

River Forest Township
Senior Outreach Coordinator

Fiscal Year 2017

(April 2017 – April 2018)

Annual Report

Annual Town Meeting, 4/10/2018

In FY 2015, the Township funded a new part-time position (Senior Outreach Coordinator, hereafter referred to as “SOC”), to further assist its local senior citizens. The Township hired Cathaleen Roach as an independent contractor to work approximately 10 – 15 hrs./week. We are nearing completion of three years of funding. The Senior Outreach Coordinator position is now an established position with a number of relationships created throughout River Forest, Oak Park and beyond. In FY 2017, Ms. Roach focused primarily on three areas: programming initiatives for lifelong learning and health & safety; collaboration with other local entities; and senior outreach.

Ms. Roach reports directly to Supervisor Carla Sloan. In addition to being part-time Township SOC, Ms. Roach attends most OP&RFT Senior Committee Meetings (now held monthly, and formerly quarterly). She also volunteers bi-weekly with the 2 year--old Low-Income Senior Advanced Directive Clinic, which she and the Center for Disability and Elder Law (CDEL) coordinate. This legal clinic serves River Forest and Oak Park seniors who qualify.

I. PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES: LIFELONG LEARNING AND HEALTH & SAFETY

A. Programming Co-Sponsored with River Forest Library -- CSAYL™

River Forest Township continues to enjoy its great working relationship with the River Forest Public Library, particularly through their limited joint partnership created three years ago. In FYs 2016 and 2017 this partnership brought a tremendous increase in free programming available to local RF seniors in large part through its “Celebrating Seniors All Year Long”™ efforts. Local seniors have responded enthusiastically. In addition to the co-sponsorship of Library programming, RF Township co-sponsored Wednesday Computer Labs, called Connect With Tech, (which effective May 2018 will morph into “Gather, Discover, Engage” with some changes to frequency and format) and monthly Coffee Monday programs, each of which is described below.

In FY 2017, the sum total for all 3 parts of Library-Township partnership (Coffee Monday + Connect with Tech + Celebrating Seniors All Year Long™) yielded 71 programs/events total with 1075 total attendees:

- CSAYL™ -- A total of 739 people attended 24 events co-sponsored by River Forest Township and River Forest Library for FY 2017 under the programming called “Celebrating Seniors All Year Long”™ programming. Especially popular were the Solar Eclipse event, historical edu-tainment presenters (e.g., featuring “Hamilton’s Women” and Lady Diana Spencer history), “Christmas at Marshall Field’s,” a WWII Radio Hour, and a children’s chamber orchestra.
- Connect With Tech -- In FY 2017, the Township continued its co-sponsorship with the River Forest Library of weekly free Computer Labs, called “Connect With Tech.” These labs were typically conducted as eight-week sessions with a two-week break in between each session. A total of 187 to date, duplicated participants (i.e., some attending regularly) attended. Local seniors– at any computer competency level – are invited to come in for assistance with questions of their own about their phones, laptops, tablets and other related electronics. Effective May 2018, concerns about cost and attendance mean the Labs will be conducted monthly and by Library support staff. Under the umbrella entitled, “Gather, Discover, Engage,” our partnership will continue with a modified Connect With Tech, Coffee Mondays, and will add a monthly free lunch-time film.
- Coffee Monday –Third, the Township co-sponsored with the River Forest Library once-a-month Coffee Mondays with opportunities for socializing and some limited content programming for seniors.
 - In FY 2017, we co-sponsored 11 Coffee Mondays with 149 attendees total. Most popular this year attendance-wise, were presentations delivered by Township-affiliated people: Abby Schmelling gave a wonderful presentation on Genealogy. Trustee Karen Taubman gave an equally popular and well-received talk on “Tools for a Less Cluttered Life,” which explored on-line and other local resources available to seniors and others looking to declutter and/or downsize.

