

## Elders in Action City funded Programs and Services Update

November 10, 2006

Elders in Action, a powerful voice for local seniors since 1968, is pleased to be an active partner with the City of Portland to help ensure that city services are “Elder Friendly” and that City staff and Bureaus are prepared to meet the needs of the growing senior population. 149 people are turning 60 every day in Portland and the 85 and older population is the fastest growing demographic group. Elders in Action believes the quality of life should never depend on age.

- Elders in Action in achieving its mission “*to assure a vibrant community through the active involvement of older adults*” continues to be actively involved with ONI and its many city wide partners. Our work is carried out by harnessing the wisdom, talent and experience of our senior volunteers. We help connect Portland seniors to critical services so they may remain independent and involved in their neighborhoods.
- Our Elders in Action Commission in the official advisory group for the City of Portland on aging and issues affecting its senior citizens. Our Commission members meet monthly and also meet one on one with City Commissioners and various City Bureau personnel to help them better serve the growing senior population.
- We work with the Portland Police Bureau and its Elder Crime Response Team and advocated for the updating of the Interagency Agreement in March 2006 with the Portland Police Bureau, Adult Protective Services, the District Attorney, and other county law enforcement agencies. We met with Police Chief Rosie Sizer and Captain Eckhart of the Family Services Division in September to acquaint them with how Elders in Action Personal Advocate and Aging Awareness programs can assist elderly victims of crime. Since July 2006, we have followed up on 137 police reports from seniors referred from the Portland Police Bureau.
- Since the unanimous City Council approval on March 31, 2004 of the Elders in Action “Neighborhood Livability Standards for Seniors”, we have actively worked with the Portland Department of Transportation on creating “Safe Routes for Seniors” at 10 senior gathering places and promoting pedestrian safety and the “Share the Road Campaign”. Between May and October we promoted and participated in “Senior Strolls 2006” conducted by PDOT’s Transportation Options program in NE Portland. In September 2006, we kicked off the “Senior Bike Program at Willamette Park with

PDOT and the Bureau of Parks and Recreation. This 3 wheeled reclining bike program has been enthusiastically received and our volunteers were featured in a national bicycling movie filmed in Portland in September that featured all the positive bikeways and transportation options that Portland has. We continue to work with PDOT on activities to improve local strategies to assure safer traffic, streets and walkways, including media events and cross walk enforcement activities.

- Last year, our Personal Advocate volunteers assisted hundreds of City residents with problems related to housing, health care, crime or abuse. We continue to get referrals from the City/County I & R, City Housing Inspectors, and the City Auditors office. Elders in Action has provided Elder Friendly evaluations by trained senior volunteers of numerous City offices.
- Elders in Action staff and volunteers connect with City Bureau staff and ONI neighborhood contacts on a regular basis. We were the only **visionPDX** grantee to focus on collecting the thoughts and ideas of Portland seniors for their vision of Portland over the next 30 years. In August 2006 we had a focus group of seniors to provide input to the Engagement Subcommittee on how to engage seniors in strategies to carry out the work of **visionPDX** and to look for ways to ensure community governance in a positive and innovative way.
- Elders in Action City funding is 18% less in 06-07 than 05-06 and it supports 2 FTE and materials and services for operating the Commission, Personal Advocate, and Elder Friendly Certification programs for the City of Portland.
- A recent MetLife Foundation study found only 46% of American communities have begun to plan to address the needs of the exploding aging Baby Boomer population. Elders in Action wants to help the City of Portland be prepared, as an “Elder Friendly” community benefits everyone. As people age, accessible neighborhood services become increasingly important, as 21% of people over 65 do not drive. We want to develop a network of neighbors to keep older adults involved in our community, and to care for our elders, neighbor by neighbor. We want to celebrate the talent and experiences that seniors bring to our community, and build more avenues for seniors to actively contribute to our community.