

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2017



*Branch County Commission on Aging*  
*65 Grahl Drive, Coldwater, MI 49036*  
*[www.burnsidecenter.com](http://www.burnsidecenter.com)*  
*517-279-6565*

# **BRANCH COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**The primary mission of the Branch County Commission on Aging is to establish and provide services for older adults by encouraging, promoting, and safeguarding the rights and abilities of our older adults so they may enjoy maximum health, well-being, and independence.**

## **VISION**

**To become the primary focus (not the sole focus) for older adult activities in the county through the establishment of the senior center and by partnering with other agencies whose goals will complement the Commission on Aging's mission.**

## **VALUES**

**The Commission believes the State's philosophy of "no wrong door" and to that end will provide access, information, and referral for any service to older adults that may be required throughout the county.**

**The Commission will partner with other agencies to maintain a presence throughout the county.**

**The Commission will solicit and promote volunteerism through the older adult community to expand its services and provide those older adults who volunteer with a sense of worth and accomplishment.**

**The Commission will strive to provide outreach and services to those older adults whose needs for services are the greatest.**

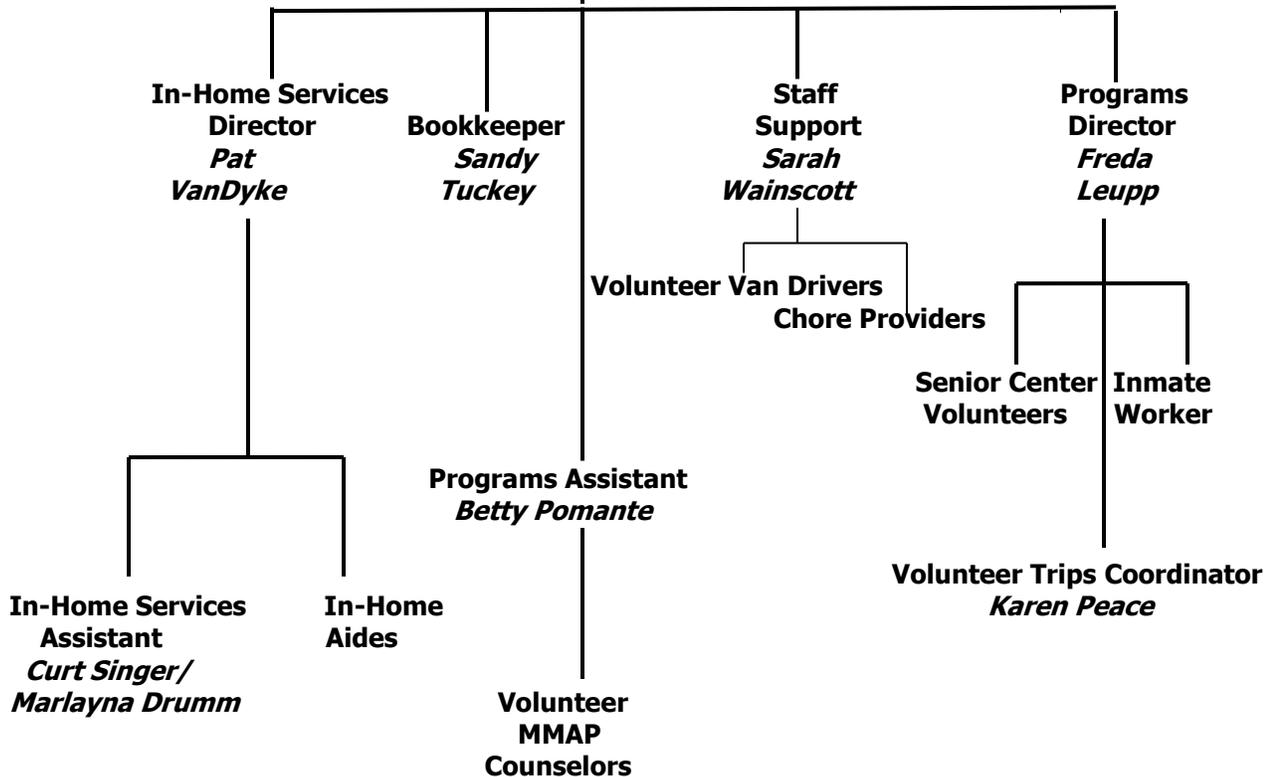
**The Commission will seek and facilitate cooperation and consensus of action through our partnerships with community agencies and governmental bodies in all areas where our missions are convergent.**

# BRANCH COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING 2017 STAFF

Branch County Board of Commissioners

Branch County Commission on Aging  
Board of Directors

Executive Director  
*Amy Duff, LMSW*



# **BRANCH COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Established by action of the Branch County Commissioners**

