SIX LESSONS IN SEVEN YEARS:
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED IN SEVEN YEARS OF
BUILDING AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

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LESSON 1:  
“ONE SIZE FITS ALL” MODELS DON’T FIT

In a rapidly diversifying aging population, age friendly communities must provide opportunities that meet the differing needs of older people.
LESSON 2: THINK BIG, BUT WORK SMALL

Trying to implement a comprehensive age friendly initiative all at once can lead to paralysis.

Start with programs that have quick, visible success and build from there.
LESSON 3:
AGE FRIENDLINESS IS LONG TERM

Comprehensive planning and implementation takes time, but without a plan it is hard to keep focus over the long term.
LESSON 4:
WE WANT AN AGE FRIENDLY
COMMUNITY. LISTEN.

Follow the community’s lead. Informal leaders will emerge if they are encouraged and are an essential part of a sustainable age friendly process.
PLANNING

HEALTH PROMOTION AND CARE

TRANSPORTATION AND WALKABILITY
LESSON 5: GOOD SERVICES THAT ARE NOT INTEGRATED DON’T WORK.

Developing integrated programs that serve all the needs of older people is very difficult, but essential. This is the essence of the age friendly communities model.
GIA’S GUIDE TO SUSTAINABILITY
PRINCIPLES OF AGE-FRIENDLY
COMMUNITY EFFORTS

www.giaging.org
under Age Friendly Initiatives
LESSON 6:
SUSTAINABILITY MUST START ON DAY ONE.

Without a plan to sustain the effort, age friendly community programs can falter once the initial support is over. Begin creating a plan at the beginning of the effort.
SIX LESSONS LEARNED

• “One size fits all” models don’t fit.
• Think big, but work small.
• Age friendliness is long term.
• We want an age friendly COMMUNITY. Listen.
• Good services that are not integrated do not work.
• Sustainability must start on day one.
• Website: www.giaging.org
• Age friendly/livable communities resources are at https://www.giaging.org/initiatives/age-friendly
• Rural aging resources are at https://www.giaging.org/initiatives/rural-aging
• Please let people know about them!
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