

ADVOCATES *for* Senior Issues

YOU'RE INVITED

AFSI Membership Meeting

November 21, 2025 | 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

WHO: The Advocates for Senior Issues Members, Guests, and Sponsors.

WHAT: An opportunity to advocate, learn, and grow together.

There will be a continental breakfast so be sure to arrive early and bring a guest!

WHEN: November 21, 2025
10:00am to 12:00pm

WHERE:

*Salvation Army Kroc Center
2500 Division Ave S,
Grand Rapids, MI 49507*

QUESTIONS?

Please contact AAAWM
Advocacy.

 Advocacy@aaawm.org

 (616) 456-5664

Advocates for Senior Issues is a non-partisan organization, affiliated with the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan. Learn more at www.aaawm.org/afsi.

Legislative Speaker

**KENT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
ALAN VANDERBERG**

Al Vanderberg has served as the Kent County Administrator since August 2021, with a robust background in local government. Al serves on many boards, including the National Association of County Administrators (NACA), Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and Housing Kent, to name a few. Al is also an adjunct faculty member at Grand Valley State University, where he teaches undergraduate and master's programs.

Program Presentation

**AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES: A
REVIEW OF GRAND RAPIDS' PROGRESS**

The City of Grand Rapids was designated as an "Age Friendly Community" by AARP in 2018. Jennifer Feuerstein-DiVita, Associate State Director of AARP MI & On-Air Personality at ABC4/WOOD TV, will walk us through what this means, the steps the city had to take to become age-friendly, what the city has accomplished, and how this initiative is growing across the entire state.

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MEMBERSHIP MEETING

WHEN: November 21, 2025
10:00am to 12:00pm

WHERE:

Salvation Army Kroc Center
2500 Division Ave S,
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

AGENDA: Call to Order & Announcements:
Margaret Howard, President

LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATION:

County Administrator Alan Vanderberg

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PROGRAM PRESENTATION:

**Age Friendly Communities: A Review of
Grand Rapids' Progress**

The City of Grand Rapids was designated as an "Age Friendly Community" by AARP in 2018. Jennifer Feuerstein-DiVita, Associate State Director of AARP MI & On-Air Personality at ABC4/WOOD TV, will walk us through what this means, the steps the city had to take to become age-friendly, what the city has accomplished, and how this initiative is growing across the entire state.

SPONSORS



GOLD

Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (AAAWM)
AARP | Beacon Hill at Eastgate | Beth A. Swagman
Elders' Helpers

SILVER

Kelso Homes | Life EMS | Meijer Inc.
MKD Funeral Homes | Priority Health
Reliance Community Care Partners | West Michigan Credit Union

BRONZE

Care Resources PACE | Community Caregivers
Grand Rapids Elderly Care | Leslie Sanford
Lody and Joanne Zwarensteijn | Ofield Funeral Home
Parents Empowering Network | Primary Home Care | Tom Appel

FRIEND

Beth Mans Greenridge Realty | Chris Becker Kent Co. Prosecutor
Fair Housing Center of West Michigan
Grand Rapids Savvy Senior Learning Series
Joel Jason Certified Financial Planner | Kristyn Merkle
Meals on Wheels Western Michigan | Oasis Senior Advisors
Phil France | Renew Mobility | Senior Neighbors



ADVOCATES for Senior Issues

JOIN US MONTHLY TO...

ADVOCATE | LEARN | BUILD COMMUNITY

2025-2026 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

3RD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

Except July, August, & December

THE SALVATION ARMY KROC CENTER

(Unless otherwise noted)

10:00 AM MEETING CALL TO ORDER

September 19th

Prince Conference Center

October 17th

November 21st

January 16th

February 20th

March 20th

April 17th

Blanford Nature Center

May 15th

June 26th

TBD

AFSI is open to the public and free to attend for first time guests.

QUESTIONS?



www.aaawm.org/afsi



Advocacy@aaawm.org



616-456-5664

THE LOCAL SENIOR ADVOCACY GROUP GIVING VOICE TO OLDER ADULTS

THE WHY: The Advocates for Senior Issues (AFSI) is the premier older adult advocacy group in the state of Michigan. AFSI is a non-partisan group that strives to be inclusive of all of Kent County's diverse senior communities.

THE WHO: In addition to learning how to advocate, members are centers, and retirement communities, bringing the estimated reach of the group to over 10,000 people. AFSI members have various backgrounds, affiliations, and work histories, but many have a history of service, volunteerism, and/or activism.

THE IMPACT: In addition to learning how to advocate, members are educated on topics of importance to seniors. Programs include elder abuse and scams, healthy aging, senior driving issues, aging in place, Medicare, and more. State Senators and Representatives, as well as local County Commissioners and other special guests, are also invited to present to the group & answer questions.

THE HISTORY: In addition to learning how to advocate, members are *Citizen Senate*. Founded and led by Sister Agnes Theil, the group originally started with just a few dozen members. In 2001, its name was officially changed to *Advocates for Senior Issues*. The group was instrumental in bringing the Medicaid Waiver program to Kent County in 1992, making it one of the first counties in the state to have this cost-efficient program. AFSI played a major role in the Kent County Senior Millage campaign in 1998, as well as the millage renewal and increase in 2006 and 2014.

THE LEGACY: Two members have earned the Blue Cross Blue Shield Claude Pepper award for advocacy, and three members have received the Maggie Fegel Award. Additionally, three members have received the Governor's statewide Senior Leadership Award, and five members from the group have been awarded a Medal of Merit by former U.S. Congressman Vern Ehlers.

THE ACTION: In addition to learning how to advocate, members are the exception of July, August, and December. These meetings take place on the third Friday of the month, from 10:00 am-12:00 pm, with an average attendance of 125 members. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to attend a meeting to witness AFSI in action.