

**OSARC MEETING
MINUTES
5/10/2023**

Greetings: Joan Borovoy, Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed attendees

Introductions:

Joan introduced OSARC board leadership/activists:

Susan O'Brien, Secretary
Mark Lewis, Acting Vice Chair
Colleen Cox, Consultant to the Board
Judith Lovell, Volunteer
Jay Warshofsky, COMRO rep

And OSA staff members assisting OSARC:

Rob Spencer, OSA Media Director
Megan Wofsy- OSA staff

Joan explained Zoom etiquette.

Presentation: Colleen Cox made a presentation in honor of Women's History Month and Mother's Day. Colleen told us in beautiful detail about the life of her mother, Josephine Cox, who is still alive at 106 years old. She was born in 1917 in Jamaica. In a time when few women were becoming educated, she trained as a nurse in Kingston, Jamaica. She eventually immigrated to the US where she worked as a nurse to help support her immediate and extended family. She was one of the few women to buy a home on her own in 1980, something not possible even a few years before. On her 103rd birthday, Ms. Cox went on a cruise.

Some tips she gives us for a long life:

- give away money to those in need
- balance life and work
- eat healthy meals
- receive acupuncture and homeopathy
- do puzzles, garden and travel, and most importantly
- be able to forgive

We thank Colleen for such a wonderful presentation about an extraordinary woman.

Presentation: Cynthia Osagie, Engagement Specialist for the NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA) discussed services available through DFTA.

The mission of DFTA is to eliminate ageism and ensure the dignity and quality of life of approximately 1.75 million older New Yorkers, the agency is committed to helping older adults

age in their homes and creating a community-care approach that reflects a model age-inclusive city.

These goals are accomplished by partnering with hundreds of community-based organizations to provide services through:

Older Adult Centers: more than 300 older adult centers (OACs) throughout the five boroughs that provide healthy meals, fun activities, classes, fitness programs and social services. OACs are free and open to NYers 60 and older.

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC): NORCs are defined as a building or community that over time has become home to many older adults. There are around 60 NORCs in New York City and DFTA funds 36 of them providing services and activities to help residents stay engaged, healthy, active and help them age in their homes.

Case Management: A case manager/social worker from a partner agency will evaluate current benefits of NYers 60 and over (who are not on Medicaid) and determine their eligibility for in-home services. Services can include, home-delivered meals, access to borough-based agencies that offer assistance with bathing and dressing, housekeeping, counseling on long-term care issues and access to the Friendly Visiting Program.

Case managers are free but expect to be asked to make a donation to the agency assisting you.

Caregiver support: caregivers are supported in a number of ways:

- Information and referrals
- Long-term care planning
- Support groups
- Counseling
- Training
- Respite care
- Financial assistance for some types of assistive devices (medical alert systems, limited home modifications, and caregiving supplies)

Transport: (not Access-a-Ride) Transportation services are available for essential medical and social service appointments for people age 60 and older who lack access to transportation or cannot use public transportation. This service is provided by community-based organizations funded by DFTA.

Older Adult Workforce Programs: Supporting New Yorkers who are unemployed or underemployed to find new job opportunities. Programs include:

- **Older Adult Employment Program:** provides training and assistance to older low-income NYers in securing a variety of employment opportunities through training and internships.
- **Silver Corps:** provides older adults with volunteer assignments at a partner organization, training, and/or credentialing to secure employment.

- **Silver Stars:** offers retired New York City civil servants part-time, temporary work assignments, where they can apply their skills and experience to continue serving the city.

Geriatric Mental Health: DFTA provides mental health services in local communities by placing licensed health clinicians at older adult centers in all five boroughs. Services are also offered in-person, virtually or telephonically.

Legal Support: DFTA contracts with local legal organizations to provide free legal services to older adults. Services include help with public benefits, long-term care issues, consumer and landlord-tenant issues. Tenancy and Eviction Support Services (TESS): Free legal assistance can be provided if older adult is referred by a judge.

Elder Justice: Abuse committed by someone an older person knows and trusts is called "elder abuse." Elder abuse can be financial, physical, emotional, and include neglect (withholding food and medication, abandonment) DFTA partners with a community-based program in each borough to provide elder abuse victims with crisis intervention and safety planning.

Grandparents Resource Center: Provides:

- Workshops on legal issues, benefits and entitlements, nutrition, budgeting, and other topics
- Referrals and information
- Peer support groups and guidance on starting individual groups
- Expanded outreach at Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety sites
- Parenting a Second Time Around classes
- "Grandparent sensitivity training" for professionals

Foster Grandparent Program: is a volunteer-based program that offers NYERS age 55+ who meet income eligibility requirements a paid non-taxable stipend to serve as mentors, tutors, and emotional support for children and youth with special and exceptional needs.

- Volunteers serve a minimum of 15 hours per week
- Volunteers are placed in a variety of community settings, such as Head Start Programs, day care centers, schools, hospitals and, family courts.

Aging Connect: is DFTA's information and referral contact center for older adults and their families. Callers are referred to resources, services and opportunities in their community. These include information about health services such as Medicare, Medicaid or Epic. Special initiatives such as Farmer's Markets, food coupons, etc.

They can be reached at 212-AGING-NYC (212-244-6469)

Volunteer Program: DFTA, in partnership with NYC Service, has a Volunteer Program that recruits, trains and hosts individuals who are interested in learning about Aging services.

The program has many community partners across the city looking for individuals who want to give back to their communities. From pantries to resource fairs, volunteers are matched with opportunities that are fun, meaningful, and engaging.

The Volunteer Program includes Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program (HIICAP), Health Promotion, Friendly Programs, and Foster Grandparent Program. There are also opportunities to volunteer for NYC Aging special initiatives. To sign up go to the DFTA Volunteer Portal.

Presentation: Bob Croghan, president of OSA spoke to the group. The OSA Welfare Fund will still be available to retired OSA members who waive NYC health benefits. Some people will waive benefits rather than become members of the Aetna Medicare Advantage Plan. Welfare Fund benefits include vision, dental, life insurance.

It is currently unclear how the Aetna Medicare Advantage plan will impact the costs to the Superimposed Major Medical program. For now, those waiving NYC Health Benefits will be covered by SMMP. Changes may be made later.

Discussion included remarks about the Davis Vision plan having fewer eyeglass frames to choose from in recent times. Davis was once a small NYC-based company but was sold to a national company, so there have been some changes. OSA will monitor how things are progressing.

The hospital rider has been incorporated into the Aetna Medicare Advantage Plan.

Discussion: Ideas were discussed for speakers for next year's meetings.