

Lake Currents, April 17, 2015

Community for All Ages Update: Introducing LOWLINC

During the cold winter months, the Community for All Ages working group has been busy planning next steps in response to the community survey we conducted last fall. You'll recall that the survey was designed to answer the question: How can we as a community best support seniors and those with physical and cognitive challenges to remain independent at LOW for as long as possible? Here's a quick update on our activities.

- **Additional Research.** We've researched services currently available both inside and outside LOW. We've met with representatives of the LOW Church and Woods Cares to share the results of the survey (see the December 12 issue of Lake Currents for a summary) and explore collaboration. We plan meetings with other volunteer and paid service providers as well. We also are working with Aging Together, a nonprofit that builds collaborations to support older persons, their families and their caregivers in five local counties of Orange, Rappahannock, Madison, Fauquier and Culpeper. In addition, we've researched services available through Orange County. We anticipate using the results of our research to raise awareness in our community about services available and to serve as a source for referrals.
- **LOWLINC: It's official!** We've formed an organization, now officially registered with the State of Virginia. Our name suggests our mission: to enable seniors and those with special challenges to "Live Independently in our Community" through linkages, collaborations, interconnections and support services. We're building a board and applying for 501(c)(3) status with the IRS. We expect to have a website soon. We're modeling LOWLINC after other "aging in community organizations" and have sought guidance from other so-called "villages" about their formation, cost for membership, volunteers, finances and operations. We anticipate there will be a cost for membership, which would be completely optional. As we have noted in the past, our efforts and LOWLINC are independent of the Lake of the Woods Association and have no impact on your annual assessment or fees.
- **Planning for Services.** The survey we conducted last fall indicated that a list of vetted service providers was one of the top-rated needs. We are exploring how other "aging in community" organizations have created and vetted their lists of preferred service providers, and we anticipate rolling out a plan for developing a LOWLINC list in the near future. We also are working on a plan for providing additional services that were highlighted as needed (e.g., transportation, home and yard maintenance, computer support). We remain grateful to the more than 200 LOW residents of all ages who indicated in their survey responses that they are interested in volunteering, and we are exploring the creation of a "community of volunteers" through LOWLINC that will support seniors and others at LOW with special needs.

Please watch for further updates in Lake Currents.