

Benzie Senior Resources

Facility Benchmarking Visit Summary

Facility Needs Assessment Taskforce
1-6-2023

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Benzie Senior Resources Facility Benchmarking Visit Summary - December 2022

Overview

The BSR Governance Committee established a Facility Needs Assessment Taskforce to begin an assessment of the current and future facility needs for Benzie Senior Resources. The assessment process began with Doug Durand, Executive Director for Benzie Senior Resources, identifying several senior center facilities that he suggested should be benchmarked to develop an understanding of how other center's facilities meet the needs of their area seniors.

The Facility Needs Taskforce membership currently consists of:

- Nancy Mullen Call – BSR Board President and Board Member
- Victor Dinsmoore – BSR Board Treasurer and Board Member
- Leo Hughes – BSR Board Secretary and Board Member
- Michael Call – Community Member
- Susie Hughes – Community Member
- Doug Durand – BSR Executive Director

The following senior centers were visited:

- Charlevoix Senior Center, Charlevoix, MI
 - Retired elementary school under renovation being shared with Charlevoix County offices
- East Jordan Senior Center, East Jordan, MI
 - Community Center concept based in a leased portion of an East Jordan school facility
- Friendship Center, Petoskey, MI
 - Purpose built building
- Isabella County Commission on Aging, Mt. Pleasant, MI
 - Purpose built building
- The Wagoner Community Center, Manistee, MI
 - Retired Catholic Church under renovation currently

Each visit included a tour of the facility with the taskforce team members asking a series of questions regarding the services offered and the functions performed within the building to help us better understand what and how each organization meets the needs of their senior population. With the knowledge gained and following the long-accepted axiom of “form follows function” we can better evaluate what we offer to our seniors and how best to utilize our current facility as well as assess our future facility needs.

Finally, we want to extend a special thank you to the following individuals and their teams for hosting our visit and being very open to sharing their insights...

- ★ Jennifer Crawford, Director, Isabella County Commission on Aging, and her entire team
- ★ Sarah Howard, Executive Director, Manistee County Council on Aging and her entire team
- ★ Marcy Huntoon, Activity Center & Fitness Program Manager, Isabella County Commission on Aging
- ★ Denneen Smith, Executive Director, Emmet County Council on Aging, and her entire team
- ★ Amy Wieland, Executive Director, Charlevoix Commission on Aging, and her entire team

Notes from our facility visit: Charlevoix, Amy Wieland, 12-5-22

What services are offered at the center and by the COA with which it's affiliated?

- Developing (construction IN PROCESS) a community center.
- Large, divisible gym for Pickleball, indoor corn hole, indoor walking etc.
- Congregate meals at Charlevoix, East Jordan & Boyne City. Beaver Island has no congregate meals, but restaurant vouchers avail for County Residents 60+.
- Congregate meals have a unique Hot entrée daily and a unique cold entrée option weekly
- Hiking snowshoe XC trails on property.
- Home Delivered Meals.
- Foot Care - ultimately will use one classroom for foot care, 2 offices and a coat room. This room (as with many others) will have direct outside access and handicap parking nearby.
- Outside grilling sometimes when weather is nice - maybe in conjunction with a baseball game or other event on the big/72" screen TVs.
- Large TVs and streaming technology now being used to stream activities to the other centers - so all can participate "Use technology as well as teach it."
- Missing man table at all congregate centers - recognizes lots of missing people and list always grows.
- A monthly Ice Cream Social to celebrate birthdays, anniversary, "all the good stuff" - sometimes sponsored by an outside organization or Business.
- Monthly Veterans Social at all congregate centers - free meal+ for all veterans (honors people and helps introduce new people to the Center).
- County Veterans Affairs Office is co-located in the Charlevoix facility
- New building will enable them to serve more seniors, including Curbside meal pickup for those still working.
- Travel Club - 1 time per month a trip, where transportation is provided, to a fun place. Could be TC, Music House, dining out or any number of things. (Participants pay their own expenses). Idea is to encourage SOCIALIZATION.
- COA pays for any senior to take the public transportation in the County and they pay for medical transport.
- One evening activity per week (May – Oct) a nice dinner, usually with music. Volunteer entertainers and she'll pay their mileage. If no musicians, Karaoke, or canned music. Typically, well attended (125 people) and a substitute for the mid-day meal.
- Full list of services on their web site.

How large is your facility and does it meet your current needs?

- Facility was a large elementary school built in 1969
- County purchased the school (the down payment of \$400k came from Charlevoix COA)
- County is paying for the balance of the building.
- County and COA worked with the same remodel architect
- The COA is funding 100% of their remodeling cost (estimated to be \$1-2mil over the next 9 years)
- The building is allocated approximately 1/3 for senior center and 2/3 for County departments.
- Being renovated to accommodate growing senior population.
- Seniors (60+) Currently represent 34% of the Charlevoix County population
- Dining room will be able to seat 125
- 19-acre property.
- Currently adding AC and rearranging heating to fit remodel

How many seniors visit your location daily?

