

Elderly Nutrition Program Revitalization Pilot Projects

By: Sara Koenig, Elder Nutrition Program Manager

As part of a statewide revitalization effort directed toward the congregate nutrition program, the Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources released a Request for Applications to aging units/ADRCs to fund pilot projects throughout the state. Twenty-eight aging units/ADRCs submitted applications. Following a competitive review process, the following eleven aging units/ADRCs have received awards to begin project implementation effective May 1, 2014. Those receiving funding for their innovative ideas will have one year to complete their pilot projects. The results of those projects will be shared frequently throughout the next year.

Project Highlights:

Bad River Tribal Aging Unit

Farmers market vouchers for the local farmers market will be purchased to promote access to fresh fruit and vegetables.

A nutrition program garden will be established on the grounds of the dining center. UW Extension will partner with the tribe to help maintain the garden and engage participants in the construction and upkeep of the garden. Fruits and vegetables grown in the garden will be utilized by the dining center. The aging unit will host a summer picnic open to the community with the first large harvest from the garden.

The nutrition program will be expanded to include minor renovations to encourage socialization, through partnership with the tribe's casino.

Barron County Office on Aging

A breakfast bar/bistro will be added at the Rice Lake Senior Center, as well as a seasonal weekly salad bar that will be implemented from May through September using a garden cultivated by the seniors and staff, as well as produce from the local farmers market. Free transportation may be provided to MOW customers as an incentive to try eating at the dining center.

ADRC of Central Wisconsin

The ADRC of Central Wisconsin has implemented an alternative model, called the Senior Nutrition Access Coupon (SNAC) program, in rural areas of Marathon County, and this project would expand this model to an underserved area of Wood County. SNAC meals are provided in a local restaurant, making it a community-friendly, multicultural, and intergenerational dining experience. The customer is served directly by wait staff, and the dining center offers consumers a variety of meal time options. No reservations are required. SNAC coupons are obtained prior to utilization. A full-time dietitian directs the program.

Area Agency on Aging of Dane County

My Meal, My Way Restaurant—This pilot will relocate a dining center currently in a housing facility to a popular neighborhood restaurant and implement a breakfast meal with no reservations required.

Café 301—Dining supplies will be updated at salad bars, and evening dinners. Fresh produce will be grown in the Sun Prairie community garden with volunteers. Entertainment, health education classes/screenings, and cooking classes will be enhanced by partnering with the local school district, restaurants, and hospitals.

Connections Café—The Oregon Area Senior Center will be remodeled to create a fresh, inviting WiFi café style dining center. A variety of music programs will be offered weekly to Colonial Club Senior Activity Center to create a fresh image. The dining center will change to a later start time and offer themed meals, entice new diners.

ADRC of Florence County

The Hillcrest Dining Center will be relocated from a large gymnasium to a remodeled classroom and will incorporate a coffeehouse approach seating area and offer internet access. Intergenerational activities will be provided through partnership with the youth program "Food, Fun, and Fitness," offered by the School District of Florence County and UW Extension. A component of these activities will be creating garden boxes to grow produce for use by the nutrition program. Breakfast and evening meals and a salad/soup/sandwich bar will be offered on a rotating schedule.

ADRC – Green County – Behring Senior Center

The Monroe Dining Center located at Behring Senior Center in Monroe will be remodeled into a modern and chic café that will serve meals five days per week for lunch, include a coffee bar open throughout the day and a breakfast bar serving hot and cold breakfast items three days per week. The breakfast program will be coordinated closely with the senior center's wellness and exercise programs and the ADRC's health promotion programs. The senior center has a fully equipped gym that serves 240 members. Health promotion programs and other health and wellness programming in conjunction with the local clinic and public health department will be offered periodically during the breakfast meal. Initially reservations will be required, but plans include movement to a "no reservation" system. Plans are also in place to incorporate soup, salads, and sandwich choices into the lunch menu.

Green Lake County Aging Unit

"Start Your Day – Stay & Play" pilot project will be carried out at Berlin Senior Center. The project will include facility modifications to include a make-your-own-espresso bar and an outdoor table under a sun umbrella. A breakfast bar will be created and serve breakfast five days a week. Locally grown fruits and vegetables will be provided, and vegetables will be grown in the senior center's garden. Reservations are not required, and breakfast will be offered to the general public on a fee basis.

Lac du Flambeau Senior & Disabilities Services Center

Pilot project funding would be used to build a three-season sunroom onto the existing dining room at the Lac du Flambeau dining center to provide additional dining and gathering space, increase the number of elders served, and provide energy cost savings. A Garden Club would also be established so elders can plant a variety of plants and herbs to use and to decorate the space.

Milwaukee County Department on Aging

The project will transform the Kelly, Franklin, and Beulah Brinton dining centers into café/casual warm and friendly dining environments. A small equipment purchase will be used to build awareness of the nutrition program. MCDA will

work with local restaurants to cater sample meals at two dining centers and explore menu preferences of participants. A café will be developed at the Kelly dining center. The pilot project will be used to potentially leverage funds to expand this model to other dining centers. MCDA will work with community partners to utilize local students' talents in the remodeling effort. MCDA will document its efforts to develop a toolkit guide for others detailing successful aspects of the project.

Vernon County Aging Unit

The pilot project will increase dining center activities, develop dining center ambassadors, and hire an LTE outreach coordinator. Ambassadors will enhance meal site activities for those over age 60, encourage and promote utilization of congregate meal services that are offered, and lead in fundraising activities to support meal site activities. The outreach staff person will identify barriers to participation and methods of communication to reach those that currently do not utilize the service. Site ambassadors will be trained in leadership in collaboration with UW Extension. A video of new meal site activities will be developed as a marketing tool.

Washburn County Unit on Aging

Each dining center (Shell Lake, Spooner, Minong, and Birchwood Senior Centers) in Washburn County will participate in the pilot project. The pilot project involves implementation of a hands-on cooking class titled "Hands-On Healthy Cooking and Sharing." The class will be a two-hour, six week course that teaches older adults how to cook healthy meals, while also addressing any chronic conditions they are experiencing. An instructor would facilitate the class for six weeks, and then senior leaders would continue the class following the initial six-week period. Each dining center will also implement a salad bar. The nutrition program would partner with the local farmers market to utilize some of their produce.