



SSSF
Steuben Senior Services Fund, Inc.
Empowering Seniors to Age at Home



Dear Linda,



BONE BUILDER'S LEADER EXTRAORDINAIRE, SUZANNE MILLER

Bone Builders is sponsored by Steuben County Americorps Seniors and is closely affiliated with Steuben Senior Services Fund, so it seemed appropriate to focus this issue's interview on one of our Bone Builder's group leaders. What better person to spotlight than Suzanne Miller, a Bone Builder's group leader for nearly 25 years, and one of the founders of our Steuben County program.

I have known Suzanne since 2002 when she asked me if I knew of any part-time jobs, and I directed her to ProAction where she was hired to assist with the Senior Wellness program focusing on home safety assessments, the Ramps Program and Bone Builders. At that time, Suzanne was credentialed through Tufts University where the original research for this exercise program was completed. After training, Suzanne worked to establish many Bone Builder groups and eventually hired Darlene Auckland to take over the expansion of this program throughout Steuben County.

Born and raised in Wisconsin in an area much like Steuben County, Suzanne is the oldest of four siblings all of whom are still alive. Suzanne completed her master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling in Mental Health and Psychiatry at Michigan State University and spent several years of predoctoral work with Devereaux Foundation near Philadelphia, working with children with autism and developmental disabilities.

Suzanne and her husband and one child came to Canisteo in 1974 and bought a 1790's farm and began restoring the house and farmland. She went to work at the VA in the Department of Nursing working in psychiatry and mental health from which she retired in 2000 having completed 28 years of service. In addition, with friends the Millers started a preschool and the first food coop in Steuben County.

Suzanne has always had a passion for horses, starting in her early days in Wisconsin. In fact, her first horse traveled and lived with her in multiple states including Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Colorado. Through the years Suzanne participated in competitive long-distance riding, Pony Club and 4-H with her children Ilsa and David. Naturally her love for horses continued and the Canisteo farm was the home for many horses until it was sold in 2005.

Suzanne is devoted to good nutrition, exercise, and leaving the smallest carbon footprint as possible. She has eaten a plant-based diet for 45 years, still doing her own cooking from scratch every day, leading her Hornell Bone Builder's group

twice a week, and swimming at Guthrie Health Works three times per week. She also loves music, practicing her tenor recorder daily and leading hymns at the Hornell Alfred Unitarian Universalist Society each time they meet. She also plays concerts at the Hornell Senior Center.

Her children live in Hornell and in Florida, and Suzanne has three grandchildren. She will soon be a great-grandmother. She enthusiastically says she has had an absolutely awesome life and can't believe how quickly time has passed, especially since retirement.

Suzanne believes that keeping active both mentally and physically and maintaining wonderful social contacts—connections with all sorts of groups, people, etc. is vital to aging well and aging in place. Hence her long-time commitment to Bone Builders. Thank you, Suzanne!

--by Linda M. Tetor

2024 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

The board and staff of SSSF gratefully recognize the hundreds of organizations, businesses and individuals who contributed to SSSF in 2024!



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- **Some people think that allowing help like Full Circle America in their home might take away their independence. Full Circle America doesn't take your independence, it supports it!**
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Transform Your Home into a Safe Haven

Tell me, Sue, ...?

Sue Gruber, Certified Aging in Place Specialist,
is here to answer your pressing questions.

Tell me, Sue, why does "Aging in Place" require a conscious decision?

Aging in place does NOT require a conscious decision!

EVERYONE is naturally aging where they are at this moment... even children are aging in place!

If we do nothing differently, we will still be aging in place, but the question we need to ask ourselves is: "Are we aging in place WELL?"

If we want to age in place WELL, we need to make a conscious decision and intentionally work towards this goal.

Why? One reason is because only 6% of our homes are aging-ready! (U.S Department of Health & Human Services Report Issued May 2020) This means that 94% our homes cannot adequately support us throughout our lives without some modifications. WOW! According to the study above, there are 3 attributes of an "aging-ready" home, which are numbered 1-3 on the right.

