



MAYOR DAVID J. NARKEWICZ

City of Northampton

Office of the Mayor

210 Main Street Room 12

Northampton, MA 01060-3199

(413) 587-1249 Fax: (413) 587-1275

mayor@northamptonma.gov

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 6, 2016

TO: City Council

FROM: Mayor David J. Narkewicz

SUBJECT: Appointment of Director of Senior Services

I am appointing Linda Desmond to the position of Director of Senior Services. Mrs. Desmond is a Northampton native and long-time city resident with a 40-year background in elder and social services. She recently returned to Florence after living and working in Ireland for 10 years. Mrs. Desmond represented Ward 5 on the Northampton City Council for 5 years and served on the Northampton Council on Aging for 17 years. A copy of her extensive resume is attached.

I am submitting this appointment to the City Council in accordance with § 2-10 of the Northampton Charter.

cc: City Clerk, Wendy Mazza

Linda Desmond
50 Middle Street
Florence, Massachusetts
01062

Summary

A distinguished leader with proven success in program development, community organizing, advocacy, coalition building, intergenerational programming, and grant writing. Significant leadership experience in addressing human services issues and resource acquisition. Skilled in all aspects of supervisory and staff management. Ability to work effectively with private and public sectors and diverse populations. Has committed four decades of service to actively improving the lives of older people living in both Ireland and the United States.

Education and Certifications

University of Connecticut School of Social Work West Hartford, CT

- Masters of Social Work, Concentration in Social Work Administration

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

- Bachelor of Science, Concentration in Community Service
- Graduate Certification, Gerontology: University of Connecticut School of Social Work, Hartford, CT

Professional Accomplishments

- As the CEO of Care Local, a Dublin, Ireland based charity, I started a new initiative called the Plate Pals Programme, which was awarded the Vodafone World of Difference award. Through this volunteer based pilot, trained volunteers are assisting in nursing homes during meal time. Presently, according to research, more than 20% of the most vulnerable older people living in residential settings are malnourished. This new project addresses this critical issue.
- As Chairperson of the Docklands Senior Provider Council in partnership with other committee NGOs, older Docklands residents, the National College of Ireland, and major businesses, developed the first annual Docklands Book Sale. Twenty thousand books were collected, and all proceeds were distributed to older people's critical services in the Docklands area of Dublin. The book sale continues to generate €15,000 annually.
- As the Head of Empowerment and Regional Development for Age Action Ireland, I designed and developed the Getting Started Programme. Since its inception more than 4000 Irish older people have been trained in using computers and over 400 volunteers have been recruited and trained to assume a tutorial leadership role in Getting Started. It has been recognized as a program of E-inclusion Excellence by the Department of An Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Information Society Policy Unit.
- Through the resources provided by an EU Interreg grant, I began a Positive Aging Cross Border Program. This project focused on three streams of service from a cross border perspective - Advocacy, Education, and Health/Social Activities. More than 1000 older people participated from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- As Co-Chairperson of the National Advocacy Programme Alliance, in partnership with a number of older people's organizations and the Health Service Executive (HSE), I assisted in

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the development of a National volunteer residential advocacy initiative, which was based on the US Ombudsman Program. Produced a video that won the EU Inter-generational Solidarity Award. As Vice President of Community Investment for United Way of Hampshire County, Massachusetts, established four new programs and brought an additional \$165,000 in revenue to the United Way of Hampshire County.

Professional Employment History

March 2012 to July 2015

Crosscare Dublin, Ireland

Crosscare North Dublin Regional Program Director

- Successfully merged Care Local, of which I was the CEO as detailed below, with one of the largest charities in Ireland.
- Represented Crosscare on two World Health Organization's Age Friendly Cities regional committees.
- Developed a new older men's initiative called the League targeting one hundred economically and socially vulnerable men in Dublin.
- Coordinated an international educational visit with prominent Irish women representing older people's programs in Ireland with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and other Massachusetts Area Agencies on Aging.
- Hired, managed, trained, and supported 16 staff and interns and one hundred and fifty volunteers in Crosscare's Befriending Program, Plate Pals, Appointment Companions, and the League.
- Produced an award winning inter-generational video that emphasizes inter-generational solidarity.
- Organized all fund raising events.
- Continued the expansion of the Vodafone World of Difference award-winning program, Plate Pals, to three major hospitals in Dublin and ten nursing homes.
- Developed a new community initiative called Crosscare Connections, which created a "village" model of volunteer support for the oldest and most vulnerable Dublin people in partnership with individual parishes, Crosscare, and other public sector organizations.
- Facilitated four monthly Carer Support Groups.
- Managed Crosscare's satellite building/office in Finglas.

January 2009 – March 2012

Care Local Dublin, Ireland

Chief Executive Officer

- Responsible for all areas of management of Care Local, including strategic planning, financial monitoring, effective delivery of service, grants management and evaluation under the direction of the Board of Directors.
- Developed and implemented a strategy to maintain and expand Care Local's volunteer base of 150 volunteers by creating new program initiatives, including: Plate Pals, the Homecoming Programme, Neighbourhood Support Groups, and the Drummelee Older Men's Drop-in Centre.
- Designed new programs based on defined community needs and research and secured funding for the new initiatives.
- As a Dublin based NGO, liaised with other community partners, NGOs, and businesses to further strengthen and expand the organization.

