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## **A Message on Aging from Linda Siegel and Jonathan Lavin**

Aging is a modern phenomenon that requires adaptation and possibly different expectations, life styles and plans than ever experienced before on this Earth. Nationally, some 10,000 people every day celebrate their 65th birthday as the group of 76 million persons born between 1946 and 1964 age into later life. The population age 55 to 64 is 73 percent greater than measured in the 2000 census.

To prepare communities for the dramatic growth of the older population, AgeOptions will ask municipalities and townships for their understanding of the future demands and needs of older persons. We are also interested in understanding what they see as their strengths and challenges.

The Southwestern Conference of Mayors (<http://www.swmayors.com/index.html>), covering 21 suburban Cook County communities, agreed to host the first of several community forums on the topic of aging and community preparedness on June 1. The Village of Chicago Ridge is hosting the discussion and the chairperson of the Municipal Conference, Mayor Gerald Bennett of Palos Hills, is inviting communities to participate.

Clearly, the level of support from federal and state governments is on the decline. Even if the same level of funding is provided from the Older Americans Act and Illinois Act on Aging to AgeOptions in 2013, the per capita support will begin to shrink dramatically.

AgeOptions goal is to be a resource and primary partner to communities across the region as we design responses to the biggest challenges of the boomer generation. We anticipate that our funding and the funding of community senior programs will be changing, and not necessarily proportionately to the unprecedented growth in the senior population. We do have the know-how, commitment to communities and power of advocacy to work on issues that can divert time and energy from such municipal services as public works, fire, police, library, recreation and health departments, etc. Our goal is to understand all of those responsible municipal departments and to seek their guidance on how AgeOptions can be there for them into the future.

The following newsletter offers information on a number of exciting activities undertaken by the dedicated staff, volunteers and partners of AgeOptions. Our hope is that all of these initiatives will be dependable, ongoing and important to the communities in suburban Cook County and the 481,119 persons who are age 60 and over in our region.

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