- It varies depending on the time of the year, activities and meal scheduled. Range is anywhere from 10 – 125.

What is your average weekly volume of home delivered meals?

- 300

Does the community have access to your facility during off hours?

- Being developed as a community center. Senior center usage 7am-5pm Mon - Fri.
- Available for community use after (gym etc.) Specific senior areas avail to others only with Amy's permission.
- County controls other organization's usage. Administrative Assistant to County Administrator controls the calendar.

What other Community organizations use your facility, if any?

- Service Clubs meet here - can partake of mid-day meal (@ \$8 if not a senior) and this introduces people to the facility.
- All county services, except court, will ultimately occupy this building. CONVENIENT FOR SENIORS!
- Veterans Affairs
- Having a school or day care IN the building is a very positive arrangement.

What are your days & hours of operation?

- 8am - 4pm Mon - Fri.

Does anyone use the facility on weekends?

- Totally up to the County - Amy doesn't have to deal with this.

How are their operations funded?

- 98% senior millage.
- They budgeted, over 17 years, for some millage money to be earmarked as a down payment on a facility. They paid \$400,000 as a down payment and are funding renovation of the Senior section of the building. Amy hopes to keep renovations under 2MM. School has good bones.
- A new roof will likely be needed in the foreseeable future
- She says there are grant funds available for rehabbing facilities BUT be aware of the strings and reporting requirements if you go this route. Time consuming and can be limiting.
- Senior Center won't have to pay utilities, though the COA offices will participate in the County utility cost split.
- Senior Center pays no rent to the County for use of the facility.
- No additional fund raising necessary at this time.

If a capital campaign was launched to build or re-purpose the Center, what was the process and what resources were engaged to plan/execute the fundraising?

- Amy really appreciates that she does NOT have to fundraise.

Are they consciously working to engage younger seniors, and if so, how are they doing this?

- Yes. Things like Pickleball in the gym, snowshoeing hikes/birding/paddle boarding & nature hikes outings offered THROUGH a partnership with the Little Traverse Conservancy.
- COA will pay for an individual's Conservancy membership (\$1/year), so that the senior can participate in that organization's activities for free.

What are their biggest challenges?

- STAFFING!

If multiple groups utilize the facility, as in a community center, who oversees/manages the overall operations and scheduling?

- County's Administrative Assistant for the County Administrator oversees all non-COA activity at the center.

Programs involving kids or young adults?

- Court School (with separate entrance) is housed in the Center and ZERO problems. Kids interact with seniors in various ways. Good for all involved.

Vision for the facility

- Amy handpicked a visioning advisory group to tour and then develop the plan for the facility. It included people she respected and trusted: a "new facility" advocate and an opponent, younger senior, community member, etc. This group helped fashion the ultimate plan for the Center. Critical to get people invested Pre-finalization of the Vision. They then surveyed the participants at the Centers. EVERY COMMUNITY IS DIFFERENT - YOU NEED TO IDENTIFY WHAT THAT COMMUNITY WANTS.
- Center will have:
 - Welcome area with TVs & couches
 - Coffee Bar
 - Ping pong, pool table, foosball
 - Spaces for games & cards - Mahjong is big (whereas East Jordan is big on Texas Hold'em)
 - Computer bank
 - Library
 - Conference room
 - Activity rooms
 - New dining area with sky lights (blowing out an exterior wall) to seat 125
- She was able to say "YES" a lot when people envisioned whether the center could offer things like Pickleball, tours, exercise programs, etc.
- Plan to have a Center garden - good for "senior farmers", crafters using the flowers, growing produce and herbs for the kitchen, etc. Will utilize trustees from the jail (they have a garden) to help develop the Center's Garden.
- Veterans Affairs Office (not part of the Senior Center, but close by in the same building)
- Political winds can change directions. You need to involve your constituents in the visioning process, stay consistent and fight for your plan.

Building Notes

- Structure built in 1969 as an elementary school
- Opened as Senior Center April 2021
- Food Service - plan enough room for wheelchairs and caregivers.
- Built a REAL commercial kitchen (same size as original school kitchen) & did only curbside during construction, with food prepared at the other locations.
- She demonstrated that you CAN operate while under construction (lots of moving parts). In a building with multiple rooms, you can ISOLATE some of the cutting & sawing mess.
- Lots of exits (because it was a former school), therefore great access to multiple services.
- There will be County-organized security procedures in the building.
- Gyms are TOO loud for activities other than sports related!
- Each of the Centers (except Beaver Island) have their own kitchen for HDM and congregate meals.
- Included in renovation - offices for key staff and cubicles for others, like the HHA who need to do paperwork.
- Staff break area with bathrooms/kitchenette, storage & outside access.
- Lockers in the building will be available for seniors to “reserve” for in-process project storage.
- Playground equip. and soccer field will remain - it’s a community center.
- Old library is the new Commissioner’s Room with plenty of public space. Also have a smaller conference room.
- Washer/dryer off kitchen.
- One of the classrooms divided into 2 offices and 1 conference room.

