



Celebrating Older Americans Month

Appreciating and Supporting Seniors as they Enrich and Strengthen our Communities.

May is “Older Americans Month”, which acknowledges the aging American population and the issues this senior generation faces, along with inspiring new trends of what it means to live healthy into old age.

Observed each year by the U.S. Administration on Aging, the theme of 2011 in celebrating older Americans is; “*Older Americans: Connecting the Community*”, which pays homage to the ways older adults bring inspiration and continuity to the fabric of communities. This theme also highlights the many ways modern technology is helping older Americans live longer, healthier and more engaged lives.

Statistics

The current US Census estimates nearly 13% of the American population is over 65.¹ Because of increasing longer life spans, the U.S. population aged 65 and older will double to 71 million (20% of the population) by 2030. This will impact society in many ways that will demand a strong and integral support system which will affect many facets of our communities.

The milestone birthday of 65 will be celebrated like never before. The Alliance for Aging Research states that as of January 1, 2011, as the baby boomers begin to celebrate their 65th birthdays, 10,000 people will turn 65 every day; and this will continue for 20 years. So by 2029, all of the baby boomers will be age 65 and older.² Of those living longer, statistics confirmed that women outlive men for a variety of reasons. In 2004, research showed that life expectancy for U.S. women was 5.2 years longer than men.

Lifestyle Trends

Today’s seniors are teaching us so much about aging and what it means to thrive after 65. New standards are being demonstrated and thanks to modern medicine, nutrition and technology, the old paradigm of aging will only continue to evolve.

An increasing number of seniors in the 65 – 75 brackets are becoming computer savvy and thriving in the virtual world of continued learning, entertainment and connecting with others. Not only does staying engaged with current technology help with agility and memory, it keeps them interested in current events, and provides a new way of staying connected with family.

¹ http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_many_Americans_are_over_65#ixzz1JQJhHdEx

² <http://www.silverbook.org/browse.php?id=57>

With this age group re-inventing the concept of slowing down when growing old, service sectors have increased alongside to support them. Older Americans of all ages from 65 to 90 plus are looking for ways to remain independent and live in their own homes longer. Home Health Care and companion services, senior's community access groups and innovative technology solutions have risen to meet the demand surrounding the care of seniors who are still active and contributing to society. Their longer and healthier life spans enable them to remain independent as much as they are capable, and having the support systems in place to encourage their independence is a win-win solution for everyone.

Along with seniors continuing to live in their own homes longer due to increased services, supportive housing across the nation is on the rise. When it's time down-size and leave their home, multi-residential housing projects are a sensible option intended to assist more elderly seniors who want to live autonomously, but require help with daily living activities. Seniors' Housing and retirement homes offer independent living space, but provide assistance with meals, shopping, transportation, hygiene, nursing care and recreational activities. Seniors' Housing which offer fewer support service appeal to active, healthy seniors while older and more frail elderly require housing with a larger range of services, before needing to enter long-term care facilities.

Staying empowered after 65 is easier than ever before, and in May we celebrate the older Americans among us.

This article is written by Philips LIFELINE, the largest Personal Emergency Response Service program in Western Pa. This program delivers extraordinary service to nine counties and offers the cutting-edge **Auto Alert** -- which automatically detects falls, provides peace of mind and assists people with living independently longer. Contact Bob Gordon at 412-779-0696 or Toll Free 866-677-7795.