

ACTIVITIES REPORT

Building Bridges for Elders to Services:



“We believe we have found a niche that works well and enables us to get more people connected with existing and newly-expanding services that will result from VOCA funding”. –Gini Milkey, Director, Community of Vermont Elders.

January and February 2017 were devoted to research and planning.

In March, Building Bridges held its first Summit meeting in Randolph, VT, The Community of Vermont Elders introduced its new project and staff to a variety of Vermont state agencies, non- profit, public and private organizations - all of which are currently working with older Vermonters. As planned, this was also an opportunity for project staff to gather information from the attendees in design and development of the project. Subsequent meeting evaluations were positive and useful in going forward with program implementation. Attendees asked that a follow- up meeting be held in six months.

A second summit meeting is scheduled in Saint.Johnsbury, VT on April 20th.and a third in Townsend, Vermont on April 27th. These are meetings with experienced case managers and care givers working in the front lines of elder care.. Referral specialists, nurses, Ship and Sash Coordinators and victims’ advocates round out lists of potential attendees to these meetings. Information exchange is paramount. We anticipate that feedback from these meetings will be crucial to informing the Building Bridges project. By the end of May, a fourth summit will have been held in the Champlain Valley.

By the end of June, Building Bridges will have held 6 specific training events and we plan to have taken advantage of an invitation to meet with students from the Vermont Law School who are especially interested in elder law issues.

During these months of project initiation and of no small import, the Burlington Savvy Seniors travelled to sites and performed skits about scams at the request of COVE and the Vermont Senior Medicare Patrol. The impact of Savvy Senior performances at Building Bridges Summits was impressive. Their portrayals of scamming and fraud brought life to the topics and were extremely well received.

Building Bridges is a program to protect Vermont Elders from fraud and scams. It forges connections to resources and services for crime victims who are Elders. Expanding on the work of COVE’s Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program, Building Bridges to Service is intended to increase referrals to appropriate services for elders who do become victims, and decrease the number of elders who are vulnerable to becoming victims of crime, especially through financial exploitation.

Building Bridges is a collaborative project funded from federal Victims of Crime Act money, received through the Vermont Center for Crime Victims Services.

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