

Organizing a Caregiver Resource Fair

What is a Resource Fair?

A resource fair is a convenient way to share information in your community by offering resources—materials, programming, activities, giveaways, video, speakers, and so on—in one location. Coordinating a caregiver resource fair will enable you to tap into local organizations that also offer help and information. Whether you create a stand-alone event or participate in a larger event (such as a health resource fair), you will be able to enhance and extend the impact of the PBS documentary *Caring for Your Parents*.

Before the Resource Fair

- **Decide on a goal.** Research what aspects of aging and caretaking are the most needed in your community—for example, housing, medical care, or transportation. Adding a focus to the fair will make it less overwhelming.
- **Identify your audience.** Will you be providing information for elders, caretakers, health care agencies, or policymakers?
- **Find partners.** Consider teaming up with your local chapter of AARP, the National Association of Social Workers, or Area Agency on Aging. You will be able to provide more resources and publicize the event more widely. Other groups to consider include public libraries, social services organizations, pharmacies, faith-based organizations, and local businesses.
- **Hold a planning meeting.** Discuss the details and logistics with your partners: what is the budget? Who pays for what? When should the event be? What supplies are needed? What is the best venue? Where can you find volunteers?
- **Develop a timeline.** Make sure everyone knows what is due when, and who is responsible for what. Create a contact sheet for all organizers.
- **Publicize, publicize, publicize!** Use a wide variety of local outlets: newspapers, e-newsletters, the public library, bulletin boards, schools, hospitals, health clinics, coffee shops, and more! In addition to creating notices and flyers, be sure you create attractive signage for the event itself.

At the Resource Fair

- **Distribute materials.** Set up tables in order to distribute handouts about caregiving (pbs.org/caringforyourparents/community/index.html). You may also want to download individual chapters of *The Caregiver's Handbook* to address additional issues. You can also display recommended books; a local bookstore may be willing to sell books. Ask your partners and volunteers to help staff the tables.

- **Offer a screening of *Caring for Your Parents*.** A screening is a great way to get the audience engaged. From the DVD screener, choose highlights from the film and/or the complete 30-minute expert panel, “A Conversation About Caring,” led by Dr. Art Ulene.
- **Assemble a local panel of experts.** Brainstorm who could be part of a local panel, such as a geriatric social worker, a gerontologist, a representative from the Area Agency on Aging or Council on Aging, and caretakers. Ask your local public television or cable channel to broadcast the panel. Choose a moderator who can keep the conversation focused and flowing.
- **Leave plenty of time for questions.** Caretaking can be an emotional subject. Encourage the audience to be brief but be prepared to summarize their questions when necessary. If possible, offer sign-up sheets so that participants can meet one-on-one with experts.

After the Resource Fair

- **Evaluate the event with your partners.** Was it successful? How might you improve it?
- **Start planning for the next one!** Consider a follow-up event or a resource fair at a different time or venue.

FOR HANDOUTS, RESOURCES, AND MORE, CHECK OUT
pbs.org/caringforyourparents

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