

Mayor's Commission on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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MCAAE Meeting Summary November 15, 2024

Members: Benjamin Abe, Charlotte Antoine, Rita Howard, Pamela Williams, Paula Williams; Sheila Mary; Paul Mitchell, Claudette Thomas

Members Absent: Charlotte Antoine

ADS Staff: Michael Adusah, Eldad Mekuria

Guests: Teresa Tam, Phinney Neighborhood Association

I. Welcome & Introductions – Rita Howard, Chair

II. Social Connectivity

Teresa Tam is the Social Connection Project Coordinator with the Phinney Neighborhood Association (PNA). She works specifically for the Greenwood Senior Center, which is part of the PNA, because this social connection project is focused on older adults in the community. Her presentation provided some data on the problem of social isolation and loneliness, discussed what made PNA decide to start a social connection project and their goals. Teresa showed some of the project programs, spoke about the impact of the project, and some lessons learned they've discovered over the past 3½ years. Some of the social connection programs mentioned were:

- Speed Friending – Resulted from a survey of older adults in collaboration with the University of Washington Graduate Program. Respondents had expressed a desire for opportunities to meet people one-on-one
- Backup Plan for Solos – Individuals who are aging without the traditional support of family are encouraged to think through what their plan will be should they need assistance with making a health decision.
- Connect2Affect – A one-hour workshop created by the AARP Foundation; a brainstorming session where people create a friend inventory and come up with a structured plan to reach out to them.
- Connection Rx – This is a 6-week program that PNA is piloting and an expansion of Connect2Affect with participants coming together in small groups to work on their friend inventory and thinking of ways to become more engaged. Over the 6 weeks, they return to the group and report on what worked and what didn't, and any challenges faced.

- Tech Support Group – The pandemic heightened the importance of staying connected virtually and has been a popular program.

Questions and observations from the council:

- Experience working with Black people; the observation that the communities served by the Greenwood Senior Center are predominantly white.
- Whether a presentation could be made to either a Black church or a senior center with predominantly Black members.
- Suggestion of reaching out to Dr. Pittman, who has done extensive research and published a book about grandmothers taking care of grandchildren.
- This program could be something to bring to the attention of the mayor's office to replicate in predominantly Black neighborhoods.

Teresa said she would ideally like to see her position located in various community centers around the city because her program is limited. She welcomes helping others start similar programs within their communities.

[View Teresa's presentation [here](#)]

III. Other Updates & Debriefs

Pamela reported on the Advisory Council retreat two months ago and reviewed some of the topics discussed. The advisory council focused on things that can be improved within the aging and disability services and their three top priorities: nutrition, social isolation and loneliness, and case management reduction. Each advisory council member committed to working on specific issues and Pamela's commitment was to work on loneliness and social isolation.

Policy matters, case management, estate recovery, and digital equity were also discussed at the advisory council retreat.

Eldad and Pamela attended the Caregivers Forum, which was well attended with approximately 82 participants. The keynote address was given by Beverly Kimmons with the Alzheimer's Association and was excellent. It helped people see how Alzheimer's and people with dementia are cared for, and the challenges. There was a film screening that followed three different families having a person with some form of dementia, not necessarily Alzheimer's, because we learned that Alzheimer's is a very specific disease, and dementia is a broader care category.

Eldad said the next meeting is **December 20, 2024**, which will be more of a celebration than a regular meeting, although members will likely want to talk about some things that are relevant and important to them. This will also be a potluck, so everyone is asked to bring their favorite dish or snack to share. There is a list of potential topics for discussion at the February retreat. Eldad suggested getting a head start in December doing some vision setting for 2025 to discuss what issues the MCAAE will focus on, what are members passionate about, and how can MCAAE bring that to life in 2025. Another option could be inviting a guest speaker on relevant topics, city policy changes, intergenerational leadership or intergenerational activities.

Meeting Adjourned