

Two senior centers receive national accreditation

Congratulations are in order for the Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Greater Pittsburgh and FamilyLinks for achieving National Senior Center Accreditation for centers the providers operate under contract to the Area Agency on Aging.

The centers are AgeWell at the JCC in Squirrel Hill and Vintage Inc. in East Liberty. Both met stringent requirements set by the National Council on Aging/National Institute of Senior Centers to achieve the accreditation. The two are the only centers to be accredited by the National Council in Western Pennsylvania and they join only about 200 centers nationwide in the accomplishment.

Both providers were supported by AAA with a grant in their pursuit of accreditation. Jennifer Baker, AAA Caseworker Supervisor who oversees the senior centers, said the JCC and FamilyLinks achievement, announced in December, comes at a time when AAA is prompting all of its 14 senior center providers to increase attendance and enhance programming.

And while both centers have historically been well-performing community assets, the accreditation is an extraordinary achievement. It not only incorporates standards promoted by AAA through performance-based contracting but expands upon them.

The [National Council on Aging](#) notes that the accreditation process binds centers more closely to their communities and helps to position them for continued future success. The AAA's performance-based contracting is designed to do the same as it works to ensure that attendance and programming meet the needs and wants of a changing older population.

AgeWell and Vintage are Focal Point Senior Centers, meaning they provide all core services in their contracts with AAA. Those include meals, transportation, information and referral, volunteer opportunities and legal assistance. Both also provide fitness, wellness, socialization and recreation opportunities.

AgeWell is a collaboration of the JCC, the Jewish Association on Aging, and Jewish Family & Children's Services (JFCS). It has been in operation for 43 years.

Vintage Inc., founded in 1973, is a licensed provider of Stanford University's Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, which helps older adults learn self-management of ongoing health issues such as heart disease, arthritis and cancer. The program is also supported by the Allegheny County Medical Society and the United Way of Allegheny County.