AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY APPROACH TO HELPING SENIORS SUCCESSFULLY AGE IN PLACE IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
BACKGROUND
Project Renewal’s mission is to end the cycle of homelessness by empowering individuals and families to renew their lives with health, home and jobs.

GEFFNER HOUSE
• Permanent supportive housing facility for 307 low-income and formerly homeless individuals.
• Interdisciplinary Team Approach
• High presence of isolation and depression among Geffner’s 120 seniors.

SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS
• NYS Department of Health – TAP Program (Tools for Aging in Place).
• 2 year pilot program.
• Personalized occupational therapy services were instituted at Geffner House for seniors in hygiene, health management, nutrition and community engagement.
• Modifications to senior’s apartment such as grab bars and non-skid tiles.
OUTCOMES
• Escorts to appointments resulted in a significant increase in seniors utilizing primary care and mental health services.
• Data indicated that occupational therapy services were essential to TAP program.

HOPE PROGRAM
• Helping Older People Engage evolved from the TAP program.
• Goal of HOPE program to provide occupational therapy services for seniors to age in place with dignity and independence.

FUNDING
• Private foundation grant.
• Geffner’s government contracts.
• Occupational therapy program replaced recreation program.
STAFFING
• 2 full-time occupational therapists and 1 part-time.
• Clinical internship of master’s level occupational therapy students.
• Occupational therapy offers a more targeted approach to determine an individual’s cognitive, social and organizational skills necessary to remain housed.

SERVICES
• Environmental modifications.
• Escorts to primary care, mental health and dental appointments.
• Group and individual service planning.
• Targeted treatment for skill development in hygiene and self care, health management, social participation, home maintenance, stress and anger management and others.
QUANTITATIVE DATA
• Tracking numerous factors such as ER visits, hospitalizations, behavior indicators of stability.
• 9 month in operation too soon to evaluate outcomes.

QUALITATIVE DATA
• Based on reporting of staff, there is an increased senior presence in the building and an increased sense of community.
• Increased teamwork among clinical disciplines.
• As seniors have become a more visible presence in the building, younger tenants have begun assisting them and being more aware of their well being.
• An increase in positive communication between staff and younger tenants. As younger tenants observe staff more actively providing care for senior tenants, they appear to view staff more favorably.