Those of you who have attended our Creating Your Forever Home series know that there are many other easy things that can make our home more functional, including, but certainly not limited to: improved lighting; strategic placement of frequently used items, better flooring transitions, and decluttering.

Let's all take conscious steps today to age in place WELL!

Attributes of an Aging-Ready Home

1. A Zero-Step Entry
2. First Floor Bedroom & Bathroom
3. At least one accessibility feature in the bathroom, i.e. grab bar, raised toilet
4. A functional environment
*(Addition by CAPS
Mike Hurley & Sue Gruber)*



To submit a question to Sue Gruber go to
www.forwardthinkinghomesolutions.com
and click on the "Contact Us" tab at the top

BUBBLY & BRUNCH July 27, 2025

Mark your calendars for this year's Bubbly & Brunch, scheduled for July 27th from 11-2 at the Pleasant Valley Winery once again, thanks to the Mike Doyle family. A delicious brunch and PVW libations will be served, there will be music and various raffles, along with a large silent auction of items donated by various businesses and organizations from throughout Steuben County. Please plan to join us



for our fun event in the completely air-conditioned comfort of this picturesque wine museum and visitor's center. We look forward to seeing you at the 5th Bubbly & Brunch.



AGING IN PLACE NEWS

Aging in place is the ability of older adults to remain in their own homes and communities safely, independently, and comfortably as they grow older. This concept is increasingly popular as many seniors prefer to stay in familiar surroundings rather than move to assisted living facilities or nursing homes.

Successful aging in place often requires modifications to the home, such as installing grab bars, improving lighting, or using smart technology to enhance safety and convenience. By planning ahead and utilizing available resources, aging in place allows seniors to maintain their independence, dignity, and emotional well-being while staying connected to their communities.

One of the key ways Steuben Senior Services Fund (SSSF) fulfills its mission is by partnering with aging-in-place communities across Steuben County to provide valuable information, resources, and programs that support independent living. Recently, we collaborated with certified Aging in Place Specialists, Mike Hurley of Gerould's Healthcare Center & Sue Gruber of Forward-Thinking Home Solutions, along with the Steuben County Office for the Aging, to bring the Creating Your Forever Home program to the Cameron, Woodhull and Jasper-Troupsburg areas.

We are excited to announce that another offering of Creating Your Forever Home will be held in Hornell at the Hornell Senior Center, 20 Broad Way Mall. This 5-week workshop held on Thursdays will begin Thursday, April 10 -May 8, 2025, from 1-2 pm.

Did you know that the Hornell Senior Center is a designated Senior Nutrition Congregate Meal Site? Enjoy a nutritious meal served Monday through Friday at 12 PM, with a suggested donation of \$4. If you haven't visited the Hornell Senior Center yet, now is the perfect time! Join us for lunch and stay for this wonderful program.

To register for the Creating Your Forever Home workshop, contact the Steuben County Office for the Aging at (607) 664-2298.



In Memory of Elizabeth Engel

Recently Elizabeth (Betty) Engel, one of our Full Circle America members passed away. There are two things that are notable about Betty's time with us. First, she called me and **asked** to join our Pioneer Club. That was an unusual occurrence, as only a small handful of the 107 people we have served have referred themselves. Betty was a true forward thinker in so many ways!

She had heard me speak about Full Circle America at a meeting of the Trust in the Lives of Older Women in Wayland. Her story was that when she was in her '70's she fell down the stairs of her home and fractured her pelvis. She said that she hadn't expected to fall, but that the lesson in the fall was that you never know what will happen to you in life and that being prepared was key. Betty wanted to age in place in her home and therefore believed that Full Circle America would help her to do that. And it surely did. At her calling hours on Sunday, the family expressed their deep appreciation for our service to her, and I was able to tell them the story of how she joined Full Circle America.

The second notable thing about Betty was that she was with FCA longer than any other member—7.31 years! Thanks to Betty for allowing us to be a part of her life for so many years. She will be missed, but her shining example of aging with grace and dignity in her own home will live on.

By Linda M. Teter

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