



National
**COMMUNITY
CARE CORPS**

*Building Engagement
and Independence
in Communities*



2021-2022
GRANTEE SNAPSHOTS



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Introduction

The Community Care Corps is a national program that fosters the development and implementation of innovative local models in which volunteers assist family caregivers, older adults or adults with disabilities with nonmedical assistance in home and community-based settings to maintain their independence, health and well-being. Administered by the Oasis Institute with support from USAging, Caregiver Action Network (CAN) and Altarum Institute with funding through a cooperative agreement from the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the Community Care Corps awards grants to local organizations across the country to establish, enhance and grow volunteer models to meet the growing need for these forms of assistance.

With most Americans wishing to live in their own homes and communities as they age, increasing access to services and supports that promote aging in place is a priority. It is critical to prioritize programs that encourage independence and activities that are responsive to individual needs and preferences to ensure that all Americans have the ability to live independently and thrive for as long as possible.

To directly respond to community needs, Community Care Corps grantees implement innovative volunteer models to provide various forms of nonmedical assistance and companionship, such as caregiver education and skills training, respite programs, care coordination, friendly visiting, peer-to-peer support, non-emergency nonmedical transportation, and home modifications. These forms of assistance enable older adults and adults with disabilities to not only maintain their independence and autonomy but remain connected to critical social support that improves quality of life and helps prevent premature institutionalization. These forms of assistance also empower and provide relief to the millions of overburdened family caregivers providing indispensable care to their loved ones, family and friends.

This publication, **Community Care Corps: Building Engagement and Independence in Communities**, spotlights the invaluable work that the 2021-2022 grantees conducted to meet local needs of older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers in their communities. We have been so impressed by the ingenuity and innovation demonstrated by the 2021-2022 Community Care Corps grantees and we hope these snapshots will serve as inspiration for the future.



Grantee Videos

Community Care Corps grantees created videos about their programs. These short videos provide a window into how individuals have become involved with the program, what their role is and how the program impacted them. Click the image below to view the Community Care Corps videos.



View all Community Care Corps grantee videos online at www.vimeo.com/communitycarecorps.

The Friendship Project

Advocates

Framingham, MA | www.advocates.org

Advocates, based in Framingham, MA, is a comprehensive community-based nonprofit serving children, adults and older adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, brain injuries, mental health conditions, and other life challenges throughout central and eastern Massachusetts. Advocates embraces the spirit of holistic engagement and recognizes the value and dignity of adults with disabilities and older adults who possess talents and vitality that can help reduce social isolation in their communities.

In response to the isolation that many people face, Advocates has developed The Friendship Project, a volunteer initiative. In addition to working with partner organizations, Advocates recruits adults with disabilities and older adults, whose strengths are often overlooked, to provide meaningful social engagement in a one-to-one volunteer model to foster friendship and support. As a collaborative project that spans multiple urban and suburban communities in Massachusetts, Advocates prioritizes cultural and linguistic congruence. In Framingham, 15 percent of residents age 65 and older are people of color and the Boston and MetroWest areas are home to extensive African immigrant and refugee communities. To recruit and engage with volunteers and care recipients from these communities, Advocates partners with local organizations including the Somali Development Center and the Greater Framingham Church, which are home to individuals who share faith traditions and cultural backgrounds. Additional partners include UnitedHealthcare, Bay Path Elder Services and Central Boston Elder Services, all of which identify volunteers and recipients who could benefit from participating in this project. The MetroWest Chamber of Commerce and MassBay Community College are additional resources to the growing volunteer network.

To match volunteers to the appropriate care recipient, volunteer coordinators work with recipients and their families and staff to gather information on their specific wants and needs. Once matched, pairs plan friendly activities and interactions, which may include phone calls and texts, recreational outings, errands in the community, help with moving, or whatever else recipients may be interested in or need. For many care recipients, the only prior interactions occurred with paid staff, so this program offers a connection with other community members who are simply there to be a friend. The Friendship Project helps expand important social connections for recipients, and Advocates has also found that this volunteer support lessens the stress on family caregivers and direct support staff who work with individuals who live alone or in congregate housing. This initiative addresses individual needs and strives to bring human caring connections to all involved.

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“

We learned a little bit about each other throughout our conversation. I felt like I made a new friend in just a few hours!

—Participant

”

Trusted Ride-Certified Chaperone Program

Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut

North Haven, CT | www.aoascc.org

Many older adults and people with disabilities miss medical appointments and outpatient procedures due to transportation and social barriers. The Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut (AOASCC) is an independent nonprofit organization serving older adults, adults with disabilities and caregivers in the greater New Haven area. Since transportation is a barrier to many receiving essential services and attending medical appointments that allow individuals to live independently in their communities, AOASCC is committed to providing comfortable and accessible transportation options. The Trusted Ride-Certified Chaperone Program model engages volunteer chaperones to provide door-through-door assistance to improve health care access and outcomes while reducing anxiety regarding medical care that older adults and adults with disabilities may experience.

During their pivot from virtual chaperone assistance due to the COVID-19 pandemic, AOASCC found that the rapport built between chaperones and individuals prior to in-person service appointments is extremely effective when working with clients who struggle to make it to appointments due to mental health and anxiety issues. This led AOASCC to add a new internship component to its model in partnership with Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of New Haven (IVCG) and Southern Connecticut University (SCU). The internship option developed with SCU recruits senior-level social work interns to provide case management for at-risk individuals who have a pattern of missing medical and essential appointments. This model of support has been incorporated with every referral. These interns and volunteer chaperones work directly with clients to form personal relationships and provide intensive support to address health needs, including coordinating and accompanying clients to and from medical appointments. Transportation is most often provided through IVCG's volunteer drivers and staff; however, the program accommodates other modes of transportation with volunteer chaperone support, dependent on clients' requests and/or needs.

Trusted Ride-Certified (TRC) works with AOASCC to provide volunteer training and uniforms, maintain relationships with transportation providers and coordinate the ride scheduler system. TRC Chaperones provide assistance getting from the individual's door to the waiting vehicle at the curb, loading ambulation devices into the vehicle when necessary, and riding along to the essential service or medical appointment. AOASCC is exploring collaborations with additional local transportation providers to ensure maximum opportunity for older individuals and adults with disabilities to receive chaperone assistance.

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“

A chaperone recipient living with her caregiver daughter, who cannot always take her to appointments due to her work schedule told us, 'I am so grateful for this experience! I had such a fear of falling before you arrived! When I saw you all, I knew I was not going to fall!

—Program Leader

”



Community Volunteer Program

Alamo Area Council of Governments

San Antonio, TX | www.aacog.com

Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG), which serves as the Bexar County Local Authority for persons with Intellectual and Development Disabilities (IDD) and parent agency to the Bexar Area Agency on Aging (AAA), has a long history of working with and managing older adult programs and volunteers. Dedicated to building a community that supports individuals aging in place with dignity, security and enhanced quality of life, Bexar AAA has developed the Community Volunteer Program (CVP). The CVP aims to fill gaps and address the changing needs of older adults and individuals with IDD in San Antonio, TX. To determine the expanded services needed to address these gaps, Bexar AAA worked with Alamo Service Connection, the local Aging and Disability Resource Center, and Successfully Aging and Living in San Antonio, a local social service group, to learn about local resources and referral needs. Bexar AAA staff concluded that transportation, phone calls, food delivery, lawn care and friendly visits were essential services to incorporate into the Community Volunteer Program.

It is estimated that nearly 22 percent of Bexar County residents are 55 and older and 22 percent of Bexar County residents have a disability; of those individuals, more than 26,000 are persons with autism spectrum disorder or an intellectual disability. Many older adults and adults living with IDD experience health conditions and physical and cognitive challenges that require similar support to meet their desire to remain active and engaged in the community. Bexar AAA partners with Texas Veterans Network and Alamo Service Connection to recruit participants who would benefit from CVP services that are intended to reduce social isolation, improve health outcomes and support aging at home. United Way 211 posts program information on an electronic bulletin board and AACOG service coordination staff help spread the word to the IDD community.

While AACOG had previously offered companionship and phone support to older adults, expanding assistance to the IDD community meant adapting their volunteer structure and scheduling. Traditional volunteers used to have a set schedule or time commitment; however, CVP now works with a credentialed pool of volunteers who are matched to needs requests on a real-time basis via a volunteer management tool. After assessing volunteer availability and capability, program coordinators match available volunteers with support requests from the Veterans Network and Alamo Service Connection referral program. This streamlined model facilitates access to critical transportation, food and socialization that empowers individuals to live and age well in their community.

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Thank you for delivering my food box. I did not know where or how I would get food. This program is a lifesaver.

—Client



A Village of Support

Arlington Neighborhood Village

Arlington, VA | www.arlnvil.org

Arlington Neighborhood Village's (ANV) mission is to help older adults in Arlington, VA age in place safely and independently while remaining engaged in their community. Founded in 2013, ANV began with conversations between neighbors about the extra supports needed to age in place. To address these needs, the founders adopted the village model—a volunteer-driven, nonprofit membership organization that provides members with volunteer assistance, social and educational activities, health and wellness programs and service referrals. Arlington's Age-Friendly Plan indicates that 90 percent of older adults wish to stay in their own homes as they age. To achieve this, some older adults require assistance and all must have the financial capacity to afford to remain in their homes or make the choice to relocate to more affordable housing.

