



Research shows
the majority of older persons wish to age in place among family and friends.



How Can I Become Involved?

Individuals or service groups and organizations can become involved in making the Orange Communities elder friendly and friendly for everyone! Contact Orange Community Education and Recreation at 216-831-8601 for more information or visit our website at www.orangerec.com.

216-831-8601

www.orangerec.com

Orange Community Education & Recreation ■ Orange City Schools ■ 32000 Chagrin Blvd. ■ Pepper Pike, OH 44124



Task Force & Sub-Committee Members

Orange Elder Friendly Communities

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What Makes a Community Elder Friendly?

An elder friendly community is one that ensures its oldest residents feel a sense of safety, belonging and involvement in the community. It assumes a community that values its elders will also be a strong community for all generations. An elder friendly community has critical assets in place that improve lives of older adults and those around them, including:

- sense of personal safety and security at home and in the community
- ease of mobility to get around, within and beyond the community
- needed support and health/medical services are available and located near populations who utilize them
- varied lifelong learning and enrichment opportunities
- retail, business and municipal services in the community meet needs of elders
- affordable housing options matching different lifestyles and age-related needs
- varied recreational, leisure and wellness opportunities
- community and religious organizations that involve and meet needs of elders
- elders involved in the fabric of community's daily life and are respected and valued



**ELDER FRIENDLY
COMMUNITIES
ARE FRIENDLY
FOR EVERYONE!**

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By 2010, the largest segment of America's population will be 65 years of age or older.

The number of Americans over age 65 will more than double between now and the year 2030—from 35 million to over 70 million people. During that same time, the number of Americans age 55 and over will also double growing from 60 million today to over 107 million people. The average American's life span is now 83 years and the likelihood that an American who reaches age 65 will survive to age 90 has risen to 25% in the last 40 years.

As these unprecedented changes take place throughout our country and in our own backyard, communities across America are examining the livability of their neighborhoods for their elders and for all residents, regardless of age.

Cutting edge communities, like those of the Orange School District, are positioning themselves today to pro-actively address the many challenges associated with these incredible changes. This unparalleled opportunity to understand and address current and emerging needs of our communities' senior adults is fundamental to creating elder friendly communities. Read on to learn how our community stakeholders are working together to ensure that our communities are elder friendly and friendly for everyone.

What Is the Orange Elder Friendly Communities Initiative?

In 2005, the Orange Community Education & Recreation department received a \$25,000 Elder Friendly Community grant from The Cleveland Foundation as part of their Successful Aging Initiative. Serving as the lead organization, Orange Community Education & Recreation collaborated with the communities of Hunting Valley, Moreland Hills, Orange, Pepper Pike and Woodmere in this ground-breaking project designed to examine assets and challenges related to our communities' elder friendliness using an assessment

guide developed by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission. As one of six community consortiums chosen by The Cleveland Foundation to participate in this project, our major objectives were (1) to develop and implement an elder friendly community building process that would result in a community-wide strategic plan to enhance elder friendliness; and, (2) to provide feedback to The Cleveland Foundation on our process so it could be shared with and used by other communities.

The largest concentration of emerging elders (*age 45-59 years*) in Cuyahoga County is found in the Orange Communities.



Plus, **32%** of the population of the Orange Communities is age 55 and over.

How Was the Initiative Accomplished?

The Orange Elder Friendly Communities Task Force, consisting of diverse individuals including community leaders and elders, was established to accomplish the Initiatives' goals. Utilizing the *Guide to Elder Friendly Community Building*, the Task Force gathered important information about our older adults over several months through key leader and stakeholder interviews, surveys and community observation. A Town Hall meeting was also held to engage senior adults in dialogue to share

views on key issues relating to mobility, housing and community services.

The mission of the Task Force was to better understand how elders in our communities live . . . what issues are important to them . . . how the community provides services and establishes physical environments in relation to elders needs . . . and, what our communities' views and values are in relation to older adults who live in or visit our communities.

 **The Orange Communities** cover 25 square-miles of urban, suburban, and rural geography, with most homes built before 1959.

What Are the Strengths & Assets of Our Orange Communities?

The Elder Friendly Task Force identified the following strengths and assets already in place that serve to make us "elder friendly":

- abundant opportunities for elders to be engaged in all aspects of community life
- elders serve as a resource to our community based on their experience, education and civic-mindedness
- unique model of cooperation among local municipalities, community education and recreation and school district supports regional thinking and non-duplication of services
- community agencies, organizations, municipalities and safety forces and services are responsive to needs of elders
- majority of community residents are long term and not transient
- residents appreciate the rural, semi-rural, suburban nature of our communities
- elders have access to diverse lifelong learning, recreational and enrichment opportunities
- reputation of and pride in Orange City Schools adds to community's desirability and livability.

What Are the Recommendations of the Orange Elder Friendly Task Force?

The Task Force has outlined five important recommendations designed to enhance and improve the livability and elder friendliness of the greater Orange communities. These outcomes have been incorporated into a strategic plan that will be implemented over the next three years, as a community-wide effort. They are:

- 1** Raise awareness of existing resources and services for elders
- 2** Improve physical access within the community and identify and reduce mobility barriers
- 3** Advocate for diverse housing options and housing related programs and services
- 4** Develop new community-based programs and strengthen and adapt existing programs to meet changing needs of elders
- 5** Enlist and involve volunteers of all ages to assist in the implementation of this strategic plan for elder friendliness

