

Age-Friendly Maple Grove invites community members to volunteer



www.agefriendlymaplegrove.org

September 2020

Age-Friendly Maple Grove (AF MG) is looking for new volunteers to join its work. This community-City initiative to make Maple Grove a better place to grow older is part of the growing age-friendly communities movement.

What volunteers can expect:

- A well-organized and welcoming group
- Options to engage a little or a lot; it's up to you!
- An opportunity to help rethink how our community approaches aging and older residents
- To learn about the age-friendly communities movement and to advance that work in Maple Grove

“We have a very committed and engaged team, and we get a lot accomplished—even now during the pandemic,” said initiative co-chair Mark Carpenter. “But we can do more with more people. Every person brings another perspective and their own particular expertise and insights.”

Maple Grove joined the WHO/AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities in 2016. It is one of six Minnesota communities to have enrolled—three other cities and two counties, including Hennepin. There are more than 400 members in the U.S. now committed to making their communities more inclusive of older adults.

“Older people contribute enormously to communities—as members of the workforce, entrepreneurs, volunteers, and caregivers of grandchildren and other family members, to name a few,” said AF MG co-chair Mark Carpenter. “Cities need to make sure they are set up in a such a way that values these contributions and empowers us all to live active and autonomous lives as long as possible.”

How you can participate:

AF MG welcomes community volunteers as well as those interested in a professional capacity. There are a few ways to participate: join the Leadership Team, a subcommittee or two, or simply sign up for emails. Read on to learn more.

Leadership Team:

AF MG's Leadership Team is made up of 15-20 people—cross-sector professionals as well as community members with a range of backgrounds and interests. The team meets monthly (second Fridays) from 8:30-10:00am at the Maple Grove Community Center (but online until further notice due to Covid-19). The Leadership Team guides and oversees the work of the overall initiative. Subcommittees lead implementation of the work laid out in AF MG's three-year Action Plan. All teams meet monthly, and no special background or experience is required to participate.

AF MG's subcommittees are working on a wide range of activities, detailed below. Learn more about how you may want to get involved. All you need is an interest in the work!

Communication & Information

This team oversees AF MG's communication strategies and develops new and creative ways to share information. We manage content for AF MG's website and Facebook page, and develop collateral materials and standardized branding/communication tools. We also lead efforts to share information about scams that target older adults. Writers, photographers, and marketing professionals are encouraged, as well as anyone interested in bringing age-friendly news and messages to the community.

Community Support and Health Services

This subcommittee addresses a variety of services that support physical, mental, and overall well-being. We partner with the City of Maple Grove, Maple Grove Hospital, M Health Fairview, Yes& Studio, and others. Current activities include supporting people with dementia and their families, advancing Evidence-Based Programs (proven ways to promote health and prevent disease), and connecting with the City's police and fire departments about issues related to older residents. Over time new members have enriched this work with their own ideas and expertise—we welcome yours, too!

Housing

The Housing team focuses on bringing more affordable, accessible, and appropriate housing options to Maple Grove's older adults. We approach this from various angles, working with the City as well as private and nonprofit partners. We also help raise awareness about existing resources and services related to housing. Join us to help advance this complex but critically important work.

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

The OSB team works to make local businesses, public buildings, and parks and

open spaces more inviting and usable to older adults. Volunteers can use an audit tool (questionnaire) to evaluate businesses and public spaces around town—including retail, services, restaurants, parks, parking lots, etc. The compiled data will be used to make recommendations to business owners, the City, Chambers of Commerce, and others as way to encourage age-friendly adaptations.

Social Participation & Civic Engagement

This team focuses on making sure older residents can stay socially connected and have opportunities for civic engagement and employment. We work to facilitate meaningful volunteer opportunities, use technology to help older adults connect to other people and information, and identify opportunities around multigenerational connection, among other things. Anyone interested in these and other ways of helping older adults actively connect to the community is welcome to join us!

Transportation

The Transportation team works to bring more and better transportation options to Maple Grove, particularly for older residents. We partner with the City, the Metropolitan Council and others to put an age-friendly lens on transportation planning and funding efforts. We have two immediate volunteer needs:

- 1) Walking audit: Volunteers observe traffic at busy intersections and note walkability and pedestrian safety concerns. It takes about an hour. Training and tools provided. Audits are being done in partnership with the City of Maple Grove.
- 2) Feedback and ideas on our action plan: Our committee is developing a three-year plan that suggests transportation opportunities for the

future. Additional input and ideas encouraged!

Fundraising & Development

This team works to identify new financial supporters as well as to maintain relationships

with existing funders. We welcome assistance from development professionals, writers, strong thinkers, people with community connections and good ideas, and anyone else who enjoys this work.

If you have questions or are interested in volunteering with Age-Friendly Maple Grove, please contact Liz Faust at 763-494-6514 or EFaust@maplegrovern.gov.