

Mather LifeWays' Café Model Offers More

by Emily Wilson

Published On: July 23, 2012

Thanks to **Mather LifeWays** in Chicago, visitors at any More Than a Café can grab a hot cup of joe, meet with friends, admire local art, enjoy a gourmet meal, relax with some yoga, or brush up on their computer skills—all in one convenient location.

During a recent visit to the More Than a Café on West Higgins Road, LeadingAge's chief operations officer, Katie Smith-Sloan, noted the immediately apparent sense of community.

"More Than a Café is clearly a neighborhood destination—a hub of activity, some of which is planned by staff, some of which is created by its regular patrons," she says. "There is a strong feeling of neighborhood and connection."

The More Than a Café that Sloan visited was just one of four in Chicago, each one reflecting local flair. There are over 30 More Than a Café's in other states and in Japan, born out of Mather Lifeways core idea of "making neighborhoods better places for older adults to live, work, learn, contribute and play in inspiring ways." Mather LifeWays dubs it the "Café Plus Concept," and explains the idea's success on their website.

- 65% increased community outreach and engagement.
- 57% offer different types of classes and programs.
- 57% increased customer engagement and involvement.
- 46% re-trained staff on customer service techniques.
- 38% enhanced culinary services.
- 38% are utilizing new marketing techniques.

Clearly, Mather LifeWays is addressing a need and a preference, while expanding the world of possibilities for aging in this and other neighborhoods fortunate enough to have More Than a Café.

For more information on the Café Plus Concept, please visit www.matherlifeways.com/cafeplus