

Age-Friendly Times

News from Teaneck's Age-Friendly Community Initiative

Teaneck Joins Network of Age-Friendly Towns

Teaneck is now part of a global alliance whose community members are pledging to work together toward an age-friendly future.

The township was the third New Jersey community to join AARP's Age-Friendly Network of States and Communities, but more are expected to follow.

The Township Council unanimously supported joining the network, a move that builds on government leaders' ongoing collaboration with Age-Friendly Teaneck, a non-profit initiative created in 2016 to help make Teaneck an easier place to grow old.

Like most American suburbs, Teaneck is a town whose homes, streets and public spaces



were designed primarily with an eye toward the families with young children who moved here in droves in the 1950s and 60s. Like most American suburbs, Teaneck's population is aging rapidly, with nearly 17 percent of the township's 40,000 residents now over 65.

The concern in Teaneck and elsewhere is that - without a concerted effort to create more walkable streets, affordable housing, accessible transportation and targeted services - older residents will live more isolated lives or feel compelled to move away.

The AARP network launched in 2012 through the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program.

In addition to access to aging experts and other professional resources, communities in the network can **NETWORK on back**

Teaneck Fire Department Offers Morning Check-Up

A simple "Good Morning" can start someone's day off right.

The Teaneck Fire Department believes it can also save a life – at least in the case of an elderly or disabled resident living on their own.

For more than 30 years, Teaneck firefighters have been placing "Good Morning Wake Up" calls to residents with health concerns. These well-being checks occur between 8 and 9 a.m., 365 days a year.

They are usually short, friendly conversations, but they can be very revealing.

"Sometimes you can pick up that something is wrong from the sound of someone's voice," said Lt. David Barrett.

If a resident says they aren't feeling well, or if they fail to answer the first call or a second one placed five minutes later, the dispatcher

will send a unit to the house to check on them.

Over the years, the department's responders have discovered residents suffering a medical **CHECK-UP on back**



Firefighter William Lynn making calls on a recent morning.

NETWORK from front

share ideas and strategies, said state AARP Director Stephanie Hunsinger. "They can talk about what worked and best practices, and



Program Director Elizabeth Davis; Deputy Township Manager Dean Kazinci; Teaneck Township Manager William Broughton; State AARP Director Stephanie Hunsinger; Teaneck Mayor Mohammed Hameeduddin; Project Coordinator Jacqueline Kates

also about what didn't work."

Hunsinger presented Mayor Mohammed Hameeduddin and other local officials with a membership certificate at a June 14 reception.

The mayor said that he and the Township Council are committed to addressing older adults' challenges and welcome suggestions on how to assist elderly residents who don't have families nearby or other needed support.

Age-Friendly Teaneck has already worked with township officials on many efforts, from pledging to make streets more pedestrian-friendly to disseminating a resource guide. More collaboration is planned on projects such as the new Mayor's Wellness Campaign and an upcoming walkability study.

"I think we've accomplished a lot, and we have a lot more to work on and we're excited to work with all of you," said Age-Friendly Project Director Elizabeth Davis.

Considering Volunteering?

So many ways to help older adults!

Brightside Manor

Help with exercise, entertainment and activities
201-692-1000, info@seniorhousingervices.org

Jewish Family & Children's Services of N.NJ

Friendly visits, meal delivery, and more
201-837-9090, info@jfcnnj.org

Helping Hands Food Pantry

Pantry staff/ office help/ donation pick-ups
201-837-1600 (x1825), katz07666@gmail.com

Cheer Service

Friendly visits/ grocery shopping/ errands
201-489-9454 (x203)
mogden@bergenvolunteers.org

Chore Service

Help with minor home repairs/chores
201-489-7790, chore@bergenvolunteers.org

For more opportunities, log onto:
www.bergenvolunteers.org

CHECK-UP from front

problem, and their intervention helped avert a more serious crisis.

Since its creation in 1985, participation has varied and there are currently only 21 residents signed up, a very low number, considering that senior citizens live alone in 11 percent of Teaneck households.

On one call Firefighter William Lynn made recently, there was some excitement – but the good kind. The woman said she was leaving town for a few days to visit her newly born first grandchild. "Congratulations," Lynn said. "Enjoy the trip."

Lynn said he's gotten to know a bit about the people he's assigned to call, and some like to do a little chatting on some mornings.

Those who enroll in the program receive a home safety inspection and provide emergency contacts and medical details that responders would need to know.

If you think this service would help you or someone you know in Teaneck, please call the fire department at 201-837-2085 and ask to speak to Lt. Barrett or Capt. Rich Burchell.



www.agefriendlyteaneck.org