Other popular Coffee Monday topics included:

- Librarian selections on “Books you will Love in the New Year.”
- A panel discussion with 3 local colleges (Triton, Dominican University and Concordia University) on “Low Cost Cultural and Education Opportunities in our Own Back Yard” including tuition breaks and cultural events.
- Transportation Options and details on discounts for Seniors including, PACE, RTA and very low cost OPTSS \$1 rides for local seniors. Our “Transportation” CM featured Rahman Burton from the RTA (on Free and Reduced Fare and other pertinent senior information) and Charles Barnes (OPTSS Transportation). Both speakers were enthusiastically received. We had attendees sign up with RTA at our gathering for free and reduced RTA passes.

B. Other Senior Programming Sponsored by River Forest Township

- **NEW! Senior Brain Health** -- Carla Sloan presided over our Saturday Oct. 28, 2017 Brain Health Initiative held the RFCC. We coordinated with Mayra Ligeza, an Alzheimer's Assn. representative who spoke on *Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from Latest Research*. Thereafter, Steve Smith from OPTSS hosted a 2nd Alzheimer talk here at RFCC Friday, Nov. 17, 2017 on more of the latest Alzheimer's Research.
- **NEW! Pickleball** – Supervisor Carla Sloan and Trustee Holly Economos collaborated, and in March 2018 (scheduled thru late May 2018) introduced our first weekly Pickleball programming jointly hosted by The Tennis & Fitness Center in Oak Park and the River Forest Township. Local residents receive training and free equipment rental for “America’s Fastest Growing Sport!”
- **NEW! Movement & Memory for Joyful Aging**- SOC coordinated a new class for seniors with the popular teacher, Gloria Araya (who taught the very successful CSW single-day event in May 2017) and came back to teach our brand-new 6 weeks’ program called, Movement & Memory for Joyful Aging, and hosted through River Forest Community Center.
- **NEW! Senior Employment Assistance Efforts** - SOC met with Laina Krasik, Employment & Employer Services/Associate Career Coach, from the American Jobs Center- Maywood Center campus at 1700 South First St. in Maywood. Ms. Krisik’s federally funded program helps those seniors looking for both full and part-time work, with an overlap in the Center with AARP assistance. SOC will work with the AARP 50+ Work program and Ms. Krisik to publicize the numerous services available for local seniors looking for work.

Additionally, Ms. Krisik will be the featured speaker at the June 2018 Coffee Monday.

- **NEW! Oak Park & River Forest Historical Society** – On September 11, 2017 we sponsored Jan Dressell, President of the OP & RF Historical Society, at the September Coffee Monday to a very enthusiastic and appreciative audience interested in the Society and its new move to a permanent location on Lake St. in Oak Park.
- **Memoir Writing** – SOC conducted 3 sessions in Memoir Writing for local residents.
 - St. Luke’s Primetimer’s Club – SOC conducted an Introduction to Memoir Writing Seminar and one month later, a Memoir Writing Follow-Up for a total of approximately 20 participants
 - Grace Lutheran -- Similarly, SOC conducted a single-day Memoir Writing for Grace Lutheran’s Cornerstones 17 attendees
- **CDEL** – Powers of Attorney Preparation for low-income residents – We provide preparation of health care and property powers of attorney, and living wills at the Seniors Advanced Directives (free) Clinic, staffed twice-monthly by Cathaleen Roach (on volunteer time) and CDEL, the Chicago Center for Disability & Elder Law, for local senior residents who qualify.

C. Eighth Annual Celebrating Seniors Week Programming & Other Participation
April 26 – May 3, 2018

Beginning January 2018, the SOC spent a great deal of time preparing for the 8th Annual Celebrating Seniors Week, (April 26 – May 3, 2018). This year, the Township plans on hosting, co-hosting or assisting with six local events in one week. During that week, there are a total of approximately 40 free presentations presented in the tri-suburban area (Forest Park, River Forest & Oak Park) by the Celebrating Seniors Coalition. Additionally, the SOC substantially increased her involvement this year assisting in selecting, interviewing, photographing and preparing “copy” for this year’s CSW Resource Guide, featuring 61 local honorees for “60 Over 60,” of which the SOC was responsible for approximately one-third.