Staffing

- With an operation the size of theirs you must have an Assistant Director who deals with the day to day and operations, and a Director (County department head) who can be forward thinking, and handling marketing, development of new alliances & programs, and connecting with and speaking to the community.
- Part time hiring very difficult (and she fought for more money for those workers), and she has gone to more full-time people with benefits.
- Charlevoix County has about 25 staff including:
 - Executive Director (Amy has been there approximately 6 years)
 - Assistant Director has also been there 6 years
 - Office Manager (billing/mail/HDM routes)
 - D-Base person (including mailing/travel club/backup)
 - MAPP person (including volunteer coordination & keeping fleet clean)
 - Food Service Manager
 - 2 nurses (when one retires, she’ll probably replace with a social worker)
 - Full time Cook
 - Need a part time Cook
 - Note: they have Volunteers working in the kitchen

Other miscellaneous notes

- DON'T CALL IT A SENIOR CENTER. SOUNDS OLD!! Once completed, they will have participants help select the official name.
- Volunteers - are a good pool from which to draw future employees.
- Charlevoix uses volunteers for food prep in the kitchen.
- They have 2 HDM delivery vehicles, and via reservation, can use County vehicles. Sometimes they even have County employees deliver meals.
- They have increased # of people served by 25% per year over the past 5 years.
- You must develop a good, solid relationship with the County based upon "truth and reality"
- Volunteer recruitment: She speaks a lot in the community - service groups, women's fellowship groups, etc.
- She grew up in the community, so lots of folks know her and see her as a go to.
- "When you turn 60, the COA should be your first call!"
- To give a new program a chance, you must offer it multiple times, even when nobody shows up the first time offered.
- She participated in Leadership Charlevoix County.
- "Take the Center out into the community" - like offering curbside that people can pick up and take elsewhere to eat.
- No Board of Directors, just an appointed Advisory Board of 9, and each center has its own advisory group pulled from attendees.
- They pay \$900 per month for insertion of their 4-page newsletter into the local weekly paper. She writes and lays out the whole thing and sends the PDF to the paper.
- She handles all the Grant reporting/writing.
- Snow Removal Program: Senior completes and app and provides financial info. They use the DHHS fee scale to qualify people. Lowest income people can get 5 \$40 vouchers, highest income people can get 1 voucher. Client can engage ANYONE they want to plow or shovel. Worker must complete a W9. Voucher gets stapled to bill & client must pay the difference. Worker can then submit the voucher(s) to the County and get \$40 per voucher.
- Think outside the box! Recently "pumpkin bowling in the hall with blow-up pins".
- "Make your Center like Florida" - everything you need in one place.
- 35% of Charlevoix population is 60+.
- Re: their programs - she would like to divest their COA of the Personal Care (for which they require a CENA). Says that private companies can bill Medicare and get more money for the services. So, she can't compete with this and doesn't want to compete with private enterprise. However, she feels she must keep the homemaker program BECAUSE they have to provide County pay and benefits in order to get people. She doesn't believe the homemaker services could be provided in another way.

Notes from our facility visit: East Jordan, Amy Wieland, 12-5-22

What services are offered at the center and by the COA with which it's affiliated?

- This is a Middle School building that also houses the Senior Center (a satellite of the Charlevoix Center). In operation now about 6 years.
- Home Delivered Meals.
- Congregate meals.
- Lots of non-seniors (including working folks) come just for the lunch @ \$8 - best deal around.
- One room for crafting AND exercise - appointed hours for each.
- Old library now houses computer lab, book nook, piano, pool table. Just starting tech outreach for seniors - hoping to engage county library staff to teach classes.
- Full list of services on their web site.
- Surveyed community to better understand the senior needs in the area.

How large is your facility and does it meet your current needs?

- Yes

How many seniors visit your location daily?

- 50 - 80 lunches per day + curbside pickup.

What is your average weekly volume of home delivered meals?

- 70

Does the community have access to your facility during off hours?

- COA leases space from the county, and the building is shared with the middle school. COA has no responsibilities for building usage beyond their scope in the rest of the building. Their part is totally locked down when they are closed, though some activities (Girls Scout, Brownies use the space on occasion and help decorate the senior space).

What other Community organizations use your facility, if any?

- Unknown as they rent the location from the school.

What are your days & hours of operation?

- 9am - 2pm Mon - Fri

Does anyone use the facility on weekends?

- No

How are their operations funded?

- They do receive LOW-COST products through MANNA - a USDA program in Antrim, Charlevoix & Emmet County

If a capital campaign was launched to build or re-purpose the Center, what was the process and what resources were engaged to plan/execute the fundraising?

Are they consciously working to engage younger seniors, and if so, how are they doing this?

- Yes, through marketing, targeted activities and programs, surveys on what is needed and wanted.

What are their biggest challenges?

- STAFFING.

