



**Desiree M. Scully, MA**  
Executive Director

## **Aging Well Neighborhood: Empowering Older Adults Through Community-Driven Vitality**

For over 50 years, Aging Care Connections (ACC) has been a cornerstone of support for older adults in five townships, serving over 13,000 individuals annually across 38 communities. Our mission, to enrich the quality of life in our community by providing older adults and their families with guidance and support that enhances the ability to age well, drives innovative programs that challenge aging stereotypes and empower seniors to live vibrantly. Central to this mission is our **Aging Well Neighborhood (AWN)** initiative, a transformative program that fosters wellness, social connection, and vitality through community-driven engagement, in collaboration with our unique **Aging Well Teams**.

### **The Vision of Aging Well Neighborhood**

Aging Well Neighborhood redefines aging by creating vibrant, inclusive learning environments where older adults thrive. Unlike traditional senior programs, AWN, along with the Aging Well Teams, unites older adults, their caregiving families, and community stakeholders to design and deliver programs tailored to the diverse needs and interests of the communities we serve. From fitness classes, education and nutrition workshops to social events and wellness screenings, AWN empowers seniors to stay active, connected, and in control of their aging journey.

This approach aligns with the 2025 National Older Americans Month theme, “Flipping the Script,” which calls for challenging negative perceptions of aging. AWN does just that, by engaging older adults in ongoing learning and growth opportunities, shattering stereotypes of older adults as frail, fearful of technology, or uninterested in new ideas. Aging Well Teams supports this effort, helping to ensure ACC stays in tune with older adult interests across Lyons, Proviso, Riverside, Leyden, and Norwood Park townships.

### **The Power of Aging Well Teams**

At the heart of AWN are our **Aging Well Teams**, groups of dedicated community members, older adults, caregivers, volunteers, and local leaders, who identify programming interests and organize events. These teams ensure AWN offerings reflect the unique needs and cultures of each community.



**Aging Well Teams Meeting**

For example, in North Riverside, the Aging Well Team collaborates with the village to host a **Senior Fair** at Village Commons. Events like these offer health screenings, benefits guidance, and community resources, drawing dozens of seniors and their caregiving children. A caregiver shared, “The fair helped me find support for Mom—it’s a lifeline for us.”

In Hodgkins, another Aging Well Team partnered with the public library to offer **Chair Yoga** sessions in 2023. These classes, designed for strength and flexibility, attract seniors committed to staying well and staying connected. A participant noted, “Yoga keeps me moving, and my daughter loves that I’m keeping busy. In Summit, AWN will collaborate with the Summit Library to host a **Health Fair** in April 2025, providing health screenings, benefits guidance, and community resources. These events draw

hundreds of seniors and caregivers. “The health fair is a lifeline for finding services,” said a caregiver. As ACC’s Executive Director, Desiree Scully, emphasizes, “AWN, in collaboration with the Aging Well Teams, create spaces where seniors lead and thrive, proving aging is an opportunity for growth and connection.”



**Community Health Fair – Feria de Salud**

### **Impact and Scalability**

AWN’s impact is profound. In 2024, AWN engaged 3,899 participants in health and education programs, enhancing well-being for seniors while supporting caregiving families, according to our program data. By partnering with villages, township officials, businesses, park districts, and



**Fitness Class**

libraries, AWN builds sustainable networks that address social determinants of health, like isolation and access to resources. These partnerships amplify AWN’s reach, ensuring seniors and caregivers receive holistic support, from health education to emotional connection.

The Aging Well Teams initiative is a replicable model. Its success lies in empowering communities to lead, requiring minimal infrastructure, just passionate individuals, and a commitment to listening. Aging Well Teams self-identify the gaps in their individual community and decide which programs they want to see...walking clubs, movie and popcorn, lunch and learn, or particular classes like computer education or learning how to crochet.

### **Looking Forward**

Aging Care Connections is expanding AWN in 2025, launching new Aging Well Teams in Leyden and Norwood Park Townships, and introducing innovative programs with community partners, such as

intergenerational workshops and expanded wellness screenings. ACC's updated website enhances accessibility, allowing users to browse and register for events like Chair Yota or the Summit Health Fair online, streamlining engagement for seniors and caregivers. These advancements reflect AWN's commitment to reducing barriers and fostering inclusive communities.

**Join Us:** Visit [AgingCareConnections.org](https://AgingCareConnections.org), email [info@agingcareconnections.org](mailto:info@agingcareconnections.org) or call 708-354-1323 to learn more about Aging Well Neighborhood and browse or download the monthly event calendar. Together, let's flip the script on aging, creating communities where older adults and their families thrive.



**Health Fair Screening**

### **Thank You to Our Community**

**Aging Care Connections** extends heartfelt gratitude to all who participated in the Aging Well Teams initiative. With your partnership, we are able to keep in closer touch with the older adults, families, and caregivers we serve.



**Aging Care Connections in Action in the Community**

**Aging Care Connections** has been a leader in providing a full spectrum of client-centered programs that enhance the quality of life of older adults for over 50 years. Located in La Grange, Aging Care Connections serves over 13,000 older adults, and their caregivers and family members each year, from 38 communities in the Lyons, Proviso, Norwood Park, Riverside, and Leyden townships. To learn more about Aging Care Connections and Aging Well Neighborhood, visit [AgingCareConnections.org](https://AgingCareConnections.org).