



FROM THE CEO, DREW DYSON

National Senior Center Month

Dear Friends,

Each September, the National Council on Aging celebrates “National Senior Center Month” by recognizing the important role such community centers play in enriching and extending the lives of older adults. In May of this year, NCOA released the findings of its study *The State of Today’s Senior Centers: Successes, Challenges, and Opportunities*. This month, as we celebrate the role PSRC plays in our community, I would like to highlight a few findings from this landmark study that will be important as we look to the future.

- **Generational Differences Expand.** The study highlighted the challenge for modern senior centers to serve the growing cohort of older adults. Currently PSRC, whose mission is to serve adults age fifty-five and above, serves FOUR (4) generations of older adults: Greatest Generation (age 98+), Silent Generation (ages 77–97), Baby Boomers (ages 58–76), and now our first cohort of Generation X (ages 42–57). As one can imagine, the concerns, interests, and perspectives of these cohorts varies greatly and programming must respond to this wide range of needs.
- **Language Matters.** Many of today’s older adults simply don’t consider themselves to be in the “senior” category. One study participant, reflecting myriad similar sentiments from the study, reported: “I am almost sixty but I don’t consider myself a ‘senior’ ...and I don’t see myself going to the senior center. What is there for me?” I have spoken with members of our own community in their late seventies/early eighties who are still looking forward to the day they are ready for “the senior center.” We must grapple with, and modernize, our language to reflect this new reality.
- **Technology is Key — AND — Access is still limited.** The study shows the important role that technology played in successful senior centers throughout the pandemic — and the critical role technology will play from now on. Thankfully, with a skilled staff and volunteer tech team, PSRC adapted quickly to technology — and our new building represents one of the first senior centers in the nation built with hybrid technology as a centerpiece. At the same time, seniors without access to technology (either due to finances or ability) may become increasingly isolated without consistent in-person programming options.
- **Health and Well-being is Critical.** Older adults are increasingly focused on improving their health through education, information, access to health care services, and fitness programs. Our research and interviews during our strategic planning process clearly showed health and wellness as the top concern of older adults not currently connected with PSRC — and offering new programs such as pickleball, contra dancing, and Feldenkrais, are critical to engaging these emerging cohorts.

This national research study is both an affirmation of PSRC’s service to the community for the last five decades and a challenge for us to continue our evolution to meet the emerging needs of new generations of older adults while retaining our core commitment to help *all* older adults thrive. In the days ahead, you will hear some of the ways we are responding to this changing landscape, and we invite you to join us on this journey of progress. Together, we will continue to live out our vision to be “an indispensable community asset for older adults and their families as they navigate the journey of aging.”

All the Best,
Drew A. Dyson, PhD
Chief Executive Officer