



Neighborhood Connections: Creating Community and Aging in Place

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide interested neighborhoods and communities with a framework for creating their own neighborhood groups. In writing this Guide, the Project EngAGE Neighborhood Connections Team aims to assist neighborhoods in fostering a vibrant and engaging quality of life for seniors. We hope to build trusted and reciprocal relationships through social engagement, education, practical support and assistance.

Do you have a “Neighborhood Connection” program in your community, or would you like to start one? The Neighborhood Connections Senior Resource Team (SRT) is available to consult with individuals and groups interested in creating their own community groups. Join us at our monthly meetings – third Tuesday, 12:00-1:30, Seymour Center. For more information and/or support, contact Melissa Hunter (mhunter@orangecountync.gov, 919-245-4278).

How to Use this Guide

This guide should be utilized as a framework for how to develop and implement an active and engaged neighbor support system. The guide has been divided into functional sections which have been color coded for easy identification.

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Tips to Start

The following suggestions offered by the Neighborhood Connections Senior Resource Team have been provided to assist you with your process. This is not a concrete blueprint, but rather methods we have found beneficial.

Start Slowly and Don't Reinvent the Wheel: Make a first year plan with reasonable goals, and expect a slow start. When identifying goals it is important to set short-term goals and long-term goals. Short-term goals should focus on building relationships (e.g., implementing social gatherings, creating email contact groups, creating an interest committee). Long-term goals should encompass the larger picture of what you would like to accomplish for your neighborhood (i.e., creating a community where you can age in place, creating an intergenerational community). Learn from other groups and their tried and true experiences.

Start (Very) Locally: Even within your neighborhood, you will gain more support and interest from your immediate neighbors (such as same street, easily walkable from your home, or people you know well). Once you organize your immediate neighborhood, you can more successfully expand to the rest of your community.

Form A Core Group: The importance of finding a committed group of neighbor volunteers cannot be overstated. Such a group will allow for success, as the responsibilities will be distributed (divide and conquer), and diverse ideas and perspectives will be represented. If you can't find others to team up with, consider whether you are willing and able to do this on your own and for how long.

Organize Social Events: Organize a fun, short, and easy-going event, such as a "pub night," "coffee," or "dessert party" at your home or a neighbor's home, or a central meeting location if you have one in your neighborhood. The focus of these events should be on fun and getting to know each other, rather than on launching into aging discussions.

Assess Your Neighborhood's Readiness: How well do neighbors know one another? Prior to this initiative, were there regular gatherings? Focus on building good relationships with neighbors before discussing how you can help each other age in place. Building trust between neighbors is paramount to a successful and sustainable program. Once you've reached a point where trust has been established, prepare your talking points ("why are we forming this group?") and be ready to explain, explain, explain.

Involve Your HOA: If you have one, consider whether this group can be integrated into the HOA, or at least supported by the HOA.

Diversify Your Strategy When Communicating with Neighbors: There are many ways to attract neighbors – use a combination of communication tools, including flyers in common area and in

doors, a “message in a bottle,” informational bags on door handles, email, Nextdoor.com, and of course, and likely most effective, personal invitations (with names on the invites).

Use Sign Up Sheets: After a few social gatherings (or sooner, depending on how close your neighborhood was prior to this initiative), use sign up lists or surveys to establish sub-groups of interest (e.g., yard sales, babysitting, transportation, walking, book club, safety, pet care, tech help, watching houses.)

Create a Mission/Core Values/Covenant: Draft a Mission, Core Values, and/or Covenant for your neighborhood group that outlines an inclusive, democratic process and allows the group to evolve as it wishes.

Sample Mission: To foster a vibrant and engaging quality of life for people living in our neighborhood by building trusted and reciprocal relationships through social engagement, education, practical support and assistance.

Sample Core Values:

- Specific projects are determined by the members’ interests and needs
- The project is volunteer driven
- Activities are structured to increase neighborhood connections
- Activities build relationships
- The Village will provide mutual support between individuals and enhance quality of life
- Information and resource sharing are central
- Collaboration with other local “Villagers” is encouraged

Keep Records: Decide what works best for your group. Are you interested in simply tracking attendance or would you like to evaluate your progress and reinforce your effort? This will assist in determining which method to use.

