



2004-2006 IN REVIEW

Executive Summary

“We have found that the seniors in our community are wise, spirited and independent.” — Cynthia Finch





In his inaugural address (September 2002) announcing his four focal points of Knox County government, Mayor Mike Ragsdale said, "We have an obligation to America's greatest generation, our senior citizens. We are going to focus on their health care, housing, nutritional, and recreational needs to make certain no senior in our community is overlooked, forgotten or left behind."

The Mayor's **No Senior Left Behind** Initiative began with the first annual Senior Summit in November 2002. The Summit brought together seniors, seniors service providers, government leaders, community leaders and others to discuss and prioritize senior needs, and gaps in services to them. Based on priorities of needs that emerged from the first Summit, seven task forces were formed to address issues in community based services, housing, information services, leisure and recreation, the high cost of prescription drugs, senior health and mental health, and transportation. The task forces worked for eight months to prepare recommendations for solutions, which were presented to Mayor Ragsdale prior to the Second Annual Senior Summit.

Senior Summit IV

The Fourth Annual Senior Summit

and EXPO was held on November 15, 2005 at the Knoxville Convention Center. Billed as "A Day Just for Seniors," The information packed day began with breakfast and Mayor Ragsdale State of Knox County Seniors Address.

State Rep. Joe Armstrong's keynote speech accompanied Ragsdale's address during the opening session. Other activities included flu shots, exhibits with a wealth of information and a variety of give away items for seniors, entertainment, bingo, and workshops of particular interest to seniors.

The Workshops

The workshops, in particular, provided timely information for seniors, including healthcare, housing, planning for your future, and successful grandparenting.

- "Up, Up and Away: Dealing with Rising Prescription Costs and Shrinking Benefits"
- "If the House Fits: Housing Solutions that Work for You"
- "The Best is Yet to Come: Planning Your Future and Avoiding Pitfalls and Scams"
- "Grandparenting: Not for the Faint of Heart"

Representative Joe Armstrong challenged all of us to ask and find the answers to the tough questions.



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“As we work to make Knox County a place seniors are proud to call home, our expectations for success remain high and we continue to push ourselves to do even better.”

— Mayor Mike Ragsdale

He said, “All of us here today need to be leaders for positive social change.

We need to be the ones to ask the tough questions, and here are the toughest ones: Can America afford an aging society? Can we do so without sticking our children and grandchildren with the bills? Can we help older Americans maintain this quality of life? These are some of the critical issues that we face as baby boomers edge closer to retirement.”

Accomplishments Knoxville-Knox County CAC Office on Aging

- Knox County provided \$70,000 over two years to the Affordable Medicine Options for Seniors (AMOS) program.
- Knox County provided additional funds for Mobile Meals to eliminate the waiting list of 135 people in 2005.
- Funding that supports the Knox County CAC Transit program.
- The John T. O'Connor Senior Center's expanded North Wing has made it possible to expand the programming available.
- Mayor Ragsdale participated in the launch of the PAWS (Placing Animals with Seniors) program, a joint partnership of the Knox County Office on Aging and the Young-Williams Animal Center. The

program places adoptable animals from the animal center with low-income seniors.

- The Senior Employment Program provides job search assistance and counseling to help seniors return to the work world.
- Project LIVE (Living Independently through Volunteer Efforts) provides a much needed resource for exceptional and extensive care management for low-income Knox County seniors.
- The Mobile Meals kitchen prepares and packages about 1,200 meals each day.

Knox County Public Library

- **Reference Department**
 - Staff attended and spoke to Office on Aging groups and other senior groups about library services
 - Offers free computer workshops to seniors
 - Reference staff has helped many seniors get the new Knox County prescription discount card
- **Homebound Services**
 - Delivers books to shut-ins, most of whom are senior
- **Communications/Marketing**
 - Senior Lectures
 - Tradeshows and Workshops
- **Collections**
 - Has nearly 20,000 large print books



- Has 12,000 talking books

Health Department

The Knox County Health Department received more than 40,000 visits from senior citizens. These visits included:

- More than 10,000 flu shots
- More than 200 female senior citizens received screening for breast and cervical cancer.
- More than 6,200 clinic visits by senior citizens to get primary care services.
- Nearly 400 senior citizens attended classes on senior nutrition, healthy eating and diabetes.
- Seniors participated in numerous health education outreach activities concerning senior health issues and health disparities.
- Knox County Health Department (KCHD) enrolled more than 400 senior citizens onto the Medicare Part D program.

Knox County Community Development

- Funded Knox Housing Partnership for Willow Place Senior Apartments, a new 20-unit senior complex.
- Funded CAC Minor Home Repair Program
- Funded CAC North Neighborhood Center – 15 senior households were provided with essential services for the prevention of homelessness.
- Funded InterFaith Health Clinic

serves the working uninsured, medical care and prescriptions were provided on a sliding fee scale to 20 seniors.

- Funded Parkridge Harbor provides services for low-income citizens.

Goals for 2006-2007

Our goal is to sunset the Senior Summit and identify partner organizations that can continue the senior EXPO so that providers can have valuable exposure for the services they have to offer. Our vision is that this will lead to a quarterly senior caucus focused on senior needs. This will create a permanent venue for seniors to share their thoughts and ideas.

“It has been a great four years. We are fortunate to work with talented and professional volunteers who give their time to Knox County and its citizens.

We are proud of what we have accomplished and our awareness of senior issues is at its height. As we indicated in the first report two years ago, our process is a model for other communities.” — *Cynthia Finch*

