RUFTY-HOLMES SENIOR CENTER
MARKETING PLAN

Introduction:
Rufty-Holmes Senior Center was established and exists to provide a focal point for aging resources as well as opportunities to extend independent living and enrich the quality of life for Rowan County older adults.

The Center is the only Senior Center in Rowan County. It works in cooperation and association with other human service agencies and organizations, and does not compete for clients or services. The Center maintains an accessible and comfortable building to provide services in, as well as making use of other community facilities when appropriate.

Rowan County is the 20th largest county in North Carolina. The percentage of Rowan County citizens aged 55 and older, the service eligibility age for the Center, is approximately 25%.

Marketing Strategy:
The Center seeks to promote itself as a premiere older adult service organization in Rowan County, creating member and community awareness regarding the services and programs offered. Communicating the overall mission that the Center is a “community focal point for aging services,” effective marketing strategies will help develop the member and financial base, attract volunteers, build relationships with other community service providers, and aid in producing high quality programs and services that enable local older adults to better understand and acquire the necessary skills for successful aging.

It is realized that a marketing plan must take into consideration the relative modernity of senior centers within the aging network. There must be special efforts designed to counteract the natural bias of the populace to view the program as just another rest home or nursing home operation. It is further understood that the "Rufty-Holmes" name can easily be misunderstood as "Rufty Home," contributing to the aforementioned bias.

The Center will market its programs and services with an emphasis on being a non-residential program that promotes independence for older adults through their utilization of community support services. Efforts will be made to promote a positive understanding of aging, enhancing the image of older adults.

Target Markets:
The Center will develop and market a variety of programs, activities and services designed to reach a broad cross-section of the older adult population in Rowan County, with special emphasis on reaching out to typically under-served groups (lower income, minority, men, widowed persons). It is understood that most new clients will be drawn to the Center due to an interest or need in a particular activity or service. The Center will utilize their involvement in a singular service to inform them of the many other opportunities provided. This will be accomplished through promotional materials and personal contacts with staff, volunteers, and other clients.

Rufty-Holmes Senior Center develops its long- and short-term goals and objectives through input and involvement of the older adult citizenry. The Center seeks an inclusive participation in its operation from funders, members, participants, and the general community. This inclusiveness insures that services offered meet the interests and needs of the clientele being served.
The Center will offer some programs, activities, and services free of charge to older adult participants. When fees have to be charged in programs to recoup associated costs, rates will be reasonably set so that cost does not inhibit participation. Program fees are considered an important aspect of participant involvement in contributing to the costs of the Center’s operation. The Scholarship Program assists participants who have difficulty in paying program fees.

**Positioning:**
Rufty-Holmes Senior Center will employ a variety of approaches in attempting to inform local older adults and the community at large of its mission, programs, activities and services; and in providing access to these.

Marketing logos, tag lines and slogans communicating the mission of the Center will be utilized in conveying the programs and services that are available for clients and the community.

The Executive Director of the Center will be responsible for developing and maintaining various aspects of the plan in accordance with budget allowances. Other staff will have special involvement in educating and informing clients and the public about the mission and program of the Center. The Board of Directors shall provide over-sight and evaluation, and serve as ambassadors throughout the community.

**Marketing Approaches:**

- **Print Media**
  It is recognized that older adults utilize print media as a major source for local information. As a result, a major marketing approach will be print-oriented, using a variety of tools.

- **Brochures:** A *Center brochure* will be developed and maintained as the centerpiece of literature in providing an overview of the mission and program. The brochure will be general in nature, allowing use for both participant and community audiences. In addition to being available at the Center, the brochure will be made available to the public through the local Visitors' Bureau and other community agencies. Separate *program specific brochures* will be developed and maintained to provide specific information of use and benefit to those who become active with the programs and services of the Center.

- **Newspaper:** Through an agreement with the Advertising Section of the *Salisbury Post*, an advertisement will be published the last Sunday of each month in this publication which has a very high market saturation level. The ad will contain the monthly calendar of events for the Center. Special notices and articles will be submitted as needed for publication.

- **Senior Savvy:** This *monthly publication* will serve as a primary vehicle for the dissemination of timely information on programs and services. Through a written agreement with the publishers, the Center will provide for publication its schedule of events and activities, and general articles of relevance to older adults. The publishers will distribute 5,000 copies per month throughout the county in locations frequented by older adults.

