



OCCOA

OTSEGO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING



Submitted by
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RESEARCH &
VOLUNTEER
COORDINATOR

*We Help.
We Care*

120 Grandview Blvd., Gaylord, Michigan 49735

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EBS PARTICIPANTS LEARNED ABOUT VISION LOSS DURING ONE PROGRAM

or second Thursday of each month, from 9 to 11 a.m., at the University Center at Gaylord. A different topic is featured at each program. One to three guest speakers with varying knowledge and viewpoints are invited to address the featured topic of the month. All the speakers are there as volunteers! Of course, the hot breakfast that is included is always a favorite part of every meeting – all for only a suggested donation of \$5.00!

During the course of the program, participants listen to the presentations prepared by the guest speakers while they sip coffee and enjoy breakfast. A question-and-answer session is allotted at the end of each program, allowing participants to directly address the speakers. Educational handouts and reference materials are usually available to take home, and participants also have the opportunity to evaluate the program and make suggestions for future topics. It is these suggestions that determine the topics for the next program year. Although the programs are targeted at those who are age 55 and older, and their caregivers, adults of all ages are welcome to attend.

OCCOA Special Events Coordinator Michelle Dunkelberg, who coordinates the EBS programs, recently shared with me, “Our targeted audience has been expanding over the years.” She explained, “Personnel from other agencies and businesses that serve the older adult population often join us, as do visitors from Northern Michigan.”

Dunkelberg noted that a big draw of the Series is its flexibility. “Every year, we publish a list of program topics we plan to offer over the next twelve months. Participants know what is coming each month and can plan to attend those programs that appeal to them,” she explained.

The programs are interesting and practical!

The programs are intended to be interesting and practical so that participants may apply the information they gain to their own life situations. Past programs have addressed such topics as memory loss, mind-strengthening strategies, depression, hearing and vision loss, physical fitness, fall prevention, investment planning, travel ideas, driver safety, spirituality, and pain management.

Patricia Moehring, a regular participant, recently shared with me, “I love the topics that are featured and I enjoy the breakfasts offered. I never come away from a program with less than three to four good ideas or suggestions that I can apply to my own life.” She added, “These programs offer participants an opportunity to get good information from people who have knowledge of the program topic.” She recalled, “At one meeting, I learned about a website that offered some great ‘brain game’ exercises.”

It’s important to learn something every day!

A long-time EBS participant, Alma Harrison, has only missed two of the programs since the Series first began. She noted, “The EBS features such a wide variety of topics, and the speakers are knowledgeable. I’ve never been disappointed!” She added, “I think it’s important to keep learning, no matter how old you are. Attending these programs keeps me current, and keeps my mind active!”



ALMA HARRISON
COMPLETES AN EBS SURVEY CARD

It’s important to keep learning ~ no matter how old you are!

At the Otsego County Commission on Aging (OCCOA), lifelong learning opportunities are an important offering in the agency’s programming. OCCOA Executive Director Dona Wishart knew well the importance of lifelong learning when she established the Educational Breakfast Series (EBS) in 2004. Targeted toward older adults (age 55 and older), the Series consists of inexpensive, lighter-fare educational programs that feature a variety of topics. It was inspired, and made possible, in part, thanks to a generous donation by former OCCOA clients, Morrison and Carl Schneider. It was Mrs. Schneider’s wish that the interest earned from the trust that was established from the donation be used to fund educational programs for older adults.

What can one expect to gain from an EBS program?

The EBS consists of lighter-fare, educational programs that are offered on the first or second Thursday of each month, from 9 to 11 a.m., at the University Center at Gaylord. A different topic is featured at each program. One to three guest speakers with varying knowledge and viewpoints are invited to address the featured topic of the month. All the speakers are there as volunteers! Of course, the hot breakfast that is included is always a favorite part of every meeting – all for only a suggested donation of \$5.00!



OCCOA SPECIAL EVENTS
COORDINATOR
MICHELLE DUNKELBERG

The programs provide an opportunity to socialize!

One other feature of the program that Harrison appreciates is the opportunity to socialize. “It’s important to have opportunities to get acquainted with other people and to socialize with your friends. She shared, “I walk at the Sportsplex, and a lot of the people I walk with there also attend the EBS programs.”

OCCOA invites you to attend the next program, which is scheduled for Thursday, November 4th. The topic is “How can we protect our community from prescription drug abuse?”

**PLEASE COME AND BRING YOUR SPOUSE, FRIEND, OR NEIGHBOR!
SHOULD YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT US AT
(989) 732-1122 OR VISIT US AT WWW.OTSEGOCOUNTYCOA.ORG!**

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