

## January Notes From the Director

### New Year, New Mission, New Possibility

I would like to point out two pieces of special importance in this month's newsletter. The first is a new statement of the Center's mission that appears on page two.

The Center's mission has become a key concern in our work. Now more than ever it is clear to staff and Board members that the Center cannot be all things to all people in our towns. The needs of seniors have far outgrown our capacity to keep up. We need a new vision rooted in new social networks and new forms of collaboration among public and private organizations.

Many mission statements spend most of their time in a file cabinet or gathering dust on a shelf. What you see on page two is a work in progress, but it brings us a step closer to having a real living document - a workable vision that we can work into the very fabric of our daily work. It may be "out ahead of the curve" compared to what we actually do, but it presents a vision of where we believe we need to be headed.

From the beginning of my time as director, we have tried to bring our internal conversation about what Senior Center's role in our towns should be into the public arena. This is another attempt to do this. Please read this statement carefully and weigh in with your questions, observations, and comments. Help us to shape a new Center where our staff, structure, and programs are more coherent with the vital needs of elders.

The second item I want to share is also an opportunity to be part of this exciting conversation - the Conversation Cafe schedule for 2009. As you will see, the theme of the series is neighborhood building, which is the heart of our new mission focus. Each session will provide the people of West County with an opportunity to wrestle with some of the key questions that confront us in these times of economic struggle and social change. As the session titles suggest, such times can become an opportunity for new possibilities.

I encourage you to pin the schedule on your fridge, and to spread the word. They will be vibrant, engaging sessions that will provide food for thought and, hopefully, inspiration for new ways of seeing, thinking, and living together.