

A WIN-WIN-WIN FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Beyond the obvious benefits to our Seniors and other vulnerable residents week in and week out, and in the event of an emergency, participation in the Neighborhood Buddy Initiative benefits everyone—Senior participants are able to offer watchful eyes in the neighborhood, occasional light child care duties, and wise counsel grounded in the perspective of long experience.

The town benefits by creating a back-up system for our first responders who may be overwhelmed with calls in the event of a crisis, and reassured to know that members of the community are equipped and willing to assist.



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To sign up as a helper:
<https://princeton.seamlessdocs.com/f/5ppar9jufkod>

To register in our vulnerable residents database:
<https://princeton.seamlessdocs.com/w/PrincetonPreparesIntake>



Princeton's Neighborhood Buddy Initiative



Princeton, New Jersey
The Best Small City in America



Buddy Benefits

The Neighborhood Buddy Initiative hopes to build on a trend of growing neighborhood organizing in town to encourage residents to take an older or otherwise vulnerable neighbor under their wing and check in on them to make sure they are safe in the event of any kind of local emergency.

Sustainable Princeton, as part of their Climate Action Plan, hopes to organize neighborhoods around changing behavior and increasing sustainability, partly by improving resiliency in the face of extreme climate events.

The Princeton Senior Resource Center (PSRC) hopes to advance our status as the first certified Age-Friendly community in New Jersey, by building neighborhood cohesion, facilitating aging in place, and further integrating Seniors into the life of the community.

IDENTIFYING THE NEED

Those who have lived in Princeton for ten years or more have seen multiple instances of flooding, downed trees, sustained power outages, unrelenting heat waves, and most recently, traffic-snarling snowstorms. Any one of these can put vulnerable residents at risk, and impede the ability of first responders to access those residents in need of assistance. Climate change will only increase the frequency and severity of these extreme climate events.

FINDING A BUDDY

Are you an older adult without children living in the Princeton area, who would feel more secure knowing that your neighbors would be willing to look in on you from time to time? Are you a new member of the community who would like to become more engaged in town? Are you a senior with lots of time on your hands who would like to get to know your younger neighbors and stay active and vital? Are you a baby boomer with aging parents in another part of the country who wishes there was someone you could count on to check in on your parents? If you meet any of the above descriptions, you are a perfect candidate for the Buddy Initiative. We can help you find your counterpart.

OPTIONAL TRAINING

The local Office of Emergency Planning has in the past offered Community Emergency Response Training (CERT), and plans to offer it again in conjunction with the Neighborhood Buddy Initiative. For residents who would like to participate in the Buddy System, but feel anxious about their ability to respond in an emergency, this training program gives you all the tools you need to be effective in a crisis. It includes basic first aid, elementary fire-fighting methods, and perhaps most important, training to know how and when to call for help.

MAKING IT WORK

The office of Emergency Planning already has a database of local residents who may need assistance in the event of an emergency—folks with medical conditions who may need rapid response in a power outage. But there are difficulties with keeping the information up to date; registration is voluntary; and the existence of the program is not widely known.

Our neighborhood associations may be best equipped to address these shortcomings. Neighbors who are willing to reach out often know best who might need help in a crisis, and a friendly familiar face may be more welcome than a uniformed representative of the local government.

The key is to make contact before an emergency arises, and to build a relationship over time—help your elderly neighbor out by bringing in their newspaper for them, rolling the trash out to the curb, or shoveling the walk. Then, when a more urgent need arises, a relationship of trust will already exist.



PSRC Grand Pals program in action