

## **“Johnson County: A Livable Community for Successful Aging” Action Planning Follow- up Report**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose was to engage a spectrum of community leaders, agency personnel and community citizens to determine priorities to pursue in 2007 to move Johnson County forward in establishing itself as a Livable Community for Successful Aging.

The September 19<sup>th</sup> event, attended by 128 guests, was hosted by the Johnson County Consortium on Aging and the University of Iowa Center on Aging. Elinor Ginzler, AARP Director of Livable Communities was the keynote presenter and large group facilitator.

### **Process:**

The September 19<sup>th</sup> planning event was a two hour working session. Invitees participated in one of six work groups. The work groups include Health and Supportive Services, Housing, Transportation, Education and Leisure, Employment and Volunteerism, and Faith Based.

After reviewing a series of recommendations and facilitated discussion each work group determined their two top priorities. The criteria used to determine the most viable selections included: a) report/data indicates the need, b) significant progress can be made in 6-12 months, c) the community would support the goal, and d) attainment of the goal will benefit a spectrum of seniors.

Each work group presented their two top priorities for the full group’s consideration. After discussion and some consolidation, seven issues were presented for the “show of hands” vote. Attendees had one vote for their top issue. The outcome of the small group recommendations and the priorities which were established by the group at large are listed on the accompanying attachment. The top three priorities are:

- Managing and creating resources and activities to help persons age successfully.
- Educating seniors about the benefits of physical activity and healthy lifestyles to affect behavioral change.
- Addressing the barriers to obtaining accessible/universal designed housing.

There was a lot of interest and energy in the room as the issues and recommendations were being discussed. The event planners acknowledged at the start of the event that the time constraints may be frustrating for the attendees. However, the goal to establish top priorities was accomplished. Elinor Ginzler commended the group for their focus, “You need to congratulate yourselves. You have done in two hours what would take four months to do in Washington, DC”.

### **Steps taken since September 19<sup>th</sup>:**

- A follow-up survey was sent to all participants and those who expressed an interest but were unable to attend. The suggestions for next steps have been correlated. Lists have been prepared of those who expressed a willingness to serve on an action team to develop next steps, along with a list of those persons suggested who should be involved.
- Action Teams are now being convened to develop the priority issues into measurable goal statements and to create specific action plans.
- A follow-up meeting in early spring will be held at which time the Action Teams will report their progress, receive input to update their action plans and determine next steps.

Thanks to all who took time to attend the event and to AARP for their invaluable assistance.