The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced that older adults, particularly people of color and those who have low incomes, are in critical need of access to direct assistance and social supports that can help them to remain safely at home. Lessons learned during the pandemic demonstrated the importance of the village model's flexibility and an immediate need to expand village membership to reach more lower-income older adults and those from historically marginalized backgrounds. ANV's Financial Aid Program had always enabled participation by lower income older adults, but even more support was needed. ANV is working with two affordable housing partners, Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAHA) and Culpepper Garden (CG), to bring village assistance to their residents.

To help fulfill resident needs for transportation, technology assistance, home organization and social engagement, ANV provides full membership for at-risk older adults living at APAHA and CG and elsewhere in Arlington. ANV is working with both partners to foster supportive resident environments. Through collaborating with local nonprofits and expanding membership to a broader population of older adults focused on income, ethnicity, race and disability, ANV is continuously evolving to meet the needs of Arlington's older adult population.

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ANV again came to my rescue during the pandemic when I developed problems involving my heart, lungs and liver. I was provided with rides to medical appointments, sometimes two and three times each week. At a time when I felt alone and stressed, it was truly comforting to have the company of an ANV friend (volunteer) who conversed with me and eased my nervousness on the trip. The volunteers felt like angels in my life! They even did my grocery shopping!

—Participant



Friendly Volunteer Program

Aroostook Area Agency on Aging

Presque Isle, ME | www.aroostookaging.org

Aroostook Area Agency on Aging (AAA) implements various programs to increase social inclusion, support aging in place and improve quality of life for older adults living in the rural community of Presque Isle, ME. Aroostook AAA offers volunteer-provided companionship and outreach as well as assistance with daily activities to support socially isolated and homebound older adults to live safely at home. Aroostook AAA receives many referrals for its Friendly Helpers, Neighbors and Visitors programs, which support older adults by providing help around the house, connection to community services and social engagement.

During the pivot to adapted and virtual delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic, Aroostook AAA learned that many older adults faced technology needs. Many did not possess the technology tools or skills to actively participate in a virtual world and struggled to utilize telehealth services and online social platforms. Approximately 15 percent of Aroostook County's older adult residents live below the poverty line and more than 20 percent report living with a disability. Many of these older adults rely on internet access and computers in public libraries, which remained closed during the pandemic. As a result, the county's most vulnerable residents were left without access to critical technology that promotes social inclusion and telehealth access. To help mitigate some of these challenges, Aroostook AAA augmented their Friendly Volunteer Program by adding a Friendly Techies element aimed at bridging the digital divide that exists between generations and across socioeconomic status.

Aroostook AAA uses a train-the-trainer approach to teach Friendly Techies volunteers a variety of technology skills to help older adults connect with online health and wellness programming. Friendly Techie volunteers teach participants several skills, including setting up new computers and phones, establishing Facebook and email accounts, and using telehealth platforms. To make this possible, Aroostook AAA acquired a supply of iPads for volunteers and participants to use for technology training, access to services and virtual engagement opportunities.

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We are thrilled to have the support of the Community Care Corps grant; this grant has enabled us to purchase iPads, and we have started an iPad lending program. Our goal is to loan out the iPads, provide technical assistance, enroll in evidenced-based classes, assist with connecting to friends, family and providers, and continue to empower consumers to live independently in their own homes.

—Program leader



Trusted Ride Chaperone Program

Ascension Saint Agnes Foundation

Baltimore, MD | www.healthcare.ascension.org

Ascension Saint Agnes (ASA) Foundation has a long history of providing holistic care to residents in southwest Baltimore, MD, and is committed to serving those who are most vulnerable. To hear directly from community members regarding how to best meet their needs, ASA convenes a Community Council composed of health care providers, nonprofit organizations, residents and other organizations devoted to addressing social determinants of health. ASA has learned that lack of transportation is a top barrier to adequate health for one-third of its community members. This results in missed medical appointments that are essential for managing chronic disease and preventing hospital readmission. With transportation recognized as a foundational social determinant of health, ASA seeks to address this lack of viable transportation options for patients in their service area through a layered approach to ridesharing services.

The ASA Trusted Ride program pairs volunteer chaperones with older adults and adults with disabilities to provide door-to-door assistance and support during non-emergency medical appointments. Due to patient concerns about COVID-19 exposure, the model expanded to include virtual chaperoning in addition to in-person chaperoning. ASA continues to maintain the well-received virtual option as well as phone-based appointment reminders, wellness checks and referrals to case management and social services. Building on lessons learned from the first year of implementation, Ascension Saint Agnes is expanding assistance to patients who are not provided transportation by specialty clinics and piloting a hospital campus shuttle service with volunteer chaperones.

ASA focuses on patients with high no-show and cancellation rates as well as patient populations with professional referrals indicating a strong need for transportation assistance. ASA uses a web-based scheduling application service to match chaperone schedules with patient schedules and to deploy volunteers. The integrated system allows ASA to book chaperone assistance in a timely manner, approximately 24-48 hours prior to patient appointments. Volunteer chaperones then confirm the scheduled ride with patients via phone. This program provides extra assistance to those in need of chaperoned rides for health, safety or comfort reasons by improving health outcomes and allowing for continued engagement with community life.

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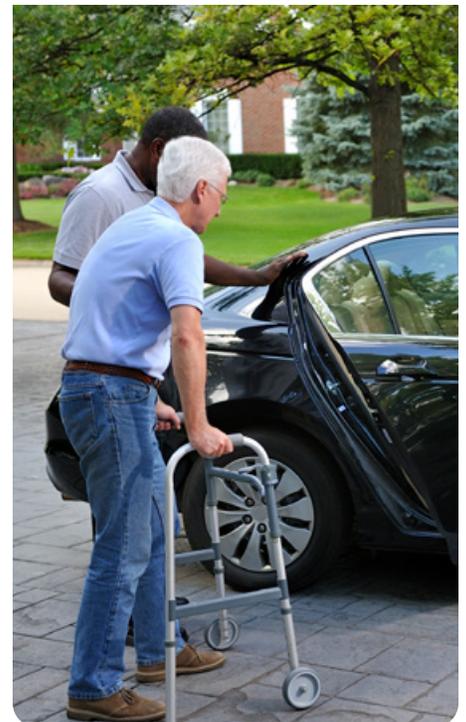
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As the challenges with COVID-19 persist, additional support for older adults, and adults with disabilities, remains vital. Access to medical appointments and treatments is key to good health outcomes. In these times where our community members have deferred health care because of the pandemic, expanding support has been greatly appreciated by our patients.

—Program Leader



Village Model for Individualized Support

At Home by High

Columbus, OH | www.athomebyhigh.org

At Home by High (AHBH) is a grassroots, member-based organization in Columbus, OH providing support and connection to enable independence for older adults. Located in Franklin County, where supportive services for older adults are centralized and phone-based rather than in-person, AHBH provides individualized support to community members based on real-time need. AHBH follows the village model and offers volunteer-provided assistance to meet historically unmet needs in their community. Many AHBH members are isolated due to a lack of opportunities for social engagement and affordable transportation, and outdoor home maintenance remains one of the biggest housing challenges facing older adults in Columbus.

Because Franklin County is home to vulnerable and underrepresented populations, AHBH prioritizes free membership for older adults who have low incomes. AHBH also prioritizes purposeful outreach to older African American adults, who are highly vulnerable in Franklin County, and LGBTQ+ older adults, who are disproportionately more likely to live alone and have a higher risk of disability, poverty, social isolation and premature institutionalization. To provide well-coordinated activities and supports that engage members and encourage mental and physical wellness, AHBH operates two primary programs: services and events. These programs consist of companionship visits, check-in calls, transportation assistance for errands, outdoor home maintenance, food delivery, tech support and community outings and events. Recently, AHBH added a new emergency preparedness component to equip members with tools and resources to navigate potential emergency scenarios.

AHBH recruits student volunteers from aging and health programs at The Ohio State University to provide consistent support to members. Every year, members report that AHBH assistance reduces stress and increases their confidence to live independently. AHBH assistance also helps to alleviate caregiver stress and provide respite by taking care of essential tasks and offering meaningful engagement to care recipients.

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“

I like helping people and enjoy meeting new people. I've helped with picking up food and delivering it to neighbors, grocery runs, picking up [members] at doctors' appointments. I have met a lot of friends through At Home by High. It's been a very excellent service to the members and has created a lot of friendships among the group.

—Volunteer & Member

”

Friends of Seniors Program

Catholic Community Service, Inc.

Juneau, AK | www.ccsak.org

Catholic Community Service, Inc.'s (CCS) Friends of Seniors Program strives to strengthen families and individuals in Southeast Alaska with dignity, care and compassion. As trust is an essential component in alleviating stigma associated with asking for and receiving help, CCS works with local cultural organizations and vetted volunteers to assist older adults while engaging and empowering them to share experiences and expertise in a mutually supportive service model. Friends of Seniors fosters a reciprocal relationship between volunteers and participants that encourages older adults to seek assistance but also helps them feel connected and appreciated.

While Juneau is home to one of the fastest growing older adult populations per capita in the U.S., it is a geographically isolated community that faces environmental and cultural barriers to safe, independent aging. The community operates on limited resources due to minimal service options, a shortage of adequately trained staff and lack of funds. To help bridge these essential resource gaps, CCS volunteers provide a wide variety of assistance that supports home safety and independence, health and wellness, as well as community and cultural connection.

Juneau fared relatively well through COVID-19; however, the pandemic made existing gaps within the community even more apparent and underscored older adults' need for socialization. Companionship and relationship building has become a cornerstone of Friends of Seniors and CCS is expanding its program model throughout other southeast communities experiencing similar environmental and cultural challenges. CCS is committed to examining needs, demographics, costs and staffing of other communities to identify those that would best benefit from implementing this model.

