

Aging population is increasing

Kings Mountain and No. 4 Township's population of older Americans is rising. Monty Thornburg, Director of Kings Mountain's Aging Program, said that 3,300 adults 60 years of age and older live in the Greater Kings Mountain area and 600 are served through the Kings Mountain Senior Center at the Depot. The figures are based on the 1990 census.

Thornburg said that eligible clients are those who live in the Kings Mountain School District, age 60 and older, and meet an income eligibility requirement.

Thornburg, in a speech before the American Legion Auxiliary Thursday, said that the older population numbered 31.8 million in 1991 and by the year 2010 will double.

Thornburg said that 80 people enjoy lunch at the Senior Center daily and 30 home-bound adults are served meals on wheels.

"We target economically and socially needy and minorities but there's a misconception that programs like ours are welfare centers," said Thornburg. He said that

70 percent of the Center's \$170,000 budget comes from the City of Kings Mountain.

Thornburg said that such programs as exercise, bridge, line dancing, crafts, monthly blood pressure checks, flu shots, health fairs, food commodities, legal service and adult basic education courses are offered at the Center. He said that except for trips, everything is free and there is no registration fees classes for citizens age 65. Transportation is provided by TACT of Cleveland County and includes transportation of seniors to doctor's clinics.

Thornburg said that hot meals are cooked on the site, the largest operated in the county.

Thornburg said his staff's long term goal is to build a new center and use the present facility for adult day care. "We are growing by leaps and bounds and soon we may outgrow our present facility," he said.

Thornburg encouraged local volunteers to help staff health fairs and serve as hostesses for commodity distribution and dances. He said the youngest volunteer is 14 and the oldest volunteer is 93.

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