



2023
YEAR IN REVIEW



Mission

AgeOptions innovates, partners and advocates to improve systems and services in order to strengthen communities so people thrive as they age.

Our Core Values:

Commitment,
Integrity and
Connectedness

Vision

People thriving
as they age.



2023 By the Numbers

2,139,296

Home Delivered Meals

1,337

participants in health promotion programs statewide

Meals provided to

21,685

clients

230,976

Individuals Reached By AgeOptions and our partners



1,011

Caregivers counseled and trained

12,789

Individuals reached statewide Jun 1, 2022 through May 21, 2023 in Illinois SMP

5,085

Callers were helped by information and assistance team at AgeOptions

339

COVID shots given in FY23; Total COVID shots given since inception: 7,821

639

Individuals were served by Advisery, including 588 who attended one or more events

AgeOptions Diversity Statement

The diversity of our organization and communities is a rich asset that strengthens our mission and guides our decisions and direction.

Statement of Non-discrimination

AgeOptions does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in compliance with appropriate state and federal statutes.

2023 in Review

“AgeOptions innovates, partners, and advocates to improve systems and services in order to strengthen communities so people thrive as they age.”

A Letter from Rose Canonaco and Diane Slezak

During 2022/2023, AgeOptions refocused our priorities based upon the perspective and experience accrued during the COVID 19 pandemic. Our core functions as an area agency on aging allowed us to distribute federal American Rescue Plan Act funding to community partners that delivered essential services to older adults, supporting their ability to live safely at home. We were flexible and responsive in using these funds to expand access to home-delivered meals and other services that reduced isolation and supported family caregivers.

With our funded partner organizations, we served 230,976 individuals across 130 communities and focused on the following priorities through a (DREI) Diversity Racial Equity Inclusion lens:

- Social Isolation
- Food Security
- Improved Integration with Health Care Providers
- Home Preservation
- Improving economic security - Supporting older adults access to benefits
- Supporting (unpaid) family caregivers



We sharpened our focus on diversity, racial equity and inclusion as the Board of Directors, Advisory Council and staff collectively and individually committed to developing and advancing DREI goals.

Achievements over the year include the most comprehensive needs assessment we have published in 30+ years, expanded caregiver initiatives, continued growth of the meal delivery, programs to address social isolation, continued success of the Home Options Path to Empowerment (H.O.P.E.) by AgeOptions program to move people back into the community and other programs you will learn about in this report. Advocacy for older adults is always at the heart of our work.



Thank you to the many organizations and people who partner with us to make a collective impact in assuring that people thrive as they age.

Rose Canonaco

Rose Canonaco
Chair, AgeOptions Board of Directors

Diane Slezak

Diane Slezak
AgeOptions President and
Chief Executive Officer



OUR COMPREHENSIVE
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A Beginning, Not an End

AgeOptions commissioned the University of Illinois at Chicago Institute on Disability and Human Development to conduct a comprehensive Needs Assessment. Focused on changing demographics and increased diversity of suburban Cook County older adults, the report underscores the impact of Social Determinants of Health, highlighting the stark disparities in life expectancy among older Black and Brown adults across different zip codes in the region. Moreover, the findings starkly illuminate the heightened vulnerability of non-English-speaking older adults to social isolation.



This report serves as a beginning and not an end. We will use it as a living document to inform and shape our programs, services, and advocacy strategies in substantive and meaningful ways. AgeOptions invites our partners, including health departments, those providing housing, health care, transportation, and other vital services for older adults to use this valuable study to address the needs of older adults within our communities for years to come.



Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

AgeOptions undertakes substantive initiatives to embed the principles of Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion (DREI) in our organization.



- Our Board of Directors formally added a Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion Committee into our bylaws.
- We embarked on a journey of education and empowerment, offering Racial Equity coaching to our employees through a year-long opportunity from The Community Memorial Foundation. DREI committees on the Advisory Council and among our employees foster platforms for rigorous dialogue and introspection.
- We recruited board, advisory council and staff of diverse backgrounds.
- Our employee book club and Advisory Council delve into discourses about racism.

Through these concerted efforts, DREI permeates every facet of our organizational fabric, serving as an indelible lens through which we navigate our mission and operations.



