

Planning for the Expected

By Alicia Eagan

It's been said that the best way to predict the future is to create it. That's the philosophy behind Queen Anne's at Home (QA@H), a non-profit that inspires local seniors to plan for—and lead—vibrant, meaningful lives.

“As we age, we strive to stay active and hope to remain in our own homes for as long as we can. Yet, for many of us, getting older is an uncomfortable and overwhelming subject to confront, and we put off making plans for the future,” said QA@H President Russ Mail. “By connecting seniors across Queen Anne’s County and providing invaluable tools and resources to support one another, we can proactively make decisions about how we want to live our lives. It’s an incredibly empowering way to prepare for—and have some control over—the inevitable.”

QA@H is part of Village to Village Network, the national peer-to-peer organization that addresses the challenges of aging and enables seniors to thrive as they mature. The cornerstone of QA@H is the Senior Navigation Action Plan—abbreviated SNAP— a comprehensive hands-on training and planning framework to help members “age in place” so they can live at home well into their golden years. According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), 90% of Americans over age 65 say they want to remain in their current residence for as long as possible, yet far fewer anticipate being able to do so. QA@H’s community support-based system and comprehensive SNAP curriculum aim to change that.

SNAP includes 10 detailed chapters devoted to seniors’ most pressing concerns about getting older, such as contingency

planning, medical directives and end of life preferences. Each chapter is outfitted in an organized binder for quick reference and includes forms and checklists to guide members to create a fully-fledged life plan. Regular SNAP Chapter meetings feature life planning experts and presentations on SNAP-related topics to allow members to dive deeper into the content.

QA@H member volunteers also lend their time and expertise to other seniors by offering a hand around the house, training one another to use new technology and providing transportation to the grocery store or medical appointments. A robust social schedule helps members stay connected and builds a strong sense of community. The Live and Learn and Coffee+Conversation programs host VIP speakers ranging from area law enforcement leaders to national Medicaid and Medicare experts, and a regular social hour allows members to catch up about current events. In the wake of the coronavirus, QA@H has made all gatherings virtual and recently added a new moderated Coping Forum for members interested in sharing their experiences about life during the pandemic. QA@H relies on a phone calling tree to communicate with members who don’t use computers or the internet.

County residents looking to learn more about QA@H’s mission, membership benefits and annual fees should visit www.queenannesathome.org. The site also includes a list of upcoming Zoom sessions and virtual social hours free of charge and open to everyone.

