

NEWS RELEASE: JUNE 16, 2009

### **Greene County Senior Citizens' Fund Board marks four years Wednesday**

The Greene County Senior Citizens' Fund Board marks its fourth anniversary Wednesday with a special luncheon and media availability designed to showcase projects funded by the Senior Citizens Services Fund.

Members of the media are invited to speak with Senior Fund Board members and representatives of benefiting senior agencies **Wednesday, June 17, 1 p.m., at Springfield's South Side Senior Center, 2215 S. Fremont Ave.** An Older Adults Transportation Service (OATS) bus, purchased through the Senior Citizens' Services Fund, will also be on hand. The media availability follows an 11 a.m. anniversary luncheon at the senior center.

Greene County voters approved the Senior Citizens' Services Fund in April of 2005, levying a 5-cent per \$100 assessed valuation property tax to fund services for Greene County seniors. State statute dictates the tax revenue may only be used for senior citizens' services.

The Greene County Commission appointed the seven-member volunteer Greene County Senior Citizens' Fund Board June, 2005, to administer the fund. Collection of the tax began in January, 2006. Since then, the board has appropriated more than \$4.3 million in grants for programs and agencies serving Greene County seniors age 60 and older, including home-delivered meals, transportation, utility bill and food assistance, personal care, respite care, nurse visits, lifeline units, home repair, and special needs such as dental, hearing, and vision. The board does not deal with individuals directly, but awards grants to agencies already providing services to seniors in the Greene County.

Board Chair Denny Pilant said the board's primary mission is to support services that enable seniors to continue living in their own homes as long as they can safely do so.

"An important board goal is to be a good steward of the taxpayer's money while providing funding for as many services as possible for Greene County seniors who need these services," said Denny Pilant, chair of the Greene County Senior Citizens' Fund Board. "Over the last four years, more than 8,000 individuals have been directly helped by the fund, and many others have indirectly benefited from the programs supported."

The fund supports projects through the Southwest Missouri Office on Aging, OATS, the Council of Churches of the Ozarks, The Salvation Army, Franciscan Villa, Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation (OACAC), the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Legal Aid of Southwest Missouri, United Way-Senior Link Collaborative, and the Alzheimer's Association. The fund also supports senior centers in Greene County, which provide nutritious and affordable lunches other programs for seniors. Other projects include a shingles vaccine program through the Springfield-Greene County Health Department and distribution of the "Yellow Book" senior services directory to senior residents of Greene County.

"We have been able to help so many seniors stay independent and in their homes with programs that, prior to the board's funding, there were no resources for," said Dorothy Knowles, Chief Executive Officer of the Southwest Missouri Office on Aging. "We're able to do things that no other programs cover, particularly with hearing and dental assistance, transportation and in-home services. It's a blessing to all of Greene County."

For more information, call Denny Pilant, chair of the Greene County Senior Citizens' Fund Board, at 417-866-1133; or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 417-379-5713.

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