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**Age-friendly New York City Community Forum Notes
East Tremont Senior Center
Council Members Palma and Vacca
April 24, 2008**

Approximate number of attendees: 60

Note: Spanish translation was provided at this forum.

Where people turn for help

- Maintenance of building super
- Friends or family
- Police department
- Senior center
- 911
- One person told a story about slow ambulance response for ill husband; doesn't trust ambulance service

Quality of life issues

- Dogs
- Graffiti
- Loud car radios
- The City needs to do something to address this. Maybe hold educational program to educate people about quality of life issues.

Housing

- Only 3 people lived in stand alone housing; rest in apartment buildings
- All lived in elevator buildings
- One women (in a wheelchair) said she left her home in Parkchester because, even though it had an elevator, it had steps to get into the building
- Housing is expensive and cost of rent and/or maintenance goes up every year

- Only some people in the room knew about SCRIE
- Utilities (especially ConEd) also expensive and costs increasing
 - They need a senior discount on utilities.
- Assistance with home repair and maintenance needed
 - “I need an organization that can send someone to plaster and paint my apartment.”
 - Can’t afford to pay someone full price
 - Develop a youth program to help seniors with home repair and decorating
 - On City Island, Boy scout troops do these kind of services (painted the church); they could be used to help seniors

Information

- General agreement that it can be hard to find information
- Many (about 2/3) have had good experiences with 311
 - Few Spanish speakers know about or have tried 311, and one had a bad experience when she tried
- Need information on access-a-ride, how to get help with rent, and emergency housing for seniors (sr. ctr staff)
- About 3-5 people have computers
 - About half indicated they would be interested in learning how to use computers
 - One got a free computer through RAIN
 - One knows how to use a computer but can no longer do so because of her poor vision. There is software that could help her, but it’s too expensive (\$600).

Employment

- 2-3 people indicated they wanted work. One said she didn’t know where to get a job.
- Age discrimination is an issue.
 - One women told of a friend who is an attorney who can’t get a job. “no one wants him once they hear his age.”
 - Another woman who used to run a job club noted that age discrimination is subtle and that the age at which you are “over the hill” is younger and younger (now 50 is considered over the hill for employers)
 - “I’m at the top of my skills, but I can’t get a job.”
 - “I worked at Department of Education for 20-30 years. I retired, and when I reapplied, I couldn’t even get an interview.”

- Older workers have advantages that only some people recognize
 - Recommends doing PSAs or commercials about the advantages of hiring older workers (e.g., knowledge, experience, reliability.)
 - “I worked at a bank, and they wouldn’t accept my retirement. They said seniors are more responsible than the young ones.”
 - Some companies (McDonald’s, Burger King and Casinos in Atlantic City) are good about hiring older people

What do you like to do?

- “2-3 years ago I took a class at JPAC and it opened up my life. I’m never home now. I’m more active than I’ve been in 50 years. I’m an activist.” (Woman in wheel chair)
- Volunteering
- Shopping
- Race track
- Cards, bingo, maj jong
- Walking
- Senior center activities (programs, trips, etc...)
- Only 2-3 go into Manhattan
 - “It’s not easy.”

Transportation

- Woman in wheelchair took subway into Manhattan and got stuck in the gap between the train and the platform.
- She also got stuck on a bus when the lift broke. The Fire Department had to be called to get her off the bus.
- Long wait between buses on City Island but no benches at bus stops.

Outdoor Spaces

- Need more time for crossing intersections. (wide agreement)
 - Letter from friend of a woman who was run over by a truck crossing the street and lost her legs. She is now moving to Tucson so her niece can look after her.
- Sidewalks on City Island very bad. Tree roots have lifted up the paving stones.
 - “I’ve fallen several times.”
 - Reports of broken hips from bad sidewalks
 - Not enough enforcement of laws requiring home owners and retail to fix sidewalks
- Trees limbs obstruct the sidewalks and the Parks Department “never comes to City Island” to cut the trees back.

Woman in wheelchair made the following comment: “A little girl was walking along the shore throwing star fish that had been stranded on the beach by the tide into the ocean one by one. A man came by and asked her what she was doing. He said, ‘you can’t save all the star fish.’ She picked up another one and threw it into the ocean and said, ‘no, but I saved that one.’ Don’t think that you can’t make a difference. I’m just one person, but I’ve moved mountains.