



PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

PHFA's Housing
Services Department
Best Practices

StrongWomen Program

Category: Healthy Living

Outcomes:

Residents benefit by improving their physical health through a strength-training program that incorporates osteoporosis education. The program uses a supportive approach in helping individuals make appropriate lifestyle changes to help prevent osteoporosis. Poor bone health is a common cause of fractures, hospitalizations, trips to the emergency room, and why people are placed in nursing homes.

Trainer: PA State
Cooperative Extension
Program Contact:
Nancy Wiker
717.394.6851
nwiker@psu.edu

Program Components:

- **Group Leader.** This is a train the trainer program. The necessary training to lead the program takes one full day. For information on training, contact Nancy Wiker, Penn State Cooperative Extension program at nwiker@psu.edu or call 717.394.6851.
- **StrongWomen Leader Training Program.** At the StrongWomen workshop, program leaders are trained on the exercise program and how to effectively instruct and assist participants in learning the exercises. The workshop covers all topics found in the Toolkit, including screening, safety, and effective leadership. Attendees are given guidance on how to schedule their programs, space, and equipment needs.
- **Space & Equipment.** A room with a minimum of 200 square feet is suggested. The room should be well lit and free of clutter. There should be sturdy, armless chairs available in the room. Preferably, there should be a locked closet either in the room or nearby where the exercise equipment can be stored between classes. Each participant should have access to a set of dumbbell weights ranging from 2 to 5 pounds, a few 8 pound dumbbells, and ankle weights from 1 to 10 pounds.



Background:

The StrongWomen program has been ongoing at eight elderly apartment buildings in central Pennsylvania since 2005. The sites are a mix of PennHOMES, Tax Credit, and HUD financed developments. In central Pennsylvania the program is at the following sites: Saint Peter Apartments in Lancaster County, Willow Terrace, Poplar Terrace, Tulpehocken Terrace, Maple Terrace, Oak Terrace, and Hill Terrace in Lebanon County, and Springwood Overlook in York County.

In 2006, staff from an additional five sites in western Pennsylvania were trained and will begin the weight training program with their residents. Plans are currently underway to expand StrongWomen to eastern Pennsylvania affordable apartment developments as well.

Investment in Services:

A mid-range set of weights costs from \$15 to \$30 per person. However, during the program, many of the various weights can be shared between the program participants. The Penn State Cooperative Extension Site Leader Training for the StrongWomen Program costs \$175, which includes the StrongWomen Toolkit, morning refreshments, lunch, and a T-shirt.

RESULTS

Improved health through reduced risk for osteoporosis and related fractures, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, depression, and obesity. Improves sleep and vitality.

Resident participation in a group activity.

For more information,
contact PHFA's Housing Services Department:
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