If multiple groups utilize the facility, as in a community center, who oversees/manages the overall operations and scheduling?

Programs involving kids or young adults?

- At East Jordan there is interaction between middle school kids and seniors. Example - kids decorating the dining area for benefit of the seniors.

Other miscellaneous notes

- They had 2 different groups (Landscaper & Builder) come to them and ASK how they could partner/help/volunteer. One ended up doing lawn chores for the neediest clients, the other signed up to do repairs where most needed at senior homes.
- Their crafting group makes quilts and sells them. Half the proceeds go to Toys for Tots (great community connection and outreach) the other 1/2 goes to the Center.
- Volunteers working in the kitchen MUST be supervised by a certified person.
- Interconnection example: Occasionally offer seniors who choose to eat lunch at the facility discounted local movie tickets.

Notes from our facility visit: Emmet County, Denneen Smith, 12-6-22

What services are offered at the center and by the COA with which it's affiliated?

- Nice, welcoming entry area with seating. Two bulletin boards - one strictly for their activity flyers and the other for flyers regarding area events. (They decide what gets posted and they keep it neat & fresh.)
- No brochure/business card area, so they don't have to maintain, or update this kind of stuff. Instead, they maintain a resource BOOK and they have the OPTI-SIGN app (very inexpensive) that cycles on the lobby TV. Content reflects the items they want to feature.
- HDM - 4 routes serving approx. 140 people per day. Paid staff drive and all 6 program SUV vehicles obtained through local-type grants (written by Marketing/Fund Dev person, at 30 hrs./wk.).
- Congregate meals
- All meals made in their commercial kitchen.
- All durable medical equip. is stored in Shed "A". Equipment is donated by people, then sanitized and stored. Shed is open during the day and the public can help themselves to items with NO help from staff. No warranties on condition, no assistance... no liability.
- Health Care wing with Foot clinic and offices. VERY COOL! Really nice "portable" opaque glass walls create the offices. Very efficient/orderly use of a small space.
- Foot Care is \$20 for in-county residents and \$23 for out. Going up slightly in January.
- Cozy, carpeted library (a favorite space and people prefer to the public library cause easy parking).
- Carpeted game/cards room. Hard surface floors are too noisy!
- Nice, bright activity room for table tennis, yoga, cardio drumming, Wii bowling (declining), etc.
- Activity room opens to dining space creating more seating for special meals.
- Activities seniors want to participate in change over time and since Covid, some of the older folks have dropped out (moved, aged out), being replaced by the 60 -70-year-old crowd.
- Dining area is lovely with bright, big windows. She wrote a grant (Great Lakes Peoples Fund) for needed solar blinds for summer heat and intense light. Also wrote a grant for a new buffet line.
- Dining area has oval collapsible tables - very nice, hands-free beverage dispensers and adjacent bathrooms.
- Couple times per month, all you can eat soup & salad for lunch - popular.
- Outside dining patio off the dining room not very popular - not "temperature controlled" like inside and street noise is a deterrent
- Outside activities don't seem popular. Had shuffleboard but no one ever used it.
- Full services listing on web site.

How large is your facility and does it meet your current needs?

- Purpose built in 1999 - donor funded. "Small - 8400 sq. Ft" - Denneen has been on a mission to declutter, purge, organize and maximize the use of every space. Extremely well organized.
- Key fobs for staff. Locks can be interrogated. Only front entrance available to non-staff.
- Denneen's office is right behind reception area (manned by Exec. Assistant). Denneen insists on it there - so she can hear everything happening, though she isn't visible. Believes this is critical.
- Some offices are shared by necessity.
- Small copy/server room
- Small staff break room and a very small maintenance person office
- Small satellite center in Brutus open 10-2 M-F and that's enough. Building donated, but COA paid for its renovation. Meals for Brutus prepared at Petoskey Center. Some activities offered at Brutus Center.

How large is your facility and does it meet your current needs? (Continued from prior page)

- Bus garage (built 2003 or 2006) adjacent to Petoskey Center. Garage facility and 5 busses (equipped with lifts and for senior transport only) funded by MDOT. Washing unit in garage plus 2 offices. Very neat/efficient storage for max facility utilization.
- Shed "B" - storage for maintenance equip - mowers and such

How many seniors visit your location daily?

- 40-60 congregate meals served daily. Numbers increasing, but pre-Covid 60 – 75 meals were being served.

What is your average weekly volume of home delivered meals?

- Average 140 HDM per day.

Does the community have access to your facility during off hours?

- No, unless special arrangements are made with a staff person in attendance.

What other Community organizations use your facility, if any?

- The RSVP office (Retired Senior Volunteer Program funded by a state grant) is in the building

What are your days & hours of operation?

- 8-4:00 M-F
- 10-2 M-F at Brutus Satellite Center

Does anyone use the facility on weekends?

- No

How are their operations funded?

