

Formerly NJ Foundation for Aging

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(digital photos available)

February Aging Insights TV, “Policies and Perspectives: Age-Friendly Communities”



Trenton, NJ (February 1, 2021) – Approximately 15 communities in New Jersey are designated “Age-Friendly Communities.” Not familiar with the term or concept? Wish your location were more age-friendly? Watch Episode 113 of Aging Insights TV, airing now, to learn about “Policies and Perspectives: Age-Friendly Communities.”

Hosted by Melissa Chalker, Executive Director of NJ Advocates for Aging Well (NJAAW, formerly NJ Foundation for Aging), the show features Amy St. Peter, Deputy Executive Director of Maricopa (AZ) Association of Governments, and Julia Stoumbos, Program Director, Aging in Place, The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation (NJ).

Aging Insights, now in its 10th year, can be viewed on NJAAW’s YouTube channel at youtube.com/c/njadvocatesforagingwell, at njaaw.org and more than 70 public-access TV stations across NJ (check local listings for channels and times).

The Taub Foundation, which has seeded age-friendly projects, states on its website, “Age-Friendly Communities aim to incorporate older residents into all aspects of community life and improve physical environments to promote independence and equity for aging residents, in partnership with municipal, county, and state government, local anchor institutions, and researchers.” Community leaders regularly meet with other age-friendly communities, forming a network that also includes such partner organizations as NJAAW. According to their website, “This alliance seeks to work with municipalities, counties and the state to identify and meet the housing, transportation and social services needs of older adults who want to remain in their homes and communities as they age.”

Amy St. Peter explains that Maricopa Association of Governments is the regional planning agency for the greater Phoenix region. “That means that we’re a Council of Governments as well as a Metropolitan Planning Organization,” she says. “Those two structures are present throughout the country so you have those in New Jersey as well and every state in the country.” She notes that the age-friendly efforts taking place in Arizona “...can be undertaken in a very similar way with partners that you have right in New Jersey as well.”

St. Peter stresses the importance of having a community-driven movement. “If this effort is really driven by the community, then it’s more relevant to the community, it’s more responsive,” she says.

Julia Stoumbos describes the age-friendly movement in New Jersey as “A sort of mindset and structure that applies to communities and helps people to be able to age throughout the lifespan in a place that supports different levels of needs.” Stoumbos explains that age-friendly communities have been in the works in the state since 2016 and more communities are joining the existing ones in New Jersey.

Stoumbos says, “One of the program areas that I’m focused on is aging in place and so the ultimate goal for that work is really to create the kinds of opportunities for people to live their best life and be as independent as possible throughout the lifespan.”

Stoumbos notes that other states have “...all been on this path a little longer than we have and have more of a statewide approach that’s more sustainable. We’re aiming for that and I think it’s something achievable. Starting at this local level has given us ideas of how to move forward.”

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About NJAAW

*NJ Advocates for Aging Well (NJAAW, njaaw.org), formerly NJ Foundation for Aging, has been on the forefront of revolutionizing the aging experience since 1998. It is the only statewide nonprofit focused solely on providing leadership in public policy and education to enable older adults to live with independence and dignity in their communities. NJAAW’s social action issues include senior housing and hunger, elder economic security, older workers and transportation. The award-winning *Aging Insights*, a monthly topical TV program produced by NJAAW, connects caregivers, seniors and their families to community-based services and resources. The show is available on NJAAW’s YouTube channel at youtube.com/c/njadvocatesforagingwell, at njaaw.org and more than 70 public-access stations across NJ (check local listings for channels and times). NJAAW also presents educational forums and an Annual Conference (June 3–4, 2021) offering development opportunities and best practices for professionals entrusted with caring for seniors.*