This tight-knit community of 15,720 has a history of keeping its residents for generations, with a growing commitment to help older adults age in place. SPRYE and The Rye Youth Council are two agencies responsible for ensuring that Rye is an age-optimized community.

SPRYE, an acronym for Staying Put in Rye and Environs, is an effort Rye residents started to create a supportive network that allows older community members to age-in-place. In addition to providing crucial service to older adults like transportation, reliable referrals to professional services, home health care and grocery shopping, SPRYE provides many avenues for older adults to maintain strong social relationships in the community. SPRYE was founded with the understanding that intergenerational relationships are imperative to keeping older adults vitally engaged in a familiar community and neighborhood.

Founded in 1964, The Rye Youth Council is Rye’s longest standing provider of youth services, which aims to actively assist young people in becoming confident and compassionate members of society. It accomplishes this by involving youth in projects that provide them a world perspective beyond themselves. For many years, the Rye Youth Council has partnered young people with older adults in the community through their “Adopt a Grandfriend” program.

Through the SPRYE Technology Workshop, both SPRYE and The Rye Youth Council give Rye High School students an opportunity to teach older adults how to use computers and new technology such as smartphones and tablets. In addition to the technology workshops, the Rye Youth Council’s Employment Services insure that older adults have access to yard cleanup, snow clearing and small handyman jobs at low or no cost that help them age-in-place.

The goal of the Rye Civility Initiative is to identify the values that the community would like to embrace and develop a plan to implement these values across all sectors of Rye. Because of the strong values placed in community engagement, in order to create this initiative, in depth focus group conversations were held with community members representing a wide variety of ages and roles in the community.

“I find working with the senior citizen population fun and since I do not get to see my grandparents that often, working with them enables me to hear their views and to see things differently. ...Sometimes we [my generation] get stuck thinking that there is only one way of doing things and then when they speak to us, we realize that there are so many ways to look at things.”

Kana White, Rye High School sophomore

These services have kept Lauren Collins in Rye for the past 21 years. For 14 years, she’s served as director of Kids’ S.P.A.C.E., a before and after school enrichment program. Through her organization’s partnership with the Osborn Retirement community, bimonthly programs include activities such as sharing stories, playing board games, holiday decorating, gardening, cooking and art. “Each year the children and the residents develop a meaningful bond and it is heartwarming to see the enthusiasm of everyone involved,” Collins explains. “Many of our children are unable to see their own grandparents on a regular basis and it is nice for them to have the experience of spending quality time with older adults.”