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“

My friend and I walked downtown on the docks and shared some French fries for our birthday celebration (we are both Virgos we realized). She bought a new book for her birthday, and we had a great visit.

—Volunteer

”



“

This was my and friend's second to last visit. We reminisced on our last year and a half as friends. We cleaned up a bit, fed the birds, and visited. She is interested in a new friend for when I move out of state.

—Volunteer

”

The Response Team and Caring Callers

DOROT

New York, NY | www.dorotusa.org

DOROT's mission is to alleviate social isolation among older adults and provide services that help them live independently as valued members of their community. To achieve this, DOROT fosters mutually beneficial intergenerational partnerships through multifaceted volunteer programs designed to meet the ongoing and immediate needs of isolated older adults. The Response Team plays a critical role in providing individualized one-to-one support to older adults who request assistance with various day-to-day tasks and express a desire to participate in social activities such as card games, foreign language practice and birthday celebrations. The Caring Calls program matches volunteers with older adults for weekly phone conversations and provides both volunteers and older adults with consistent social interaction, which was especially critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both Caring Callers and Response Team members are trained and encouraged to notify DOROT social work staff of any concerns or unmet needs that may come to light during their time spent with participants.



While the organization serves thousands of older adults every year, DOROT's strategic analysis indicates that there remains a large pool of under- and unserved older adults in their service area. To reach more older adults, DOROT expanded both the Caring Calls program and Response Team. Last year, DOROT observed that the average length of Caring Call connections lasted well beyond the four-week commitment period, so matches are now being made for an eight-week period. This time extension accommodates longer connections, which are greatly appreciated by older adult participants. Additionally, the Response Team expanded its menu of assistance to include errands and grocery deliveries from a local food pantry.

In addition to increasing the intensity and impact of these programs, DOROT has implemented a Response Team pilot program in Westchester, NY. This pilot program is an adaptation of the original urban model deployed in New York, NY to accommodate a suburban community. DOROT modified protocols for assigning, scheduling and visiting due to different programmatic opportunities and constraints in the suburban environment.

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This program is wonderful. My phone calls with my dear Caring Calls friend are the highlights of my week. It is incredible how the topics we converse about appear in my academics, daily life events and globally. His personality is kind and warm. DOROT serves as a pillar in their community and really cares about the well-being of the community. I am so grateful to have found this program...I feel that I am a better friend, listener, communicator and person as a part of joining this experience.

—Volunteer



Finding Meaning and Hope

Duet: Partners In Health & Aging

Phoenix, AZ | www.duetaz.org | meaningandhope.org

Duet: Partners In Health & Aging provides free services and supports to promote the health and well-being of homebound adults, family caregivers, members of faith communities and grandfamilies. Located in Phoenix, AZ, Duet is working to expand capacity and scale critical services to meet the needs of the large and growing number of family caregivers in Arizona and nationwide, particularly those who care for people living with dementia. Many caregivers of people living with dementia experience unresolved grief and isolation associated with ambiguous loss, which is compounded by the many hours per week of care they provide.

Nationwide, the number of people living with dementia is projected to increase significantly. To expand resources and support to meet caregiver needs, Duet developed an innovative resiliency-based program designed to support family caregivers of people living with dementia as they navigate complex grief. The Finding Meaning and Hope (FM&H) workshop series is based on the book *Loving Someone Who Has Dementia: How to Find Hope While Coping with Stress and Grief*, by Dr. Pauline Boss, an expert in complex grief and its negative health effects on dementia caregivers. Each session of the 10-week long workshop series includes a video featuring Dr. Boss sharing lessons with real-life family caregivers, followed by group discussion guided by trained volunteer facilitators. Ninety-seven percent of FM&H participants report having reduced stress since attending the workshop.

To begin scaling this effort nationally and equip family caregivers representing a diverse cross-section of the nation with tools to remain strong, healthy and resilient, Duet is piloting FM&H in three states outside of Arizona and with Spanish speaking caregivers in Arizona. Duet partnered with community-based organizations to remotely train volunteer facilitators to bring the FM&H discussion series to Seattle, WA, and New Orleans, LA, home to significant older adult and minority populations—who research shows are disproportionately impacted by dementia—and Sheridan, WY, a rural community that struggles to serve isolated family caregivers. Duet is also developing the Meaning & Hope Institute, a virtual community of support to connect the nation's 16 million dementia family caregivers. The Institute will provide dementia family caregivers a space to connect with one another and access valuable resources, such as FM&H, while serving as a hub for training and supporting volunteer facilitators. Duet continues to consult with family caregivers and community organizations in gathering evaluation data to inform program modifications and improve caregiver outcomes.

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Our strength as human beings really is...we become stronger when we realize and acknowledge our own weakness. I think the most powerful part for me was the ambiguous loss... the part where she talks about redefining your relationship and how much more loving it is and a sense of commitment when a person stays in that relationship and continues to look for ways to nurture that relationship and that love. That the person is not gone, and even though they're different...that's much more... how do I put it? It's much more a committed relationship than just expecting...Okay, the relationship has changed. So, she challenges us to stay present and to continue to find life and define love.

—Family Caregiver



Caregiving & Aging Program

FamilyMeans

Stillwater, MN | www.familymeans.org

FamilyMeans is a multi-service nonprofit organization that strengthens communities by helping individuals and families navigate challenges across all life stages. Headquartered in Stillwater, MN, FamilyMeans has supported caregivers in the Twin Cities metro area for over three decades. With hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans providing regular care or assistance to friends or family members living with chronic health issues or disability, family caregivers serve as an invaluable component of long-term support. The loss of many adult day programs combined with staffing shortages at home care agencies left caregivers with few options for relief.

To help ensure that family caregivers are rested, refreshed and able to attend to their own needs, FamilyMeans supports caregivers through a successful and established volunteer respite model. In addition to support groups, education, resource referral, and coaching and consultation, FamilyMeans offers multiple respite options through its Caregiving & Aging Program. Day Out! group respite offers caregivers an opportunity to engage with others through volunteer-led activities. In-home respite matches volunteers with participants to provide in-home companionship. Monthly drop-in respite groups meet during evening hours to offer increased flexibility to caregivers who may not be able to take advantage of daytime supports. Since respite programs transitioned to virtual formats during the pandemic, FamilyMeans continues to offer hybrid participation options.

This model, which includes multiple program entry points, allows for flexible participation for both caregivers and volunteers. To further enhance this multi-option respite model, FamilyMeans is strengthening its volunteer infrastructure to successfully adapt to the current volunteer landscape. Training and action planning with help from the Minnesota Alliance for Volunteer Advancement focuses on recruitment of more diverse volunteers. Additionally, FamilyMeans offers incentives such as stipends and transit cards to reduce barriers to volunteer participation.

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It makes me feel like I make a difference again. The caregiver's life is not an easy life, but whenever I've been there and get ready to go, she'll look at me and say, 'thank you.' It means the world for her.

— Volunteer



Volunteer Driver Program

Feonix - Mobility Rising

Corpus Christi, TX | www.feonixmobilityrising.org

Feonix - Mobility Rising believes that everyone deserves access to affordable transportation so they can survive and thrive. Since there are very few transportation options available in the rural parts of the Coastal Bend of Texas, Feonix works with various organizational partners to develop community-led solutions to meet the needs of older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers. Feonix convened community stakeholders to learn about gaps and deficiencies in transportation to lay the groundwork for Mobility as a Service in the region. Based on this community insight, Feonix gathered various community organizations to develop a strategic plan to fill gaps in transportation access through a robust volunteer network.

Many Coastal Bend counties are home to uninsured residents, veterans and adults with disabilities at rates much higher than the national average. Additionally, the U.S. Census has identified many of these counties as being in persistent poverty. Information gleaned from focus groups reveals that most areas have few affordable transportation options, including no options available in the evenings or on weekends, which hinders access to essential services. The Feonix Volunteer Driver Program addresses these challenges faced by vulnerable and underserved populations through volunteers and integrated technology solutions.

To recruit and retain volunteer drivers, Feonix employs a dedicated volunteer coordinator for the Coastal Bend region who conducts outreach and marketing to advertise assistance. As innovation is one of its core values, Feonix uses two innovative technology solutions to implement the Volunteer Driver Program: 1) a mobile app for participants to book rides and the logistics team to dispatch drivers; 2) a coordinated care platform that serves as a closed loop referral system where Feonix receives ride requests from other agencies. Feonix also uses the coordinated care platform to refer passengers to agencies that can meet other needs expressed to drivers such as food insecurity or utility assistance.

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Feonix - Mobility Rising

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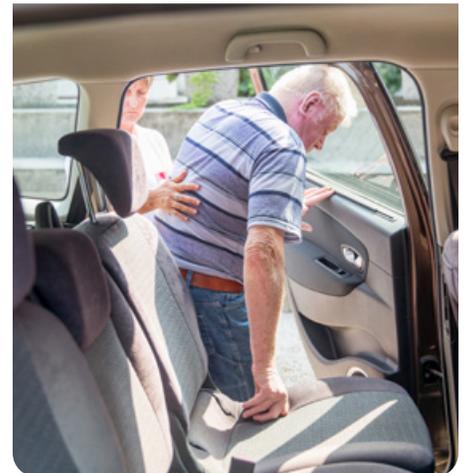
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Feonix has literally saved my life by getting me to my cancer treatments. The volunteer drivers are always so friendly and courteous. This service is so important for our community.

