

## **Aging in Place in North St. Paul: A Resident Targeted Needs Assessment Presented by students from University of Minnesota Gerontology Program**

Aging in place can be defined as the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level. Aging in place is more than just housing, it encompasses all services and social relationships required to help individuals remain in their community. Some of the reasons older adults leave their communities as they age include: their health needs are changing and they require more skilled nursing care, the services they need are not offered in their community, and caregivers are experiencing excessive strain and burnout.

To determine the needs of older residents of North St. Paul, a World Café event was conducted. Approximately 15 persons participated in this event. Participants rotated between three tables. At each table they were asked an open-ended question about North St. Paul. The main concerns of the residents are summarized here:

- 1) Transportation. Residents need to be able to drive safely. When they are no longer able to drive safely, there need to be transportation services available that meet the needs of residents. Residents do not feel the current bus system and Metro Transit are meeting their needs.
- 2) Chore service. Residents expressed a desire to have volunteers available to help them with small chores, such as moving furniture, mowing lawns, shoveling sidewalks, etc. Additionally, residents expressed a need for handymen who can help them make changes to their homes that will allow them to live in them safely, with risk of falling.
- 3) Neighborhood stores/café. Residents described needing a grocery store that is closer to their homes. Grocery delivery services do not appeal to most of the participants, as they want to be able to pick out their own produce and other groceries. Also, residents say the community lacks a restaurant or café that is appropriate for families.

These are the main concerns that arose from the World Café event. The complete findings of the event are listed in the word cloud below, with size priority given to topics that were discussed more frequently.

