

## Meeting Summary: Age Wave Business For Life Action Team

February 24, 2017 @ 8:30am-9:30am

Genworth Financial

6620 West Broad, Building 2, Richmond, VA 23230

Facilitator: Beth Ludden

### Business For Life Action Team

**Facilitator:** Beth Ludden, SVP LTC Product Development, Genworth Financial

**Notes:** Stephanie Scott

**Objective:** Identify existing businesses, communities and groups who are age-friendly, explore models and educate members of the business community of opportunities afforded by becoming age-friendly. This Action Team will develop a marketing strategy to engage the business community in opportunities to invest in older workers and older patrons.

### Think & Drink Event Update

There was a Think & Drink event at Triple Crossings. Facebook Live was utilized for the first time to promote The Pitch Event and the Think & Drink Event. Aging 2.0 and ideas on supporting aging adults were shared with participants. Eric conducted group exercises that demonstrate social isolation and ways to combat social isolation through conscious awareness. Sticky notes were utilized to generate ideas and recognize the value of combatting social isolation. The United Way Young Leaders Society read out lowed the ideas generated on the sticky notes. The event was very positive and intergenerational. There were approximately fifty people in attendance as well as two people interested in being possible participants in The Pitch Event. The committee agreed it would be good to educate and attend events promoted by The Young Leaders Society. Linda advised she would love to see more opportunity to engage with younger people, she saw many people's eyes light up with the absorption of new this new information.

### Focus Group Update

A Focus Group took place on Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. It was held at "The Rec Room" at New Run Research in the Willow Lawn area. There were 2 groups being observed: Older Adults (Age 60-80) and local Business Owners. Each session was approximately 90 minutes. Nicole facilitated the Business Group while Katherine simultaneously facilitated the Older Adult group. Karen advised that the location was very functional and all participants were very open and giving of information.

The objective of the focus groups was to look at terms that are descriptive of being 'age friendly' and garner some ideas around possible new terms. Would like to find terms that are less restrictive, not just for older age exclusively. Gerontology students currently enrolled in the Research class observed the groups and will be submitting a report on take key take aways and learnings.

The Business group leaders were all female and represented businesses in: Cary Town, On-line shopping and Brick and Mortar Stores. There was a plumber that was unable to attend at the last minute. There was some discussion regarding the issue of having a gender bias in the business group and the possibility of conducting a new group with a selection of male business owners to see how the results would be

different. Beth advised that the Business Groups were originally selected based on the goal of having a variety of local businesses not with the goal of being gender specific. Henry advised some concern that only the female perspective was captured. There was also discussion regarding using panels of different age variations, for example younger versus older baby boomers as well as varying education levels. Perhaps the profession of a participant matters, for example blue collar versus working in an office.

Members who attended the focus group believed that one of the big take aways was that people often felt invisible an example was given regarding people who provided customer service talking directly to the daughter not her mother who was the actual customer. The question was posed about how customers can all be treated with dignity and respect. There was a strong reaction to age friendly terms and the desire not to feel like the 'other'. But, on the other hand, people liked the idea of signs announcing senior discounts. So, this was a contradiction.

The group felt that once the reporting is complete it would be good to place the results in the business section of the Richmond paper for publicity. The question was asked if the business owners talked about accessibility and lighting issues with brick and mortar stores, and the answer was no, the focus was on customer service and terms used promoting age friendly.

There was discussion on how we can make Richmond more age friendly for business and the group agreed it should be life friendly (for everyone) not only age friendly. There was conversation about how difficult it is to maneuver around the city and fan in wheel chairs and walkers.

There was some dialog around the need for an 'adjective revolution' and the necessity of stopping the use of the word 'old' because no one really understands what that means. It is often seen as a subtle use of ageism. Old can mean being frail however, attitude plays a large part in how a person views aging and it is very hard thing to measure or quantitate. It is a fact that people are treated differently because of their age; an example was given for this stereotyped was someone with white hair. It was debated that it is a tough balance of making accommodations and not practicing ageism.

There was a question asked if the group should challenge the Pitchers in The Pitch event to think globally and universally, creating products that are life friendly for everyone. Perhaps it would be a good idea to incorporate this into The Pitch objective.

An additional question was presented regarding the survey that Westminster Canterbury is conducting on aging in the community and if it is associated with the VCU Gerontology Department. Karen advised it was not but that the department has seen the survey and perhaps the results would be shared with the department.

## **Aging2.0 Update**

The Pitch event is scheduled for March 15<sup>th</sup> and the judges will be: James Cotter, Ed Cook and Debra Johnson from Care Advantage. Currently there are 6 pitchers signed up to participate but it would be a good idea to have a couple more signed up just in case someone drops out in the last minute. Beth will be responsible for getting food and drinks. Kathryn is in charge of promotion and Todd Nichols will tweet. In addition, a link will be sent out for the tickets. Joe suggested an announcement be made in the Richmond Times Dispatch in the business section and Kay Demeria could be contacted. Also, committee member with promote in their perspective areas. It was asked that everyone wear their Aging 2.0 t-shirts.

## Next Meetings & Events

Tuesday, March 7th from 8:30am-9:30am  
Genworth Financial  
6620 West Broad St., Building 2, Richmond, VA 23230

Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> from 6:00pm-8:00pm (Set-up at 5:30pm)  
Genworth Financial  
6620 West Broad St. Building 4, (The Forum) Richmond, VA 23230

Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>  
Transportation & Accessibility Community Event  
Ken Lantz, Richmond Regional Planning District Commission

Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>  
Progressive Tour Innovation Pockets in Richmond  
Time TBD – Sometime in afternoon, all stops are indoors

## ATTENDEES

Name	Organization Affiliation
Erica Flynt	Genworth Financial
Jennifer Tucker	Department of Gerontology
Karen Mosley	Greater Richmond Age Wave Coalition
Joseph Mosley	SCORE
Stephanie Scott	Greater Richmond Age Wave Coalition
E. Ann Welford	VCU Department of Gerontology
Henry Simmons	Community Representative
Amy Bodman	Circle Center Adult Day Services
Patty Wilkerson	Community Representative
Catherine MacDonald	Community Representative
Mary Catharine Kolbert	Bon Secours Richmond Health System
Amy King	Community Representative
Kim Tarantino	Senior Navigator / Lindsay Institute for Innovations in Caregiving
Carolyn Colmerford	Senior Center of Greater Richmond
Colleen Wilhelm	Family Lifeline
Coly Phillippe	Consultant
Marion Shackford	Adaptive Home Environments, LLC
Marj Gerstheimer	Stewart LLC
Linda Rubin (phone)	Senior Connections
Rachel Shelton	Crave & Primes Architecture
Ken Lantz (phone)	Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
Noel Van Antwerp	Richmond Research & Recreation
Joseph Brisby (phone)	SCORE

## ABSENT