Our needs assessment focuses on the demographic diversity of our aging communities.

ELEVATING CAREGIVING:

Advocacy, Support, and Empowerment

AgeOptions champions the indispensable contributions of unpaid family caregivers, recognizing their pivotal role in supporting older adults within our communities. In alignment with our commitment to caregiving, AgeOptions spearheads legislative efforts aimed at amplifying support for family caregivers, culminating in the allocation of \$1 million dollars by the state legislature to address caregiving challenges.



- We lead Illinois and national advocacy efforts including supporting the Illinois Coalition of Caregivers, attending the first Caregiving Nation Conference in Washington, DC, and meeting with legislative staff.
- In tandem with our advocacy initiatives, we equip caregivers with essential resources and support mechanisms. Through innovative platforms such as TCARE (Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral), caregivers can access tailored support and referral services, thereby mitigating the burdens associated with caregiving responsibilities.
- Beyond these resources, AgeOptions provides a diverse array of programming aimed at enriching the lives of caregivers and their family members, particularly those navigating the complexities of dementia and Alzheimer's Disease. In Caring Together, Living Better (CTLB), and Memory Cafés, AgeOptions and its partners afford caregivers and their family members opportunities for socialization and respite.
- The Comprehensive Needs Assessment included interviews with caregivers, focus groups with a variety of caregivers and key informant interviews..

Caring Together, Living Better
saw growth with

1,011 clients



Families benefit from our caregiving programs.

729

caregivers and participants in
Needs Assessment surveys,
interviews and focus groups

PROMOTING ADVOCACY:

Amplifying the Voice of Older Adults

At the heart of AgeOptions' mission lies an unwavering commitment to advocacy, serving as a steadfast voice for older adults and people with disabilities. Against the backdrop of a rapidly aging population, advocacy assumes heightened significance, necessitating proactive engagement with legislative stakeholders and policymakers. Our Advocacy Task Force stands as a vanguard for issues of importance to older adults, including the federal debt ceiling impasse, Older Americans Act programs and services funding, American Rescue Plan funding, Medicare, affordable housing, homelessness, and combating the scourge of financial scams targeting older adults.



CEO Diane Slezak discusses the Advocacy Agenda



We convene lawmakers, aging network staff, and concerned individuals in breakfast discussions, virtual legislative updates and ongoing monitoring of legislation and appropriation levels.

Collaborative advocacy efforts have resulted in state funding for the Illinois Family Caregiver Program and needed increased funding for the Home Delivered Meals Program.



Legislative Breakfasts took place in Hazel Crest, Palos Heights, Northfield, Maywood, and Elk Grove Village.



CONFRONTING SOCIAL ISOLATION: Fostering Connection and Community

AgeOptions stands resolute in its commitment to combating social isolation, fostering community engagement, and championing the well-being of older adults across diverse demographics and backgrounds.

Through programs such as Thrive with Pride, Library CARES, and Uniper TV, we endeavor to create inclusive spaces where older adults can engage.

- The Thrive with Pride program presents monthly online workshops geared to LGBTQ+ issues including Medicare, Nutrition, Caregiving and Legislative Advocacy. Surveys show that 94% of attendees found helpful information in the presentations.
- In the Library CARES program, AgeOptions partners with 37 suburban Cook County libraries to encourage social activities among older adults. Libraries serve as convenient and comfortable locations for people to socialize with each other. Research indicates that if people stay involved, read, converse, and interact with others, their quality of life is better.

Our library program served

9,799

unique clients in 2023.

- The UniperTV program is another way in which we help older adults fight isolation. Participants tune in to health programming, social programs and videos targeting their interests from their homes. This online senior center streaming service is offered at no charge.

In addition to these special initiatives, AgeOptions owns and operates Illinois Pathways to Health, a statewide hub for health promotion, falls prevention and addressing health related social needs. We offer a single contracting solution to health plans and providers. Last year, 1,337 people participated in the programming offered by the statewide network.

Flu and COVID-19 Vaccinations

AgeOptions makes positive health impacts on older adults by partnering with CIMPAR, SC to provide Flu and COVID-19 vaccinations at community sites around the region as well as making the vaccines available through in-home visits. The importance of having health professionals addressing health needs in their neighborhoods at civic centers where they feel comfortable or in their homes cannot be overstated.