**Robert Walter – Chairman**  
**Gordon Gentry – Vice Chairman**  
**Betty Kurtz – Secretary/Treasurer**  
**Steve O'Donnell**  
**Dave Smoker**  
**Jan Olney**  
**Rod Olney**

**Commissioner Ted Gordon – Liaison from Branch County Board of Commissioners**

**The Board of Directors represents the older adult population of Branch County. Monthly meetings in 2017 were held at 65 Grahl Drive, Coldwater, on the third Tuesday at 2 p.m. in the Grahl Room.**

## **2017 STAFF**

**Amy Duff, LMSW – Executive Director**  
**Pat VanDyke – In-Home Services Director**  
**Curt Singer/Marlayna Drumm – Assistant In-Home Services Director**  
**Freda Leupp – Programs Director**  
**Sandy Tuckey – Bookkeeper**  
**Sarah Wainscott – Staff Assistant**  
**Betty Pomante – Programs Assistant**  
**Karen Peace – Volunteer Trips Coordinator**  
**A staff of 16 in-home service aides**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2017 was a very exciting year for the Commission on Aging. Our renovation wrapped up at the end of March. We held an Open House in May and enjoyed some of our largest crowds ever that day.

In 2017, we were thrilled to start a new partnership with our local hospital to bring about the return of a monthly women's gathering. "Meet, Greet, and Eat" began in November. This event features a speaker and free lunch for around sixty local women on the second Wednesday of each month.

The other big highlight of 2017 was the beginning of a new partnership with the Dr. Robert W. Browne Aquatic Center. In September, the Commission on Aging used a federal grant to train an instructor in the Arthritis Foundation's Aquatic Program and started that class at the Aquatic Center. The first class filled immediately and demand has only increased since then! The success of this class has had a positive impact on senior programming at the pool. The Aquatic Center began offering a discounted rate for pool time to Burnside key tag holders. The response to this was very strong as well, and over time, the pool has increased the amount of hours included in this discount. Burnside has seen a positive impact as well, with many seniors coming to Burnside to get a key tag who wouldn't have come in otherwise. This contact gives us a chance to give them a tour and some information on what else we can offer.

The staff of the Commission on Aging remains dedicated to providing excellent service and meaningful programming to Branch County seniors. We look forward to meeting even more seniors in the coming years.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Duff MSW". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

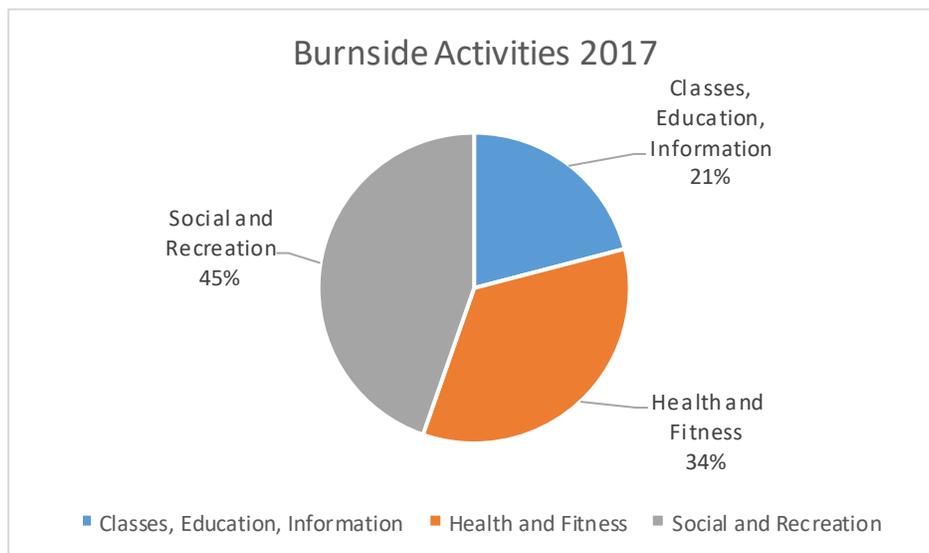
Branch County Commission on Aging  
Executive Director

## Burnside Center Open House May 2017



# SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES

The Burnside Center is well-known in the Branch County community for its many activities. In 2017, over 1,400 different seniors took advantage of the many activities, programs, and services held at the Burnside Center. Below is a chart showing the breakdown of activities by classification. Some of the social and recreational activities offered included various card games, billiards, wood carving, and Wii bowling. Health and fitness included the exercise rooms, various health screenings, exercise classes, and others. Classes and education included a variety of things, like stained glass, computer classes, and guitar lessons. No two days are exactly the same at Burnside! You can find a complete listing of activities in the Burnside Buzz newsletter or on our website, [www.burnsidecenter.com](http://www.burnsidecenter.com).