—Recipient



Intergenerational Support to Foster Independent Community Living

Good Shepherd Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers

Shepherdstown, WV | www.gsivc.org

Good Shepherd Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers (GSIVC), located in Shepherdstown, WV, provides services to older adults and adults with disabilities to improve quality of life and support independent living within their community. Daily challenges associated with chronic conditions, disabilities and living alone can contribute to social isolation and unmet needs. GSIVC offers a wide array of assistance with activities of daily living and combat feelings of loneliness. Volunteer assistance, including transportation, home modifications, friendly phone calling and medical equipment lending, connects community-dwelling older adults and adults with disabilities to essential services while reinforcing support for emotional well-being. GSIVC also offers flexible supportive services to caregivers to provide respite and ensure they can tend to their own needs.

In 2021, GSIVC saw requests for assistance double. More out-of-state family members requested assistance for their parents who live in the service area and social engagement was clearly a significant, persistent need. To combat the isolation and loneliness experienced by community members, GSIVC fine-tuned its programmatic activities and approaches to intentionally reinforce emotional needs and foster positive social interactions. For example, Friendly Callers extended their phone calls with participants and focused on offering words of encouragement. To offer more fun and carefree opportunities for social engagement, GSIVC incorporated birthday celebrations, holiday gifts and goodie basket delivery into its operations.

GSIVC also streamlined its volunteer model by using a web-based program to process and assign requests. Volunteers receive training and actively self-assign work around their schedules with any unassigned requests matched by staff members. GSIVC credits the success of its model to heeding care recipient feedback, expanding conversations with the community and remaining open to possibilities.

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Your neighbor's independence depends on you.

—Program Quote



Virtual Wellness Coaching

Hawaii Pacific Gerontological Society

Honolulu, HI | www.hpgs.org

Hawaii Pacific Gerontological Society (HPGS) is dedicated to improving the quality of life of Hawaii's older adults by promoting an understanding of the aging process and sharing supportive services that help people age with dignity and grace. Taking note of local aging and health trends, HPGS is cognizant of the fact that older adults from Hawaii's Filipino, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities experience disparities at a greater intensity than the state's population overall. In addition to common barriers to community resources faced by older adults including geographic location, limited transportation, digital literacy and financial restraints, many older adults from these ethnic groups lack English reading proficiency, broadband access and health insurance. In response to these barriers and in recognition of a lack of engaging, age-appropriate content that supports prevention and health promotion among older adults, HPGS partnered with Pear Suite to address the social determinants of health (SDOH) and to connect elders with individualized support.

HPGS' Virtual Wellness Coaches help older adult program participants live better by proactively addressing SDOH through guided interactions and progress tracking. First, comprehensive needs assessments are conducted to better understand the needs, interests, strengths and capabilities of each older adult participant. Then, virtual wellness coaches work with participants to develop customized goals and steps to drive behavior change. The Virtual Wellness Coaches are local university students studying health and social service fields who possess multilingual capacities to meet the needs of non-English speaking older adults. The volunteer coaches support behavior change through weekly check-ins, motivational interviewing and linkage to community resources. The smart phone system that guides interactions and tracks progress also collects population level data to tailor future curriculum updates to address changing needs and interests.

Program participants are recruited from community senior centers and senior groups connected with HPGS and represent a diverse mix of individuals. HPGS is exploring the impact of this model on underserved communities in Hawaii. HPGS remains committed to ensuring that community input remains a core element of this health education model by regularly connecting with their membership base as well as nurturing its partnership with Age-Friendly Honolulu.

Contact Information:

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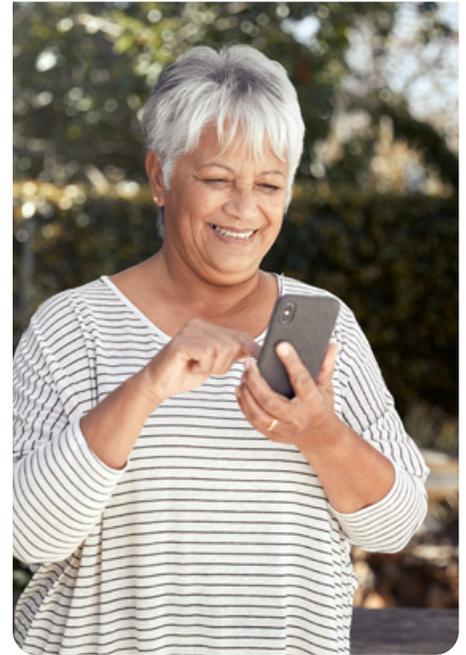
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I love connecting with older adults and helping them learn new skills and connect to local resources.

— Volunteer



Supportive Care for Dementia

Hospice of the Valley

Phoenix, AZ | www.hov.org

Hospice of the Valley (HOV) is a nonprofit hospice dedicated to bringing comfort, dignity and compassionate hospice and palliative care to its community in central Arizona. HOV offers a comprehensive continuum of care that supports families from early stages of serious illness, before hospice care is needed, through end of life. Dementia care is a special focus because of the physical and emotional toll that dementia typically imposes on families. Caring for a loved one with dementia often leaves caregivers and family members feeling overwhelmed, anxious and isolated. HOV and community leaders identified in-home respite as one of the greatest unmet needs for this population.

Respite care offers family caregivers a break to attend to their own physical and emotional well-being. Privately paying for respite care is not financially possible for many families, so HOV developed a creative volunteer model to provide no-cost respite support. The Supportive Care for Dementia (SCD) program serves persons living with dementia not yet on hospice and their family caregivers to help enable family members to stay at home and improve quality of life. Services include monthly in-home Dementia Educator visits, physician phone support for medications and advanced care planning, as well as a 24-hour nursing support line. The SCD College Partners program trains volunteer college students to provide nonmedical respite assistance as well as companionship, socialization, and support with meal preparation, errands and light housework. Student volunteers receive extensive training in engaging persons with dementia in meaningful activities, handling challenging behaviors and employing mindfulness techniques to best support participants during their visits.

Located in Maricopa County, SCD serves a diverse population of clients from many racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Notably, 28 percent of households speak a non-English language in the home, usually Spanish, so SCD works with bilingual Dementia Educators to deliver culturally sensitive care. SCD also works with specially trained veteran volunteers to serve the 20 percent of clients who are veterans. The program also provides care to older adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities who develop Alzheimer's disease. To inspire the next generation of the geriatric workforce and instill an interest in lifelong volunteerism, HOV provides SCD student volunteers with ongoing dementia training the opportunity to apply for a \$500 college scholarship after one semester of service and a Dementia Capable Certificate after one year for future school or employment applications.

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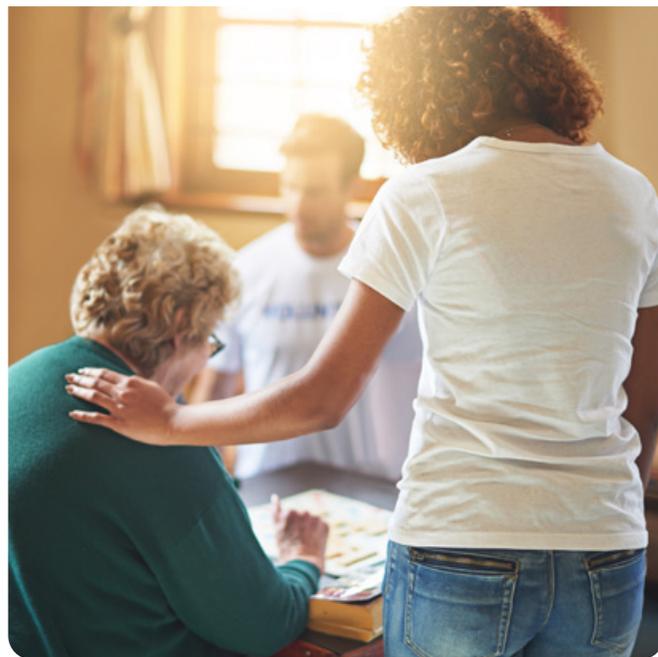
602.530.6987 | sortega@hov.org

“

Having a volunteer for my mom allows me to spend time with my children and grandchildren. I've been able to go to my grandchildren's soccer games, soon their baseball games, and, recently, I was able to go to a concert with my daughter. My siblings are out of state and are not able to help with care. The volunteer supporting my mom allows me to leave the house and take care of myself while knowing my mom has companionship and help at home.

—Caregiver

”



The Sharing Network

One Community

New York, NY | www.onecommunitynyc.org

One Community addresses inequality in the Fort Greene/Clinton Hill section of Brooklyn, NY through community outreach and partnerships. When the organization forged a coalition during the COVID-19 pandemic to deliver groceries to older adults and other vulnerable people living primarily in public housing, staff learned that many didn't just need food, they needed human connection. The One Community team also learned that no programs existed within their community that offered group socialization for homebound older adults, thus presenting a wide gap in support. Aware that loneliness and social isolation can harm health and well-being, One Community developed the Sharing Network for non-internet-using older adults to meet critical needs for socialization.

The Sharing Network offers at least 15 different hour-long, volunteer-led phone groups per week. Because 63 percent of older adults surveyed by One Community said that they do not use the internet, participants join these groups via landline or cell phone. Participants choose among topical, artistic and spiritual-themed conversations, as well as activity groups, such as artmaking, exercise and needlework. Trained volunteer moderators support friendly interaction to ensure these welcoming conversation groups address the needs of participants and encourage active and regular participation. These intimate phone-based groups are designed to build friendships and cultivate the sense of self derived from social connections. The opportunity to take part in interesting, cordial conversations allows participants to feel validated and valued.