With our partners, AgeOptions provided

7,821

total COVID shots to adults age 60+.

Health Equity Learning Collaborative

AgeOptions and the Coordinated Care Alliance were selected to be a participating Community Care Hub in the national Health Equity Learning Collaborative lead by the Partnership to Align Social Care and the Administration for Community Living. We are one of 28 applications accepted out of 66 nationwide. Joining us in the learning collaborative are the physician practice CIMPAR and RUSH University Medical Center.

The purpose of this learning collaborative is to test out the codes from the new Medicare Physician Fee Schedule that allow Community Health Workers employed by community-based organizations such as AgeOptions to get paid by Medicare for screening for health-related social needs and connecting individuals to social services and benefits. This effort reinforces the importance of social services in health care and provides a way for the aging network to prove our value to healthcare and sustainably fund the work.



ADDRESSING NUTRITION:

Nourishing Body and Soul

Food Security stands as a cornerstone of well-being, particularly among older adults navigating fixed budgets and economic uncertainties. In recognition of the intrinsic link between nutrition and holistic health, AgeOptions prioritizes initiatives aimed at promoting access to nutritious meals and fostering social connections.

Our meal programs, spanning congregate dining, home delivered meals, and meal kits, serve as lifelines for older adults, providing not only sustenance but invaluable opportunities for socialization and camaraderie.

AgeOptions and partners facilitate home delivered meals and dining centers throughout suburban Cook County. These include three new congregate dining centers catering to older adults with a variety of ethnic backgrounds and food preferences in Nilus, Maywood and Northfield.

Initiatives such as the Meal Box Kits program underscore our commitment to promoting access to fresh, nutritious foods among older adults. Meal box kits that contain a full week of groceries delivered to an older adult's home where they can cook or have someone in the home that is able to cook. The meal box program was so popular that we distributed a tool kit to enable other Area Agencies for Aging to replicate the program in their communities.



With our partners, AgeOptions served a staggering

2,304,550
meals,

a 371,823 increase over 2022, and the total clients served in 2023 was

230,976

More than

550

people participated in the Meal Box Program.

EMPOWERING ECONOMIC SECURITY: Navigating Resources and Benefits

As people age, their inquiries regarding available services and resources become increasingly pertinent. Facilitating the economic security of older adults by furnishing comprehensive information and expediting enrollment in both federal and state programs stand as a cornerstone of AgeOptions' mission. Central to our success in bolstering the economic well-being of older adults are the following programs: Benefits Enrollment Center and the Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN), Avisery by AgeOptions, ARPA Home Preservation Project and Illinois Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP).



Benefits Enrollment Center and ADRN/ Information and Assistance

AgeOptions operates as a Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC), sanctioned by the National Council on Aging. Our community-based centers serve as invaluable hubs where older adults and adults with disabilities gain access to crucial information regarding benefits, undergo eligibility screenings, and receive expert assistance in

enrolling in various public benefits programs. We are equally proud to underscore our commitment to linguistic diversity, offering information and assistance through a translator service and our Targeting to Culturally and Linguistically Isolated Older Persons (TCLIP) agencies. By the numbers:

- A total of 73,598 callers received help from AgeOptions and its Aging & Disability Resource Network (ADRN), accessing vital information and assistance.
- AgeOptions, alongside its funded Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) sites, reached 56,727 beneficiaries, providing essential education and counseling Medicare and Medicaid.
- A total of 37,712 clients received Senior Health Assistance Program services through AgeOptions and its ADRN, benefiting from enrollment aid and outreach pertaining to cost-savings programs.
- Furthermore, our dedicated team and network of providers facilitated the submission of 9,445 applications to public benefits programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, Low Income Home Energy (LIHEAP), resulting in significantly cost reductions across essentials such as for food, healthcare, and utilities.



In 2023, AgeOptions and its partners provided

177,482

units of information and assistance, spanning an array of critical programs such as food, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), caregiver support, transportation, housing, prescription drugs, Medicaid, Medicare, and utilities.