- Budget is 2.9MM per year.
- 58 - 70% via Senior Millage and they get (as of now) 90% of those monies. County Commission looked at allocating more of the millage for other orgs, but seniors caught wind of this and fought for their Center.
- Seems like lots of grant writing - many small/local grants for things like HDM vehicles, tables, etc.
- Fee for Services, like foot care clinic
- Congregate meal donations
- MDOT funded busses & bus garage.

If a capital campaign was launched to build or re-purpose the Center, what was the process and what resources were engaged to plan/execute the fundraising?

- 2009 (before Denneen's time) a capital campaign was launched for expansion, and it raised \$200,000.
- They are still looking at doing an expansion utilizing the CARES and Capital Campaign funds but have not begun.
- They are expecting to receive \$500,000 in CARES Act funding for expansion.

Are they consciously working to engage younger seniors, and if so, how are they doing this?

What are their biggest challenges?

If multiple groups utilize the facility, as in a community center, who oversees/manages the overall operations and scheduling?

Programs involving kids or young adults?

Staffing

- 37 staff (14 full time) and everyone is “all in” to promote the Center and its programs.
- Director
- No Asst Director BUT the Receptionist is WAY MORE than that, so now she’s the Executive Assistant and very helpful to Denneen.
- Full time HR person
- Full time Maintenance person
- 30 hrs./wk. Marketing & Fund Dev person (position used to be 37 hours, but budget cuts had been anticipated, so she got cut back.)
- Nurse Staff Administrator - coordinates all home health aides, respite care, etc.
- Social worker 3 days/wk. (wishes she had her for 4) who handles the MAPP program. Young (23) and people love her.
- Some volunteers help in preparing meals, as greeter/sign-in people, and as facilitators to get Center attendees to fill out the NAPIS Forms.

Other miscellaneous notes

- Denneen started 2017 - Juvenile Probation offer prior to that
- Vaccines and masks were a HOT political issue. Ultimately she did what she thought best, and some were not pleased.
- Newspaper-sized newsletter created once per month and inserted into the local paper (circulation about 12,500). Marketing & Fund Dev person writes it and lays it out. Cost is \$1500 per month.
- Newsletter also mailed out with \$10 per year subscription or with a \$20 donation.
- Some cumbersome things about their purpose-built building, like hallways too wide - wasted space, some kitchen flow issues, etc. Staff was NOT tapped for input in the visioning process and they felt they should have been.
- Denneen very collaborative and involved with her staff & program directors.
- Board of Directors has 7 seats. Currently have 6 and she’s happy with that. Board includes 2 attorneys. Terms are 2-year, and a director can serve up to 3 consecutive terms.
- We asked about how to build the board. She said she does not advertise. They seek out the right people, and she interviews them. They have applicants fill out an app, they provide them with all the background (lots of info including Board member responsibilities) and those that get through this and are interested are candidates.
- Their Center went through re-branding: Name is Friendship Center. The colors and font were updated to be more current.
- County would like her to take ALL county transportation under her wing. She has really resisted this - current prog is M-F, 8-4:30, only within the county. Seniors and disabled only. They have special needs and take way more time & support to transport.
- Advertising (stickers) for the side of the busses sold to local businesses.
- Denneen would prefer to remain a non-profit, versus a county department. County Board of Commissioners members rotate in & out, which can significantly change the landscape. She knows it’s critical to build and maintain strong ties to that organization.
- Denneen says she hopes her legacy will be to tighten up the millage language to assure ongoing, stable funding for the Centers. Avenue for this is through the senior constituents.

Notes from our facility visit: Isabella County, Jennifer Crawford, 12-12-22

What services are offered at the center and by the COA with which it's affiliated?

- Case Management/intake
- Homemaking
- Personal care
- Respite care
- NOTE: staff use their own vehicles to deliver in-home services
- Caregiver training program
- Unmet Needs (like our Essential Needs Program)
- Medicare/Medicaid insurance review and assistance - handled by volunteers
- HDM - 150 - 200 per day THREE days/week, plus frozen meals for Tues & Thurs. Volunteer drivers using their own vehicles with mileage reimbursement. Suggested meal donation: \$2.50
- Welcoming, well organized Center entry/lobby with seating & 2 volunteer receptionists.
- My Senior Center computerized, self-help check-in. NOTE: This system can be used to make robo-calls to subgroups, and other functionality which they are not fully utilizing.
- Cozy, carpeted library. County library rotates books in & out (honor system checkout from the center), caregiver resources avail & shelves for other reference materials - brochures, etc.
- Computer lab with 5 computers and 1 printer. About 1 x per month, volunteers from local library come in to teach computer skills.
- Pool table/TV room - decorated in "guy" style, very cozy, warm and inviting
- Arts/Crafts room - very versatile. Used for various music groups (dulcimer, ukulele, etc.) quilting, crafts, meetings for outside groups, etc. Craft groups make stuff to donate to area groups like medical care facility/etc.
- Fitness room and men's/women's locker rooms. Lots of programs - Zumba, yoga, etc. Classes can be in person or remote. They got comfortable, during covid, offering many things via zoom. Some classes taught by paid instructors, but many activities are groups just using the space - no charge for use of space.
- Swimming pool programs offered at and in conjunction with CMU.
- Loan closet for donated medical equipment. People can sign out equip and sign a "no liability for the COA" waiver.
- Tax prep assistance - handled by volunteers
- BIG lunchroom serves 20 - 50 per day. 24-hour advance reservation requested for meals (works well). Calls come into center, get routed to a particular extension and volunteers access the meal reservation information. Suggested donation: \$2.50, or \$5 for non-seniors. Room is also used for things like Bingo, line dancing, movies, cards, etc.
- Special events like craft fairs and health fairs
- In the process of adding an outdoor pavilion and pickle ball. Have a 1/3-mile paved walking track and an outdoor exercise station area.
- Transportation: medical & grocery shopping transport offered by screened volunteers using their own cars with milage reimbursement. 48-hour advance reservation requested.
- General Transportation provided by Isabella County Transport - NOT affiliated with the Center.
- Full list of programs available on web site.