To locate marginalized and overlooked neighbors who would benefit from the Sharing Network, One Community contacts participants in its grocery delivery program who are older adults and adults with disabilities living mostly in public housing. One Community continues to conduct targeted outreach to leaders who have relationships with diverse neighborhood institutions, such as non-English speaking churches and Stonewall House with its concentration of older LGBTQ+ residents, to enroll more participants, find volunteer moderators and identify community interests. One Community continues to develop vital programming based on participant feedback and with the help of these community leaders.

Contact Information:

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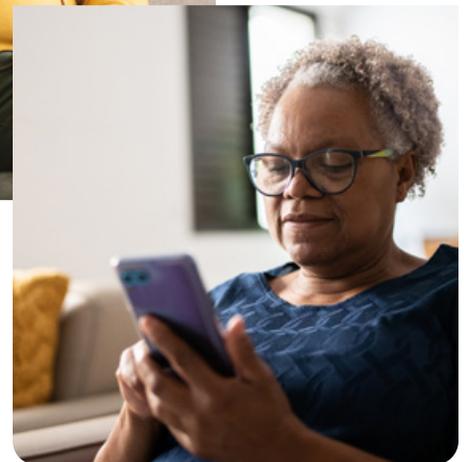
Programming Director

Sharing Network

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“

Days go by and the only call I get is from the Sharing Network. It's better than assisted living or anything. All the groups I join give me something to do.

—Participant

”

Hoarding Support Program

Jewish Family and Children's Service

Philadelphia, PA | www.jfcsphilly.org

Jewish Family and Children's Service (JFCS) is a trusted, multi-service safety net provider serving individuals and families across generations and cultures in the Greater Philadelphia region. JFCS offers an array of comprehensive programs to achieve stability, independence and community, and continually looks for ways to expand and enhance services to help more clients. After JFCS social workers recognized a lack of resources to address hoarding tendencies among a number of their clients, JFCS launched the Hoarding Support Program in 2015. Individuals suffering from hoarding disorder face distress around discarding possessions, which often leads to severe clutter that threatens the health and safety of those in and near the home. Beyond the physical challenges associated with hoarding, social and emotional impacts can lead to isolation from family and friends.



Through the Hoarding Support Program, JFCS offers care management and other supports to reduce the negative impacts of hoarding behaviors and establish stability in home environments. Primarily serving low-income older adults, the Hoarding Support Program furnishes one-on-one, in-home support to ensure client and home safety, establish organization methods and offer continued care coordination and connection to resources. In addition to care management that involves individualized care plans and progress monitoring, the program offers family support groups, art therapy and mindfulness support groups and the Buried in Treasures (BiT) Support Group. BiT is a 16-week structured therapeutic group program based on a national best practice model that leans on volunteers to serve as group facilitators. Individuals who have completed the program and have lived experience with hoarding disorder receive specialized training to become volunteer facilitators. Other volunteers with the Hoarding Support Program provide supplemental support during home visits, check in with clients during the week and assist with donations of household items.

The volunteer component of this program enhances its effectiveness, helps promote sustainability by freeing up staff time and promotes community understanding of hoarding disorder and its effects. To continue promoting understanding among community members in the field, JFCS hosts webinars in partnership with the Philadelphia Hoarding Task Force.

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“

It's been a long haul. My possessions threatened to drown me. JFCS provided guidance and hands-on assistance over a long period to make that sea recede and order be found. Today that journey continues.

—Client

”

Customized e-Volunteer Platform

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, Inc.

Ann Arbor, MI | www.jfsannarbor.org

Jewish Family Services (JFS) of Washtenaw County, Inc., is guided by its mission to create solutions, promote dignity, and inspire humanity in the diverse community of Washtenaw County, MI. Recognizing that some community members—namely older adults, family caregivers and volunteers, including those with disabilities—face barriers to in-person engagement, JFS expanded its existing e-Volunteering concept to promote opportunities for virtual connection. The e-Volunteering platform, designed for use from the safety and convenience of one's home, provides access to services for those facing transportation barriers or living in hard-to-serve regions. Friendly eVisits between volunteers and care recipients provide caregivers with much-needed respite, allowing them time to address their needs.

Last year, JFS conducted an extensive pilot-testing phase with a diverse group of volunteers to assess the eVolunteering platform. Results indicated the platform would benefit from further customization to support older adults and adults with disabilities, including those who would also like to serve as volunteers. This year, JFS worked closely with the platform developer and the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living, which specializes in serving adults living with disabilities, to increase the platform's capacity for inclusivity. The updated platform will include customized video-based technology and activities to engage more—and different—volunteers and recipients, resulting in greater respite for caregivers.

While this robust, contactless platform was conceived pre-COVID, the pandemic underscored its necessity, and JFS remains dedicated to enhancing its quality and outcomes. In addition to further customizing the platform, JFS trains volunteers in best practices for using technology with specialty populations. JFS also works with faith-based communities to support the re-engagement of its older adult community members through access to the technology platform. JFS is committed to creating a replicable system that other communities can easily adopt to broaden access to volunteer programs and improve quality of life.

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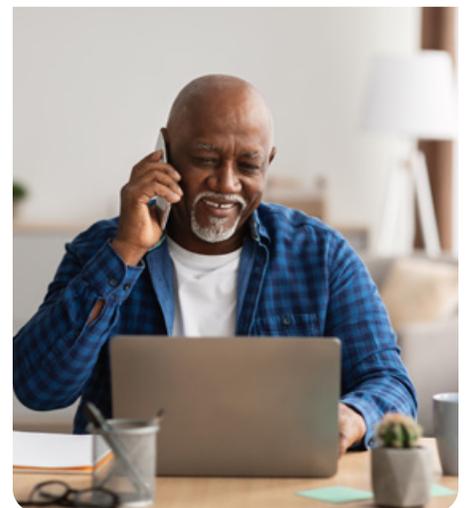
messer@jfsannarbor.org

“

The benefits of volunteer service are really twofold. The first benefit—and the most obvious one—is the benefit to the people that we serve. But equally, the second benefit is really to us, the volunteers. We learn so much from the people that we help. That has been an absolute pleasure.

—Volunteer

”



Volunteer Home Repair Program

Kenosha Area Family and Aging Services, Inc.

Kenosha, WI | www.kafasi.org

Kenosha Area Family and Aging Services, Inc. (KAFASI) is a private, multi-service nonprofit organization providing direct services to Kenosha County to support healthy aging, strong families and connected community. With high living costs in the region, especially for housing and health care, KAFASI recognized that community members needed support to continue living independently. In fact, the recent Kenosha County Plan on Aging survey indicated that housing assistance, including accessibility renovations, lawn care and snow removal, ranked number two for unmet needs. Local housing experts echo this sentiment, as many low-income older adults own their homes but experience difficulty maintaining them. Many older adults and adults with disabilities struggle to complete repair work themselves and cannot afford to hire contractors to make necessary upgrades.

To remedy these challenges and support older adults and adults with disabilities to live independently, KAFASI developed its Volunteer Home Repair Program. Through this program, homes in Racine and Kenosha County are assessed for repairs and volunteers implement modifications to make the homes safer and more livable environments. KAFASI built the volunteer base for the program by recruiting retired contractors and volunteers with basic construction skills as well as volunteers from Habitat for Humanity - Kenosha. After homeowners are selected, KAFASI staff refer the project to Habitat for Humanity who assesses the project for material, volunteer and time requirements. Projects range from repairs and enhancements, such as minor plumbing and flooring repairs, to falls prevention modifications, such as grab bar installation, handrail and step repair and lighting improvements.

KAFASI seeks to build a supportive, empowering environment where volunteers of all ages can acquire new technical skills while serving their community. Their hard work helps improve and maintain safe living environments for older adults and adults with disabilities so they can remain comfortably in their homes and community.

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*We support healthy aging,
strong families and a connected
community.*

—Program Leader



Local Resource Network

Living at Home Network

St. Paul, MN | www.lahnetwork.org

The Living at Home Network is comprised of 32 nonprofit member organizations serving older adults and caregivers throughout Minnesota. The network began in 1982 when community residents in St. Paul organized the first community volunteer program to help older adult neighbors maintain their independence. Since then, the organization has grown into a model for other neighborhoods and towns to adopt to provide support and friendship to its residents through volunteer service. Of the current 32 member organizations, 20 exist in rural Minnesota communities that previously lacked support for older adults experiencing social isolation, transportation barriers and other unmet needs. A recent University of Minnesota study found that older adults living in rural areas are significantly more likely to report feelings of loneliness than older adults living in metropolitan areas, and the MN Department of Human Services identified transportation as a top service gap in nine out of 10 rural regions in the state.

LAHN serves as a resource hub, advocate and advisor for member organizations that provide a variety of services to help engage and support older adults and caregivers, including escorted transportation, grocery shopping, respite care, home chores, meal delivery and community social events. LAHN supplies member organizations with best practices, opportunities for information sharing as well as staff and volunteer training to ensure they can meet these critical needs in their communities. This model uses the approach of local ownership to foster community engagement and assistance while facilitating access to critical resources. LAHN focuses on building capacity and updating program replication materials to expand volunteer-provided assistance into new rural communities. With the help of Helping Hands Outreach, LAHN added Rice, MN to the list of communities newly served.

To ensure that they continue to reach new older adults and caregivers in a culturally competent manner, LAHN organizations employ foreign-language speaking staff, connect with local community organizations that include faith-based institutions and host programs specifically for special populations, such as Black, Indigenous, and people of color and older adults who identify as LGBTQ+. This innovative model for assistance empowers older adults to live independently and forge new social connections while allowing caregivers to feel supported and secure knowing their loved ones are safe.