Navigating Resources and Benefits



Aging & Disability Resource Network (ADRN)

AgeOptions collaborates with these eleven organizations:

- Aging Care Connections
- Catholic Charities Northwest Senior Services
- Catholic Charities South Suburban Senior Services
- Kenneth Young Center
- Leyden Family Services
- North Shore Senior Center
- Oak Park Township Senior Services
- Palatine Township Senior Center
- Pathlights
- Solutions for Care
- Stickney Township Office on Aging

Avisery by AgeOptions represents AgeOptions commitment to empowering professionals in navigating the intricate landscapes of Medicare and Medicaid. Through comprehensive trainings, webinars, and educational materials, our Avisery team equips professionals with the requisite knowledge and expertise to adeptly counsel consumers on healthcare access and coverage. Moreover, we champion advocacy efforts aimed at offering administrative rules and legislative reforms to enhance access and affordability. The Advocacy Forums led by Avisery serve as catalysts for engaging professionals in advocacy endeavors with tangible impacts on clients and the broader community.

In 2023, Avisery provided five trainings, two webinars, an advocacy forum, and 39 policy alerts to professionals and presentations on Medicare for consumers.

We served
639

individuals, including

588

who attended one or more events.



Supporting Illinois Senior Medicare Patrol.

The nationwide Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program empowers consumers to prevent, detect and report health care fraud, waste and abuse. In 2023, Illinois SMP presented a carefully crafted, multi-platform media campaign throughout the state. Through this and dedicated outreach efforts, our SMP team successfully engaged and reached more than 12,789 beneficiaries statewide, empowering them to detect and report instances of Medicare fraud. Notably, our interactions, geared to both English and non-English speaking populations, resonated with over 90% of participants surveyed affirming their newfound awareness of avenues for reporting Medicare fraud.



EMPOWERING ECONOMIC SECURITY:

Maintaining Home Preservation

In response to rising home insecurity and homelessness among older adults in suburban Cook County, AgeOptions initiated the ARPA Home Preservation Project.

ARPA Home Preservation Project

Our staunch dedication to addressing housing insecurity among aging constituents culminated in the implementation of the ARPA Home Preservation Project. The initiative, funded by American Rescue Plan Act via the Illinois Department on Aging, aims to mitigate homelessness, and preserve the sanctity of home for adults aged 60 years and above. Recognized by USAging for its success, the ARPA Home Preservation Project exemplifies our commitment to fostering meaningful partnerships and infrastructure to sustainably address housing needs beyond the pilot phase. Our nine partner agencies and two legal assistance agencies were enabled to spend more time with clients, help them understand their needs and options, and create action plans to move forward on goals.



Our ARPA Home Preservation Project Partners are:

- Aging Care Connections
- Center for Disability & Elder Law
- Center of Concern
- Cornerstone CDC
- Kenneth Young Center
- Legal Aid Chicago
- Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago
- North Shore Senior Center
- Oak Park Township Senior Services
- Pathlights
- Solutions for Care

HELPING EMPOWER PEOPLE:

Assist in transitioning to the community from nursing homes

In alignment with our spirit of empowerment, AgeOptions works to improve the lives of Medicare recipients who find themselves living in nursing homes when they could instead be living in housing in the community.

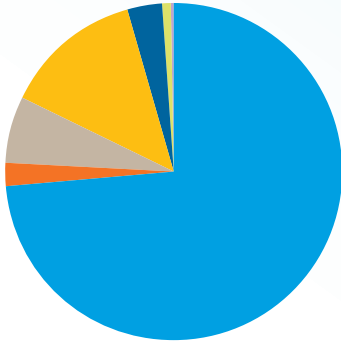
Home Options Path to Empowerment (H.O.P.E.) by AgeOptions helps eligible nursing facility residents transition safely and successfully back to the community and live as independently as possible in the housing option of their choice. H.O.P.E. is funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) under the state Colbert and Williams Consent Decree. In 2023, 60 individuals realized their dream of permanent supportive living in the community. The H.O.P.E. team also educated nearly 1500 individuals in nursing facilities about their rights through individual outreach and community meetings.