The programming, completed in FY 2017, but held in April 2018 (in two weeks) is:

- **River Forest Township (and 1 Police Dept.) Programming Events –**
 Held at the River Forest Community Center, 8020 Madison Street, River Forest.
 - Monday, 4/30, 10 am – *Protecting Yourself from Crime...At Any Age*, with RF Police Officer Glen Czernik. This event will be held at RF Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, RF.
 - Tuesday, 5/1, 1 pm – *Having Fun with Genealogy Using Ancestry.com, Facebook and Other Websites*, with RF resident Abby Schmelling
 - Tuesday, 5/1, 5 pm – *Happy Hour Improv Fun & Games*, comedy improv class with RF resident comedian Chris Hauri
 - Wednesday, 5/2, 10:30 am – *Cost-Friendly Cultural and Educational Opportunities in our Own Back Yard*, panel discussion with our 3 local universities
 - Thursday, 5/3, 10:30 am – *Using Legal Tools like Advanced Directives, Wills and TODI’s for Elder Life Planning*, with attorney Tom Wendt
 - Thursday, 5/3, 2 pm – *Why We Need More Humor in our Lives*, with local author/humorist Al Gini
- **60 Over 60 River Forest participants** – The increased participation by the SOC in the “60 Over 60” efforts facilitated many more River Foresters to be recognized this year as honorees. Additionally, the substantially increased RF Township and SOC involvement greatly assisted the CSW Committee, which had seen its first significant turnover in leadership since its inception and needed workers.

II COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT & OTHER ENTITIES

The SOC spent much of this fiscal year 2017 creating and/or maintaining collaborative working relationships with the following local government and other entities:

ADDITIONAL NEW PARTNERSHIPS in FY 2017:

- Aging & Disability Resource Consulting – RF Township publicizes the new twice-monthly free consulting opportunities at a local River Forest location (River Forest

Medical Campus, affiliated with West Suburban Medical Center) for any local senior. Staff from OPTSS are available for one-on-one consultations to provide assistance with local state and federal programs for seniors regarding topics like meal programs; home energy assistance; transportation services and other.

- Jobs for Seniors – Full Time and Part-Time. SOC met in Fall, 2017 and in March 2018 with both AARP representatives (AARP “Back to Work 50+ yrs”) and Laina Krisik, Employment & Employer Services/Associate Career Coach, from the American Jobs Center- Maywood Center campus at 1700 South First St., in Maywood. Ms. Krisik’s federally funded program helps those seniors looking for both full and part-time work, with an overlap in the Center with AARP assistance. There are a plethora of services available to seniors and other services at the Maywood Job Center. Some of these services are income-dependent, and others, from AARP in particular, do not have any maximum income limitation necessary to access the services/job training.
NEW! Also, we are excited to announce that Laina Krisik is our featured guest for the June 4 Coffee Monday. We will heavily publicize the event to reach out to as many of our local seniors who may be looking for part-time or full-time work about the plethora of wonderful services available to them right next door.
- Alzheimer’s - We initiated a new relationship with Mayra Liegza at Alzheimer’s Assn. who was our first speaker at our October 2017 Brain Health Institute.
- LOSS – River Forest Township now operates as a host site for LOSS, Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide. The Township is the host site for 2 monthly Group Support meetings per month, with licensed clinicians provided by Catholic Charities in its highly regarded LOSS program. This program is a “no denominational” program, without any religious input or affiliation.
- Reach-Out/Great Neighbors Program – SOC Cathaleen Roach will not have any involvement in this newest program, but Supervisor Carla Sloan is spear-heading a 3-unit collaboration with Arbor West Neighbors, OPTSS and Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly designed for local seniors. Now in its infancy, the program will use the Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly, entitled “Great Neighbors Program,” as an umbrella program. Its purpose is to use the existing computer and other structures of the Great Neighbors Program of the Little Brothers and connect local volunteers with local senior residents in need of companionship and other assistance. All members apply through and will be screened by the Great Neighbors Program, which is overseen by the Great Neighbors Administrator at Little Brothers. Its stated purpose is “to reach older adults in and beyond Chicago to help build community for all ages with a focus on preventing older adults from being isolated and alone.”
- SAFE DISPOSAL OF Rx – RF Township publicizes the new partnership with RF Police and Oak Park Police Departments for the “safe disposal of prescription and over-the-counter medications,” with two drop off locations at RF Village Hall and the Lobby of the Oak Park Police Department.
- NEW! Rush Oak Park Hospital free health seminars and other opportunities – In late FY 2017 we publicized a free Cancer Support Group held at Rush Oak Park, and will publicize upcoming free seminars and other opportunities (like free skin cancer

screenings, free balance assessments) pursuant to a new working relationship with Elizabeth Shayani at Rush Oak Park Hospital.

