A colorful flag hangs across the doorframe to an otherwise gray basement room. Inside, you’ll find red-checkered tablecloths, trays of yellow squash, fresh apples, and melt-in-your-mouth tomatoes. Welcome to Iona’s Regency House Farmer’s Market.

The “pop-up” market was conceived by Iona’s Farm to Table Coordinator Ashlea Steiner as a way to bring free, fresh local produce to residents of Regency House — the only low-income public housing option for older adults in Ward 3. Every second Monday of the month, Iona staff members bring their smiles, recipe ideas, nutrition tips, and (of course) fresh produce directly to Regency House. The program, which began this past May, has become a staple for many of the residents.

“We have one gentleman who will be here no matter what,” says 83-year-old Shirley Pettus, President Elect of the Resident Council, and a resident herself for nearly 30 years. “He loves it. If there is anything left at the end of the market, he’s taking it for a salad. He’s always talking about it.”

And he’s not the only one. Lining up outside the market’s door, residents “ooh” and “ahh,” as they peek their heads in to catch a glimpse of this month’s spread. Once inside, the market is a bustle with residents’ exclamations — “Oh, I’m going to cook tonight!” — and greetings as they catch up with neighbors. Ashlea stands nearby answering questions about unfamiliar vegetables. On their way out the door, they hug and kiss Shirley and thank Iona again for the produce.

For many older adults on a limited income, having to choose between healthy foods and rent, transportation, or even medicine is a daily reality. But, the Market helps lighten that stress. Additionally, residents can also try new foods they would normally ignore due to price.

“Strange foods, I call it,” jokes Angela Davenport, a resident of Regency House for 12 years. “You expose us to different fruits and

(From left to right) Regency House President Elect of the Resident Council Shirley Pettus, and Iona staff members Jakia Muhammad and Ashlea Steiner show off their colorful spread at the Regency House Farmer’s Market. Shirley calls the market a “dream come true” for her residents.

continued on page 6...
When it comes to aging or caregiving, it’s common to feel anxious, confused, and overwhelmed. Now imagine those concerns heightened by the fear of discrimination, or a lack of traditional support networks or healthcare. Unfortunately, for many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) older adults, these challenges are a reality.

Here at Iona, we believe no one should have barriers to their positive aging. That’s why we’ve made reaching out to LGBTQ older adults and advocacy experts a priority. This summer, we hosted our very first booth in the Capital Pride Festival, asking attendees to share advice to their younger selves, and in December Iona’s Take Charge/Age Well Academy’s℠ “LGBTQ Take Charge of Your Aging” series will launch.

We invite you to share your ideas for how we can continue to develop programs that meet the specific needs of LGBTQ clients by calling Susan Messina at (202) 895-9401.

This winter, Iona’s Take Charge/Age Well Academy℠ is offering a new four-session workshop for LGBTQ older adults. The series, led by Iona aging-in-community experts and trusted community partners, will provide successful aging guidance and inspiration about the questions and challenges many in the LGBTQ community face, including adequate available housing options, long-term care, and the legal, financial, and lifestyle changes associated with aging. Participants will gain resources, expert coaching, and support from peers in a safe and welcoming environment.

What Advice Do You Have for Your Younger Self?

That was the question on our mind during this summer’s Capital Pride Festival. Iona hosted our very first booth and asked attendees to share words of wisdom to their younger selves. With more than 200 responses, here are our favorite replies:

1. Be a source of inspiration for those in need.
2. Stay physically active no matter your age.
3. Live with gusto!
4. Be nice to your folks.
5. Find and embrace what makes you happy!

This four-part series starts on December 9 and runs through December 30, 2015. All sessions are held on Wednesdays at Iona from 3:30 – 5:30 pm. Tuition is $100 for the series. Scholarships are available. To register, email community@iona.org or visit our website at www.iona.org and go to Take Charge/Age Well Academy℠.
A licensed clinical social worker, Kris has lived in the District since 1978. Currently, she works for the DC Department of Health.

In 2001, Kris moved her ailing mother into her rent-controlled apartment in Cleveland Park. For the next seven and a half years, Kris served as her mother’s caregiver. It was during this time that she first connected with Iona. “I’d always heard Iona was in our neighborhood, but I never had a reason to use it,” says Kris. “Especially as a social worker, I saw what a worthwhile and productive organization it is. They know what needs to be done and they get the work done. I will always be grateful to them.”

This spring, Iona helped Kris again when she found the rent control article posted on Iona’s website. The DC rent control law gives all older adults like Kris, age 62 or older, the legal right to register for a permanent reduced annual rent increase. Additionally, there are no income requirements. Kris immediately registered.

The result? Kris pays $22 less a month in rent — saving $264 this year.

Like many of the District’s 100,000+ seniors, Kris Laurenti had a problem — how to “age in place” in an increasingly unaffordable Washington, DC. Fortunately, thanks to Iona, Kris found a solution.

Now, Kris not only has the peace of mind of reduced rental housing costs, she also has more dollars to spend on one of her favorite things — travel (in fact, Kris just returned from Singapore!).

— Special to the VOICE
By Barbara Cline, friend of Iona

You May Be Eligible for Annual Reduced Rent Increases

Housing advocates estimate that 10% or 7,900 of the available 79,000 rent-controlled units may be occupied by older adults like Kris who are eligible but unaware that they have the legal right to apply for a permanent reduced annual rent increase.

You are eligible if:

- You live in a rent-controlled unit in a building built before 1976;
- You signed the lease;
- Your annual rent increase notice is RAD Form 8, from the DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD);
- You meet one of the eligibility requirements:
  - at least 62 years old
  - OR are disabled (any age);
- You do not receive any District or federal voucher money for your rent payments

Help is Available

If you and/or your caregiver need help determining your legal rights or registering for a permanent reduced annual rent increase, call the Office of the Tenant Advocate at (202) 719-6560 or visit them online at http://ota.dc.gov.

