

Aging Well offers new senior-based program

By Catherine Leyden
La Grange Suburban Life
Fri Apr 06, 2007, 12:46 PM CDT

La Grange, IL -
Countryside resident Georgian Rekash recently retired and wants to do her part to ensure necessary resources are readily available as she gets older.

That's why she plans to interview for Aging Well's new Volunteer Senior Ambassadors program which will create a network to better connect seniors to their communities.

"If they are trying to improve the quality of life for the seniors, I would like to be involved in that because I'm getting older and I might be in need of some of these things," Rekash said.

The program will allow seniors to visit businesses in 20 local communities to generate a relationship with the employees and customers as a way of voicing the needs of old adults. Businesses will include those that senior citizens use in their every day lives such as banks, grocery stores, beauty salons and doctor's offices.

Louise Starmann, director of social services for the Southwest Suburban Center on Aging, said the program is important because she feels community outreach to seniors is shrinking. "It's a mechanism by which the community gets better informed about resources, benefits and issues related to aging," Starmann said.

One important issue for Rekash is making public transportation for seniors more convenient. After living in Chicago for the majority of her life she became accustomed to the ease of using the Chicago Transportation Authority.

"In the suburban areas they don't have such an extensive program," Rekash said. "More public transportation would be good."

Starmann said research conducted by Aging Well showed a large portion of local senior citizens did not know where to turn with questions about locating the tools that would benefit their lives.

"[The program] avoids getting exhausted looking yourself for resources," Starmann said.

Want to know more?

An informational reception is set for 1 to 3 p.m. April 19, at the Southwest Suburban Center on Aging, 111 W. Harris Ave., La Grange. Adults age 50 and older are invited to learn the details about volunteering as well as general information about Aging Well. Those planning to attend the reception should RSVP to Annette McClain at (708) 354-1323, Ext. 19.