

Is Defiance, Ohio Age-Friendly?

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ABSTRACT

Living in an age friendly community is very beneficial to all people. By being an age friendly community, older adults can bring different perspectives to many different parts of life. An age friendly community allows older adults to volunteer and to stay active in the community while also promoting their physical, mental, and social well-being.

A majority of the population will soon be over 65; therefore, it is in the community's best interest that they become an age friendly place to live including housing services, transportation, health and wellness services, and many more working pieces.

This presentation will take these qualifications into question and will decipher just how age friendly Defiance, Ohio is and the ways that the city can become better developed to cater to older adults needs.

CRITERIA FOR AN AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

Housing: accessible and affordable in locations with access to retail, transportation, and social services; safety at home and in the neighborhood.

Outdoor Spaces: pleasant and clean environment, places to rest, age-friendly pavement, safe pedestrian crossings, public toilets, and features for older customers.

Transportation: a range of options for people to get where they need and want to go including availability, affordability, reliability, frequency, and age friendly vehicles.

Social Environment: respectful behavior, age-friendly services, intergenerational interactions and collaboration, no economic exclusion.

Community Support: encouraging active engagement in community life and civic leadership; options for volunteering and employment for seniors.

Health and Wellness Services: accessible care; proximity and access to a wide range of health services both mentally and physically.

HOUSING

- The Laurels of Defiance is an assisted living facility and a nursing home. There is great accessibility as residents with any mode of transportation can easily get around the facility. The facility provides a wheelchair accessible bus providing transportation and community interaction. They also offer many options to stay connected with family and friends including telephones as well as offering welcoming environments for the families to visit the residents.
- Glenn Park is a facility that offers apartments to older adults to live in when they can no longer live alone. Glenn park facility is centrally located in the city of Defiance making it accessible and a great option for older adults who are looking for a place with more of a community aspect. Glenn Park offers maintenance services of lawn care, interior, and exterior, scheduled transportation to appointments, and other places in the community, and routine health care services including routine blood pressure checks and complimentary wellness needs assessments and RN consultations.
- Older adults can also stay in their own home or with family. The criteria for age friendly housing of one's own home would be dependent on each individual situation.

OUTDOOR SPACES

- The parks in Defiance that would be considered age friendly include Independence Dam state park, Old Fort Defiance park, Riverside park, Bronson park, Kingsbury park, and Canal park. These parks are known to have good walking paths, places for older adults to play with their grandchildren, and often live music.
- The Defiance mall and YMCA are very common places for older adults to go and walk laps and socialize with their friends especially during the winter months. The YMCA also provides the option to workout, swim, or play arcade games alongside others. These options give older adults a great source of physical activity as well as socialization. The senior center in Defiance is Defiance County Senior Services. This senior center provides many services including transportation, nutrition services, supportive services, and activities. Many of these activities include a multitude of programs, trips, and opportunities for older adults to find community while also participating in activities that they enjoy.

TRANSPORTATION

- United Way of Defiance County is a transportation specific organization that provides transportation for older adults. This service is willing to pick you up and take you to wherever you need or want to be taken to. They have to reside in Defiance County to be eligible and also, they have to be covered through their insurance. It is very common for older adults to use this service for reasons of legal, employment, and medical.
- "Defiance County Senior Services provides transportation to senior adults residing in Defiance County for medical appointments, therapy, grocery shopping and more." With these two services together, older adults residing in Defiance County have multiple options of services to use for transportation services. This gives the many services of trained drivers, safety and comfort, and driving conditions.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Defiance, Ohio provides many different opportunities through AARP. Volunteering is very important to give older adults great opportunities to help them to continue to make a difference in their community even after they retire. Ohio as a whole provides many opportunities including volunteering with the American Cancer Society, Red Cross, or Hospice centers.
- These events are often near to Defiance without being directly in it including the Disabled American Veteran's meeting as well as coffee hour. These volunteer opportunities not only provide the older adults with a great experience, but it also helps them to learn new skills in the workforce. All of these pieces and parts are helping to make Defiance, Ohio more of an age friendly community.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

- With the COVID-19 being the most prominent topic in most conversations currently, I feel that the fastest way to access the information and the new updates each day is Twitter. As more of a statewide rather than a city-wide way of receiving information from the governor this does not only specifically pertain to Defiance, but the whole state of Ohio.
- Twitter is not known as an age friendly way of transporting important information because not all older adults have this form of social media or know how to work it. Although I feel that with the recent events Twitter has been the quickest access to this information, our city and surrounding cities have also done a good job of providing information on this as well as other topics on TV's, in newspapers, and on the radio as well as other forms that older adults are used to.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

- The senior center in Defiance, Ohio provides numerous classes and activities for all aspects of life. As far as health and wellness, the center provides nutrition, Zumba, yoga, Tai Chi, and blood pressure classes as well as supportive services. These are all great options for older adults to stay active and keep themselves physically as well as mentally healthy.
- In Defiance, Meijer provides home delivery plans where you can set up to have your groceries delivered to you. This can be a great help to older adults who constantly need assistance to go anywhere or who have had their license taken away. This service helps to make it easier for older adults to continue to get their groceries without also having to rely on their family members.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, I feel that Defiance, Ohio is working its way to be a very age friendly town. As with anything there is always room for improvement especially in terms of social environment as we are moving to a more technologically savvy world. The places that have room for improvement would include social environment and community support. Defiance needs to work to help older adults' transition with the rest of the world into a more technological era. Defiance provides an array of community support for older adults, but I feel that there are places to add more of a variety of activities to include everyone. There would also be a place for an intergenerational activity that is currently not very common in Defiance. Overall, I feel that Defiance has a very good sense of the criteria making a city age friendly and are working towards making advances in the places where they might not be as age friendly.

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