

Sally Jo Spaeni,
Senior Center and Senior Services Manager
Madison Senior Center.
330 W. Mifflin
Madison, WI

Dear Sally Jo,

I am pleased to officially inform you that the Accreditation Board met on January 30, 2020 and unanimously approved the recommendation for accreditation of the Madison Senior Center. Successfully achieving accreditation status takes the work of many people both in the senior center and in the community. When these two groups work together the rewards will be felt for many years to come. Your organization demonstrates outstanding leadership and commitment to quality programs and services. This letter is your official notification that the Madison Senior Center has been accredited by NCOA/NISC for a period of five years (January 2020- January 2025).

Your Peer Reviewer observed many strengths of the Madison Senior Center. These included:

- Physical facility is a warm, inviting, spacious, clean building with room for expansion of programs.
- Marketing within the building shows appropriate and pleasant vision of aging.
- The Center provides high level, challenging programs, like the music program PLATO program and the conversational Spanish class.
- Intergenerational programming occurring at the Center should be recognized as a best practice. Preschool children engaging with older adults in a one on one fashion doing projects together. It was apparent how both generations felt connected and trusting of the other. A middle school student meeting with older adults to journal their life stories gives validation to each of those generations. Lastly, nursing students meeting one on one for health benefits of the older adult proves to be a benefit for both the student and the older adult's health. Great collaborating within a community.
- Wonderful community partners: Of note was an interview with Downtown Madison, Inc., a nonprofit working together with the Center for advocacy and delving into the issues that older adults face in downtown Madison. They are working together to become an Age Friendly City. Working in this collaborative way for an age friendly city initiative that encompasses safety, transportation, falls prevention, advocacy, downtown amenities is a best practice.
- Engaged Volunteers: The volunteers are just naturally helping and participating as members, as well. The volunteers speak positively of the Center as "friendly", "engaged", "at home here", "it's a good fit for me". One volunteer reporting, "It always happens when I leave. I'm happy!"

- Excellent Accreditation Committee: They understand the process, the purpose and the mission of accreditation. They buy into being the best, a higher honor, educating the masses, fresh viewpoints that aren't just staff speaking. It is a credible organization.

Suggestions for the future included:

- Programmatically: Explore expanding programming in the health & wellness areas. Consider using technology to broaden your area, for example, Zoom your classes to participants or zoom in the instructor from a different location.
- Evaluations: you can never get enough input: Sessional, seasonally, annually. Get the feedback and use the information from the evaluations not only for knowledge of what works, what doesn't, but also for marketing. Include testimonies from participants in your annual report.
- Explore outdoor expansion. This is a prime downtown spot for marketing. So exciting if you can make green space in your courtyard for public gardens, butterflies, pollination, outdoor programming!
- Consider purchasing audio equipment. Although the rooms are quiet and there is good sound control, some people have compromised hearing. A mic and headsets can work quite well.
- Strengthen partnerships with universities for more diverse programming. Broaden your discipline areas by targeting these disciplines: therapeutic recreation, exercise science, social work, psychology and gerontology.
- Consider moving the location of the Conversational Spanish class. The current meeting room is a craft room. There may be a more comfortable room available for the class.
- Implement volunteer background check system for all volunteers, not just those working with children or going into homes.

We are pleased to have the Madison Senior Center on the list of more than 120 senior centers who meet the standards as developed by NISC. These are centers that are held up as models for others to follow. We know that you and your staff will continue to improve and adapt to meet the changing needs of the older population. We congratulate you and your staff in striving to meet the needs of the older population in your community.

Sincerely,



Maureen O'Leary
NISC Program Manager