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Living at Home Network

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“

Providing services for older adults in Minnesota has a two-fold benefit...both to the individual receiving services and the community at large. What we are doing here in Holdingford and Rice through Helping Hands Outreach has a real impact on the quality of life for caregivers and care receivers. Working to reduce or eliminate isolation, providing transportation to medical appointments and for grocery shopping, offering safe opportunities for fellowship, delivering meals...we are meeting peoples' needs and making our community one that is age-friendly and vibrant.

—Program Director

”



Mutually Beneficial Service Learning

Lori's Hands, Inc.

Newark, DE; Baltimore, MD; and Metro Detroit, MI

www.lorishands.org

Lori's Hands, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that began in Newark, DE building mutually beneficial partnerships between community members with chronic illnesses and college students focused on fostering empathy, connection and resilience. Recognizing the many challenges of aging in place, Lori's Hands trains and equips college students to assist community members living with chronic illnesses with weekly companionship and support services. Over a semester-long period, student volunteers provide consistent social support and build trusting relationships with the participants they serve. In a truly reciprocal nature, participants also serve as volunteers, teaching students about the lived experience of chronic illness and preparing them for health professions. In 2021, Lori's Hands navigated the pandemic landscape and helped hundreds of community members in Newark and its newly established Baltimore, MD chapter. In 2022, Lori's Hands is focusing on expanding both locations and launching a third chapter in Metro Detroit, MI.

Lori's Hands offers services at no cost to community members, ensuring socioeconomic status is not a barrier to participation. Lori's Hands works closely with a range of community providers and this year is piloting a partnership with a homebased primary care team to evaluate outcomes among shared clients. Along with a focus on supporting aging in place, Lori's Hands is committed to developing a pipeline of future health professionals interested in older adult care. Starting with a partnership with just one academic institution, Lori's Hands now recruits students from more than 12. This helps the organization guarantee a steady source of support for community members and helps prepare the future workforce needed to care for an aging population.

Taking lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to in-home visits, Lori's Hands has permanently incorporated virtual and contactless elements into its model. Additionally, Lori's Hands has expanded volunteer training modules to provide more comprehensive training on health equity, community resource navigation, caregivers and care coordination. Clients also now engage in goal setting at the onset of their tenure with Lori's Hands to inform student services and track outcomes. To spotlight the experiences and stories of their clients, Lori's Hands launched a Community Voices Podcast series.

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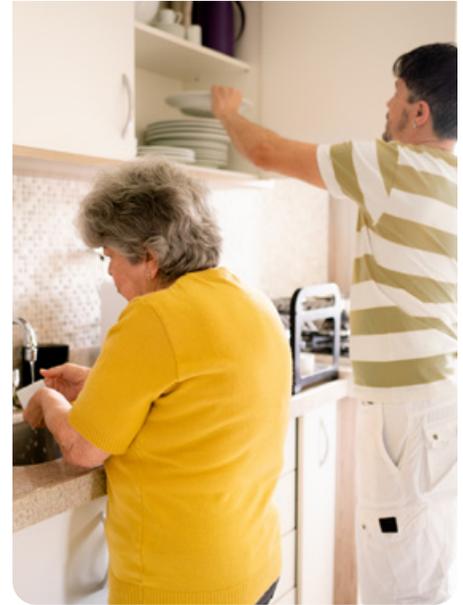
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Lori's Hands

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Being a volunteer with Lori's Hands has not only improved the life of my clients, but also mine. I genuinely look forward to visiting my clients each week. I love seeing the impact I can have on them by doing things like cleaning and organizing while having meaningful conversations. I've learned so much about life from my clients and feel like this organization has made me become a better person."

— Volunteer



Safe Homes for Seniors

Meals on Wheels People

Portland, OR | www.mowp.org

Meals on Wheels People (MOWP) has been enriching the lives of older adults in Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA by assisting them in maintaining independence and connection to their community for more than 50 years. MOWP provides its community's most vulnerable older adults with nutritious food, human connection and social support. While congregate dining and other in-person activities were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, MOWP continued routine meal delivery services and implemented contactless visiting to combat the increased social isolation experienced by older adults. During routine meal delivery, MOWP staff and volunteers identified another recurring need in addition to addressing social isolation—home maintenance.

Many of the community's older adults live in apartments or old houses that are in disrepair with trip hazards, low lighting and yard overgrowth, resulting in decreased safety and security. Some older adults experience sensory deficits, mobility issues and memory challenges, which make it difficult to address these much-needed repairs. For many, a budget for these repairs is not realistic or feasible and some must choose between paying rent, buying food or purchasing medications. MOWP developed the Safe Homes for Seniors Project to provide engagement and maintenance assistance around the house to address these urgent needs. MOWP matches skilled volunteers with older adults who share similar backgrounds and interests to conduct minor home repairs while providing ongoing conversation and connection. To recruit skilled volunteers from diverse backgrounds, MOWP partners with local chapters of Rotary, the Urban League and Centro Cultural, as well as other organizations such as gardening clubs, veterans' groups and cultural organizations. Volunteers conduct minor repairs that make daily living safer for older adults and increase quality of life, including but not limited to securing area rugs, replacing lightbulbs or smoke detector batteries and assembling shower chairs. In addition to these in-home repairs, volunteers also assist with regular lawn mowing, trimming and yard debris removal.

An additional component of the Safe Homes for Seniors Project is the development and provision of older adult-friendly disaster supply kits for older adults who are particularly vulnerable when catastrophes hit as many have little or no family or other resources to depend on in times of crisis. These kits have been designed especially for older adults and homebound individuals who may have difficulty lifting or quickly accessing more traditional kits that tend to be large and heavy backpacks. The MOWP kits are compact and accessible cinch-sacks that can be stored under a bed or in a small closet for easy access.

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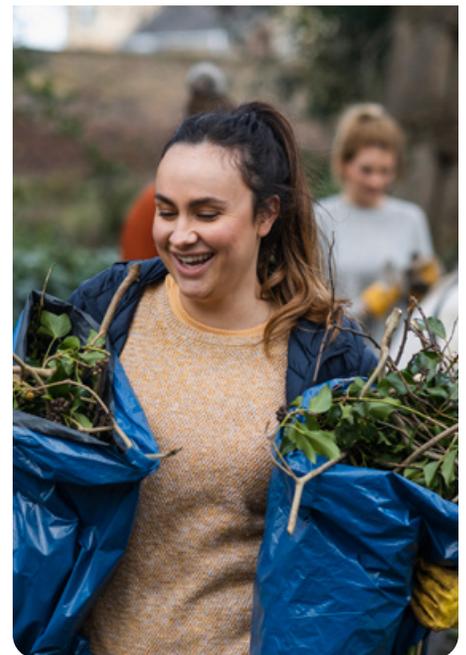
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Caring is the most important thing there is – being able to help someone in need is really [...] heartwarming; all this really makes a person feel good.

—Participant



Fostering an Engaged and Inclusive Community

Movimiento para el Alcance de Vida Independiente

Santurce, PR | www.mavi-pr.org

Founded by Puerto Rican citizens with disabilities, Movimiento para el Alcance de Vida Independiente (MAVI) is the largest center for independent living (CIL) in the Caribbean and the first CIL in Puerto Rico. For years, MAVI has been providing independent living skills training, peer counseling, advocacy, information and referral and transition services to people with disabilities. Because Puerto Rico has few CILs, limited services for people with disabilities and limited funding for personal assistance programs, MAVI seeks to provide accessible and inclusive services through its staff and volunteer network. While most services provided by CILs are focused on independent living and employment skills, MAVI recognizes that social developmental activities are just as important to fostering an engaged community. With limited opportunities available for people with disabilities to participate in cultural events, sports training and social activities due to accessibility, MAVI focuses on building its volunteer capacity to offer specialized programs that enrich the experiences of all community members.

To offer cross-disciplinary experiences to adults with disabilities and older adults with disabilities that may not otherwise be accessible, MAVI trains volunteers to offer a wide range of art, music and physical activity programs. MAVI works in collaboration with community organizations and educators to ensure an extensive spectrum of accessible and inclusive social developmental activities. MAVI conducts outreach to local schools, universities and centers specializing in the arts, music and adaptive sports to recruit volunteer candidates with experience and knowledge in these areas to adapt cultural activities for people with disabilities to participate. In addition to tailored service offerings, MAVI trains volunteers to ensure effective and sensible interaction with program participants and on best practices to support people with disabilities during the different stages of an emergency or disaster. To further ensure that caregivers feel supported and comfortable relying on the volunteer network to engage with their loved ones, MAVI coordinates caregiver support groups facilitated by social workers.

MAVI focuses on capacity building to strengthen their volunteer network to continue offering inclusive activities to their community. MAVI staff, 70 percent of whom are living with a disability, continue to serve as consultants regarding needs and best practices in service to adults with disabilities.

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Community education and activities that promote inclusive communities are fundamental to our society. A holistic approach where a person with disabilities is exposed to cultural disciplines and physical activity is beneficial and key. Providing volunteers with education and best practices can dramatically improve the quality of assistance provided. By providing these opportunities we can achieve true inclusion.

—Program Leader



Empowering Caregivers Through Education

New Mexico Caregivers Coalition

Bernalillo, NM | www.nmdcc.org

The New Mexico Caregivers Coalition (NMCC) is dedicated to providing culturally relevant services and educational interventions to support caregivers and empower older adults who are aging in place. While the NMCC office is located in Bernalillo, NM, NMCC serves caregivers across New Mexico, Arizona and the Navajo Nation who seek engaging training, activities and events that reduce stress and social isolation. NMCC conducts needs assessments to identify critical gap areas and to develop courses to ensure that caregivers' needs and interests are addressed. Over the course of its 12-year history, NMCC developed nonmedical classes on numerous topics including infection prevention, safe transfer and mobility, stress management, communication skills, self-advocacy and online identity and financial safety. NMCC staff and volunteers with subject matter expertise teach the 60 to 90-minute classes. Volunteer instructors also serve as resources with whom participants can connect outside of the educational sessions to receive individualized support. Since NMCC intends for classes to inform and empower participants, care recipients as well as caregivers are welcome to attend.

