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Queen Anne's at Home promotes 'aging in place'

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The Queen Anne's at Home Board of Directors includes, pictured, Jinny Guy, Russ Mail, Linda Schuerholz, George Foss and Peggy Schaefer; and, not pictured, Margan Glover and Adalberto Soldani.

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Statistics compiled by the AARP show close to 90% of people over 55 are choosing to remain in their own homes as long as possible. This is a growing trend across the country referred to as "aging in place." To work toward this goal, organizations are evolving across the country with a mission to assist seniors in this endeavor. Queen Anne's at Home is one such organization, created to serve residents of Queen Anne's County.

QA@H is a membership-driven organization based on the model of the Village to Village Network. This network supports the creation of a virtual village comprising seniors in a community having the common goal of helping themselves age in place and thrive in their community. Members can seek help as they need it from time to time and offer help to other members as they are able.

This reciprocity helps build on QA@H's three foundational principles: empowerment, connection and purpose.

This group is all about helping seniors help each other by staying safe, healthy, connected and

independent at home as long as possible. There are annual membership dues and subsidies are available.

Members identify the skills and talents they are willing to share with each other. Through the website, members can put in a service request that might involve help with a small household repair, a ride to a doctor visit or even watering plants while away for a few days. The recipient of that help is not obligated to return the favor to the same individual but will provide help to another member at some point in time.

The key to achieving the goal of remaining at home is having a plan and being organized. One benefit of QA@H membership is a Senior Navigation Plan, a tool developed to help members as they think about the future. This tool facilitates the creation a life plan, and offers a means of collecting and organizing vital personal and household information. These organizational strategies are designed to ease communication between partners, extended family, doctors and others should the unexpected happen.

The Senior Navigation Plan is provided as a physical binder including a series of documents that can be maintained either in the binder, on a computer or in online storage places. Binder materials are updated periodically and are available to members online at QueenAnnesAtHome.org.

Monthly workshops are designed around the Senior Navigation Plan. Experts in areas such as senior life planning, emergency planning, home safety, elder law and more offer presentations and answer questions that help members accomplish their personal goals as they think about the future.

Members learn how to adapt to changing situations that may be encountered as they age in place. They learn about emerging technology that will make it easier to stay safe, stay well, stay connected and stay independent at home, and about support programs and resources available in Queen Anne's County.

In addition to the monthly workshops, small guided discussion groups tackle in-depth issues, such as evaluating personal needs and goals, and developing contingency plans for future living. These discussions are focused on being proactive while thinking ahead.

QA@H members have many opportunities to remain connected with each other. Once a month, there is a morning coffee gathering where there may be feedback from a previous workshop, a short informational discussion led by a local entrepreneur or a behind-the-scenes tour. There are also late-afternoon happy hours at local establishments.

For information about Queen Anne's at Home, visit [QueenAnnes AtHome.org](http://QueenAnnesAtHome.org), email info@QueenAnnesAtHome.org, write to P.O. Box 164, Centreville MD 21617, or call 410-635-4045.