

Safe Communities “Only Leaves Should Fall” 2019 Final Report

Mally Fund for Aging Education

On September 24, 2019, Safe Communities, in collaboration with the Dane County Falls Prevention Task Force, hosted its annual “Only Leaves Should Fall” falls prevention event at Door Creek Church in East Madison. The event was from 11:30am to 3:30pm and consisted of numerous screenings, demonstrations, speakers, and community resources for attendees. A highlight of the event was having Dr. Zorba Paster as our keynote speaker for the event.

Number of People Served: 111

We had an overwhelming response to this year’s “Only Leaves” event. The 111 attendees was a 30% increase from the number of attendees in 2018. Due to space capacity, we started a waitlist then followed up with those individuals who were not able to attend afterwards to see if we could offer them free registration for a Stepping On falls prevention workshop. (Stepping On is an evidence-based falls prevention workshop proven to reduce the rate of falls among completers by 30% nationally and by 50% in Wisconsin.) All event attendees were 60+ years of age.

Screenings, Resource Booths, Demonstrations, Speakers:

Screenings at OLSF 2019 included blood pressure, vision, medication reviews, home safety, cognition, and gait/balance. The physical therapy, nursing and pharmacy students/faculty from UW-Madison, as well as occupational therapy students/faculty from Madison College conducted the screenings. Resource booths included the ADRC, Safe Communities, Dane County Nutrition Program, Independent Living, Inc., Supporting Active Independent Lives (SAIL), the African American Opioid Coalition, Madison School & Community Recreation, UW-Madison *All of Us* research program, and SSM Health at Home’s Safe at Home program. A keynote address was made by Dr. Zorba Paster who spoke about falls risk factors. Dr. Judith DeWane, Assistant Professor in the Physical Therapy Program in the School of Medicine and Public Health at UW-Madison, also spoke with the group about falls prevention measures and set the stage for the day. Local class demonstrations included Tai Chi and Ballroom Basics for Balance. Lunch was provided for all attendees and a resource bag was distributed to all participants. We were also able to provide very intentional door prizes to help participants along their falls prevention journey. Door prizes included yak trax, night lights, free Stepping On and Ballroom Basics for Balance class registration, walking poles, etc.

Transportation:

Safe Communities partnered with Dane County Transit to provide transportation for approximately 10 individuals who otherwise would not have been able to attend the event. This service was offered to us (and our event participants) free of charge.



Post Survey Results and Event Follow Up Outcomes:

Each attendee was given an evaluation survey at the end of the event (*please see attached evaluation summary results*). We received 75 evaluations which was a 68% response rate. Almost half of the participants who completed an evaluation survey had fallen within the past year and about half indicated being injured from a fall. 57% of participants who completed an evaluation indicated that they are fearful of falling. 95% of participants indicated that the information presented would cause them to make some sort of change that might help them prevent a fall. 100% of participants indicated learning something new at the event.

To better gauge the outcomes from OLSF and any potential behavior changes among participants, follow up calls were conducted approximately 30-45 days post OLSF with participants who agreed to a follow-up call. Through the follow-up calls, we learned that several participants did make changes, such as adding some sort of balance or exercise class to their routine. Another individual is petitioning his condo organization to add railings to outside staircases. And several folks said that the follow up call was a good reminder to make changes.

Thank You:

To conclude, “Only Leaves Should Fall” 2019 was a huge success with participation numbers at an all-time high. The Mally Fund for Aging Education Grant helped us secure the ideal space for OLSF and provide lunch for participants, thus removing any financial barriers individuals might have had in attending the event. We thank you for your continued support of falls prevention and in “Only Leaves Should Fall” in particular. We will strive to continue to keep older adults in our community upright, independent and healthy.

