

Is Payne, Ohio an Age-Friendly Community?

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ABSTRACT

The elderly population is expected to grow exponentially over the next several years. This growth will put the current infrastructure of healthcare to the test. The systems currently in place will likely not be enough to support and meet the needs of older adults. A shift toward age-friendly communities will provide elders with the services necessary to successfully age in place. These services include public transportation, outdoor spaces for active living, and accessible health services. The purpose of this comparative analysis was to evaluate if my hometown, Payne, Ohio, fits the criteria to be considered an age-friendly community. Additional research was required to determine what services are available in my community and to assess the quality and effectiveness of these services for the older population

CRITERIA

To assess the age-friendliness of a community, the following components are taken into consideration:

- Housing
- Outdoor spaces and built environment
- Community support
- Transportation
- Health and wellness services
- Social environment

For this project, I traveled to various locations in my hometown and did further research to evaluate how Payne is doing in meeting the criteria to be considered age-friendly.

HOUSING

Vancrest of Payne is a skilled nursing and assisted living facility. They offer long-term and short-term care along with some home health care services. Vancrest has therapy services available to patients and offer both group and individual activities that include arts, crafts, and games. There are two sets of income-based apartments in Payne, Flat Rock Creek Apartments and Sunrise Retirement Apartments, where the cost of rent is based on the individual's income. Additionally, Jacob's Pointe offers one story condominiums for elders looking for smaller and more manageable homes; lawncare and maintenance services are provided. All these facilities are easily accessible for elders.

OUTDOOR SPACES

The Payne Community Park offers a pleasant outdoor experience for anyone looking to enjoy the outdoors. The park is rentable for parties and gatherings. Furthermore, the park has a small pond where people are able to fish with catch and release regulations. For shade and tables for picnics or eating, there is a pavilion open to the public at the park. This park offers some age-friendly services, including paved walking paths, benches along the walkway, and handicapped parking. There are multiple restaurants in town with accessible outdoor seating for elders and handicapped parking near those seating areas.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Ten miles from Payne in Paulding, Ohio, The Bargain Bin, a non-profit organization similar to Goodwill, offers volunteer opportunities for elders. In addition, the county hospital in Paulding is a place where many elders hold volunteer positions. The trade school in our area is approximately 15 miles from Payne. Vantage Career Center in Van Wert, Ohio is where high school students interested in a trade attend, but they also have some adult classes with no age limit where elders would be able to learn new skills and find employment opportunities.

TRANSPORTATION

Though there is not a public transportation service located in Payne, the county's Senior Center in Paulding offers transportation services for all county residents. The most common transportation services is transporting the elderly to appointments at Paulding County Hospital.

HEALTH/WELLNESS SERVICES

Health services in Paulding County are available at Paulding County Hospital in Paulding. The hospital offers common services that are vital to patient well-being, but they also offer some unique services including a swing bed inpatient rehabilitation program and a Delay the Disease program for Parkinson's patients which is administered by the physical and occupational therapists at the hospital. The county's Senior Center sponsors a "Meals on Wheels" program that provides meal delivery for those unable to get out of the house or cook. In Payne, there is a family doctor's office and a chiropractor.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Many social events in my town that elders attend are held at the library. A cookbook club meets once per month. Also, they have seasonal events, such as the Mingle and Jingle and Spring Fling, which raise money for the library while giving people of all ages opportunities to socialize. The library does an activity twice per month that teaches people of all ages about meditation. A skin care class is held on essential oils, as well. One of the churches in Payne offers a free meal once per month. This is open to all people of all ages, but it seems many senior citizens attend this event to socialize. Approximately ten miles away in Paulding, Ohio, the county's Senior Center is constantly hosting events that are very popular amongst the elderly. These events are posted in town and on social media, and in a small town, information spreads through word of mouth quickly.

CONCLUSIONS

After spending hours researching, visiting, and investigating the services offered in Payne, Ohio to fit the criteria for an age-friendly community, I have concluded that Payne could be considered an age-friendly community. Though many services are not necessarily located directly in the village of Payne, the county as a whole offers enough services for all county residents to enjoy life as elders. Payne offers several affordable, accessible, and safe housing options for elders. Even in a small town, there are outdoor spaces that allow seniors to get out and enjoy outdoors and age in a healthy manner. There are opportunities in the area for elders to volunteer or seek employment even in an older age. Transportation may not be plentiful, but it is available when needed. Paulding County Hospital provides great medical care for elders along with the family doctor and chiropractor in the town of Payne. Finally, for a small town, Payne works hard to ensure there are social events for elders to attend and enjoy a bit of social life. Though Payne may lack some options for social events, outdoor spaces, and public transportation, for a town of just over 1,000 people, the town does fairly well. All in all, I believe my hometown of Payne, Ohio has some improvements that could be made to make the town more age-friendly, but the town is in a good place.

REFERENCES

1. Paulding County Hospital (2020). Retrieved from pauldingcountyhospital.com.
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3. The Village of Payne (2020). Retrieved from villageofpayne.com.