



# Bexley Senior Center

*Be Active. Be Curious. Be Engaged.*

The Bexley Senior Center opened in February 2022.

For 30+ years, senior programming was managed by the Bexley Activities Club (BAC), with support from a recreation department staff member. After moving all senior operations under the rec department and opening a physical location, membership increased dramatically.

## Membership

- Bexley Activities Club (BAC) Membership 2021: **200**
- Bexley Senior Center (BSC) Membership 2022: **266**
- BSC Membership 2023: **272** as of 6/22/23

## Demographics

- 70% Bexley residents
- 63% female
- Average age is 75; 51 members are 80+ including one 100-year-old.

## Senior Center Programming

- **Weekly – 40 hours of programming per month**
  - Fitness classes: 60-70 participants per week
  - Mah Jongg: 12-16 participants
- **Bi-monthly – 12 hours per month**
  - Euchre: 20-25 regular participants
  - Happy Hour: 25-35 regular participants
- **Monthly - 4 hours per month**
  - Book Club: 10-15 participants
  - Birthday Lunch: 20-30 participants



## Senior Center Operations

Programming has increased dramatically by having a dedicated senior center, however the physical space does have its challenges, especially as our membership continues to grow.



### Pros:

- The space has allowed us to introduce new, ongoing programs that were previously unable to offer due to scheduling conflicts at Jeffrey Mansion.
- The parking lot is a huge asset, as members know they will never have to worry about where to park.
- The Bexley Beat provides transportation to all of our day trips, and the large parking lot and space allows members the opportunity to use the restroom, grab a cup of coffee, arrive early to socialize, etc. (In the past, members were picked up by the Beat Bus in the pool parking lot.)

### Cons:

- The programmable space is one large room, which requires staff to turnover the space (rearranging furniture, pull exercise equipment storage, set up tables and chairs, etc.) There are days where we have back to back programming and it would be wonderful to have to separate spaces.
- Accessibility is also a concern. The restrooms are not ADA compliant, and there is a step leading into both the front and back doors. Luckily, the garage door has been helpful to those members with mobility issues and use walkers and/or canes.



## Hours of Operation/Programming

- The senior center is open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Staff is usually present during planned programming, but members have a specific code that can be used to enter the center during office hours.
- While there is approximately 56 hours on going programming per month, this does not consider the time members spend at the center when they're just stopping by. Many members pop in when they see cars in the parking lot, to use the restroom, to grab a cup of coffee, or to pick up information about upcoming activities.
- There are often 40+ members at the center before day trips. Members usually gather 30-60 minutes before the Beat bus is scheduled to leave, which overlaps with some of our fitness classes. While the space can get very crowded at times, this is a great opportunity for members to meet others that might not necessarily participate in the same senior programs.
- We are working on a member survey to get a better sense of how much they participate, if there are gaps in our programming, how the center has benefited them, and to get general feedback. We should have the results of this survey in the next few weeks.



## Testimonials:

These are just some of the recent statements made by members about what the senior center means to them:

*“It’s really nice to have a space that is our own. We always had to leave Jeffrey, and even the pool parking lot for bus trips, during the summer because of the camps.”*



*“It’s so great that we have this space, where people may have known each other when we were raising kids, and now we have an opportunity to reconnect!”*

*“My husband is going through treatment, and one of my friends from the senior center went through something similar a few years back. We are all going to meet on the patio after this trip with our husbands so we can talk things through.”*

## Off-Site Programming

- **Weekly**
  - Walking Club: 20-25 regular participants
  - Community Garden Plot: 12 gardeners/waterers
  
- **Monthly**
  - Mystery Lunch: Our most popular bus trip! Approximately 50 individual members regularly attend these lunches. 21 members attend per month.
  - Monthly Luncheon at Berwick Party House: 50 regular participants





### Monthly+ (2-3/month)

- Bus Trips: 100+ participants throughout the year
  - Members participate in various day trips throughout the year, including visits to local attractions and museums as well as longer trips around the state. Trips are typically during the week, but occasionally take place in the evenings and weekends (holiday dinners and displays, Broadway shows, sporting events, etc.)





## Rentals

The senior center has been a great space for private rentals and community events. Our policy states that only members may rent the center, but there have been several instances in which a member has rented the space on someone else's behalf.

- Paid rentals since February 2022: **53**
- Revenue: **\$3,150**

Members have rented the building for gatherings such as birthday parties, graduations, holiday dinners, potlucks, etc.



Other rentals include non-profit events, book readings, PTO meetings and socials, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade celebrations.

The space has also been used by city staff and recreation activities including Recreation Board meetings, City Council meetings, teen night, film-making courses, blood drives, and much more.



The Cassingham 5<sup>th</sup> graders had their end of year celebration at the senior center in 2022 and 2023.



Bexley Recreation and Parks hosted a teen night event on May 12, with over 70 attendees. Due to the success of this event, there are more teen-centric events being planned, including at the Bexley Pool on Aug. 4.

### Next Steps

The 420 N. Cassady Ave. site is set to be redeveloped, which will include residential on the top floors and retail space on the first floor. Our current proposal, pending further review and discussion with our senior center community, is to move the senior programming back into the 1<sup>st</sup> floor space once it is completed.

We have had meetings with the Senior Center Advisory Committee about this plan and one of their primary concerns for the newly developed space was the reduction in parking. Some of the desirable components of the proposed new space would be its larger footprint and the potential for more flexible space; improvement in restroom and accessibility amenities; improvement in building energy efficiency, among other positive attributes.

The Mayor's office has been working on plans to address parking concerns, including designating certain spaces for senior center members and the possibility of including angled parking on Cassady Ave. While this plan continues to be workshopped, addressing parking concerns is at the forefront of planning. As the timeline becomes clearer, we will continue to work with senior leadership to maximize the impact of the new space.

### Takeaways

Having a dedicated space for seniors has been instrumental in the growth of the senior center membership. The space has been a welcome addition to the community, and has been heavily used to by community members.

- Since 2021, membership has grown by **36%**
- Participation in senior programming and activities has increased by nearly **50%**
- There have been **54** paid rentals, and the building has been used over **100** times during evenings and weekends. These types of events including Bexley Rec activities, City Council and Rec Board meetings, staff trainings, etc.