

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING

MINUTES

September 4, 2025. 8:30a -10:30a

MEMBERS' PRESENT: Anne Rittenhouse, Elaine White, Eleanor Lee, Bhavana Pahwa, Shana Aucsmith, Hannah Kimball, Beth Hanley, Kari Marino, Julie Hart, Abigail Brown, Andrea Kline

MEMBERS ABSENT: Barbara Carey, Lori Reinvik, Lisa Corcoran, Beverly Heyden

STAFF PRESENT: Dan Lassiter -Community Services Supervisor

GUESTS: John DePalma, Ellia Harris, Mary Blogg

PRESENTER(S): Cecily Kaplan, Ellia Harris – Old Friends Club

RECORDING SECRETARY: Daniel Lassiter, Bellevue Parks & Community Services

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL: The meeting was called to order by Chair Anne Rittenhouse

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes approved for July. No meeting was held in August.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

Presenters: Cecily Kaplan and Ellia Harris

Presentation: Old Friends Club Affiliate Program

The purpose of Old Friends Club Affiliate program is to build a caring circle of connection for communities that are facing dementia. These individuals become increasingly isolated, then fearful, then agitated and must endure the stigma and diminishing control over their own lives. The care givers experience high levels of stress, depression, financial hardship, and strained relationships. There is an urgent need for a break to nurture the caregiver's well-being. To that end, Old Friends Club empowers communities to cultivate joy in the lives of adults with cognitive challenges and nourish the well-being of family caregivers by creating an environment within a person's community.

Old Friends Cub(OFC) is a 501c3 founded in 2021 to serve rural communities; it expanded to four respite programs by 2020; it served 130+ families; works as an extensive gap in dementia respite care. They now work to provide a toolkit for an expansion plan to equip other organizations to start their own community-based community-led OFC social respite program.

The purpose of this plan is to deliver meaningful engagement to people with dementia and respite caregivers through an Affiliate model that can be replicated and sustained by Affiliates in any community. There are no upfront costs for an organization to become an Affiliate and the OFCN receive funds from grants, sponsorships and donors to provide the service.

The OFC Social Respite Model is a place of friendship and belonging for people living with dementia-and a social respite program that provides family caregivers time for self-care. Each group allows up to 12 members and will utilize two staff members and volunteer guide for activities.

The OFCN is set up as:

- Social respite program aligned with OFCN values,
- OFCN provides toolkit and program guidance,
- Self-sustaining through member user fees,
- OFCN provides ongoing training and support, without charge.

The OFC network is a collective, growing community of Affiliate Clubs around the county and state which OFC provides leadership stewards. What makes the OFC model different is that similar programs have struggled to thrive and have dwindled in number, leaving a serious gap in respite care. OFCN creates a sustainable, replicable model and instills joy and resilience in community members dealing with dementia.

To financially set a group up, OFCN provides a budget template to help Affiliates tailor monthly fees. The group is set to be self-sustaining with just seven members. The group is affordable with room for a sliding scale to serve low-income families. Families are helped with budgeting for respite and encourage regular attendance. OFCN offers \$2,500 to help new nonprofit Affiliates with startup expenses. The program revenue covers all expenses, including part-time

staff to provide expertise and reliability. A Program Coordinator and a Program Assistant are the staff. The Assistant is a trained caregiver (CAN or equivalent). The two positions offer help not provided by most other social programs. Members can engage at the Club for much longer than they would have otherwise.

Ongoing training is completed at quarterly sessions by experts in the field. This ensure that staff and volunteer remain current and confident and if promotes peer support among Affiliate program staff.

If interested in starting an Affiliate phone 425 681-9776, ext. 2 or email OFCN@oldfriendsclub.org. The Website is www.olfriendsclub.org

Human Services Report – Christy Stangland

Christy reports that Human Services Division is preparing for the next funding cycle that begins March 2026. The method that awards will be decided is changing to be more streamlined with HS commission providing recommendations to city council and then the amounts go back to the commissioners for adjustments. The Home Repair is still on hold but looks like it will be funded for 2026 but will continue to need city council approval. The Needs Update is not completed but will be ready by next month's BNOA meeting when Christy will present to BNOA.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Members were asked to read the committee reports before the meeting for discussion.

Advocacy Committee- Abigail

No Advocacy meeting was held in August.

Outreach Committee Report – Shana/Andrea

Shana announced the need for an article for the Neighborhood News for November. Also, the need for articles in January and February were discussed.

The last tabling events are coming up at the farmers markets for the year and the resource bins need help for stocking then restocking. Older Adult Day will be held

at the Bellevue Farmers Market on September 18th and will feature tabling from agencies that provide older adult services, an older adult Sound of Swing jazz band and sit-down yoga demonstration. NBCC has arranged a van trip for 12 older adults to attend the market. Dan will take tents, tables and resource bins to the market and set up then remove all items at 7pm. Hannah agreed to restock the resource box for the Crossroads Farmers market.

Housing and Transportation – Elaine

No meeting was held in August.

Community Meetings Attended

None for August.

Other Business

- October 6th, 1-2 p, is the King County Assessor Office presentation on housing tax breaks for older adults at the North Bellevue Community Center. Members will attend and set up chairs, tables and snacks provided by North Bellevue Community Center and clean up afterward.
- Dan updated the group on Michael Shiosaki taking the Age-Friendly City project to leadership to review the project.
- Elevator Speeches will be developed for BNOA members to take to city department meetings as an effort to make sure older adults are included in the thought processes of planning.
- Recruitment Team for BNOA: Volunteering for the task includes Hannah, Anne, Julie, Elaine and Eleanor. Dan will send applications as he receives them to the team.
- It was announced that a senior day is planned at the Bellevue Botanical Garden for September 9th at 10a.

Next meeting is October 2. Presenters: Jean Kim of Puget Sound Regional Council on Transportation Planning results.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30