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Senior Needs Survey Given the Green Light

By Cathy Tyson

The Lafayette Senior Needs Assessment Task Force is happy to announce that they have received the go-ahead funds from the City Council to cover the cost of a senior needs survey, although there's a small catch. Part of the agreement was that the task force will raise enough funds to contribute at least one-third of the full \$29,750 research cost.

According to the Task Force, a well designed and professionally executed survey is critical providing the city with solid reliable data. This data will help the city to establish strategic priorities in preparation for the expected tremendous growth of an older age population and to make the city a viable candidate for future outside grants. "I would be thrilled if we can raise the full amount of \$29,750 to reimburse the City's General Fund." said Ruth McCahan, Chair of the Task Force.

As part of the research process, there will be two community workshops, hosted by the Lafayette Senior Liaison Committee, that are planned for not only the participation of older residents but also concerned families, organizations who serve seniors and community leaders. Input gathered from the workshops will assist the consultant, B.W. Research in designing the phone survey which will take place sometime in May. The dual workshops will be held on one day - Tuesday April 28th at 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. at Temple Isaiah, 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd (off Risa Road) in Lafayette.

"We want to hear from seniors - what they need to live happy, safe and interesting lives, what their opinions and hot button issues are," said McCahan. Input gathered from the workshops will assist the consultant, B.W. Research, in designing a phone survey. They will provide the Task Force with at least 400 completed interviews of Lafayette residents that are 55 years and older. Senior Services Coordinator Mei Sun Li, encourages those receiving the survey phone calls to be patient and not hang up on interviewers since direct input from everyone contacted is important to the future well being of all generations and not only to older residents.

Why now? McCahan said that they wanted to parallel the Downtown Strategy planning effort. As the city looks to provide a framework for future growth, taking into account the needs of seniors is vital.

The "Rapturous Fiddling with Mark Shaw" concert on Friday, June 5 will be one of the fundraisers for the Senior Needs Assessment Project. The afternoon 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. event at the Lafayette Community Center will not only feature "Hot Club" music of the '30's and Irish countryside tunes but also raffle prizes and light refreshments donated by Aegis of Moraga. For more information on the concert or to register for the community workshops call Lafayette Senior Services at 284-5050 or reach them via e-mail at seniors@lovelafayette.org.

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