

# The Community of the Blessed Sacrament

## Senior Findings Report

This report is based on findings from an in-pew all-parish survey that was completed by those attending parish liturgies held on a weekend in April 2004. Most of the questions were derived from CARA's (Georgetown University) database of nationally tested questions, with some designed specifically for our parish; a vision planning ministry's demographics study; an Interfaith Network of Scottsdale Senior Life Options panel discussion and parish ministry lead interviews.

### Parish Demographic Summary:

- 2,180 Families listed on Parish Data System (PDS)
- Age Distribution:
  - 16-29: PDS: 21% Survey: 7% Parishes Nationally: 9% All Catholics: 21%
  - 30-49: PDS: 41% Survey: 27% Parishes Nationally: 38% All Catholics: 48%
  - 50-59: PDS: 17% Survey: 22% Parishes Nationally: 19% All Catholics: 13%
  - 60-69: PDS: 12% Survey: 26% Parishes Nationally: 17% All Catholics: 9%
  - 70-79: PDS: 6% Survey: 14% Parishes Nationally: 13% All Catholics: 7%
  - 80+: PDS: 3% Survey: 4% Parishes Nationally: 4% All Catholics: 2%
  - Age distribution within 6 zip codes, in which 80% of our parishioners live, per census: 28% are 45-64 and 30% are 65+
  - In our parish and in the surrounding zip codes, age group 45-64 is much larger than the national average; 40% of the population is over 45; the fastest growing population by percentage increase is people over 85. Therefore, providing services and ministry to seniors is increasingly more important.
  - 55 average age of person completing in-pew survey
  - 36 average age of 6,595 participants on PDS
  - 45 average age of participants over age 16 on PDS
  - Due to differential mortality between men and women, surviving members of this generation are now disproportionately female. In our parish this is significant especially aged 80+! Those over 16 in PDS: 47% are male and 53% are female
- Relationship to Parish: 1,334 survey respondents: 66% were registered, 16% attended parish regularly but were not registered; 52% live closer to another Catholic church
- Income: Parish target area is very affluent – with some of the highest income zip codes in AZ. 23% of households in area make over \$100,000; 59% of the households make \$50,000 (US average is \$21,033). People in target parish area predominately have retirement plans. Therefore, our parish has a greater need for social programs and services versus individual financial needs – this is reflected in the priorities listed below.
- Age 62 and older per in-pew survey respondents:
  - Were especially likely to rate the sense of the of community within the parish and efforts to create a community with a giving lifestyle as “excellent.”
  - Outreach to Seniors: Only 3 in ten rate outreach to seniors as excellent; only 1 in 6 rate outreach to widows and widowers as excellent (although it should be noted that 8 of 10 of those involved in one or more parish ministries rate outreach to seniors as excellent).
  - Receiving communion weekly, or more often, if possible, is very important
- Priorities of Parish per survey respondents:
  - Nearly 9 in 10 of respondents gave some priority to parish senior programs
  - 2 of 3 respondents gave very high priority to sacredness of human life
  - 5 of 10 gave very high priority to family oriented and senior programs
  - 7 of 10 at least somewhat would like to have a dedicated building on the parish premises that would incorporate activities for seniors (4 in 10 considered this a very high priority)

## **The Community of the Blessed Sacrament Senior Findings Report**

### **Needs in order of most requested:**

1. On-premise building dedicated to senior programs – programs and planned activities that are diversified to address the wide variety of physical capabilities, mental capabilities and interests of our seniors, i.e. day care, trips, educational programs, fitness programs, art projects, elder hostels, adopt a grandparent...
2. Referral services that can keep pace with increasing number of seniors within the parish boundaries (all denominations)
3. Relief for seniors ministering to seniors: i.e. day care centers, assistance with healthcare needs; caregiver training and outside socialization opportunities
4. Loneliness: Not enough options available for seniors to socialize outside of homes and group homes or to be meaningfully *engaged* in the community. i.e. create a caring culture within the parish community - led by a core ministry team that meets regularly with seniors to “listen” and then address their needs and see #1, #5 and #8
5. Work and service opportunities for seniors – they want to be useful, asked to help and appreciated. i.e. assist with mailings, money counters, prayer lines, office work, craftsmanship, card writing, mentoring with families...
6. Spiritual interactions – Eucharist, homily videos/tapes, home visits and praying with others....
7. Elder Care Ministry – i.e. Core group that organizes: healthcare professional ministry – to plan and assist with healthcare programs – i.e. flu shots, health checks, parish nurse, Rx watches... fundraisers and Endowment Fund programs to raise funds for senior programs; communications (newsletters, mailings, brochures, resource library); develop a grantmanship team...
8. Lack of, high cost and availability (long waits) of transportation for homebound and disabled
9. Bereavement, grieving and spiritual aspects of death programs
10. Community events/activities with all ages within parish community
11. Financial assistance for paid caregivers and addressing high turnover of caregivers.
12. Cost and availability for grocery delivery to homebound
13. Unavailability of affordable medical care and prescriptions

And almost all requested... not to be identified as seniors or aging – to have innovative ways to market services, i.e. prime-timers, care by design...