



**NEWS RELEASE – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

Release Date: Friday, June 30, 2017

Contact: Jenni Lewis, Community Outreach

F-32 PO Box 500

Rio Grande, OH 45674

Phone: 1.800.582.7277, extension 22224

E-Mail: [jlewis@aaa7.org](mailto:jlewis@aaa7.org)

Website: [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org)

---

## **Local Wellness Volunteer Encourages Others to Participate**

Many people in our communities live with a chronic disease. This could include conditions like diabetes, COPD, heart disease, arthritis, and other health issues that individuals live with daily in their life. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, half of all American adults have at least one chronic condition, and almost one of three have multiple chronic conditions.

Several years ago, the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7), in a joint effort with the Ohio Department of Aging, began the development of a wellness initiative to bring classes to the community, for those age 60 and over, to help with chronic disease self-management, diabetes self-management, and falls management. Designated staff members of the AAA7 were trained in these initiatives and became “master trainers”, allowing them to teach others in the community to become “community coaches”. These volunteer coaches help others in their hometown or county discover helpful ways to live with their chronic diseases and become empowered to take better care of themselves.

Don Davis of Scioto County is one of those individuals who has been serving as a volunteer community coach in order to help others in his community who are living with a chronic disease. Having been active in the aging field at both the local and state level for almost 40 years, and living with two chronic illnesses himself, Davis was drawn to the call for volunteers after reading a newspaper article. He’s been volunteering in this capacity since September 2015.

Through his volunteer role, Davis is teamed up with an additional volunteer community coach. Together, they work to present the materials to participants and encourage and facilitate dialogue throughout the six-week course that is provided to participants at no cost. AAA7 provides both the technical course and material training to potential community coaches on how to instruct the sessions, and prepares them before they start their class. The AAA7 also provides all course materials and co-instructors, secures the training site, schedules the sessions, and registers participants. Potential volunteers only

need to give of their time – all materials and training is provided to each volunteer at no cost.

Through the workshops, community coaches provide support to participants and discuss helpful topics such as: learning ways to deal with pain, fatigue and depression; discovering ways to be more physically active; learning how to eat healthier; learning better ways to talk with physicians and family about health issues; setting personal goals; and finding ways to relax and better deal with stress. Davis shares that what he feels those attending find most useful varies from person to person, but that through the basic information presented and sharing time during the workshop, several ideas are usually discovered and found useful by those who attend.

“Being a coach is one of the most rewarding experiences that I have ever felt,” Davis shares. “All you have to do is see a participant respond as if they just had an “a-ha!” minute or have them tell you that they have found something new which they tried and it worked! This happens frequently in the various sessions we present.”

Davis encourages those who are interested to consider becoming a community coach. The AAA7 is currently recruiting for volunteer community coaches in the following counties: Gallia, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton.

“As I have discovered, we make a difference,” he says. “I have seen participants try something new and embrace it; others have blossomed and acted as ‘assistant coaches’; many have taken significant steps in accepting their condition and finding effective ways of dealing with it. If we have helped only one participant in a particular session, we have made their life better. What more can you ask?”

The AAA7 currently has a Community Coach Training coming up in Jackson, Ohio, beginning July 10<sup>th</sup>. Those who are interested must attend all five days of the training: July 10, 11, 12, 17 and 18. Training will be held at the Jackson County Water Company, located at 124 West Huron Street in Jackson each day noted from 9:00 am – 4:30 pm.

To register for the training or if you have questions, please call Carla Cox (extension 284) or Vicky Abdella (extension 254) at 1-800-582-7277.

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7's Resource Center is also available to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the

Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a specially-trained staff member who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an in-home assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org), or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org). The Agency also has a Facebook page located at [www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7](http://www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7).

###



*Don Davis of Scioto County has been a community wellness coach volunteer with the Area Agency on Aging District 7 since September 2015. He is encouraging others to participate in this capacity as a way to give back to the community.*