How large is your facility and does it meet your current needs?

- Purpose built building in 2008. Now debt free.
- Jen provided the building floorplan to Leo via email.
- Most rooms carpeted, except dining, fitness and crafts area.
- Security cameras
- Electronic locking system enables them to lock off certain areas, set building exterior doors to lock at a pre-set time.
- 4 satellite facilities operate from 10-2 three days/wk. with a meal (delivered from main center by contracted delivery people) and a pre and post meal activity. Staff person from the main Center in attendance for these meals, and a minimal rental paid to the facilities which include: a church, a library, a community building, and an assisted living facility.
- Building wish list: More storage everywhere including the medical equipment storeroom & bigger fitness center.
- Sizable administrative wing.
- Phone system with VM boxes set up for particular functions (like reserving for a meal). Enables calls to be routed to a mailbox that can be handled by volunteers, rather than having everything funnel through staff VM boxes.

How many seniors visit your location daily?

What is your average weekly volume of home delivered meals?

- 1000

How many HDM vehicles to you have and how do you fund replacements?

- They have NO HDM vehicles. Volunteers use their vehicles & get mileage reimbursement. Some volunteers donate back their mileage money. Center has only 1 vehicle - used in various ways.

Does the community have access to your facility during off hours?

- Yes. Since they have security cameras and can lock off certain areas & auto lock the building at a certain time, they do allow other groups to use after hours without staff supervision or presence. The Activity Coordinator (Marcy, who took us on much of the tour) handles all space reservations.

What other Community organizations use your facility, if any?

- Local non-profits and governmental groups including the Board of Commissioners for their meetings.

What are your days & hours of operation?

- M - F, 8-4:30. M/W/F 10-2 at satellite operations

Does anyone use the facility on weekends?

- Could be by reservation through Marcy

What are your staffing levels (Full time/Part time)?

- Promotion from within when talent is there
- 300 volunteers
- 36 staff total
- Director - reports to County Administrator
- 5 Program Managers - all report to the Director
 - Activities
 - Nutrition
 - Volunteer Program Coordinator
 - Foster Grand Parent/Senior Companion Coordinator (with 2 people under her)
 - In-home Care Coordinator (with 4 case managers and a caregiver trainer for clients under her)
- 1 full time Home Health person and 4 part time
- 1 full time Homemaker person and 4 part time
- Unpaid interns regularly used - some even work full time for a year. CMU an excellent source of talent.
- Gold-Key Volunteer Program offers a wide range of volunteer opportunities, among them: HDM drivers, lawn care help in the fall, shoppers, meal prep - packaging things/serving line, receptionists, etc. Volunteers also drawn from CMU and from local schools (School age kids require more supervision/direction than the adults).
- Regarding CMU: You need to develop relationships with the instructors - a good conduit to enlist volunteers over time.
- No contractors. No program for lawn work except some volunteer work in the fall, no snow removal.

Assistant Director?

- No

Marketing/Fundraising Manager?

- No.

Other Key Positions?**How are your operations funded: Senior Millage, Grants, Donations, etc.?**

- Building construction and ongoing operations funded largely from senior millage. Annual budget - 3MM, about half from millage plus generous Tribe grants, state & federal programs and a few other sources. Tribal grants from their 2% program have contributed 9MM since 1995. Tribal monies go exclusively towards programs, no admin.

If a capital campaign was launched to build or re-purpose the Center, what was the process and what resources were engaged to plan/execute the fundraising? County/State/Federal Grants?**Are you consciously working to engage younger seniors, and if so, how are you doing this?**

- They try to reach out to new seniors with fun programs like karaoke and dancing (ditch the Senior Center image!) and via programs of interest to them like Medicare assistance & AARP Tax prep assistance.

What are your biggest challenges?

- Staffing. They are a County Commission, so subject to County pay scale. Not great pay but good benefits.

If multiple groups utilize the facility, as in a community center, who oversees/manages the overall operations and scheduling?

