

# Impact of the TimeBank on its Membership

Research Study Results – December, 2009

The survey, funded by the Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc., was administered by the VNSNY Center for Home Care Policy and Research. The study surveyed active older members (ages 60 and over) to gauge what impact the TimeBank has had on their lives. The following are some key findings and quotes from members surveyed:

## General Benefits



- **100% of members reported that they have benefited from becoming a TimeBank member.**
  - "I feel that the TimeBank is an expansion of my family."*
  - "Those of us of advanced age should enroll because we will share and we won't feel alone."*
  - "Now that I'm sick, my TimeBank friends have come to see me, and most importantly, I feel that they care about me as much as I care about them."*
- **Those with the lowest self-reported annual income (under \$9,800) and those who took the survey in Spanish reported the highest level of positive impact from TimeBank membership.**
  - "We learn from one another and there aren't barriers or discrimination in the TimeBank."*
  - "It improves one's self-esteem and happiness settles in your heart."*
- **98% reported that they are able to use their skills to help others through the TimeBank.**
  - "We all have something to give and even if we think we don't, the TimeBank helps you see that you have much to give."*

## Improved Health and Access to Services

- **48% reported improvements in self-rated physical health.**
- **72% reported improvements in self-rated mental health.**
  - "I feel better and my self-esteem is better... now I don't feel like an old woman without a future."*
  - "The TimeBank came into my life during a sad time and completely changed my life."*
  - "They helped me during my most difficult time, which was the death of my only sibling... if it wasn't for my friends from the TimeBank, who encouraged me to continue on, I would have died of pain and loneliness."*
- **67% reported increased access to health and other community services.**
  - "If you are sick or need someone to go with you to the doctor, you have someone to call."*
- **93% saw the TimeBank as a place to obtain information about services in the community.**
  - "They have people that can help you with anything, but if they can't, the staff of the TimeBank finds you someone that can. Your life changes completely."*
- **92% reported that since joining the TimeBank it is easier for them to ask for help.**



## Financial Savings

- **51% of all members surveyed reported that they saved money through the TimeBank.**
- **73% of those with an annual income of less than \$9,800 reported that membership in the TimeBank helped them save money.**

## Increased Socialization



- 90% reported that the number of friends they have increased since joining the TimeBank.
- 71% of these members reported that they have contact with their new friends at least once a week (42% reported contact a few times/week).

*"My life changed greatly and now I have a social life that I didn't when I was young. Now I have friends and go to the theater, to museums. We meet every afternoon in the house of one of my new friends, exchange recipes, drink tea, eat cookies and pastelitos."*

*"Before [joining the TimeBank] I didn't speak to anyone because I was feeling bad. I didn't know how to make friends. The TimeBank gave me confidence and made me sure that I could."*

## A Resource for Aging in Place

- 79% reported that the TimeBank membership gives them support they need to be able to stay in their homes and community as they get older.

*"Now I have a broken hand. They cook, clean my house, changed my curtains, visited yesterday, and they call every day."*

*"When I was sick, a member did my laundry. They called me every day and brought me food."*

## Increased Trust and Sense of Belonging to their Communities

- 73% reported an increase in trust of people from other backgrounds, cultures or age groups.

*"Practicing English, seeing that people from other countries come to the TimeBank and do what they do helps me to be more open with others because I am very full of shame and before I didn't speak with people that I didn't know. The TimeBank, for me, has been the best thing that can happen to someone to feel human."*

*"I know that I can confide in the TimeBank members."*

- 85% reported increase in sense of belonging to their community.

*"By meeting many people of different cultures, you have so many friends that truly like you and you feel useful to your community."*

- 93% reported that they have made friends with or exchanged with members of different ages, backgrounds or cultures.

*"That it's a sharing of cultures, to meet very nice people, such as the TimeBank staff that are a true symbol of what it is to give love and also to become a member of such a prestigious bank."*

- 88% reported that they feel they are making a contribution to their community through the TimeBank.

*"Before, I didn't dare offer my services for fear that I would be told 'no,' and now, thanks to the TimeBank, I have the courage to talk to other people without feeling embarrassed or ashamed."*



## Improved Quality of Life

- 82% reported that the quality of their life increased since joining the TimeBank.

*"It has given me life; my health comes from the sisterhood that we have. The TimeBank has brought happiness to my life...when there is a meeting I feel happy because I'm going to share for a while with my new friends."*

*"The TimeBank has given me new energy to go forward every day."*