- Detailed minutes
- Attendance sheets
- General notes

Just Seniors?: Will your group include only older adults, or will it include persons of all ages? There is no right answer. It all depends on your unique neighborhood and how you envision your end goals. Can you engage younger people (i.e., parents, working non-seniors) in reciprocal relationships? Are younger people already involved in their own groups (i.e., parent groups) and therefore have limited time, or might they be interested in being part of a multi-generational group? Consider the unique contributions older adults in your neighborhood can make for younger people, such as babysitting, teaching a trade, advise, etc.

Costs of Running the Group: Consider whether it is necessary to charge membership fees. Can you secure a yearly amount from your HOA? Can you keep costs low and/or donated? How extensive will the group's services be? On the high end, do you want to employ a person to coordinate services?

Where Will Your Group Meet? Communities vary on whether they have a central meeting place. While it's easier if one exists, it is not absolutely necessary. Alternating people's homes is a good alternative – but meeting within your own neighborhood is very important, if at all possible.

Neighborhood Listings

Chapel Hill/Carrboro

Courtyards at Homestead

- Contact Person: Bill Crittenden, bill.seniorcare@gmail.com
- Notes: This is a neighborhood group consisting of 63 private residences. Their focus is on building community by socialization, networking, and aiding residents through an established network of resident committees such as the Social Committee, Health & Wellness, Finance, Architectural Review, Landscape and a resident board of directors. The homeowners association which meets at least quarterly. Suggestions for new events and committees are always welcome.

East Franklin Historic District

- Webpage: <http://www.eastfranklin.org/About-Us.html>
- Internal communication: subgroup lists for members through Next Door
- Notes: active groups include traveling pub, bridge group, book group, and mahjong. Other interest areas being planned around transportation, meal prep, visit/phone call, pet care, tech assistance, and home watch.

Estes Village

- Contact Person: Lenore Martin, lenore.s.martin@gmail.com
- Webpage: www.estesvillchapelhill.wordpress.com
- Internal Communication: private Facebook page and e-mail list
- Notes: Membership is free. This group encompasses a mix of neighborhoods along N. Estes Dr. from Franklin St. to MLK Jr. Blvd. It is a multigenerational group with subgroups dedicated to Aging in Place and other interests as determined by group members. Monthly traveling pubs in members' homes, "village-wide" information sessions, other social, and information activities.

Falconbridge Village

- Webpage: <http://www.falconbridge.org/falconbridge-alliance/>;
<https://www.falconbridge.org/neighbor-services/falconbridge-friends/>
- Notes: *Falconbridge Alliance* is a group of volunteers that coordinates social activities in the neighborhood (e.g., traveling pub, game night, book clubs, wine tasting group, gourmet group, poker night, bowling, ladies coffee klatch, as well as holiday celebrations such as July 4th, Halloween, etc.). *Falconbridge Friends* is a volunteer group of neighbors helping neighbors with temporary conditions that interfere with functioning (e.g., recovering from surgery or childbirth, or other situations that limit daily functioning). These volunteers provide a wide range of service, including transport to medical appointments, grocery shopping, preparing

meals, dog walking, rolling out trash bins, fetching mail, etc. To seek assistance, one places a call to 919-391-8210, or emails FalconbridgeFriends@gmail.com.

Meadowmont Aging in Place Project

- Contact Person: Fred Spielman, fred.spielman65@gmail.com, (919) 929-4520
- Webpage: <http://mapp27517.net>
- Internal Communication: email list
- Notes: Organized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Membership is \$20.00 per year. The website provides a forum for members to discuss whatever they wish or to ask for assistance. A calendar of activities is sent at the start of each month, supplemented by a weekly calendar.

The Meadows Community Connections

- Contact Person: Debbie Suchoff, debbiesuchoff@yahoo.com
- Internal Communication: private email list, nextdoor.com, and neighborhood directory
- Notes: The Meadows is located in east Chapel Hill. There are 56 homes, a certain percentage of renters, but mostly lived in by homeowners. Demographics have changed over the years and the area is a diverse mix of seniors, working professionals, and young families. All residents are included in the program – “Community Connections” – which was established 2016. A steering committee meets monthly to discuss ideas, programming, and ways to move forward. A brief monthly email newsletter lets people know about upcoming events. There are monthly social activities, plus a men's group and women's group that each meet twice a month. Membership is free and the HOA is supportive of the Community Connections program and offers some financial help.

