



Age and Youth in Action

Gray Panthers Awareness Survey Results – January 2015

www.GrayPanthersNYC.org

Gray Panthers, NYC Network is pleased to report on findings from the January 2015 online survey seeking information on the public's awareness of Gray Panthers and the issues it supports. The purpose of this survey was to better understand the public's perception and dreams for Gray Panthers and to informally identify issues of potential concern and interest. 149 people responded.

Do people remember Gray Panthers and do they want it to remain active? The answer is YES. Not a statistically representative sample, the survey was distributed by those currently active in Gray Panthers affairs then forwarded to their personal networks of contacts. Not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority have heard of the Gray Panthers before.

Survey Question: What is your age?

18-29	14.38%	21 – Number of Responses
30-49	17.12%	25
50-59	28.97%	35
60-69	26.71%	39
70-79	13.01%	19
80-89	2.74%	4
90 or older	2.05%	3
Total		146

Interestingly, younger people were active in responding, representing 14%. The largest age cohort responding was those aged 60-69 - 27% of the pool. Regarding employment status, fully half of responders (50.68%) are employed full-time, while those retired represent 25%. But, all were represented.

Survey Question: Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

Employed, working full-time	50.68%	74 – Number of Responses
Employed, working part-time	15.07%	22
Not employed, looking for work	4.79%	7
Not employed, NOT looking for work	2.74%	4
Retired	24.66%	36
Disabled, not able to work	2.05%	3
Total		146

Survey Question: What do you know and/or remember about Gray Panthers?

Resoundingly, the most common recollection of Gray Panthers was the powerful, positive image of Maggie Kuhn – founder of Gray Panthers. Most recall Gray Panthers as an activist group representing older persons – sometimes in a radical way, but always as a vocal, effective advocate for the rights of older persons.

Respondents emphasized the broad range of social justice and progressive issues, particularly Gray Panthers’ fight against ageism and its firm anti-war activism (regarding the Vietnam and Iraq Wars). The concept of older and younger working together to achieve these goals was another forceful theme.

We believe this suggests that the public has a hunger for Gray Panthers to achieve positive results for older persons and for all, social justice, intergenerational solidarity and building peace, which had been the hallmarks of Maggie’s activism.

Survey Question: Which unaddressed issues do you think are most important for Gray Panthers to address now?

When asked to identify which issues are most important for Gray Panthers to focus on now, respondents’ answers represented a thoughtful and broad swath of concerns. Within each category, many under examined issues were identified. All are important and worthy of attention. Please note, the list below is arranged randomly, not according to number of suggestions received:

- **Healthcare and Health Insurance** (including Single Payer Health Care, Ageism by Medical Professionals, Affordability, HIV, and other issues);
- **Social Security** (including Raising the Cap, Opposing Cuts to Soc. Sec, Maintaining Medicare, and other issues);
- **Economic and financial security** (including Poverty, People over Profit, Retirement Planning, Financial Management and other issues);
- **Ageism** (including addressing Internalized Ageism, Invisibility of Older Persons, Consciousness Raising, Poor Overall View of Older Persons, and other issues);
- **Access to Resources and Care as well as Self –Reliance** (including How can People find the Resources they need, Monitoring the Vulnerable at Home, Isolation, Assistance for Younger Persons caring for Older Persons, and other issues);
- **Employment for older persons** (including Ageism and Discrimination against Older Workers, Mandatory Retirement, Re-training Opportunities, Salary and Promotions, and other issues);
- **Housing** (including Affordable, Accessible Housing, Aging in Place, Preventing Homelessness, Affordable Assisted Living, Better Oversight of LTC facilities and other issues);
- **Civil Rights and Justice for all** (Police Relations, Addressing Violence in Society, Corporate Welfare, Environmental Justice, and other issues.).

Less frequently mentioned categories of issues included:

- Emphasis on the **Opportunity and Potential that Aging offers; Strong Advocacy at the National Level; Media Depictions of Older Persons; Sexuality in the Older Population; Nursing Home Care; End of Life Issues; Fighting Discrimination: Transportation; Human Rights; Elder Abuse; Pensions.**

These results can help Gray Panthers determine future projects and identify issues we might focus on, such as – ageism, civil rights, healthcare, financial security, and housing. Yet, the passion of Gray Panthers activism stems from its loud and educated visibility as well as its strong, principled stands on numerous progressive and social justice issues. Attaining victories in these areas (both large and small) will help the organization gain visibility and to make the most valuable contributions.

Survey Question: Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

Numerous respondents noted that Gray Panthers should expand its membership. Inclusion of people of color in Gray Panthers membership and advocacy as well as inclusion of the unique concerns of older gay women and men were requested. As many requested further information about Gray Panthers NYC Network, an effective method of outreach is necessary.

Of the many eloquent comments received, we'd like to highlight just a few.

- *"I love the mixing of ages. Would like to see more ethnicity, more people of color, joining Gray Panthers."*
- *"It's critically important to add age as a criterion for both diversity and discrimination, alongside race, sex and sexual orientation, and disability."*
- *"I worry about the new middle class of America. Can they afford to retire? Will they be cared for? Will they lose their homes? Will my generation be the last in which the middle class experienced any degree of affluence?"*

Respectfully submitted,

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