



SEWICKLEY VALLEY YMCA

BRIDGING THE GAP

Connecting older adults to programs, people and support beyond its walls

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THE COHORT INSPIRED US TO LOOK BEYOND OUR WALLS AND BETTER UNDERSTAND OUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS.

We were proud of the programs Senior Central offered at our YMCA.

But not every older adult could easily get to our building or take part.

How could we bring programs and connection closer to them?



LISTENING SHOWED THE GAP

We listened in three places:

- 01 Community surveys
- 02 Participant feedback
- 03 Community partners



THE GAP WE SET OUT TO BRIDGE

The missing connection was not a lack of programs. It was access to them. Transportation and location keep older adults from connection.

WE BUILT THE BRIDGE BY TAKING THE Y OUTSIDE THE BUILDING



Instead of waiting for people to come to Senior Central, we began offering programs in places they already knew and trusted.

- Senior high-rises
- Libraries
- Community centers

THREE BRIDGES. ONE WHOLE-PERSON APPROACH.

The three Pittsburgh bridges featured on our cover help tell the Senior Central story: supporting the whole person through mind, body and spirit.



Andy Warhol Bridge | Spirit

- Lunches in the community
- Senior socials
- Building connections and friendships



Rachel Carson Bridge | Mind

- Lunch-and-learn programs
- Educational events
- Connections to local resources



Roberto Clemente Bridge | Body

- Chair exercise
- Faith in Action rides to medical appointments
- Home-safety support

THE BRIDGE LEADS TO BELONGING.



"I always have something to look forward to."
Bill, Chair Class participant



"Senior Central and the socials have been such a blessing in my life. It has opened a whole new world for me."
Sue, Senior Central Resources



"How exciting to have a partnership with the YMCA and know I am not alone in supporting my seniors."
Michelle, Lenz Court Senior Living

A SIMPLE PLAYBOOK FOR BUILDING THE BRIDGE

01 LISTEN BEYOND THE BUILDING

Ask participants, nonparticipants and community partners what gets in the way.

02 NAME THE BARRIER

Be specific about whether the challenge is transportation, location, awareness or something else.

03 START WITH ONE PARTNER

Choose one trusted site and one program that responds to what you heard.

04 LEARN AND ADJUST

Use participant feedback to decide what to continue, change or add next.

Start small. Stay curious. Let relationships shape the next step.