



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

Release Date: Tuesday, June 7, 2006

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Shawnee State OT Students Receive Falls Management Training Through AAA7

A group of Occupational Therapy (OT) graduate students at Shawnee State University recently became trained as community coaches for the evidence-based falls management program, *A Matter of Balance*, offered locally through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7).

A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls, is designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels among older adults. Participants in the class learn to set realistic goals to increase activity, change their environment to reduce fall risk factors, and learn simple exercises to increase strength and balance. Attending classes can help improve quality of life and independence.

In a study of participants after six months following the *A Matter of Balance* program, 97 percent are more comfortable talking about their fear of falling; 97 percent feel comfortable with increasing their activity level; 99 percent plan to continue exercising; and 98 percent would recommend *A Matter of Balance*.

Dr. Christine Raber, professor in the Master of Occupational Therapy program, notes that becoming trained as *A Matter of Balance* community coach accomplishes many valuable objectives for students and older adults receiving the program. “We are so grateful to be able to partner with AAA7 as part of the *A Matter of Balance* program,” she said. “Falls prevention is an essential component of occupational therapy services across the healthcare continuum, and being able to reach out to older adults living in the community is an invaluable learning experience for our students. Becoming a community coach builds our students’ falls prevention skills and aligns perfectly with our experiential learning curriculum design. Additionally, since we have students from across Ohio and the tri-state region, they can continue their involvement in *A Matter of Balance* after graduation, which can benefit older adults in their communities.”

Those students who completed the course from Shawnee State University included Allison Black, Steffenie Camarata, Kelsey Douglas, Megan Flower, Doug Gentile, Taylour Hoyt, Megan Litwiller, Amanda McCoy, Tyler McDaniels, Jonathan Upholz, Anthony Rosco and Jennifer Werring.

If you or someone you love could benefit from helpful hints regarding falls prevention, *A Matter of Balance* is a program specifically designed to help with these and other similar concerns. The AAA7 has a number of Matter of Balance classes scheduled throughout 2016. The series of classes are free of charge and held over several weeks for any community member age 60 or older who feels they may benefit from this class. For more information about class location, or just general information about the program, call 1-800-582-7277.

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7 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 nurse or social worker 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, or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at info@aaa7.org. The Agency also has a Facebook page located at www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7.

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Graduate Occupational Therapy students from Shawnee State University display their certificates after completing a training to serve as community coaches for the *A Matter of Balance* falls prevention class.