- **PrimeTimes:** This *monthly publication* of the Salisbury Post features space for the Center's monthly calendar of events and special notices. PrimeTimes is printed and distributed once each month as an insert to the regular daily newspaper.
**Flyers:** Small posters or flyers will be developed and used to promote specific activities. Flyers will be posted at various locations throughout the Senior Center building, mailed to targeted audiences, and posted or distributed throughout the community as practical.

**Advertising:** The Executive Director may authorize paid advertising for special activities or events in accordance with available funds. Display advertising will normally be placed with the Salisbury Post and Senior Savvy.

**Radio**

Older adults make up the largest audience for local AM radio in the Salisbury-Rowan community. The Center will utilize radio to supplement print media and to make announcements requiring immediate release.

**“Senior Moments”:** The Center will produce and air daily (Monday – Friday) radio minutes in conjunction with WSAT 1280 AM Radio to provide healthy aging and senior living tips, as well as to promote events of interest to local older adults.

**Public Service Announcements & Advertising:** The Center will use PSA’s and paid advertising (as funds allow) on local radio stations to promote various events and activities, and to inform participants and the public concerning emergencies or weather-related cancellations or closings.

**Local Television**

**Announcements and notices on public access channels:** The Center will utilize the services provided by the local television access entities to provide community announcements.

**Internet**

**Detailed Website:** The Center will maintain a domain site on the World Wide Web to provide the public with information on the Center’s mission and program. The site will contain photographs, a description of services, a listing of events, information on location, and contact information. The site will be updated regularly by Center staff. The Center's website will be accessible from other local sites and aging pages through linkages.

**Email Newsletters & Bulletins:** The Center will publish and disseminate an electronically transmitted newsletter and special bulletins to members of the Center, and other interested parties including churches, whose email address is on file with the Center. Such communications will have “opt-out” provisions to allow the receiver to discontinue receipt.

**Signage**

**On-site:** The Center will maintain a primary sign at the street identifying the Center and the numbered address, as well as other signage attached to the building designed to distinguish its location and purpose.

**Directional:** The Center will maintain through its association with the City of Salisbury brown directional signs to the Center at neighboring intersections in the vicinity of the Center.

**Personal Contacts**

**Email, fax, voice replies:** Center staff will respond to all public inquiries and contacts in a professional and timely manner providing information on the Center's mission, programs and services.
Co-Marketing Initiatives: The Center will engage in co-marketing efforts with other organizations such as the United Way, aging services partners, community non-profit agencies, business partners, and the Chamber of Commerce on a regular basis.

Speaking Engagements to community groups/civic organizations: Members of the staff and Board as well as volunteers will be utilized in making talks and presentations to various groups explaining the Center's mission, program and services.

Participation in agency/human service fairs: Utilizing staff, Board and volunteer resources, the Center will participate in opportunities to appear in public forums to display materials and talk with those in attendance.

Programs by participants: The Center will utilize participants and volunteers in representing the Center at various community events. Groups such as the Lady Liners dance group, Ambassadors Club, and Singing Seniors will provide personal testimony for Center programs through their participation.

Hosting of Clubs & Organizations: The Center will seek to host as many different senior clubs and organizations as possible by providing regular meeting and special event facilities on a recurring basis. Participation by individuals in these groups will expose a large number of older adults on a regular basis to the other programs, activities and services of the Center.

Hosting of Special Events: The Center will plan and host special events to thank and educate volunteers and supporters who provide the greatest marketing in terms of "word of mouth."

Hosting of Intergenerational Activities: The Center will plan and host special and recurring intergenerational events to inform and educate parents and children of the mission and program of the Senior Center.

Client Service: The Center will treat its members and clients as indispensable in the success of its programs and services, and will strive to continually increase satisfaction and positive results gained from the association and participation.

Other

Promotional items: As monies allow, the Center will purchase and distribute promotional items with the Center’s name, logo and contact information to reinforce name recognition.

Evaluation: The Center will evaluate the success of its marketing program on a regular basis in conjunction with the overall evaluation of the Center’s operation. Feedback from clients and the community will be important indicators of effectiveness, along with an evaluation of results realized from public relations efforts (client inquiries, registrations, responses).

Marketing policies, procedures, strategies, targets, and positioning will be revised as needed to insure continued success.

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