

From the Penn National Community web site blog ...

SNaP at Penn National..part of a National Movement to Age in Place

By **Dennis** Filed in **NEWS** Tagged with **active adult community, retirement living** April 15th, 2011 @ 7:52 pm



It's been dubbed the Village Movement and Aging in Place, among other things. Whether a movement or a lifestyle, the concept of people remaining in their homes as they age – with a little help from their neighbors – is taking off all over the country, including at the Penn National Golf Course Community.

SNaP at Penn National is one of the few examples of such a community in a small-town setting. SNaP, the Support Network at Penn National, was formed in 2008 but the organization was several years in the planning stages. “It really came from a former resident who was the first president of SNaP,” says Executive Director, Donna Crissman. “He read an article in the *New York Times* about Beacon Hill Village.

Beacon Hill is generally regarded as where the Village movement began when residents of this historic Boston community banded together to offer a variety of services, in a kind of one-stop shopping format for member residents. Services included a wide variety of things to make life easier, including referrals to a vetted list of providers, group discounts, transportation, volunteer help, etc.

The idea, as journalist Gail Sheehy wrote in a recent *USA Today* article, centers on the desire to “change the experience of aging by empowering and enabling adults to remain in their own homes or apartments to the end of their lives.” By creating a support system that helps aging residents cope with changing needs – declining mobility, failing eyesight, illness – people are finding that they can age gracefully in familiar surroundings and avoid leaving the homes they love.

Penn National's SNaP program is a success by a variety of yardsticks but the real measure of success is whether SNaP is achieving what its founders set out to do – to help community members stay in their homes, as opposed to moving to assisted living or nursing facilities, by providing them with help with transportation, simple home maintenance tasks, home repairs and other needs. The network is based on community volunteers and a list of local contractors and service providers who SNaP assembles at favorable rates to members.

To join the SNaP organization, households pay \$250 per year (or \$200 for a single person). In 2010, SNaP received 226 requests for assistance, some of which were handled by volunteers and others, requiring major specialized jobs like roof replacement, were handled by SNaP's “preferred provider” network of contractors.

Another telling indicator of success is inquiries about SNaP from outside the Community—as Crissman says, “I talk with a lot of people from all over the country who call to find out how you get started and what it is we're doing.”