The full “2015 Rent Control” article can also be found online at www.foresthillsconnection.com
Adrianne Doyle had always had a special relationship with her Uncle Bert. To her, he was the best kind of teacher — intelligent, articulate, but with a fun side too. “He was one of the smartest people I had ever known,” says Adrianne.

After he passed away, Adrianne knew she had to do something to honor him. Volunteering in Iona’s Wellness & Arts Center, where he was a participant for about two and a half years, seemed like the perfect way.

“When Uncle Bert got sick, he was a different person — which was hard for us,” says Adrianne. “But, once he started going to Iona, it stimulated him so much that we were able to have a little bit of him for a lot longer than we expected. The interactions with the staff and with his peers, the art, the music, the dog visits — all of that kept him going.”

So as a way to show her gratitude, Adrianne traveled from North Carolina to share her time with participants and staff members for a full week. The experience, says Adrianne, was inspiring. From one-on-one talks to vibrant dance parties, Adrianne jumped head first into our robust daily programming.

“You can volunteer with Iona!

Adrianne had an experience of a lifetime while volunteering at Iona – and so can you! Our Wellness & Arts Center welcomes volunteers of many ages. Join us for a day (or more!) of engaging conversation, laughter, art therapy, music, a nutritious meal, and so much more. For more information and to view our volunteer application, visit our website at www.iona.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer-your-time.html, or email volunteer@iona.org.

“By the end of my first day, I was sweaty and exhausted,” she says. “But, I loved it.”

“I’ve never seen a place like Iona. I don’t know why there aren’t a million of them.”

— Adrianne Doyle

Interestingly, as a certified nursing assistant by profession, Adrianne knows many of the challenges facing older adults and their family caregivers firsthand. But it wasn’t until visiting our Center that she realized how valuable adult day services could be — for both participants and their family members.

“Iona just takes the caregiving weight off,” she says. “It provides all of the structure and stimulation that family members don’t think about doing or maybe can’t do because they’re tired or sad. I’ve never seen a place like Iona. I don’t know why there aren’t a million of them.”

Since saying goodbye and heading back to North Carolina, Iona’s Wellness & Arts Center has nonetheless remained in Adrianne’s mind. In fact, because of her volunteer experience, Adrianne has started nursing school! And, of course, though she’s now back home, Adrianne knows it is not goodbye forever: “When I left, I promised there will not be another time I come to DC and don’t say hi. I will certainly, certainly volunteer again.”

Bert Cooper was a participant in Iona’s Wellness & Arts Center for two years. This summer, his niece, Adrianne Doyle, visited from North Carolina to share her time with participants and staff members.
Meet our Gallery at Iona Artists

We sat down with Artist in Residence Nancy Fève and Special Guest Artist Phil Brown to learn more about their creative processes. Check out their artworks on display in the Gallery at Iona through January 22, 2016.

Q: Describe to me your relationship with art. Has it changed as you’ve aged?

Phil: I enjoy craft art in particular – working with glass, fiber, wood, clay, polymer — and especially when that creation is an artistic one, not a kitschy kind of thing. I started learning in 1975, and by 1980, I had a piece in a show. I’ve had pieces in shows on and off ever since. Today, I have a reputation for my curved shape in pieces. People see my work and know it is a “Phil Brown.” Overtime, my creative process has become a little more refined. It’s evolved. I often do variations of the same thing, discovering what else I can do new to these same shapes or designs. For me, that’s what is exciting about creative expression.

Nancy: My relationship with art is more like a hunger for it than a relationship. I love beautiful creations and interesting ideas behind new means of expression. I collect, with delight, examples of art formed with unexpected ingredients used in surprising ways. The pleasure of discovery evokes the sense of wonder I had as a child and which I try my best to retain as I age. Growing older has freed me from ever feeling the need to curb my enthusiasm, which is my principal fuel. I unabashedly explore a new direction until I feel I have found its essence, and then I’m off onto a new path. I have so many projects in my head that I can’t imagine ever running out of the urgent need to make new and different work. I feel most alive when I’m trying something new or making work that excites me.

Want to meet our featured artists?

Meet the Artists Reception
Friday, November 13, 2015
5:00-7:00 pm
Featuring live music and delicious refreshments.

Special thanks to Sunrise on Connecticut Avenue for their generous support of Iona’s art events.

Iona’s 19th Edition of our FREE Resource Guide is Available to YOU!

Our invaluable Resource Guide is newly updated — and now includes even more resources from across the District, Maryland, and Virginia. Whether you’re looking for resources for yourself, a loved one, or a friend, we know you will find our Guide easy to navigate and useful.

Individual copies or a carton can be picked up at Iona anytime from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. And thanks to Iona’s generous partners and funders, there is never a charge for this incredible resource.

As always, Iona experts are also available to answer your questions and guide you to the right resources. Please call Iona at (202) 895-9448 and ask for our Helpline.

Spalted Maple bowl by Special Guest Artist Phil Brown
(Spalting is any form of wood coloration caused by fungi.)

“Bright Bits and Bobs,” string-pieced kaleidoscope quilt by Artist in Residence Nancy Fève

Iona’s 19th Edition of our FREE Resource Guide is Available to YOU!
vegetables that I wouldn’t otherwise purchase because of my limited funds.”

Similarly, for Angela’s neighbor Patricia Bryant, the market gives her the freedom to purchase other food items without sacrificing her health. “I love string beans, and I love broccoli. But going to buy them at the Safeway or Giant is expensive,” she says. “Now, all I have to do is go upstairs and enjoy!”