Roberson Place

- Contact Person: Sheila Evans (sheilarevans@yahoo.com) or Anne Johnson (anne_uwc@yahoo.com)
- Internal Communication: private Next Door group, Google group, and email list for the Caring committee members
- Notes: This neighborhood is in Carrboro and consists of single family homes – some with basement rentals – and town houses: 90 total. The focus is on building community, socialization, networking, and helping residents through an established and active Caring Committee. There is a Homeowners Association and a resident Board of Directors with an annual membership meeting. Some of the activities include Friday socials, annual block party, holiday events, play group, book club, and little book lending cabinet. New suggestions for events/services are always welcome.

Southern Village Aging in Place

- Contact Person: Diane Covington, dcovington@nc.rr.com

- Webpage: <http://southernvillageaip.weebly.com/>
- Internal Communication: email list
- Notes: Membership is free. The group is evaluating a minimal fee to allow for additional programs. The Southern Village Aging Place organization was established in Spring 2013. It is a community-based organization that provides a social network. Activities include monthly pub crawls at individuals' homes, women's coffee, men's coffee, classic movie night, a bunco group, women's walking group, book group, and dining out group. On occasion there are speakers and special educational sessions. There is ongoing discussion of how to offer more supportive services.

Hillsborough

Cameron Park ACCP (Aging in Community in Cameron Park)

- Contact Person: Nancy Rosebaugh, nrosebaugh@hotmail.com
- Webpage: <http://accponline.org/>
- Internal communication: Private NextDoor group and e-mail list
- Notes: This neighborhood is in Hillsborough and consists of single family homes and one small apartment building. Membership is free. Cameron Park ACCP envisions a community where neighbors of all ages can seek and find help from other neighbors and offer their gifts to one another. It has a core group of 7-11 members who meet regularly to plan activities, educational sessions, social events and more.

Other Orange County Housing Types

- Pacifica Cohousing – Carrboro, NC (<http://pacificaonline.org/>)
- Arcadia Cohousing – Chapel Hill, NC (<https://www.arcadiacohousing.com/>)
- Hart's Mill Ecovillage and Farm – Hillsborough, NC (<http://www.hartsmill.org/>)
- Fiori Hill Pocket Neighborhood – Hillsborough, NC (<https://www.fiorihill.com/>)
- Elderberry Cohousing – Rougemont, NC (<http://www.elderberrycohousing.com/>)

Resources

This section of the guide offers articles, websites, forms, and contacts that can provide useful ideas and outlets for assistance should you need them.

Articles

- Villages Let Elderly Grow At Home: http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-07-26-aging26_ST_N.htm
- Retirees Turn to Virtual Villages for Mutual Support: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/29/your-money/retirees-turn-to-virtual-villages-for-mutual-support.html?_r=0
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors: A Qualitative Study of Villages Operating in the District of Columbia: <http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-10-2009/dcvillages.html>
- Age In Place: A Guide to Modifying, Organizing, and Decluttering Mom and Dad's Home by Lynda G. Shrager: <https://www.amazon.com/Age-Place-Modifying-Organizing-Decluttering/dp/1945188189>
- Reimagining Your Neighborhood by Transforming Car-Centric Housing Developments Into Vibrant, Verdant Sustainable Communities by Bolton Anthony: <https://www.amazon.com/Reimagining-Your-Neighborhood-Transforming-developments/dp/1516816064>

Websites

Orange County Department on Aging

The Orange County Department on Aging (OCDOA) is a one-stop resource where older adults and caregivers can meet their social, mental, physical, financial, and day-to-day practical needs. It offers integrated aging services and programs at two senior centers including, wellness and education classes, job search advice and workshops, lunches, trips, volunteer opportunities, and much more.