- Activities Manager, Marcy, handles all scheduling

Other miscellaneous notes

- FED rate mileage reimbursement for all programs where personal cars are used.
- Newspaper style newsletter printed monthly. 4000 copies with 3500 mailed. No newspaper insertion. Annual donation requested of \$20.
- “Friends of Isabella Seniors” is an affiliated non-profit that helps fundraise. Less regulated entity. They are involved with an annual golf outing and cover some of the cost of the newsletter production and distribution.
- No Board of Directors, but a non-governing Advisory Board. Meets 1 time per month. Jen updates them, they can provide input. 9 positions, currently 7 people - appointed by the County Commissioners. \$25 per diem for meeting attended.
- Promotion of Commission via paid and earned radio & newspaper, newsletter, church bulletins, word of mouth, etc. Jen and all 5 managers go out and talk to community groups and promote the COA.
- All 5 managers work to get interns. Interns are exposed to all the different departments and often turn into employees. Don’t take on too many at a time, or you’re trying to keep them busy.
- Volunteer recruitment: the managers go around and recruit, Facebook, they host a Volunteer Expo each year and invite other organizations to participate. Lots of outreach into the community and promo through the media as possible. They target new retirees for recruiting new volunteers.

Notes from our facility visit: Manistee County, Sarah Howard, 12-16-22

What services are offered at the center and by the COA with which it's affiliated?

- Home Delivered Meals – November congregate total was 630 meals and 4,492 HDM meals. Oliver Tray-type meals provided 5 x per week, prepared by contracted staff at the school. This is only their second year doing HDM. They have 8 HDM routes. 3 paid part time drivers + volunteer drivers. Personal vehicles with mileage reimbursement (currently at \$.62 per mile, but about to go back down with lowering gas prices). Using the Sharkbite “Care Advantage” computer program to administer HDM. (Compatible with AAA). Not a very user-friendly program.
- Congregate meals - 5 x/week at Center and 1,2 or 3 days at 5 satellites (Oneskama, Wellston, Arcadia, Kaleva, Marilla) all by reservation which is working well. Prepared by the school and sent to the meal sites in bulk (not trayed). Note: Sarah only manages the meal portion and those who volunteer for meals. They are run by volunteers and Sarah meets with them regularly and helps by providing things like food for produce bingo, party supplies for events, musical equip, etc.
- Food Bank - 1 Friday/month. Serves 270 people/mo. Non-perishables PLUS they have Meijer food/gift cards for perishables.
- Reimbursement Program for chore services: homemaking, lawn, snow removal & Dial-a-Ride. Max monthly reimbursement of \$40/ total per client. Note: Sarah feels they are reaching far more seniors than before (approximately 400 clients), by changing to this format.
- No in-home health services other than minimal medication management managed by a part-time nurse.
- In facility: crafts, music, multiple fitness programs, MMAP assistance, etc. - comprehensive list on web site. Note: ANYONE/any age can participate in activities, and usually non-seniors make a donation.
- Periodic evening dinners (catered) followed by entertainment. Great way to introduce new people and events pay for themselves. Charge: \$15 pp
- Very spacious, welcoming main room (former church sanctuary)
- 2 libraries - one lending library to which books are donated, the other a room they are renovating (with carpet) to house a branch of the public library with rotating books and library staff taught classes (computer classes, etc.)
- Large multipurpose room being renovated. Will be divisible.
- Commercial kitchen being built - will be available to others, like the Farmer’s Market to make jams/etc.
- Maker (craft) space and a wood shop in the process of being constructed within the Center.
- Durable Medical equipment storage & Loan program

How large is your facility and does it meet your current needs?

- 26,000 sq. ft. building on 13 acres. Built as a Catholic Church in 1962. The building was closed for 5 years and then gifted to the Council in 2020. Began using this facility 1.5 years ago. Property (land) is one block from Lake Michigan.

How many seniors visit your location daily?

What is your average weekly volume of home delivered meals?

- 89 people

How many HDM vehicles to you have and how do you fund replacements?

- COA has only one vehicle for all purposes. Sarah would like to get a couple more vehicles.

Does the community have access to your facility during off hours?

- Non-profit groups sometimes use the building after hours. (For instance, the County Library uses it for evening functions.) Keys are given to the responsible party. Staff not always in attendance after hours.

What other Community organizations use your facility, if any?

- The VA and Northwest Michigan Health Services have offices at the Center (No charge or rent?).
- Centra Wellness rents space.
- Any non-profit in the county can use it free but donations are normal.
- Center used as a polling place - great exposure for the building & program.

What are your days & hours of operation?

- 8-4:30 M-F at the Wagoner Center. Satellites open for lunch (and activities?) on certain days.

Does anyone use the facility on weekends?

- A non-profit could, by arrangement. Sometimes the Center has weekend actives too. They rent out the building for evening and weekend gatherings.

What are your staffing levels (Full time/Part time)?

