



**Blount County**  
**Office on Aging Annual Report**  
July 2014 - June 2015

**Blount County Senior Service Directory.** The eighth edition of the directory was delivered in May. The public library is storing the books, and quantities are available by calling the library. County businesses, governments and nonprofits all distribute directories. Twenty thousand copies were printed.

**Blount County's Second Aging Summit** was held on December 9, 2014, with direct assistance from the ten-member Senior Action Council. 90 community leaders attended, representing government, business, nonprofits and churches. Keynote speaker Madeline Rogero, reported on the findings of the Governor's Task Force on Aging of which she was a member. This was followed by a report on the SMiles program and small group discussions aimed at identifying the top local senior issues. During the reporting out from each table, several key senior issues became apparent:

- **Educating seniors and caregivers about available resources and connecting them more effectively**
- **Adult day services**
- **Housing choices and options**

The common resources named included churches, an expanded Office on Aging, and community volunteers. The barrier named most often was money, followed by difficulty to reach and serve those in need of help, and crisis orientation of families. The organizational/infrastructure needs included a central clearinghouse for all information, a task force to create solutions, and sharing of resources.

**Blount Seniors Website.** As a result of the aging summit, a task force is working on the development of a senior-friendly local website that will more easily connect needs with resources. The project is currently in the RFP stage. Advertising revenue from the Blount County community will be used to sustain the site in future years.

**CHIRP.** Four volunteers, including three seniors, continue to make cheery phone calls to homebound elderly as part of the Telephone Reassurance program. Callers are each assigned specific people to call each week. In a twelve-month period 438 calls were provided.

**Musical Memories.** Providing favorite music to older people enriches their lives and sparks a renewed interest in communication, according to research. Several volunteers piloted this program, which involves creating customized playlists for residents at Fairpark Nursing Home. Staff and volunteers distribute the headphones and iPods to residents and push the "play" buttons. Currently there are 20 seniors benefitting from Musical Memories; however, plans are in the works to expand the program to another local institution.

**SMiles.** Senior-friendly transportation continues to thrive in Blount County as the volunteer drivers deliver seniors to hundreds of destinations each month. Medical trips constitute about half of the rides. Personal trips come in second.

Year	Trips	Miles	Hours	Value	Riders	Drivers	NOTES	Rides/Mo
2013-14	3,222	20,858	2,755	\$46,843	84	60		269
2014-15	5,036	27,761	4,049	\$68,837	126	42	RIDERS: 14 deceased, 35 inactive, 4 waiting	420
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,258</b>	<b>48,619</b>	<b>6,804</b>	<b>\$115,680</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>102</b>	DRIVERS: 17 inactive, 1 deceased, 1 declined	344 Avg

**Focus on Seniors.** *The Daily Times*, Maryville’s daily newspaper, publishes a monthly column written by the Office on Aging Director. Topics during the past year have included Heat and Cyber Safety, Caregiving Options, Medicare, Appreciation, Myths of Aging, Romance Scams, Pet Ownership and Dementia. Many local seniors are reading the information and commenting on it.

**Presentations at Blount County Public Library.** The Focus on Seniors educational series takes place from September through April each year in partnership with the Blount County Public Library. Six topics were covered during the 2014-15 season: legal issues, Medicare and Medicare Part D, Alzheimer’s & dementia, home health and hospice, and caring for the caregiver. There were 231 people in attendance at the various presentations.

**Community Presentations and Fairs.** In the past twelve months the Office on Aging has made 16 presentations to various community groups, attended 37 community meetings, and participated in 6 health/senior fairs.

**Information & Assistance.** Between July, 2014 and June, 2015, 530 units of information & assistance and 508 units of outreach were given by the office.

**Advocacy.** The OOA director is committed to advocacy on behalf of Blount County’s seniors in a number of venues, ensuring that the needs of the elderly are considered when planning or changes are negotiated. Seniors are also encouraged to advocate on their own behalf with business and government leaders.

**Staffing.** The Blount County Office on Aging staff consists of a full-time director, a part-time SMiles manager, two half-time SCSEP employees and one clerical volunteer.

Submitted by Joani Shaver, Director  
Blount County Office on Aging