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- Organized all fund raising events.
- Was responsible for the hiring, supervision, support and training of all staff.
- Designed a new agency branding scheme which included planning a strategy for higher community visibility and a stronger, more recognizable profile.

August 2006 – December 2008

Age Action Ireland
Dublin, Ireland

Head of Empowerment and Regional Development

- Was responsible for the planning, organization, funding, and evaluation of all development activities within Age Action Ireland, the largest national aging program in Ireland.
- Supervised and supported the team, which was comprised of staff for regional development and advocacy located in the West of Ireland, South East, and North Dublin. It also included the development and management of the Positive Aging Cross Border Programme, and supervision of the Career Support Programme, University of 3rd Age, and the newly developed Getting Started Programme.
- Planned, implemented, and evaluated the strategic plan for the Development Team over a three-year cycle with high priority in expanding the Development Programme to all regions of the country.
- Devised innovative programs and attracted funding for them.
- Liaised with a wide range of other bodies at regional, national, and international levels with particular regard to greater cross-border co-operation.
- Participated in INTERREG, an international group whose responsibility is to share projects that reflect best practices in social programming through EU member countries. In this capacity I contributed to EU publications and presented at a National Aging Conference in Chicago.
- Contributed to the overall work of Age Action Ireland as a member of the Senior Management Team.

June 2005 – June 2006

United Way of Hampshire County
Northampton, MA., USA

Vice President of Community Investment

- Responsible for the planning, development, management, and implementation of strategies to achieve the community building work of the United Way of Hampshire County, Massachusetts.
- Inspired and supported volunteer teams to understand and address the community's most pressing needs.
- Provided oversight and development of the Kimball W. Howes Volunteer Action Center, Success by Six initiative, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, and the effective delivery of the United Way's First Call for Help.
- Additionally responsible for the agency grant administration, including all areas of management of the Emergency Food and Shelter Program and its Local Board, outcome based evaluation, and needs assessments.

The V.P. was also responsible for working in consort with the President of the United Way in lobbying and advocating on behalf of the community with government officials and foundation personnel.

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1987 – June 2005

**Hampshire Community Action Commission
Northampton, MA., USA**

Director, Senior Volunteer Programs of Hampshire and Franklin Counties

- Directed two high-impact elder community volunteer programs comprising a 650 person membership.
- Supervised management staff and unionized line staff (performance reviews, disciplinary action, and team building).
- Oversaw volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition.
- Managed annual budget of \$500,000 (expanded under my leadership from original \$35,000 base) and performed successful grant writing.
- Provided public speaking, and customized workshop facilitation on effective volunteer management and community organizing, instituted performance measurement and accountability systems.

Other Areas of Employment pre-1987 include:

- Nutrition Program Director for older people's dining centers and home delivered meals; responsibility of distributing over 1000 meals a day to older people in a 2,000 square mile radius.
- Supportive Services Coordinator which planned activities for older people participating in the Highland Valley Nutrition Program.
- Case manager for older people providing a multi-level support system which allowed older people the dignity of remaining in their own homes.
- Have held numerous leadership roles on committees providing support, services, and advocacy for older people on the local, regional, national, and international levels

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- As member of the University of Massachusetts Community Service Learning Advisory Board assisted academic personnel and interns in designing a graduate track for both the Master's and Doctorate degrees in Community Service Learning.
- As a committee member of Treehouse, Inc., assisted in all areas of planning and development of this award-winning inter-generational, planned community for older citizens and foster families in Easthampton, Massachusetts.
- Developed an inter-generational literacy program utilizing 100 senior volunteers who served in 28 school systems, three after school programs, and three homeless shelters in Hampshire and Franklin Counties.
- Through successful grant writing, generated over \$2,000,000 in new revenues for program expansion and new program development from private and public sources (Department of An Taoiseach, Corporation for National and Community Service, Mass. Service Alliance, Verizon, Office of Refugees and Immigrants, Orchard Foundation, Mass. Dept. of Public Health, and the Guinness Foundation).
- Developed a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program in the Republic of Ireland and organized a "Conference on Older Volunteering" at Dublin Castle where keynote speaker President Mary McAleese recognized my civic engagement of older people.
- Served as elected official on the Northampton, Massachusetts City Council for 5 years.
- Invited by the Lithuanian government to present a workshop in Lithuania on older volunteering sponsored by Transparency International.
- Organized the Cambodian Elder Task force for Khmer elders experiencing poverty and isolation within Hampshire County. Through the efforts of this committee, Cambodian elders were assisted with home visits, the naturalization process, and assimilation into the greater community elder network.
- Through the Mass. Department of Public Health and in partnership with eight area Councils on Aging, created the Osteoporosis Exercise Program. Based on a senior peer leadership model, this free program serves 100+ seniors weekly and continues to grow.
- Over a ten year period, raised \$300,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds and rental income to convert Florence Grammar School, an abandoned school building, into a multi-purpose community center.
- Presented an Environmental Program that I initiated called Project Radon at the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington. Working in partnership with Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement (EASI), the Massachusetts Department of Health, and the Massachusetts RSVP Programs, thousands of Massachusetts homes were tested for Radon gas through the efforts of an inter-generational volunteer force..