NMCC witnessed an increased desire for interaction and high-quality training during the pandemic, so they continue with a hybrid approach to training. Because of New Mexico's tri-cultural diversity and rural/frontier nature, participants may not be native English speakers. As a result, NMCC offers occasional online trainings and events that include simultaneous translation using contracted interpreters for Spanish and/or Diné, the language of the Navajo Nation.

In addition to contracting with two outreach managers—one in northern New Mexico and one on the Navajo Nation—NMCC conducts regular outreach in newsletters and on social media. NMCC continues to develop relationships with state agencies and community organizations to expand its reach and serve those most in need.

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I want to thank you for connecting me to the New Mexico Caregivers Coalition training on communicating with patients with Alzheimer's [disease]. Almost immediately I had the opportunity to use what I learned from the two amazing trainers with my 97-year-old mother who has been experiencing some delusions. [!] was able to comfort her while also feeling more support[ed] and competent in my role as caregiver. In addition, I was able to share what I learned and ... model it for my sisters who are also caregivers. I feel very fortunate that I attended this event and really want to thank you for encouraging me to learn more about better ways to provide care that reduce stress for both my mother and our family of caregivers.

—Caregiver



Caring Neighbors Program

Peninsula Agency on Aging

Newport News, VA | www.paainc.org

Peninsula Agency on Aging (PAA) directly supports older adults and family caregivers through supportive services and access to community resources. Serving those aged 60 and over, with special attention to those at risk of institutionalization and those who have low incomes, PAA works to foster independence and quality of life for older Peninsula residents to help them safely age in place. PAA provides care coordination, nutrition services, information and assistance, wellness programs and transportation services. The organization also recognizes that additional assistance is needed to ensure that isolated older adults have access to socialization opportunities that enable them to thrive as they age. Older adults and adults with disabilities face increased social isolation primarily due to a lack of transportation and human interaction. Nonmedical transportation and in-person visiting are either unavailable or unaffordable to many older adults and adults with disabilities in Newport News and Hampton, VA, so PAA developed the Caring Neighbors Program to fill these gaps.

PAA offers three new forms of assistance through its Caring Neighbors Program: volunteer non-medical transportation, in-person social visits and volunteer companion aides. The non-medical transportation component, called Out and About, provides no-cost rides to older adults who are otherwise unable to transport themselves to social events or take care of errands. The in-person social visits conducted by friendly visitors provide companionship and conversation to older adult participants and adults with disabilities who are identified through PAA's safety check-in calls as individuals who express a desire for contact beyond phone calls. The companion aide program called Volunteer to Work, which seeks to address the severe shortage of trained aides to work with home health agencies, provides volunteers with stipends as they gain skills to become paid non-medical Companion Aides.

With Virginia's population becoming older and more racially and ethnically diverse like that of the nation, PAA is committed to partnering with other community organizations to connect even more adults with disabilities, older veterans and LGBTQ+ older adults with their services. PAA continues to partner with local organizations with whom it has longstanding partnerships, including faith institutions, Adult Protective Services, senior housing developments and healthcare providers to publicize the Caring Neighbors Program and identify particularly vulnerable, isolated seniors not currently receiving services.

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I've only been volunteering a couple of weeks and already feel that I'm making a difference. My clients may not realize it, but they warm my heart, make me laugh and remind me to be grateful. I'm thankful to Peninsula Agency on Aging that they are allowing me this opportunity to volunteer with them. Giving someone your time is the best gift.

— Volunteer



Safe at Home Program

Rebuilding Together New Orleans

New Orleans, LA | www.rtno.org

As part of a national nonprofit, Rebuilding Together New Orleans (RTNO) provides no-cost critical repairs for low-income older adults and homeowners with disabilities in urban Louisiana. RTNO works to rehabilitate homes throughout New Orleans so that residents can live and thrive in healthy environments. A combination of low wages and poor-quality housing stock makes it difficult for residents to find safe, healthy and affordable housing. Homeownership on fixed income leads many older adults and adults with disabilities to live in unsafe conditions because they cannot afford maintenance that supports health and mobility. Unfortunately for many, additions like wheelchair ramps have become a luxury rather than a necessity that dramatically increases accessibility and safety.

RTNO assists by way of the Safe at Home Program in which skilled and unskilled volunteers complete client-tailored accessibility modifications to improve quality of life, dignity and independence. The RTNO Homeowner Relations department provides outreach and eligibility services to homeowners in need and the Construction Manager directs field operations to deploy customized modifications to meet individual homeowner needs. RTNO recruits skilled volunteers such as retired carpenters, current contractors and general handyworkers, in addition to unskilled volunteers who receive thorough safety and organizational training to assist with project implementation. When needed, Louisiana State University Occupational Therapy students accompany the team during home evaluations to identify additional hazards and assess homeowner mobility.

The RTNO intake and referral process utilizes partnerships with neighborhood associations, health care providers and other city and state agencies to ensure that RTNO connects with those most in need. RTNO works with these community organizations to distribute information about RTNO programs in their communities and works with health care providers to serve those whose health has impacted their ability to remain safely in their homes.

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There's no way that I could have accomplished what they have in the period of time that they did. Now, I stated that [the process] took four or five months; well, if it had taken a year, I still would not be in this spot if I had to come out of pocket to pay for these repairs.

—Participant

”



Volunteer-led Mental Health and Wellness Training

ShareCare of Leelanau

Lake Leelanau, MI | www.sharecareleelanau.org

ShareCare of Leelanau (ShareCare) is committed to connecting older adult residents to the services they need to live and thrive independently. Located in rural Lake Leelanau, MI, ShareCare of Leelanau recognizes that community members face challenges accessing health care, social services and social support. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the need to assist older adults as they access these supports. In 2020 and 2021, ShareCare stepped in to provide older adults with support and companionship through its volunteer phone reassurance and regular check-ins and offered virtual support groups for family caregivers. Through these check-ins and support groups, Sharecare quickly learned that caregivers experienced a high level of stress due to pandemic isolation and had very little respite and opportunity to receive individualized support. Family caregivers experience numerous stressors from loss and grief to social isolation and financial hardship, contributing to physical, functional and mental challenges. To help family caregivers navigate these complex feelings and difficult situations, ShareCare offers regular support groups; however, the organization recognizes that sometimes caregivers need more frequent support to maintain balance and their capacity to safely provide care.

With few volunteer interventions that support family caregivers, ShareCare seeks to fill this gap by building on information about caregiver experiences gleaned from support groups during the pandemic. ShareCare developed a volunteer-led mental health and wellness training program to provide family caregivers with an avenue to receive support and strategies to manage daily stress. While ShareCare continues to offer support groups, which are a useful way to connect and learn from others navigating similar situations, its train-the-trainer model provides volunteers with tools to teach mindfulness exercises to family caregivers on a one-to-one basis.

Volunteers recruited from the phone reassurance and friendly visitor programs receive training conducted by a social worker on mindfulness for caregivers. The training educates volunteers on wellness strategies, relaxation techniques and ways to share these tools with the caregivers with whom they are matched. Following an initial mindfulness session with their caregiver match, volunteers provide individualized support through monthly check-ins. This program helps family caregivers identify and understand their emotions and paves the way for a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

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Your Life. Your Home. Our Help.

—Program Quote



Community Connection Through Volunteer Transportation Shepherd's Centers of America

Kansas City, MO | www.shepherdcenters.org

Shepherd's Centers of America (SCA) is a network of affiliate centers across the United States offering a continuum of support services, including transportation and friendly visiting, to help older adults age at home safely. Transportation not only represents independence, but it helps ensure access to health care and other goods and services that help older adults remain engaged and connected. This community connection is essential to mental health and well-being.

Recognizing that volunteer driver programs and other support services are as varied as the communities in which they operate, SCA empowers communities to adapt programs that build on their own unique strengths to better meet the increasing needs of older adults. In this strategic initiative to support historically marginalized communities, SCA partners with the Mississippi Baptist Seminary (MBS) to launch and expand service-learning volunteer caregiving in Jackson and Tupelo. The purpose is to match students with older adults in meaningful volunteer roles, including driving to medical appointments and on other errands in the community, helping build and enhance technology skills and promoting connections with friendly visits. This intergenerational volunteer caregiving not only addresses key social determinants of health, but it also seeks to help heal centuries of racial injustices. Through the bonds of friendship and trust, the intent is to create more compassionate, respectful, and inclusive communities.

With guidance from MBS, SCA continues to develop DEI strategies that nurture relationships with community partners that engage a diverse range of volunteers and participants to pave the way for improved supports created by and for people of color. The lessons learned will be applied to build more racially equitable systems for volunteerism and participation across the SCA Network.

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“

I am happy to be part of this program. Connecting around shared experiences was rewarding yet I developed a greater appreciation for the challenges older adults face when access to transportation is limited. This experience has deepened my ministerial mission.