CONTINUING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS in FY 2017:

Additionally, we continued our important and sustaining on-going relationships with local entities:

- RF Library – We co-sponsored numerous CSAYL™ programming events; weekly computer labs called “Connect With Tech; and our monthly Coffee Mondays.
- RF Police Department – We will support and publicize the 4/30/2018 Celebrating Seniors Week presentation, “*Protecting Yourself from Crime...At Any Age,*” with RF Police Officer Glen Czernik.
- RF Fire and Paramedics – We will continue our participation in the ICE Packet Program distribution with the Fire Department. We are also hoping to help coordinate more Falls Prevention Programming, perhaps in association with the Fire Department and local physical therapy providers.
- Oak Park Township Senior Services - We work intimately with OPTSS in connecting needy RF senior residents with available services.
- CDEL- Center for Disability and Elder Law- We support bi-monthly free legal clinic for Advance Directives for qualifying local residents.
- Forest Park Mohr Community Center- We promote ongoing senior tour events.
- We engage with local churches and other religious institutions including River Forest Grace Lutheran Church; St. Luke’s; and West Suburban Temple Har Zion and Oak Park Temple’s STAR group.
- Encore – We actively promote newly formed 40-person senior choir ensemble based on national model.
- Arbor West Neighbors – We actively promote and assist the newly formed tri-suburban not-for-profit group on successful aging in place initiatives with publicity, assistance with surveys, and their big event featuring Atul Gwande, MD., held in summer 2017.
- Triton RSVP and AARP Tax Preparation – We assist in publicizing and finding volunteers for training in tax preparation AND publicize tax assistance for qualifying local seniors.
- Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation Volunteer Meet and Match Event -- This year we will attend on April 18, representing the Township in an event that annually draws about 400 people looking for local volunteering opportunities.
- Celebrating Seniors Week™ Coalition – See above, pp 1-2.

III. OUTREACH

The third prong of the Township’s commitment to its seniors involves its outreach efforts.

- MEMORIAL DAY PARADE – May 2017 SOC once again walked with the RF Township in the Memorial Day parade as a volunteer (no charge) with other members of

the OP and RF Townships to deliver “give aways” (like pens and candy) and promote the services offered by our Township for seniors. The Parade draws many hundreds of watchers and hopefully, provides a great venue to get out the word for what our Township does.

- **FOOD TRUCK RALLY CELEBRATION** Saturday, August 26, 2017. SOC was among 15 RF and OP Township employees and trustees who serviced the RF Tent on the grounds of Keystone Park, location of the Food Truck Rally. The event was hugely well attended, and hundreds of local attendees (very young to very senior) came to our tent to “play” a Wheel-of-Fortune-type game (educating all on Township services) and browse the many descriptive flyers and brochures we made available. Residents of all ages enjoyed a festival atmosphere, great music and had access at our tent to lots of useful information on Township services like transportation, meals, dining-out programs, and other social services made available to our seniors.
- **ICE PACKETS (In Case Of Emergency)** – By Spring 2018 we had distributed all 1100 ICE Packets (co-created by RF Township and RF Fire Dept/Paramedics), to local seniors. These ICE Packets were very favorably received. Currently, SOC is working on updating and reordering for this next “2.0” iteration of the very popular ICE Packets.
- **Regular Meeting & Other Commitments** – The SOC (Senior Outreach Coordinator) attended meetings and provided status reports for the following :
 - Monthly - RF Township Board meetings
 - Quarterly - OPRF Township Seniors Committee meetings;
 - ** Effective April 2018, these Quarterly Meetings will be held monthly, and SOC will rotate attendance with RF Liaison and others from RF Township.
 - Other -- SOC is responsible for all upkeep and monthly updating the following Bulletin Boards and “circular display racks,” or “trees” at RFCC and RF Village Hall: The RFCC Senior Board on 1st Floor; the RFCC Senior Bulletin Board on 2nd floor; the RF Library Senior Board; and two dedicated display racks, or “trees” at RF Village Hall and 1st floor RFCC. All of these boards and racks provide lots of handouts and timely information for events of interest to our local seniors.
- SOC is present for drop-in office duty on most Wednesdays 1 – 3 p.m.
- **Constituent calls:** SOC has seen an increase in senior constituent calls (now regularly numbering several every week), which vary for anything from transportation calls, to caregiving concerns, to questions about free income-tax preparation, and other social inquiries. We attribute this positive development to our Celebrating Seniors All Year Long™ activities, and our increased print and local presence by the Township.
- The Township is also now regularly approached for publicity help as a liaison between our local seniors and other programming providers including but not limited to: OPRFHS for musical plays; Encore for senior choir groups; The Willard PTO for A Senior Tea with the school children; Arbor West Neighbors; and tax preparation efforts for volunteers and clients.