# **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

## INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

Information and referral services for older adults can be obtained by calling the Center. The information available is a directory of housing, food assistance, medical services, prescription assistance, and transportation, as well as various other services. This information source is kept current and includes local, state, and national resources. Information and referral at the Commission on Aging is provided by volunteers at the front desk and MMAP counselors, as well as by staff.

## MEDICARE/MEDICAID ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The MMAP (Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program) office continues to thrive. In 2017, the MMAP office was staffed by a part-time paid coordinator and five part-time volunteer counselors. The coordinator and counselors offer free appointments to Branch County residents to help them with any challenges or concerns they may have regarding Medicare and Medicaid eligibility and services. This includes help navigating the ever-changing rules and regulations and help comparing the confusing Medicare Part D prescription plans annually.

In 2017, 1,149 client contacts were recorded. The number of clients accessing MMAP services varies from year to year— often influenced by what’s going on in terms of state and/or federal changes to Medicare, Medicaid, and the insurance system in general.

## MEDICAL VAN TRANSPORTATION

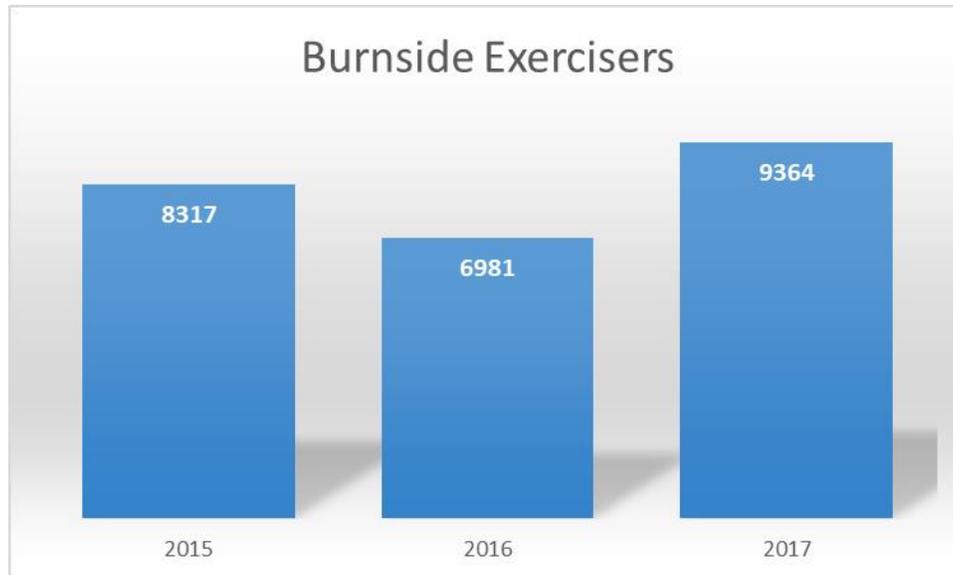
The medical van transportation program is a valuable service for Branch County seniors. This service is supported with grant funds as well as millage funds. COA owns a 2016 Dodge Grand Caravan for use in this program. COA also has a cooperative agreement with the Branch County VA office for use of their wheelchair ramp van if that type of transportation is needed.

The vans are driven by volunteer drivers who pick up older adults at their homes, transport them to medical offices, and return them to their homes. A donation to COA is suggested but is not required. The vans travel outside the local area as far away as Fort Wayne, Battle Creek, Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo, Lansing, and other locations. Many seniors find it a great relief to have someone else navigate for them in larger cities they are unfamiliar with. In 2017, the vans traveled a total of 14,020 miles during 358 trips.

## HEALTH AND FITNESS

In keeping with the increased national and state focus on health promotion and disease prevention for older adults, COA provides many health related activities at the Center. Those include: free blood pressure checks, free blood sugar testing, stress reduction massage therapy, foot clinics, hearing screenings, and more. In 2017, the Community Health Center of Branch County continued providing free blood sugar and blood pressure checks at Burnside twice a month. The service has been very popular.

Many older adults participate daily in the exercise room by using the treadmills, exercise bikes, NuSteps, and a variety of other equipment to stay healthy. Interest in physical activity and use of the exercise room is one of the major draws to Burnside. The chart below shows the trending increase in use of the exercise room.