H.O.P.E.[™]
Home Options Path to Empowerment
by AgeOptions

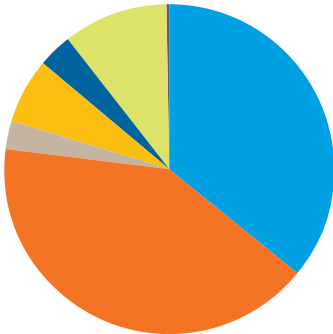
2023 Financials

Revenue



Older Americans Act	\$ 25,961,529.00	73.76%
State Programs	\$ 731,541.00	2.08%
Other Federal	\$ 2,280,462.00	6.48%
Hope Grant	\$ 4,702,923.00	13.36%
Foundations, Corp.	\$ 1,140,685.00	3.24%
Miscellaneous/Other Income	\$ 325,496.00	0.92%
Fee For Service	\$ 55,326.00	0.16%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 35,197,962.00	100.00%

Expenses



Supportive Services	\$ 12,708,982.00	36.05%
Nutritional Programs	\$ 14,467,873.00	41.03%
Health Promotion	\$ 959,381.00	2.72%
Caregiver Services	\$ 2,237,865.00	6.35%
Elder Rights Protection	\$ 1,250,446.00	3.55%
Management & General	\$ 3,583,796.00	10.16%
Development	\$ 50,008.00	0.14%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 35,258,351.00	100.00%

Funded Agencies

Aging Care Connections	Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago South Suburban Senior Services	Maywood Park District	Pathlights
Alvio Medical Center	Center for Disability & Elder Law	Meals at Home	Salvation Army - Blue Island
American Association of Retired Asians (AARA)	Center of Concern	Metropolitan Asian Family Services	Seniors Assistance Center
Arab American Family Services	CJE SeniorLife	Metropolitan Family Services	Solutions for Care
Bloom Township	City of Evanston	North Shore Senior Center	Stickney Township Office on Aging
Bremen Township	Community Nutrition Network	North West Housing Partnership	Top Box
Calumet Township	Hanover Township	Oak Park Township Senior Services	Village of Wheeling
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago (Nutrition)	Hanul Family Alliance	Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	White Crane Wellness Center
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago - Northwest	Kenneth Young Center	Palatine Township Senior Citizens Council	Xilin Association
	Legal Aid Chicago	Palos Area Transportation Services	YMCA of Berwyn-Cicero
	Leyden Family Services		<i>* In addition, 37 Suburban Cook County Public Libraries</i>

2023 Celebrate Belonging Sponsors*

Humana – <i>Signature Sponsor</i>	CIMPAR – <i>Silent Auction Sponsor</i>	Mom's Meals – <i>Centerpiece Sponsor</i>	Mutual of America Financial Group – <i>Entertainment Sponsor</i>
Addus Homecare – <i>Platinum Sponsor</i>	Gordon Associates – <i>Lobby Projection Sponsor</i>	TCARE – <i>Centerpiece Sponsor</i>	Common Sense Solutions – <i>Audio Visual Sponsor</i>
BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois – <i>Gold Sponsor</i>	Nancy Rich – <i>Lobby Projection Sponsor</i>	Carol Goldbaum – <i>Dessert Coffee Sponsor</i>	Top Box Foods – <i>Audio Visual Sponsor</i>
Oak St. Health – <i>Gold Sponsor</i>	CareAdvisors – <i>Pledge Board Sponsor</i>	The Mather Group – <i>Dessert Coffee Sponsor</i>	
RUSH University Medical Center – <i>Gold Sponsor</i>	Diane Slezak & Dana Havranek – <i>Pledge Board Sponsor</i>	Mary Coonda – <i>Entertainment Sponsor</i>	<i>* Above \$1,000 level</i>

Grants and Foundation Support

Anonymous	Illinois Department on Aging	Retirement Research Foundation
Cook County Department of Public Health	Illinois Public Health Institute	The Chicago Community Trust
DuPage Community Foundation	Kott Memorial Charitable Trust	US Administration on Aging
Illinois Department of Human Services	National Council on Aging	USAging
	Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation	Westlake Health Foundation

This publication is prepared and printed in part with federal Older Americans Act, State of Illinois General Revenue and AgeOptions funds. The Illinois Department on Aging and U.S. Administration on Aging are recognized for their support of AgeOptions. Neither is responsible for the content of this publication.

