

MINUTES
COMMISSION ON AGING
Virtual

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

Present: Fran Bond, Lisa Budlow, Don Gabriel, Natasha Itheme, Jim Lightner, Roy Moreland, Mindy Morrell, Al Muehlberger, Fred Murphy, Mabel Murray, Sheila Roman, Marlene Siegel, Sherita Thomas

Absent: Lou Marino

Staff: Vishnupriya Desai, Dayna Brown, Phyllis Myers

Public: Will Feuer

I. Start Time – 9:05 a.m.

II. General Updates

- Roy thanked the COA members for congratulating him on receiving the Humanitarian Award for his community work in the Dundalk area
- Sherita talked about current mask requirements in public places and transportation
- As an FYI, Dayna shares informational e-mails to keep COA members informed with what is going on with BCDA and opportunities for members to attend various events or to share within their network; Phyllis shares operational e-mails to keep COA members current with Commission on Aging business
- Dayna is working with BCDA managers to get key information to be shared with COA members to keep them updated with department programs and functions so they may share in their community and networks

III. Announcements

- No March Birthdays
- Marlene attended a Pikesville Senior Center Council meeting and received positive feedback
- Fran attended Overlea and Pikesville, she will report at the next meeting

IV. Approval of the Agenda and the Minutes

- Agenda and minutes were approved as submitted

V. Employee Spotlight

Vishnupriya (Vishnu) Desai, Digital Inclusion Coordinator

- Began with BCDA in December of 2021
- Her focus is getting older adults in the community more involved with and learn about technology.

PowerPoint Presentation -

- Digital Divide – people who are not digitally connected feel isolated; the cause can be lack of connectivity, availability or affordability
- To help close the divide, people need the Tools (smartphone, laptops, tablets), Training and Technical support
- Baltimore County Senior Centers have free WiFi
- A new Federally funded grant program provides up to \$30 towards internet service for qualified individuals; people can go to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) website to see if they qualify
- The Maryland Department of Aging gave BCDA 130 tablets to give out to qualified seniors; Baltimore County's OIT department contributed an additional 30
- On-line tech support - BCDA in partnership with University of Maryland's extension program has developed a program called Cyber Seniors; it provides technical support at no charge; individuals can log in via Zoom or phone on Thursdays and Fridays; senior center staff offer support as well
- Cyber Seniors offers online spring and summer tech support classes; participants also receive a free membership to GetSetUp and are certified by Senior Planet
- In-person tech support - Baltimore County Workforce Development Mobile Career center, classes on an iPad at senior centers, senior housing buildings and libraries

VI. Old Business

BCDA Management Team Update

- To date, the BCDA Management team has not provided Dayna, Phyllis or Laura information to share with the COA
- Sherita asked Dayna to circle back to the management team to get information to bring back to the COA so that they are up to date with BCDA information and able to share it with seniors during senior center visits and with their surrounding communities

Strategies to Help Seniors from Falling Victim to Fraud and Scams

- Sherita recapped the discussion from the February meeting; reminding COA members to remain diligent and share their knowledge in senior centers and their communities

VII. New Business

How COA can help market BCDA programs and services

- Al suggested - share monthly newsletter, and Community Resources book with friends, join a senior center and attend events; keep elected officials up to date; subscribe to the Time of Your Life Digest
- Roy – Beacon newspaper, churches
- Jim – word of mouth; stay informed and be an advocate; intergenerational activities
- Marlene – advertise on cable channel
- Sheila – agreed with Jim’s suggestion of intergenerational activities

VIII. Director’s Updates

- BCDA still has a number of vacancies; Dayna will continue to share job postings with COA to share within their networks
- The County Executive’s last Budget Town Hall meeting is on Wednesday, March 30 at the Randallstown Community Center; he speaks about the County’s budget plan; BCDA has submitted their budget to the County Executive
- March 22 marks the 50th Anniversary of the Congregate Meal program, made available through the Older Americans Act; all BCDA senior centers will be doing something special at lunchtime to acknowledge the anniversary

IX. Meeting Adjourned at 10:36 a.m.