- A complete list of available services and programs can be found at: <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/154/Aging>
- Senior Times, Resource Guide, and e-Newsletter: <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/187/Senior-Times-Resource-Guide-E-Newsletter>
- Aging Transitions Services: <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/158/Aging-Transitions-Services>
- Other Senior Resource Team Publications: <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/2091/Publications-and-Resources>

Orange County Emergency Services

Orange County Emergency Services is dedicated to ensuring the appropriate and efficient response to emergencies throughout Orange County operating twenty-four hours each day, year round. The

Department also plans for the Orange County response to a disaster and other complex emergencies. Disaster planning integrates all of the critical Orange County departments with the local municipalities as well as state and federal agencies.

- OC ALERTS is used to notify Orange County residents of any emergencies happening in the county. Sign up here : <https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085611768#/login>
- Visit “Ready Orange” to learn more about preparedness: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/650/Disaster-Emergency-Preparedness>
- “Five Steps to Neighborhood Preparedness” gives you the tools to ensure your neighborhood has the necessary plans in place before the disaster strikes. These steps can be customized to fit your community and its needs. Visit: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/1684/Five-Steps-to-Neighborhood-Preparedness>

Beacon Hill Village: <http://www.beaconhillvillage.org>

Forms to Request Services

To access Orange County Department on Aging resources and services, interested individuals may contact the Aging Help Line at (919) 968-2087. Alternatively, neighbors, friends, and family members may have the individual complete and sign a form from the following pages giving their permission for the Department on Aging to contact them. See forms on the following pages.



Request for Information

I KINDLY REQUEST THAT THE ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT ON AGING CONTACT ME REGARDING SERVICES THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE TO ME.

Print name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I WISH TO BE CONTACTED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER (FILL OUT ALL THAT APPLY)

HOME PHONE: _____

OK TO LEAVE A DETAILED VOICE MAIL MESSAGE? YES NO

OK TO LEAVE A MESSAGE WITH CALL BACK NUMBER? YES NO

EMAIL: _____

CELL PHONE: _____

LEAVE A DETAILED VOICE MAIL MESSAGE? YES NO

LEAVE A MESSAGE WITH CALL BACK NUMBER? YES NO

OTHER REQUESTS: _____

I understand that I may revoke this request at any time. I also understand that my information will be kept private and confidential, and will not be shared with others outside of the Orange County Department on aging without my permission.

Signature: _____



**SALT: SENIORS & LAW ENFORCEMENT
TOGETHER
REQUEST FOR PARTICPATION FORM**



SALT is a Visitation Service provided in partnership by the Orange County Sheriff’s Office and the Orange County Department on Aging.

If you, or someone you know, is over 60, and living in Orange County, a Deputy or Department on Aging volunteer can check on you regularly to ensure that you are safe, and have access to resources that enable you to remain in your home for as long as possible.

If you want to take advantage of this service, please complete the form below, and send it to the Orange County Sheriff's Office.

LAST NAME: _____

FIRST NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

PHONE: HOME _____ CELL _____

EMERGENCY/FAMILY CONTACTS:

Please send, or drop off, form to: SALT, Orange County Sheriff's Office, 106 East Margaret Lane, Hillsborough, NC 27278

Questions? Call the Aging Helpline at 919-968-2087

Department Contacts

Department on Aging:

- Aging Information and Help Line: 919-968-2087
- Seymour Center Front Desk: 919-968-2070
- Passmore Center Front Desk: 919-245-2015
- Janice Tyler, Director, jtyler@orangecountync.gov
- Myra Austin, Senior Center Administrator, maustin@orangecountync.gov
- Annie Deaver, Aging Transitions Administrator, adeaver@orangecountync.gov
- Shenae McPherson, Volunteer Connect 55+ Administrator, shmcperson@orangecountync.gov
- Melissa Hunter, Aging Transitions/VC55+ Social Worker, mhunter@orangecountync.gov

Emergency Services

ALWAYS CALL 911 IN AN EMERGENCY.

- Main Phone Number for Emergency Services: 919-245-6100
- Dinah Jeffries, Emergency Services Director, djeffries@orangecountync.gov
- Kirby Saunders, Emergency Management Coordinator, ksaunders@orangecountync.gov
- Kim Woodward, Emergency Medical Services Operations Manager, kwoodward@orangecountync.gov
- Kevin Medlin, 9-1-1 Communications Operations Manager, kmedlin@orangecountync.gov
- Jason Shepherd, Fire Marshall, jshepherd@orangecountync.gov