AgeOptions Board of Directors

Chairperson

Rose Canonaco, SPHR
Vice President
Human Resources
Miller Cooper & Co. Ltd

Vice-Chairperson

Gayle Kricke, MSW, PhD
Director of Operations
Primary Care Administration
Northwestern Medical
Group

Directors

Dr. Tonya Boddie
Regional Business Manager
BASF

Lisa Campbell, PhD
President
Physician Practice Resources,
Inc.

Mary E. Coonda
Social Security
Administration
Retired

Richard Evans, MBA
Professor
South Suburban College

Murray Gordon
CEO
MAGA LTC Insurance

**Felicia Houston, MA, LCPC,
CWA**
Mental Health Specialist
Advocate Health Care

**Megan Huisingsh-Scheetz,
MD, MPH**
Associate Professor
University of Chicago

Frederick Karutz
President
Carelton Advocacy

Genevieve Kruse, MBA
Divisional Vice President
Blue Cross Blue Shield

Dr. Dheeraj Mahajan, MD
President & CEO
CIMPAC, S.C.

Bruce Matson
CFO (Retired)
AgeOptions

John O'Connor
Partner
Plante Moran, PLLC

Eric Parker
Partner
Stotis & Baird Chartered

Rev. Kirsten Peachey
Faith & Health Partnerships
Advocate Aurora Health

Dr. Anthony Perry, MD
Chief Clinical Officer
Duo Health

Jeff Waddy, PhD
Clinical Assistant Professor
Tulane University

Brad Winick
Consultant
Planning/Aging

Staff Officers

Diane Slezak
President
Chief Executive Officer

Robert Mapes
Vice President

Kim McCahill
Vice President

Mike Giuntoli
Treasurer

Carole Murphy
Secretary

AgeOptions Advisory Council

Chairperson

Molly Hofer
Family Life Educator
University of Illinois
Oak Forest

Vice Chairperson

Andy Teitelman
Social Services Consultant
Oak Park

Secretary

Barbara Hunt
Veterans Administration
Retired
Oak Park

Members

Julie Bach
Director
School of Social Work
Dominican University
Forest Park

Jim Boyle
Retired
Oak Park

Esther Brodsky, LCSW
Retired
Oak Park

Shirley Drewenski
Director,
Continuing Education,
South Suburban College
Harvey

Elizabeth Essex
Associate Professor
Emeritus
Governors State University
Oak Park

Alan Factor
Chair,
Evanston Commission
on Aging
Evanston

Margaret Gergan
Retired
Chicago

Kelly Gilbert
Executive Director
Visiting Angels North Shore
Bolingbrook

Carol Goldbaum
Generative Services
Wilmette

Monique James
Community Impact
Coordinator
Jesse Jackson Jr. Senior
Housing
Harvey

Jacqueline Jones
Kinesiologist
Berkeley

Dr. Audrey Klopp
Assistant Professor
Marcella Niehoff School of
Nursing
Loyola University
LaGrange Park

Amelia Luckie-Griffin
Chief Executive Officer
Rophe Healthcare Adult Day
Services Center
Harvey

Carolyn Manning
Retired Social Worker

Vern Moore
Retired
Crete

George Motto
Endocrinologist
Arlington Heights

Nan O'Connor
Social Worker
Northbrook

Michlene Parker
Owner of MD Parker Home
Services
LaGrange

Chera Parham
Community Impact
Coordinator
Preservation of Affordable
Housing
Harvey

Ruth Reko
Volunteer
Alzheimer's Association,
River Forest

Katie Walsh
Senior Citizen Services
Cook County Sheriff
Maywood

Leslie Weber, Jr.
Senior Advocate
Social Services
Mount Prospect

Januari Wilson
Director of Field Education
– Social Work
Governor's State University



Coming back in 2025

20TH Networking Reception and Silent Auction

An Event to Honor and Celebrate the Older Adults
We Serve and the Belonging that Inspires Us.

SEE
YOU IN
2025!

Thursday, September 25, 2025
from 6 - 9 pm

Hyatt Lodge Oak Brook,
2815 Jorie Blvd.,
Oak Brook, IL 60523



1048 Lake Street, Suite 300
Oak Park, IL 60301
(708)383-0258

ageoptions.org

For more information on sponsorships and advertising,
please contact Dominique Borishade at (708) 383-0258.