

FROM:



**BROOKLINE COMMUNITY AGING NETWORK
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For immediate release, please

BrooklineCAN Launches Age-Friendly Business Campaign

BrooklineCAN, an all-volunteer organization which enables older residents to remain independent and fully engaged in the life of the community, has launched an Age-Friendly campaign to urge Brookline businesses to incorporate features that make them hospitable to seniors. The Brookline Chamber of Commerce is co-sponsoring the campaign, which also encourages Brookline residents to patronize local businesses incorporating age-friendly features.

Businesses can be accommodating to seniors in many practical ways such as providing print material in large sizes, making web sites easy to navigate, providing bright lighting and doors that are easily opened, controlling noise levels, making rest rooms available to customers, and offering discounts to seniors.

Brookline businesses are encouraged to apply for recognition as "Age Friendly." Application forms are available on the BrooklineCAN website, http://www.brooklinecan.org/age_friendly_business.html. BrooklineCAN will publicize the age-friendly features offered by participating businesses and will call attention to their unique age-friendly features. Participating businesses will be recognized at a public event that will serve as the climax for the Campaign.

Businesses have many reasons to be age-friendly:

- In 2010, Brookline had more than 10,000 residents who were 60+; they represented more than 18% of the Town's population.
- Between 2010 and 2030, the 60+ population of Brookline is expected to increase by 41%.

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- Older people vary greatly in income and wealth; Brookline seniors include many employed or retired professionals who have substantial clout as consumers.
- The older population includes many grandparents. Among them, some spend significantly to support grandchildren.
- Many economic benefits accrue to businesses and communities that recognize older people as customers, workers, and entrepreneurs.
- Features that make businesses attractive to older people are often welcome by customers of all ages.

BrooklineCAN is seeking wide-ranging business participation. Street-level, retail businesses, “upper-story” service providers, and services delivered to people’s homes are encouraged to participate. Businesses are eligible if they are physically located in Brookline, have a valid business license, and strive to make their business hospitable to older people.

BrooklineCAN will arrange for training for businesses on ways in which customer-service employees can be sensitive to special needs of older customers. BrooklineCAN also will offer consultation on ways in which print materials can be designed for older readers with visual limitations.

This Brookline initiative follows previous BrooklineCAN projects that recognize businesses for specific age-friendly features such as rest rooms open to the public <http://www.brooklinecan.org/restrooms.html> and buildings with automatic door openers <http://www.brooklinecan.org/autodoors.html>.

The Brookline campaign is patterned on age-friendly business initiatives in New York City and Washington, D.C, which developed check lists of age-friendly business features.

For additional information about the BrooklineCAN Age-Friendly Business Campaign, contact Frank Caro at 617 739 9228 or frank.caro@gmail.com.

For additional information about the Brookline Community Aging Network and to request a copy of BrooklineCAN’s informative monthly newsletter, visit <http://www.brooklineCAN.org> or call 617-730-2777.