

**Annual Report
Commission on Aging
2020**

2020 ANNUAL REPORT COMMISSION ON AGING (COA)

Purpose

The purpose of the COA is to advise and assist in the content, administration, and financing of county programs designed to serve the elderly residents of the county; to work with the community to develop awareness and understanding of problems and concerns of the elderly.

Membership

Keith Schukraft, Chair; AnnMarie Abell, Vice Chair; Wanda Brown; Catherine Herndon; Gail Murdock; Omonigho Olumese; Janet Perryman; Sandra Simmons; Veda Willis.

Challenges and Updates

The Commission on Aging (COA) began the calendar year fresh, optimistic, and ready to work. We were preparing to host the Tri-County Commission on Aging meeting in June 2020. Then, less than 3 months into the year, activity came to a halt per Governor's stay-at-home orders because of the COVID-19 pandemic. By May's scheduled COA meeting, some COVID-19 restrictions had eased, and the COA began meeting virtually using video and phone conferencing tools.

- **Garvey Replacement:** The Garvey Senior Activity Center is complete and awaiting the Governor's approval to reopen the senior activity centers when coronavirus related restrictions are lifted. The senior activity centers are holding virtual programs which are well attended.
- **COA Email Address:** The COA has a new county issued email address—commissiononaging@stmarysmd.com. This easy to remember email address will be used on announcements, brochures, newsletters, etc. It will help to encourage contact from interested public about the programs, activities, concerns and issues for our senior population.
- **YMCA Exploratory Committee:** COA member, Ms. Omonigho Olumese, served as the COA representative on this CSMC appointed committee. Their final report was submitted in July 2020. Three possible [YMCA]

facility locations were proposed: Nicollet Park, the Great Mills Pool area, and the lot on Shangri La Drive, next to the Lexington Park Library. YMCAs are well-known as inter-generational centers serving the local community.

2020 COA Activities

The COA continues its outreach to keep the community informed of new and ongoing issues concerning seniors. To achieve this, members visited senior living and activity sites (before the COVID-19 restrictions), facilitated presentations developed by the Department of Aging & Human Services (DAHS), invited guest speakers to the meetings and participated on local service and activity committees, mostly by virtual communications.

Prior to the COVID-19 restrictions, the COA met in open session at two senior living facilities in the county.

The COA, through its Outreach Committee, had to suspend efforts of the Department's "Road Show", due to COVID-19 restrictions. Its purpose is to make the community aware of available programs and services through a PowerPoint presentation, produced by the DAHS and presented at various locations such as churches and community organizations.

The COA has a representative attend the Homelessness Prevention Board which meets every month virtually. This regular engagement provides insight into the challenges and solution sets in providing services to community members in need of housing, food, jobs, and health and how it intersects with COA mission.

The COA was planning to host the Tri-County Commission on Aging meeting on 25 June 2020 at the *new* Garvey Senior Activity Center. By February, we had a draft agenda and lunch menu, and were in process of contacting presenters. The Governor's COVID-19 stay-at-home orders issued in March were a setback to planning and hosting this event in June. In consultation with the other county COA's, it was agreed to reschedule to June 2021.

The members of the COA, proudly and willingly, help individually in other community areas. Some are: Garvey Council, RSVP Advisory Committee, Southern Maryland American Legion, Delicados, local food banks, WARM program, Soup Kitchens, Triad/SALT, all three senior activity centers (Garvey,

Loffler, and Northern), AARP tax preparation, St. Mary's County Woman's Club, Inc., National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Homeless Coalition and the YMCA Committee.

We meet the fourth Monday of the month at 1:00 p.m. We welcome any opportunity to share with you, in more detail, our efforts and invite you and/or others to attend our meetings.

Acknowledgement

The Commission on Aging wishes to thank Ms. Lori Jennings-Harris and her staff at the DAHS for providing a wealth of information and support. Thanks also go to Ms. Mercedes Jones, Senior Administrative Coordinator, for her superb support and assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

AnnMarie K. Abell
Chair, St. Mary's County Commission on Aging

Date: 1 February 2021

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CSMC & CO ADMIN