



Steuben Senior Services Fund, Inc.

Building a Resource for Aging in Place

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Community Health Foundation of Western & Central New York (CHFWCNY)
Southern Finger Lakes Fund
Final Report- 1/2010 through 12/2011

Steuben Senior Services Fund, Inc. (SSSF) received a \$15,000 grant from CHFWCNY to implement Aging in Place strategies in the Town of Pulteney as part of their Neighborhood Action Initiative. SSSF asked for an extension through December 2011 so that we could continue the community building and strides that we had made in the previous 18 months towards the following objectives. Below is a summary of that two-year progress:

Objectives

Increase access to and knowledge of transportation in the Town of Pulteney.

AdvantAge Goal- Transportation is accessible and affordable.

Indicator #22- Percentage of people age 65+ who have access to public transportation.

A baseline percentage will be determined through surveys to older Pulteney residents at the onset of the grant period. This will be compared to results of surveys compiled at the end of the grant period in June of 2011.

At the onset of the Pulteney Aging in Place project, no-one was utilizing any transportation services, and knowledge about transportation was very limited. Surveys compiled at the end of the grant period indicated that **63% of the individuals that responded were more aware of transportation options in the Town of Pulteney**. The top three transportation needs from the surveys were medical appointments, grocery shopping, and church/recreation. Steuben Coordinated Transportation provided 33 units of service transporting seniors to medical appointments during the grant period, and Project Care provided 42 units of service to 6 seniors, some of which included grocery shopping and errands.

Increase the publicity and information to older Pulteney residents about the availability of services.

AdvantAge Goal- Assistance services are available and residents know how to access them.

Indicator #9- Percentage of people age 65+ who are aware/unaware of selected services in Pulteney.

A baseline percentage will be determined through surveys to older Pulteney residents at the onset of the grant period. This will be compared to results of surveys collected at the end of the grant period in June of 2011 at a town meeting and through direct mailings.

Much of our emphasis in this project involved increasing the knowledge of older Pulteney residents about the availability of services and creating avenues through community building to determine additional unmet needs. The surveys gave us very useful information about how seniors received information; 67% of the respondents indicated that personal mail was the best way for us to provide information. We developed a community newsletter spearheaded by the local librarian and distributed it to every individual on the Pulteney tax roll. We also made available additional copies at the library, the Town Hall, the Town Clerk's office, the Post Office, and the Fire Hall for renters and seasonal visitors. To date, we have distributed 3300 newsletters throughout the Town of Pulteney. The Town of Pulteney, the Pulteney Presbyterian Church, and the Pulteney Fire Department have donated \$900 for the sustainability of the community newsletter through 2012, and are hoping to put that in their budget for years to come. According to the surveys returned at the end of the grant period, **76% of the older Pulteney residents indicated that they are more aware of the various services available.**

We also gained valuable information utilizing "graffiti walls" in five areas of the Town, as well as pre and post surveys, an Aging in Place Event at the Fire Hall, and numerous presentations to area groups. These additional services were provided during the grant period as a result of information received:

- EISEP (Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly) provided 161 units of personal care/homemaker services.
- ProAction's Home Delivered Meals program provided 1,481 units of service throughout the town.
- The Office for Aging and NYConnects have been contacted by 12 individuals seeking information and assistance.
- A meal site was developed at the Pulteney Presbyterian Church one day per week which began on January 23rd, 2012. Fifteen individuals attended, and if successful the Presbyterian Church is committed to starting a second day per week.

I believe that these statistics are very significant considering that we started at zero and the numbers are steadily increasing as a result of the community building that has taken place in the past two years. It is very difficult to measure all the aspects of effective community building. There are so many connections between people and agencies that have been made, and the genuine excitement in the Town of Pulteney about working together and supporting those individuals in need has been a true pleasure to witness.

Another part of the implementation plan involved working with traditional and non-traditional groups to educate them about existing services and to gain knowledge. We worked with Project Care and Steuben Coordinated Transportation to develop one volunteer application that has been used to make volunteering for either organization seamless. The Hammondsport School Guidance Department has worked with us to engage students residing in Pulteney in volunteering through Project Care. We have received valuable assistance and information from the Pulteney Fire Department and Ambulance Corps about vulnerable seniors and have connected them through NYConnects to needed services. The Presbyterian Church contacted us about wanting to start a community service project to assist seniors with food insecurity, and as mentioned earlier, they are in the process of opening the church as a nutrition site one-two days per week. Volunteers and residents in need of home modification and repair were referred to Joseph's Hammer. The Pulteney Free Library is overseeing the community newsletter, the Pulteney Grapevine, which has been distributed quarterly to 1100 households in the town. The Food Bank of the Southern Tier's Mobile Food Pantry in Pulteney was being under-utilized until we included information about its availability in our newsletter, and participation now has boomed. We assisted AARP in the completion of "walkability studies" in the town and the results have recently been submitted to the Town Board to assist with the development of their comprehensive plan. The local Bone Builders group, which is the largest group in Steuben County, assists in disseminating information to seniors and members have offered to serve as volunteer drivers to get older residents to the nutrition site when it opens. It is these connections with various groups throughout the Town of Pulteney that has resulted in seniors, who have always been there with needs, accessing services through community bridges.

Although this may be considered anecdotal rather than statistical, I would like to relate one story about two older residents in Pulteney. Evelyn and George Doty lived in Pulteney since 1954 on a beautiful farm at the top of Chidsey Hill Road. George ran a dairy farm, milking cows for 45 years. In 2000, George sold the dairy operation to his trusted handyman, who passed away after a terrible farm accident and the dairy farm was again sold. Since that time, Evelyn and George lived in their home hoping to remain on the farm as long as possible. George has two very large steers, which he describes as his "pride and joy". They enjoy caring for them as pets, along with the eight barn cats. George was the caregiver for Evelyn who had Alzheimer's disease and was confined to a wheelchair.

They had no children and although distant relatives and caring neighbors came to bring them food occasionally, in 2010 they realized that they needed some additional help. They heard about the services in Pulteney and called the Steuben County Office for Aging to receive home delivered meals. This

program provided meals five days per week and ensured that the Dotys had someone to check on them those days. After assessing all their needs, the Dotys were put on a waiting list for in-home services through the Office for Aging's EISEP program. Upon hearing about the need, Steuben Senior Services Fund offered to pay for their needed services to get an aide to complete vacuuming, meal preparation, and assistance with personal care, such as bathing, as there was no funding for these services at the time.

The Dotys really wanted to stay in their home - around their personal items and memories, in the shade of their big tree in the front yard, and out near the barn feeding those prized steers. But this would not have been possible without some assistance. Unfortunately, Evelyn passed away last October, but George is happy that she was able to fulfill her wish of staying on the farm. If George had been forced to place Evelyn in a skilled nursing facility, the cost of a nursing home placement would have exceeded \$8,000/month.