<div align="center">**CORE Focus Group Research Project**
June-August, 2017
Background, Design and Emerging Themes</div>

Background

CORE Community Resources has provided an array of programs and services since 2006 including:
- Volunteer based Friends in Deed program
- Meal and social programming Friday Friends and Let's do Lunch
- Learning and personal growth classes through the Superior Life Long Learning classes,
- Evidenced based classes for caregiver support, physical activity course and other
- Grant programs to address community needs
- ENCORE resale store
- Visiting Nurse program (ended July 2017)

Many individuals and organizations have contributed to the success that CORE has enjoyed over the past several years.

The area served by CORE and Bayfield County in general faces a rapidly aging population, presenting challenges, and opportunities to agencies and organizations that serve. The CORE Executive Board, reflecting on the successes of past 10 years, and wishing to plan an appropriate organizational role for the future, agreed to conduct a Focus Group Research Project June- August, 2017.

Project Design

Ten focus groups were held in the CORE service area June 28 – August 10, 2017. Seventy (70) individuals participated in the groups.

June 28	Bayfield	10
July 7	Cornucopia	11
July 11	Washburn	5
July 13	Red Cliff	10
July 26	Bayfield	5
July 27	Washburn	6
August 1	Town of Bayview	5
August 7	Red Cliff	6
August 8	Town of Russell	6
August 10	Cornucopia	6
Total		70

Focus group facilitators presented a series of 6 questions to participants.
1. *What do you love about living in your community?*
2. *Looking ahead 10-15 years, what services and facilities would make life easier, less challenging for you or someone you know to remain in the area that you love? In other words, what changes would you and your friends suggest to make our communities more 'aging-friendly'?*
3. *Thinking specifically of some of your older neighbors, a) how would they describe their major challenges as they age in place, b) from your perspective, are they availing themselves of the currently available*

services, and if, so- what services in particular, if they are not using the available services, why not a) due to lack of information, b) would people rather pay something, 3) would volunteering themselves help?

4. *Again, thinking down the road 10-15 years, what would your community look like if aging was valued, if seniors were seen as a community resource, what would be different, how would you like to feel valued and engaged?*
5. *At this point, can you think of any ways in which CORE could improve services?*
6. *Is there anything you thought of that you have not had a chance to add to the conversation?*

When asked the introductory question about what they love about the area they live, participants responded that they appreciate nature, beauty, safety, solitude, quiet, people/neighbors and "community".   Participants in more rural areas are very intentional about their desire to live in these areas, while clearly acknowledging the challenges presented since there is a greater distance to medical care, grocery stores, other. Participants in larger towns see opportunities such as those related to intergenerational and cultural exchanges.

CORE recognizes and understands that there are at least four (4) major themes affecting aging in Bayfield The themes, broadly stated are:
    1) Housing and related
    2) Transportation
    3) Health Care and Medical
    4) Social Inclusion

In reviewing the data from the CORE (focus group notes) the following additional and accompanying themes/suggestions were prevalent and worthy of close review and consideration.

Themes and Suggestions

Community Based
- CORE could take on a coordination (for services, housing coordination, information) role right in communities
- Assess innovative housing solutions
- Faith communities are a resource, could there be more coordination between churches and CORE
- Small, isolated communities/areas may need enhanced or different services
- A personal CORE presence in communities would be advantageous
- Community-based services and programs using under-utilized buildings/space
- People in our communities tend to look out for each other, there is a strong sense of 'community' here – how can CORE build on those existing networks

Collaboration and Advocacy
- Public officials must be involved in aging issues.
- Red Cliff and surrounding areas have programs/models inherent to the Native American culture that are positive. Developing close ties in this area would be optimal.
- Local businesses could be used as a resource for expertise and insights
- Coordinate and consult with similar agencies, businesses and government agencies that address aging in communities

Communication
- Communication about services related to aging is often poor/lacking or not actively sought by individuals
- There is some lack of awareness of the scope of public transportation services
- There are some services that people may not be completely aware of/utilizing, example: Red Cliff Health Clinic, North Lakes Community Health Centers, BART
- People are unsure which county services and programs they may be eligible for, hard to navigate the system
- We need to learn to acknowledge aging and prepare for our older years

Enhanced Services
- Lack of skilled workers for home projects/home care/personal care, can CORE play a role
- There is a strong sense of personal pride when it comes to requesting services, how can this be addressed?
- Programs and services to reduce isolation are strongly desired
- CORE could assess home safety and provide expertise/referral services
- Lack of social opportunities in rural areas
- General assistance with aging well at home, getting connected with available services and support – and even providing personal assistance with medications, finances, etc. Possible expansion of Friends in Deed Program
- Nutrition and physical activity services are desired, may include access to groceries and cooking help
- Intergenerational opportunities are strongly desired, we need to support younger generation and interact/learn together
- Communities must learn to value older members and the contributions they can make to community fabric
- CORE should take on clearinghouse (for information) and advocacy roles

Conclusion and Next Steps

The CORE Board and staff recognize that the needs in rapidly aging communities are diverse, and that one agency or organization cannot meet them all.

CORE will share information from the Focus Group Research Project with other organizations, and remains committed to working toward solutions in a collaborative manner.

CORE will make these efforts in order to fulfill its mission: *To provide programs and services for older adults and their families to enable them to thrive and remain engaged in our communities.*

Kathryn Grafsgaard, Interim Executive Director
Kathryn Jensen, Board Chair
September 5, 2017