

Organization Strengths
(According to 2007 NISC re-accreditation)

1. Dedicated, highly professional, creative and forward thinking staff.
2. Good use of the Mission Statement posted throughout the center at various locations as well as on the website and newsletter.
3. Highly involved and dedicated board of directors shown through their involvement in multiple committees, initiatives and fundraisers.
4. Very well thought out gift acceptance policy.
5. Extensive space within the senior center for expansion of programming.
6. The center, through its members and staff, provides a vibrant, warm welcome upon entering the facility.
7. The Outreach program, through the Chore Corps, is very good and provides a great service to the community, especially to those that may be homebound.
8. The records of the center are very organized and easily accessed.
9. Very strong strategic planning process.
10. Excellence in operations as evidenced by the receipt of the 2005 MN Nonprofit Excellence Award and the MN Charities Review Council Seal based on meeting 16 standards for charities.

2009 Strategic Plan Report August 21, 2009

In lieu of a formal strategic planning meeting this year, I submit the following report to account for efforts made to address the plan. The current strategic plan for the Fergus Falls Senior Citizens Program, Inc. (the program) is based on: 1) the recommendations made by the board of directors at a Strategic Planning meeting on August 14, 2007, and 2) the recommendations made by our peer reviewer during the re-accreditation process in August of 2007. The following is a synopsis of our progress towards fulfilling those recommendations.

Board Recommendations:

1. How do we spend excess money above the standard reserve to continue to meet the Charities Review Council Standards?

Response: This was done successfully by conducting a facility assessment including input from all departments and making improvements to the Senior Center: adding partitions, purchasing exercise equipment (with the help of grants), repairing the north display window ceiling, improving Helen's workspace, adding an Aging and Disability Resource office for the County Coordinator on Aging/Area Agency on Aging to use, adding more storage space in Kathy's and Kim's offices, and other maintenance-related work reported through the building committee reports. Installation of nearly \$34,000 of cardio and strength-training fitness equipment also raised our membership total almost 15% from 2008.

2. How do we prepare financially for potential future city budget cuts?

Response: Currently, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the program to operate as it does without the City's funding for the staff and the building expenses. The program pays for all of the building repair and maintenance work. Grant support has been received for needs such as a new roof, automatic door openers, equipment, programs and more. In fact, the grants received have surpassed the \$250,000 mark since I began keeping track in 2000. The program continues to build its endowment fund through donations. The program has marketed the idea to members to consider giving to the program through their estate planning. A brochure printed by the West Central Initiative (WCI) has been used for these purposes. WCI informed the program that it generally takes seven years to realize any benefit from this type of request. There was one contribution given by a deceased member's estate this year for the Endowment Fund. A variety of fund raisers continue to support the program. Membership fees will be increased to \$15 per year in 2010. The opportunity to receive reimbursements from Blue Cross//Blue Shield of MN for their members who access our fitness equipment has yet to be realized. An additional way to become more independent financially would be to develop a social entrepreneurial venture - ideally related to our mission.

3. What can we do to develop better recognition for our volunteers?

Response: Many years ago the program gave recognition on a monthly basis to a Star Volunteer for the generosity of time and energy which they donated to the program. Due to budget constraints during the first round of Local Government Aid cuts in the early 2000s, the board voted

to cut back the recognition for volunteers. During the past couple of years the board has allocated \$500 to continue recognitions with entertainment, refreshments and gifts.

4. *What needs to be done to continue to meet the high standards of senior centers and nonprofit organizations?*

Response: Every year since 2006, the board formally assesses our organization's operations according to the Charities Review Council's 16 standards. We have attained national accreditation twice, most recently in 2007, through the National Institute of Senior Centers, a constituent unit of the National Council on Aging, and were the first in MN. During both accreditation processes, the program was given a list by the peer reviewers of our strengths as well as recommendations for improvement. The program fulfilled recommendations from the first accreditation in order to achieve re-accreditation, and continues to monitor our progress towards meeting the recommendations of the second accreditation. At this point in the report, the board recommendations have all been addressed with the peer reviewer recommendations from 2007 remaining.

Peer Reviewer Recommendations:

1. *Expand programming to continue to meet the needs of the new generations of older adults and to offer more programs per day. Collaborations with community colleges, library, and healthy systems could result in more evidenced-based programming, civic engagement offerings, spiritual and intellectual programming.*

Response: The addition of the fitness equipment in late 2008 will stand as a hallmark of meeting the needs of the new generations of older adults. Our membership rose by nearly 15% since its installation, and has been attracting the younger senior as well as older adults through their 90s. The program has implemented more evidenced-based programming by training Kim Shea to teach exercise programs along with Diane Scott from the Y.M.C.A. Together they have taught Arthritis Exercise, and will be instructing A Matter of Balance starting in September 2009 – both evidence-based programs. The program partnered with the Y.M.C.A. - contracting with fitness trainers for equipment orientation. Kim is scheduled to receive her Professional Certification for Older Adult Fitness Training in late August 2009 from the University of TN Martin and will take over from there. The program is partnering with Lake Region Hospital through their funding (\$2,600) for our Older Adults Conditioning Program in 2009/2010. The program purchased a Wii Game which will promote additional physical activity and be a conduit for intergenerational activities. A representative from the community college has presented seminars about lifelong learning, inviting seniors to take courses and informing them of the Pell grant for those who have been out of school for at least seven years, and who have not obtained a degree. The program has yet to partner with the library outside of inviting the director over to present information about the library. There has been discussion of starting a book club, but no interest was shown. Discussion groups are convened to cover some of the spiritual aspects of life.

2. *Addition of a staff person as a volunteer coordinator to formalize the Volunteer Program adding recruitment, recognition, and regular in-service training. The addition of this position would leverage many more resources in the area of volunteer group leaders, civic engagement opportunities and many others. It's clear that the current staff does a terrific job and has little or no time for additional duties, new initiatives, or to handle expanded hours for programming. To take the center to the next level, the addition of a volunteer coordinator would be a next step.*

Response: The addition of another staff member is not within budgetary means at the present time.

3. *Build on marketing plan to identify goals, objectives, and plans on an annual basis. In addition, look at ways to distribute the annual report to market the center to various business and organizations.*

Response: The annual report is now shared with a variety of organizations and businesses around Fergus Falls. The report is often sent with grant proposals as well. Our marketing plan remains quite minimal due to a small \$300 budget, but the program utilizes many free avenues for marketing: radio interviews, weekly newspaper column, newspaper feature articles and photo ops, a website, newsletter, public service announcements, and staff or board member involvement in other community activities and organizations.

4. *Include more community and business representatives and non-senior center users in the various planning and evaluation processes of the center as well as include a variety of age groups. This allows for outside feedback as well as providing input on attracting different age groups to the center.*

Response: The program does this every five years through our accreditation review process. We have traditionally invited funders and other aging representatives to serve on the program's review committee. A wider net could be cast over community representatives to serve on this committee.

5. *Consider integrating the accreditation and self-assessment process into the long-range planning process. The self-assessment process and completion of the action plan can provide a long-range plan for the center.*

Response: This is being done as evident by the 2008 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting and Report, and this 2009 Strategic Planning Report.

6. *Study facility use to make sure that areas are fully maximized and allow for a variety of programming and enhanced programming to attract new or younger members.*

Response: This has been completed through our facility assessment, reconfiguration of activity areas through the installation of room dividers and the purchase of exercise equipment.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Sporre, Program Supervisor