The State of Michigan has placed a major emphasis on the benefits of evidence-based programs to help Michigianians improve their health and wellness. These include programs that have been researched, tested, and proven effective at improving health. In terms of evidence-based programs, Burnside continued to offer tai chi and Zumba Gold in 2017.

The Burnside Center also added a brand new evidence-based program, the Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program. This program involved a new partnership formed with the Dr. Robert W. Browne Aquatic Center in Coldwater. The Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program is a warm water exercise program designed to reduce pain and improve overall health. Exercises include range of motion, muscle strengthening, socialization, and a moderate aerobic component. Thirty-six seniors participated in our first two sessions.

#### KINSHIP CARE

The Kinship Care program is for grandparents raising grandkids and for other adults who are raising related children. This is a joint venture with the Branch Intermediate School District Early Education program. In 2017, the Branch County Coalition Against Domestic Violence also joined the partnership as a resource to provide oversight and educational programming to the older children.

This educational/support group was held monthly, typically on the second Tuesday of every month from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Dinner and child care are always provided in order to make it easier for caregivers to attend. This program is supported by state grant funds. Some meetings feature a speaker on a topic of interest, and other meetings offer time for caregivers

to network and support each other. In 2017, this group averaged 12 adults and 13 kids attending each meeting.

#### TRAVEL/TRIPS

Our travel program is run by a volunteer trips coordinator. Trips in 2017 included Cornwell's Dinner Theatre, Christmas Lites Tour at MIS, Mississippi River Cruise, and a very popular cruise to Cuba. The coordinator plans a variety of trips ranging from single-day trips within Michigan to week-long out-of-state trips. This variety helps us include seniors from different financial backgrounds. This program is self-sufficient - no grant or millage dollars are used for it.

#### CHORE PROGRAM

The Chore Program helps seniors with the occasional heavy-duty or high-energy jobs in the home such as leaf raking, snow shoveling, window washing, cleaning of attic/garage, etc. The Commission pays high school students or young adults to complete this work for seniors in their homes. This service is supported with federal grant funds and millage. In 2017, 175.75 hours of service were performed.

#### MEDICAL EQUIPMENT LOAN CLOSET

The Branch County Commission on Aging maintains an inventory of clean, gently-used durable medical equipment which is available on a long-term loan basis to Branch County residents who have a need for it. Types of items commonly available are walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs, commodes, toilet risers, and canes. This service is supported by monetary donations as well as by donations of equipment. The Commission on Aging loaned out 97 pieces of equipment in 2017.

## **FUNDING**

The Commission on Aging is funded by a variety of means.

The majority of funding, around 80%, is comprised of millage funds. The operational millage is in place from 2015-2019 at .4908 mills. The building millage is in place from 2011-2020 at .25 mills. The Commission on Aging also receives several state and federal grants to support the services it offers to Branch County seniors. The COA is also graciously supported by individuals and businesses through donations.

## IN-HOME SERVICES

In-Home Services is the Commission on Aging's most well-known and far-reaching service. In-Home Services provides older adults the option of remaining in their own homes for a longer period of time. The housekeeping, personal care, and respite care received from one of the 16 aides employed by the Commission assists not only the senior but the family caregivers, as well. With the respite service, aides provide primary care for older adults which allows their caregivers an opportunity to take a break. There was an average of 172 clients per month in 2017 receiving services.

Assistance is provided to clients with a limited number of hours per week in order to assist a larger number of Branch County clients. In 2017, the Commission on Aging performed 9,595 hours of homemaking, 714 hours of personal care, and 2,395.75 hours of respite for Branch County seniors.



# VOLUNTEERS

The Commission on Aging could not accomplish its many achievements each year without the help of our dedicated crew of volunteers. COA provides the Branch County area with a constructive way to utilize the vast array of talents and skills that our older adults possess. The Commission on Aging uses volunteers for answering the phones, maintaining the flowers, instructing almost all of the classes, assisting other seniors with Medicare questions, taking seniors to medical appointments, and a number of other jobs.

During 2017, 61 volunteers completed 8,480 hours of volunteer work. This saved the Commission on Aging \$99,476.55 in labor costs.



# BUILDING AND GROUNDS

In 2017, the major renovation project officially wrapped up at the end of March, however construction workers could still be seen at Burnside occasionally throughout the rest of the year. The response to the renovation has been very positive with more and more seniors taking advantage of the facility.





# IN CONCLUSION

The Branch County Commission on Aging is a successful model of senior services and programming. We are proud to host several groups per year who are coming to get ideas that they can emulate in their communities.

Branch County can be proud of the programs and services it currently offers to its older citizens and can look with excitement to what new and innovative things will be offered to future generations.

