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March 2016



Partner Profile:

Hanover Township Department of Senior Services

Hanover Township's strong commitment to its older adults is evidenced in the community's Department of Senior Services and the Senior Center dedicated in 2005.

Older adults visit the center for a variety of activities that range from meals to computers, but Tracey Colagrossi, the township's director of senior services and current president of the Illinois Association of Senior Centers, says the real benefit of any senior center is creating



Volunteers stuff candy bags to give to Welfare Services clients at a spring event

relationships. "Being social is such an integral part of healthy aging," she said. "We have a holistic view that a senior center should address well-being – mind, body, spirit – what connects us all. We have a sense of spirit; we're all glad to be together."

The aim of Hanover Township Senior Services programs and services is to enable residents 55 and older to live independent lifestyles through transportation, recreation, nutrition and social service programs. It offers congregate and home-

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1048 Lake Street, Suite 300
Oak Park, IL 60301-1102

phone (708)383-0258
fax (708)524-0870

(800)699-9043
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delivered meals five days a week. Home clients can choose in advance from menus, and congregate diners have two menu choices each day. "Our culinary staff is truly amazing," Colagrossi said, "and AgeOptions has been so supportive of us in tackling this endeavor."

Other programs and services include Dial-A-Bus, which transports residents for medical appointments, shopping, dialysis and to the Senior Center. Transportation is especially important in helping older people in suburban areas maintain independent lifestyles and stay active and engaged suburban areas, Colagrossi said.

Recreational opportunities include group exercise, art and computer classes, cultural outings and extended travel. Social Services provides links to services and assists residents in applying for benefits. Residents can also borrow walkers, canes and other adaptive devices from the township's lending closet at the center.

In addition, Senior Services offers many opportunities for volunteering, as evidenced by the 250 volunteers now sharing their time and skills.

Last year the Department of Senior Services, with its 23 full and part-time staff members, served 26,692 unduplicated program participants.

Colagrossi, who started with the township 10 years ago teaching arts and

crafts and painting, says she gives all credit for the department's success to her predecessor, Barbara Kurth Schuldt who retired as director last year. "She was instrumental in getting us to where we are," she said. "I'm also proud of our Board of Trustees and Board of Supervisors for



St. Patrick's Day celebration – one of many Senior Services events



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their support and vision on how we can best serve the people of our township. All the credit goes to the people we elected to help us drive our vision, and of course to our staff.”

Colagrossi is somewhat concerned about proposed state legislation that would consolidate townships and municipalities, but said she’s not too worried that will happen. “We want to make sure everyone is fed and housed, and we do everything on a shoestring. As a township, it’s up to us to inform people about what we do, and we are awesome at what we do. We don’t just play bingo.”