- Media Outreach - The Township plays an important role in connecting its local seniors with local events and local groups of interest through many forms of media and other electronic outreach. The Township:
 - Takes photos at CSAYL™ Library events and coordinates pictures and copy with Matt Baron, Inside Edge, for placement in local outlets.
 - Works with Jeff Belmonte providing Senior Services news for website at rftownship.org.
 - Works with Wendy Senger (OPTSS) providing copy for RF Township in quarterly News & Views (sent to approximately 4000 targeted River Forest and Oak Park seniors).
 - Sends out Monthly email blasts to local seniors advising of upcoming programming, particularly Coffee Mondays and CSAYL (“Celebrating Seniors All Year Long”).
 - Works with Dana Janisch and Francesca Arnold at River Forest Library creating promotional posters and outreach materials for all co-sponsored events.
 - Works with Supervisor Sloan in promoting Township events and services in RF Village E-news; “News & Views” (OPTSS); RF Public Library Book Plate; RFCC brochure and electronic newsletter; RF Park District Fun Guide; and thereby greatly increasing the public awareness of local events of interest to and affecting seniors.
 - The SOC prepared numerous “senior packets,” prepared primarily for the Township Assessor visits with local seniors, which identify senior services available to local seniors through the Township.
- Other outreach efforts:
 - Age Options Legislative Breakfast - Carla Sloan and Pam Mahn (Director OPTSS) co-ordinated, and SOC attended this year’s Legislative Breakfast for local federal, state, and others to discuss acute situation in federal and IL state funding of senior social services. This very successful event, held at the RFCC on Monday February 5, 2018 had 50+ attendees, including many state and local elected officials and/or their office representatives.
 - On April 26, 2017 (and scheduled for next week, April 18, 2018 at the new location of the YMCA), the SOC represented River Forest Township in Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation’s highly successful Volunteer Meet and Match event at the Oak Park Public Library (over 400 persons attended in 2016).

IV. FUTURE PLANS

Senior Services makes a point of listening to its constituents and honoring their helpful suggestions for additional programs for the future. With that goal in mind, Senior Services would like to contribute even more meaningfully in FY 2018 by investigating the following areas for possible broader outreach next year:

- Expand our relationship with the RF Police Department and Community Bank for more seminars teaching senior residents about active local scams and other safety issues that are important to seniors.

- Expand relationship with RF Fire Department, via ICE Packet and Falls Prevention efforts;
- Continue to research and expand efforts to provide more programming including:
Movement –
 - Where possible, connect residents with dance, YMCA exercise, RF Medical Center chair yoga, and other avenues for physical movement;

The Arts – Explore:

- More memoir writing seminars.
- A humor-based series on Seniors and Stand-up (comedy).
- Seniors and theater performance.
- A closer relationship with the weaving, painting, jewelry and woodworking options at the Senior Lifelong Learning Center (located at OP Arms).
- Research providing more social opportunities like Mahjong groups for local seniors.
- Expand lectures on the importance of having powers of attorney, particularly those for health care.
- Increase coordination with local cab or other transportation services for better transportation options for local seniors.
- Increase outreach with Alzheimer's Assn. and Gottlieb Hospital efforts in Brain Health Initiatives.

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