

Purpose

The Aging with Attitude Regional Expo promotes positive attitudes about aging and educates older Kansans on issues that support physical, mental, and financial health.

The Need

In nine select southeast Kansas counties the percent of persons aged 65 or over ranges from 14.0% in Crawford County to 22.7% in Woodson County. The US Census Bureau (2010) indicates there are approximately 376,000 persons aged 65 or older in Kansas (1). A Kansas Department of Aging report (July 2002) predicts there will be 605,000 persons aged 65 and over by the year 2030. The Kansas Elder Count publication indicates that older adults in rural areas and their families face a unique set of challenges when it comes to accessing health care, community support services, long-term care services, and managing retirement income and finances to support health care cost and living longer. A K-State Extension 2007-08 Family and Consumer Sciences Survey shows a need to focus programming on issues, needs, and challenges facing older Kansans.

Action

The "Aging with Attitude Regional Expo" was a new Adult Development and Aging program endeavor for K-State Research and Extension and community partners in southeast Kansas in 2011. In 2009, three Family and Consumer Sciences Agents from southeast Kansas recognized the need to focus resources on the growing population of Kansans 65 years and older and their developmental needs. These dedicated extension agents put together a team of peers from several southeast Kansas counties and the Extension Area Specialist to form a programming team to research, discuss and evaluate how best to address the needs of this population cohort. In consultation with the state specialist and relying on information obtained from extension staff in the northwest area; who had implemented a similar program event a few years prior, the southeast Kansas "Aging with Attitude Regional Expo" was established.



The Aging with Attitude Regional Expo was a collaborative effort with Kansas State Research and Extension; the Southeast Area Agency on Aging; Via Christi Hospital Pittsburg, Inc.; and the Alzheimer's Association, Heart of America Chapter. Planning Committee members included (photo): Dr. Debra Sellers, Tara Solomon, Ann Ludlum, Barbara Ames, Anna Mae Brown, Martha Flanagan, Barbara Stockebrand, Gayle Price, Stacy Dickerhoof, Marlene Willis, and John Von Wedell.

The First Year - Success and Impact

The Expo was held in Chanute, KS on April 29, 2011. The event attracted over sixty participants and 17 exhibits involving approximately 100 people. Event evaluations showed participants were from eleven southeast Kansas counties and ranged in age from 40-95 years old. Evaluation data indicates that approximately 70% of the participants were over 65 years or older. Feedback from participants and exhibitors indicates overwhelming support of the event. Several exhibitors stated they were glad to be a part of the Expo and are looking forward to next year.

The Expo provided 14 educational sessions that covered 10 different topics such as: Gardening for Fun and Better Health; Elder Law and Advance Health Care Directives; Medicare Basics for Boomers and Beyond; When Dementia Isn't Alzheimer's; Putting "Arthur" in His Place; As We Age...Speech, Hearing, and Other Challenges; Arches, Aches and Aging Feet; and the ABC's of Diabetes.

Evaluation data from over 80% of the participants indicate the following:

- 89% indicated they learned something new.
- 50% indicated an improvement in attitude about growing old.
- 65% indicated that because of the expo they plan to take action or make a positive change in their life.

About 1 of 3 adults in the United States has high blood pressure, which increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States. High blood pressure is known as the "silent killer." (2) During the Expo, 27 blood pressure checks were conducted. Over 50% of the participants took advantage of the bone density screening provided by Via Christi Hospital.



April 29, 2011

Funding

Funding partners for the Expo were:

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas Foundation
- Epsilon Sigma Phi - Alpha Rho Chapter
- Katey Walker Extension Excellence Fund
- K-State Extension Adult Development and Aging
- Southeast Kansas Area Agency on Aging
- Kansas Traumatic Brain Injury Project

Additional southeast Kansas organizations contributed with sponsorships. The contributions from a variety of funding sources were instrumental in keeping the registration fees to a minimum.



Rise and Shine Activity led by Amanda Bastian, Via Christi Hospital. Expo participants pictured practicing exercises and learning other ways to stay physically active.

“I HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT I CAN DO TO MAKE GROWING OLD EASIER”

Future Plans

A six month follow-up phone survey is planned for September/October 2011 to assess participant attitude and actions taken because of information and knowledge obtained at the Expo.

Plans are being made for a 2012 Expo. The planned date is set for April 27th, 2012 and will again be held in Chanute. A short video highlighting the 2011 Aging with Attitude Expo was produced to share with our current partners and to promote the Expo to potential partners and sponsors.

Save the Date



April 27, 2012

Sources

- (1) U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2010; Website accessed 7/2011, www.census.gov.
- (2) CDC-National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. Website accessed 7/2011 www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/



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