



# Homer Senior Citizens, Inc.

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Homer, Alaska 99603  
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October 12, 2016

Mayor Navarre and Assembly  
144 North Binkley Street  
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

Dear Honorable Mayor and Assembly:

Homer Senior Citizens, Inc is a community center for the Southern Kenai Peninsula. We prepare over 23,000 meals annually to 469 different individuals. We provide over 7,890 hours of care to 35 clients in our Adult Day program—keeping seniors in their homes and with their families. We offer educational (Senior Summit, Guest Speakers, NorthWest Geriatric Educational Series, Community Forums, etc), and physical activities (Tai Chi, Zumba, Fun N Fitness) partnering with the Hospital on Strong Women exercise programs. We also host meeting spaces for Caregiver Support Group, Parkinson's Support Group, Pioneers of Alaska, Ukulele Music Group, and Provider meetings. We have accommodated the Governor on two occasions in the past year. Additionally, weekly bridge groups use our facility. During the winter we open the evening hours up for Dinner and Dance, candlelight dinners, and we host Free Donuts during the Winter Carnival annually.

Imagine...shuffling slowly stutter stepping, hunched over a metal frame, disfigured arthritic fingers twisting around a rubber handle, requiring every ounce of energy to move forward. Combined with tunnel vision and diminished hearing causing a gait imbalance then lifting and wheeling over undulating bumps and uneven worn carpet with ripples like waves.

Falls are the greatest risk for hospitalization in Senior Centers and Assisted Living facilities. According to the Center for Disease Control:

- About 1,800 people living in nursing homes die from falls each year and about 10% to 20% of nursing home falls cause serious injuries; 2% to 6% cause fractures.<sup>i</sup>
- Falls result in disability, functional decline and reduced quality of life. Fear of falling can cause further loss of function, depression, feelings of helplessness, and social isolation.<sup>ii</sup>

*40 Years of Great Service Helping Seniors "Live Life to Its Fullest!"*

[www.homerseniors.com](http://www.homerseniors.com)

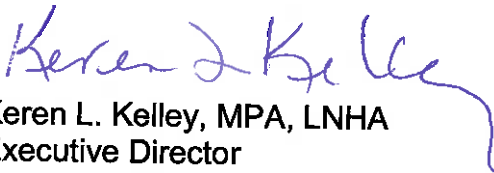


HSC takes falls seriously. Knowing this concern is a factor HSC developed a Fall Prevention Program which consists of reviewing medications, muscle weakness and walking or gait problems. However, the environmental hazards must be addressed as well. The CDC reports that 16% to 27% of falls are caused by environmental hazards such as wet floors, poor lighting, as well as medications. Research shows assessing the entire environment provides the best protection to prevent falls. Flooring is an important aspect of this program.

We have submitted a grant to Rasmuson to help us with the flooring project to protect our seniors, guests and members of the community. We selected a local contractor through an official bidding process. This is a major capital project request of \$238,656. Homer Senior Citizens, Inc. will be contributing \$77,000 to the project.

According to the Rasmuson Representative, our grant will score higher with financial support from our community. We have also submitted a grant to Homer Foundation and the City of Homer. We respectfully request the Borough Assembly to allow us to use \$10,000 from the Borough Senior Center Grant to help fund this very worthwhile project.

Sincerely,



Keren L. Kelley, MPA, LNHA  
Executive Director

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<sup>i</sup> Rubenstein LZ, Robbins AS, Schulman BL, Rosado J, Osterweil D, Josephson KR. Falls and instability in the elderly. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 1988;36:266-78.

<sup>ii</sup> Rubenstein LZ. Preventing falls in the nursing home. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1997;278(7):595-6.

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