

ABSTRACT

As the older population continues to grow, the desire to age in place is increasing as well due to older adults being comfortable in their own community. In order for a community to better support its citizens the community needs to examine whether it meets the criteria created by the World Health Organization on age friendliness in the community. The six required aspects of an age friendly community are housing, outdoor spaces and built environment, transportation, social environment, community support, and health and wellness which all would influence their well-being. I will be looking at my hometown community of Pemberville, Ohio to see if it is an age friendly community or not.

HOUSING

There is one major senior living center in Pemberville and couple places in surrounding neighborhoods like Bowling Green.

Otterbein Senior Life: Nursing home/ Assisted Living/ Independent Living care facility

- 1-2-bedroom, full bathroom, kitchen, living area
- Down the street from a small grocery store and library

Bowling Green: Brookdale Assisted Living

- 3 different floor plans, pet friendly, library, transportation, memory care
- 10 miles away

OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Pemberville has a few outdoor spaces and built environments. There is a park downtown that includes:

- Public pool
- Tennis courts, basketball courts, baseball fields
- Paved sidewalks and 1 crosswalk
- Public restrooms
- Walk up ice cream shop

TRANSPORTATION

Available transportation services like Wood County Committee on Aging and Comfort Keepers in Bowling Green travel out to the Pemberville area but tend to come out of Wood County/ Bowling Green.

- Wood County Committee on Aging: strictly for medical transportation and can be paid for by donation. The van is wheelchair accessible
- Comfort Keepers in Bowling Green: will only travel within a 25-mile radius and costs \$24/hour. They will take customers to hair appointments, the grocery store, etc.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

There are few places in Pemberville that provide health and wellness services, however there are places in neighboring communities that have these types of resources:

- Tea Spa Infusion: herbalist, non-toxic skin care, personal wellness spa
- Wood County Hospital: approx. 10 miles
- Mercy Health - Pemberville primary care: family practice physician, elderly care services, personal care, Alzheimer's/ dementia care, hospice support

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Pemberville is known for its social environment. Children in the community do a lot of different things to engage with the elderly in the community such as:

- The Lights at Otterbein: students in the community go over to the assisted living facility and string Christmas lights all around outside and on every individual pod
- Quilting Eagles: older women in the community get help from students and teach them how to make quilts. The students then hand these quilts out to veterans in the community on Veterans Day
- Senior Day: All the elderly in the community get together at the local legion hall and children volunteers come and make breakfast for them and socialize

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

When it comes to community support for the seniors in Pemberville there are a couple things, however most of the opportunities are from the surrounding area of Bowling Green.

- When the local legion hall is rented out for an event the community seniors can sign up and work the concessions

In the neighboring community of Bowling Green there are some options also:

- Newsletter Collators- assist in assembling the county newsletter
- Friendly Visitor Program- to reduce isolation and loneliness in older adults. Spend time with them 4 hours per month and act as an advocate

CONCLUSIONS

Pemberville is a small community, located just 10 miles from the city of Bowling Green, made up of about 1,400 people. The greatest risk for seniors in the community is that the closest emergency services are about 10 miles away give or take, and the lack of close transportation. Although there isn't much of a transportation system in town, since it is so small everyone tends to know everyone. Due to this it would be very easy to get a ride to an appt. etc. from a neighbor or a nearby friend. I personally think that my town of Pemberville does a great job of engaging with and including the seniors in the community therefore making the town overall a fairly age friendly place to live by providing the needs for older adults.

REFERENCES

- Jeste, D.V., Blazer, D.G., Buckwalter, K.C., Cassidy, K.K., Fishman, L., Gwyther, L.P., Levin, S.M., Phillipson, C., Rao, R.R., Schmeding, E., Vega, W.A., Avanzino, J.A., Glorioso, D.K., Feather, J. (2016). Age-friendly communities initiative: Public health approach to promoting successful aging. *Am J Geriatr Psychiatry*, 24(12), pp. 1158-1170.
- Other references available upon request.