- Wagoner Center: FT Director, FT Admin Assistant/Assistant Dir, FT Building Maintenance & Programs person, 1 PT nurse and 2 PT receptionists.
- HDM Program: 30 hours per week Program Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator at 24 hours per week and nurse for assessments at 10 hours per week and 3 part time drivers.

Assistant Director?

- FT Admin Assistant/Assistant Dir

Marketing/Fundraising Manager?

- No one specifically in this position. One of her FT employees takes photos, updates FB, does event live streaming on FB and works to get articles/info out to the public. Sarah writes a WEEKLY column that runs free of charge in the Manistee paper. She feels this is a very good way to alert the community to what's going on/available through the COA

Other Key Positions?

How are your operations funded: Senior Millage, Grants, Donations, etc.?

- This is a 501 c3 Council on Aging.
- They do receive a senior millage - approximately \$500,000 per year. All millage money spent on either HDM program, operations, or capital improvements. None towards admin
- Sarah does some grant writing for smaller grants, some board member assistance with grant writing.
- Fund raising for renovations. \$500,000 was raised for a new roof
- 100 Women Who Care - funded new doors
- Working on a capital campaign to help fund renovations - multiple activities like Craft Fair (raised \$6600), concerts, special event dinners with entertainment.
- Various Donations - like from HDM recipients and donated commercial kitchen equip
- Rental of Center (like for weddings and reunions)
- Meijer Simply Give program and Meijer is overall very supportive - works with the COA in multiple ways.

If a capital campaign was launched to build or re-purpose the Center, what was the process and what resources were engaged to plan/execute the fundraising? County/State/Federal Grants?

Are you consciously working to engage younger seniors, and if so, how are you doing this?

- So much of what they offer is handled by volunteers - some are aging out and they need to replace them.
- To engage younger people, it needs to be FUN - like Tiger Baseball outing, Dial-a-Ride to Rosie's for Karaoke and pizza (where people can purchase their own beer, etc.). Have done Mystery trips - ending up at breweries, wineries, the Alpine Slide at Crystal, etc.

What are your biggest challenges?

If multiple groups utilize the facility, as in a community center, who oversees/manages the overall operations and scheduling?

- They have a master calendar and groups planning to utilize space are simply entered into the calendar. Keys given out when appropriate.

Vision for the Center

- Sarah envisions them being a Community Center
- Community Garden where seniors can work the garden, food grown for Food Bank
- Host to Farmers Market (has been done)
- A Resale Shop run by volunteers - Seniors have lots of cool stuff in their possession that could be donated and sold. Her concept would be for 1/2 the proceeds to go back to the donor and 1/2 to the Center.
- A Congregate Meal Program for the Wagoner Center that would utilize a new commercial kitchen and brings in chefs, offers cooking classes, etc. Satellite centers would still utilize the school sourced meals for the HDM program.
- Adult Day Care - Sarah has talked with PACE. She'd like to see them rent space in the Center and provide that service.
- Convert former rectory bathroom into a space where seniors could come in (with their own assistance if needed) to access a roll or step-in tub, maybe massage services, etc.

Other miscellaneous notes

- Sarah is looking forward to having an electronic locking system - feels it's needed.
- HVAC system needs to be renovated
- She feels they need to advocate for affordable senior housing as there is nothing available. Downtown projects now allow for mixed age groups which presents its own problems. Could develop some on their campus. MHSDA is an avenue. GOOD consultants to work with regarding senior housing: Steve Latham & Peter Hughes (she has contact information).
- Renovation Architect is Kendra Thompson
- Sarah wants services provided but the COA doesn't have to provide everything - collaborate and partner, partner, partner!!
- Getting the community engaged and aware of the COA is important. One fun way to bring influencers in is to hold an event like Bingo, using Celebrity Bingo Callers - Example: Sheriff, City Manager, etc.
- People are proud and it's not always easy to get food to those that truly need it. Produce Bingo is a cool way to respectfully fulfill this need, and everyone goes home with something.
- Holiday Gift Bags - this year they asked for money versus stuff (way easier). They then purchased Meijer Gift Cards (that could be used for food, gas, merchandise, etc.). And gave those to the seniors using hand-made cards created by the "Cards & Coffee" crafting group (which is attended by non-seniors too). Meijer is very supportive/community minded, is a good business with whom to partner and card holders get good value there.
- The Tribe has their own Senior Center and contracts directly with the school for HDMs. They serve 80-90 elders a day. They did provide a \$40,000 grant for the parking lot and are generally supportive of the COA. Sarah tries to coordinate/cooperate with them whenever possible.
- Her Board has 7 members from a range of backgrounds (could have 9). Not easy to find board members. Member expertise includes Attorney, Engineer, Property Management, Teachers, and Seniors.
- From Sarah's perspective, HDM is a crucial part of their mission - reaches the people who really need help.
- Very collaborative environment. All staff members are encouraged to initiate program ideas and run with them, once vetted.
- They work with Habitat for Humanity for building ramps for seniors.