

Age-Friendly Times

News from Teaneck's Age-Friendly Community Initiative

Teaneck Awarded AARP Grant to Improve Walkways

A year after Teaneck's leaders voted to join a global alliance of age-friendly communities, the Township's commitment to a more livable environment for older adults is paying off.

Teaneck was recently notified it will receive a \$10,000 grant through the AARP's nationwide Community Challenge competition.

"Teaneck is thrilled and excited to be chosen as a grant recipient for the third annual AARP Community Challenge," said Township Manager Dean Kazinci. "There were over 1,660 applications submitted from nonprofits and government entities, which resulted in a highly competitive selection process."

"I would like to personally thank the AARP for their dedication and commitment to fund 159 quick action projects across the country, which allows communities to make immediate improvements and jumpstart long term progress to support residents of all ages."

The money will be used to increase connectivity among township sponsored activities by improving the safety conditions of Teaneck's pedestrian walkway network, Kazinci said.

"The Township will move quickly on installing highly visible crosswalks near bus stops to allow for the greatest ease of movement to and from destinations," he said. "Two bus stops of most interest include those on Teaneck Road by State Highway 4. The grant will allow us to target these locations for upgrades in making access easier and safer."

Teaneck became the first Bergen County community to join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities in May 2018.

The Township Council and Administration are supportive of the concept of making the Township

more "walkable" for its residents, a priority concern of Age-Friendly Teaneck.

In October 2018, the Township joined with Age-Friendly Teaneck and the New Jersey Department of Transportation to host a Senior Walkability Workshop for residents, civic leaders, municipal officials and key decision-makers. DOT consultants who ran the educational workshop used their field observations and information gathered from community leaders and residents to compile a report that identified ways Teaneck could improve its sidewalks, walking paths and difficult pedestrian crossings.

"The mission of this AARP grant program is to make communities more livable for everyone, and this award is a sign that Teaneck is



Senior Walkability Workshop in October 2018 identified walkways that need improvement

recognized as a community that is committed to working together toward an age-friendly future," said Jackie Kates, the Age-Friendly Teaneck Project Coordinator. "It's also gratifying to know that the Township Council and Administration share Age-Friendly Teaneck's goal of making Teaneck a great place to grow old as well as to grow up."

Older Adults Need More Transportation Options

To grow old in your community, you need to be able to get around in your community.

That's why transportation is a key priority of age-friendly organizations across the globe.

In car-dependent Bergen County, it can be daunting to find a workable alternative to driving.

Government programs providing free or low-cost transportation prioritize doctor's visits and dialysis over trips to the movies or the hair salon.

Even with those priorities, the Bergen County Division of Transportation sometimes must

disappoint some who are seeking rides.

A regular driver calls in sick and no substitute can be found. A senior center bus route is full so residents in farther-away towns can't get a seat.

These were some of the concerns raised at this summer's annual public hearing on transportation funding for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Speakers talked of how seniors without transportation can lose community connections crucial to their emotional well-being. The common refrain: "We need more options."

New transportation options have emerged in Bergen County in recent years, here's a look at some

Volunteers Needed to Bring New Ride Service to Teaneck

ITNNorth Jersey relies on volunteers to drive older adults and those with visual impairments to the places they need – or want – to go.

Unlike other services, ITN doesn't restrict rides to urgent needs such as health appointments. Instead, older adults can go to variety of destinations – a hair salon, the

available yet in Teaneck.

"We really can't start service in a new community until we have enough volunteers to support the requests for rides we would get from its residents," said Community Development Director Mary Lyons-Kim.

Jamie Elkin, a member of Age-Friendly Teaneck's health and social engagement task force, is one of only two ITN drivers from Teaneck. "I've driven some of the nicest people," said Elkin, who said she enjoys conversing with the older adults and knowing she is helping people who would otherwise be isolated at home.

Volunteering for ITN is manageable, Elkin said, because there is no set schedule. Instead, ITN keeps a database of ride requests and volunteers can check it to see if they can accommodate someone.

"There's no minimum time requirement for our volunteers," Lyons Kim said. "We have



Jamie Elkin is one of only two ITN volunteers from Teaneck

theater, or a friend's house. Volunteers escort riders door-to-door, making ITN a good option for those too unsteady to take a taxi, bus or train.

Now four years old, ITN's 116 drivers have provided more than 25,000 rides in Bergen County. But service isn't

Ryde4Life, for those without a smart phone

This E-Z Ride program allows older adults to book Lyft and Uber rides with a phone call instead of an app. There is a \$2.50 fee on top of the fare, but discounts are available to some eligible older adults.

Call: (866)208-1307, Option 4

Web: ezride.org/transportation/senior-transportation/

NJ TIP @ Rutgers demystifies public transit

For older adults unfamiliar with bus and train routes, the NJ Travel Independence Program offers a Bergen County guide and one-on-one travel instruction.

Call: 848-932-2831

Web: njtip.rutgers.edu

volunteers who drive six times a day and others who only have time for one ride a month."

To volunteer, you can contact ITNNorthJersey by calling 201-398-6885 or logging onto www.ITNNorthJersey.org



www.agefriendlyteaneck.org