—Volunteer

”



Connecting and Supporting Sibling Caregivers

Sibling Leadership Network

Chicago, IL | www.siblingleadership.org

The Sibling Leadership Network (SLN), a nonprofit organization headquartered in Chicago, IL, is committed to addressing the needs of siblings of people with disabilities and their families. Siblings often have the longest relationship of their lives with each other, and as parents age, siblings of people with disabilities often become the next generation of caregivers. However, their needs and perspectives are often overlooked. Siblings often juggle caregiving for aging parents and their own children with caring for their own children with caring for their siblings with disabilities, increasing their own need for support. With very few families caring for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) receiving state IDD agency family support, SLN seeks to fill this gap by providing siblings of adults with disabilities with information, support and tools to advocate for issues important to them and their families.

SLN developed a peer mentoring program, podcast series and monthly virtual support forum to reduce caregiver stress, improve mental well-being and reduce social isolation experienced by sibling caregivers. The Sib2Sib mentoring program trains volunteers to provide peer mentorship to sibling caregivers so that they are better prepared to support their brothers and sisters with disabilities. Sharing insights and experiences about being a sibling caregiver on a one-to-one basis offers individualized support and connection. The monthly podcast discusses useful and meaningful information to assist siblings in their caregiving roles and highlights real-life experiences that amplify caregiver voices and perspectives. The Sibposiums are virtual peer support forums comprised of short informative presentations on specific topics followed by volunteer-led discussions. Sibposiums are held over Zoom so that individuals from across the country have the opportunity to connect.

To ensure that resources and information are tailored to the needs of sibling caregivers, these programs are guided by an advisory committee comprised of representatives from three partner organizations: Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters, Siblings with a Mission and Sibling Support Project. Partners meet quarterly to integrate feedback from their networks, as well as to create networking opportunities, disseminate project information and serve as panelists and hosts for the podcast and support forum.

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Thanks so VERY much for connecting us. We just had a 1.5 hour chat – and it was genuinely one of the most nourishing I've had in my life. What an amazing person and a great person to speak with about the steps I'm taking with my sibling.

—Participant



Caring Connections

St. Vincent Meals on Wheels

Los Angeles, CA | www.stvincentmow.org

St. Vincent Meals on Wheels (SVMOW) provides nutritious, home-delivered meals to homebound older adults in Los Angeles County, CA to help maintain a healthy standard of living. In addition to meeting nutritional needs, SVMOW seeks to restore strength, dignity and independence by addressing psycho-social, economic and environmental needs of older adults and caregivers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, daily interactions between clients and meal delivery staff were minimized and many clients lost further contact with their community due to public health orders and their own anxieties and fears related to contracting COVID-19. Prolonged social isolation and feelings of loneliness are associated with negative impacts on health and well-being, so SVMOW created alternative avenues for friendly contact through their Caring Connections program.

Pre-pandemic, SVMOW coordinated a friendly visitor program and a social call program for its older adult participants. In-person friendly visiting was paused due to pandemic restrictions, but SVMOW plans to reactivate and expand the service to offer more dynamic support by engaging in safe in-person interactions as well as virtual options. These options involve the expansion of their social call/ telephone buddy services to provide more regular weekly check-ins for their clients and the launch of the technology-based video visiting (tablets are loaned and/or internet provided, if needed). Both options foster meaningful connections through long-term volunteer matches. Another new component consists of staff referrals to partner organizations. The National Alliance on Mental Illness receives referrals for their peer-to-peer and family support groups and the University of Southern California Caregiver Support Center connects individuals with caregiver education and support services.

SVMOW social workers conduct comprehensive needs assessments to match client needs with these alternative methods of social contact and AmeriCorps helped create a system for recruiting and training volunteers to step into these supportive roles. Volunteers are recruited to mirror the demographics of the older adults served, including bilingual individuals that foster common ground for connection and understanding. SVMOW staff are active in local community partnership networks to embed client and volunteer feedback into service delivery to enhance program impact.

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It's in our nature as humans to connect with other people. Social calls have turned into friendships. And technology access has become a lifeline as beautifully stated by our client, Befekadu, 'I've lost contact with the outside world. I'm learning a lot and the tablet is entertaining. Next, my volunteer is going to teach me how to make video calls to family and friends. I'm really looking forward to that. This is a good idea for people like me and I want to thank you.'
(name used with permission)

—Program Leader



United for Seniors

United Way of Broward County

Fort Lauderdale, FL | www.unitedwaybroward.org

United Way of Broward County (UWBC) in Fort Lauderdale, FL is a community-based organization that fights for health, education and financial stability for all of Broward's residents. UWBC consistently engages in conversations and seeks feedback from its diverse constituencies to gain insight into critical issues affecting all. Recently, a consortium of human service funders in Broward County, including UWBC, commissioned a comprehensive countywide elder analysis and needs assessment that identified social isolation as a primary factor affecting the emotional and physical well-being of older adults in Broward County. Social isolation is associated with limited outreach, prevention and early intervention as well as a lack of resources coupled with systemic issues regarding service awareness and accessibility. Because Broward County had previously been without a formalized elder wellness initiative that promotes healthy aging in place, UWBC created the United for Seniors Project.

United for Seniors engages older adults and students studying health and helping professions who provide volunteer support and non-medical assistance to older adults. Many older residents live with impairments that make it difficult to live independently and remain on provider waitlists. Older adults who remain without assistance for extended periods of time are at risk of premature institutionalization, so UWBC partnered with the Area Agency on Aging of Broward County to identify and enroll these at-risk older adults in the program to ensure they receive non-medical assistance as well as emotional support. UWBC works with Broward College to identify, recruit and screen health and helping professions college students to provide this assistance and engage older adult participants in interpersonal and community social activities. Students also serve as gatekeepers and connectors for other needs as they are trained to alert UWBC staff of risks or health concerns that are brought to light during interactions with participants.

This prevention and early intervention initiative is focused on promoting older adults' capacity, wellness and autonomy to support their ability to remain at home and avoid preventable crises that precipitate institutionalization. UWBC is hopeful that engaging student volunteers and providing them with a stipend to encourage participation will increase practitioner interest in elder care and contribute to alleviating the geriatric workforce shortage.

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Participants agree that everyone benefits from the relationship. One participant noted, 'the young person gets the wisdom of the older person, the older person gets the energy of the younger person.'

—Program Leader



Caregiver Support Program

Volunteers of America Northern Colorado

Fort Collins, CO | www.voacolorado.org/gethelp-northernco

Volunteers of America (VOA) Northern Colorado Services has provided nonmedical respite to unpaid family caregivers in Larimer County, CO for 15 years. The number of family caregivers is on the rise in Colorado and demand for support has not been able to keep up. With the cost of living increasing in Larimer County, many older adults are moving to rural areas where home-based services are harder to acquire. In addition, a community assessment of nearby Weld County indicates that more than one-fifth of older adults feel physically or emotionally burdened by caregiving, yet they have had limited access to respite due to county geography. VOA expanded its Caregiver Support Program to meet these growing community needs in both Larimer and Weld County.

VOA's Caregiver Support Program is comprised of multiple elements to increase caregiver resilience, improve care recipient connectedness and ensure a meaningful volunteer experience. The program matches families caring for older adults with Caring Companions volunteers who provide weekly in-home visits once they are thoroughly vetted and trained. Visits from Caring Companion volunteers provide caregivers with respite to allow them to tend to their own needs and participate in relaxing activities and rest while their loved one is engaged in meaningful conversation and activities. In addition to in-person respite, VOA provides caregivers with information on educational and support opportunities and other services available in their community, including classes such as Powerful Tools for Caregivers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Caregiver Support Program pivoted to virtual delivery to maintain essential contact with the families it serves. VOA decided to continue offering virtual options, in addition to in-home visits, for those who might not otherwise be able to engage due to barriers such as transportation, rural accessibility or personal health and safety concerns as in-person services resume.

In addition to offering hybrid services to expand program reach, VOA actively explores how to better engage LGBTQ+ caregivers, older adults and volunteers who are likely underserved. Caregiving often looks different for LGBTQ+ older adults due to family dynamics surrounding their identities and differing support structures; LGBTQ+ older adults are more likely to live alone and more likely to care and be cared for by friends, peers and neighbors. To guide efforts that provide useful and appropriate supports to the LGBTQ+ older adult and family caregiver population, VOA convened an advisory committee comprised of individuals with lived LGBTQ+ experience and experts in LGBTQ+ older adult service provision. Additionally, program staff are undergoing cultural competency training with Services & Advocacy for LGBT Elders (SAGE) and Project Visibility and VOA is developing new partnerships with LGBTQ+ focused organizations.

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Volunteers of America, Colorado

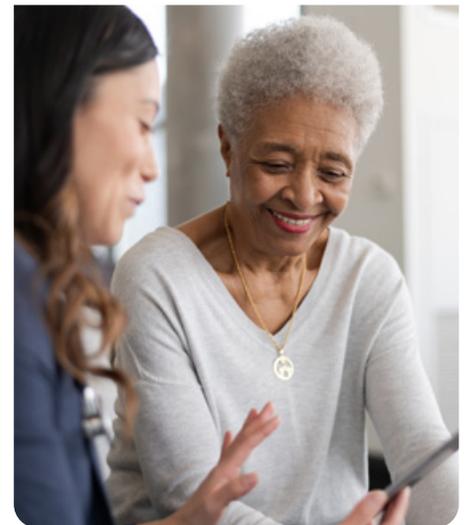
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We just wanted to say thank you to the Volunteers of America. It's just the greatest organization ever and we are most appreciative. Janet comes and reads to my husband, and she is the most terrific companion and reader. They have a great rapport. They have a great time.

—Caregiver



Greenbrier Community Care Corps West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine

Lewisburg, WV | www.wvsom.edu

The West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine Center for Rural and Community Health (CRCH) drives engagement in rural health by building infrastructure that empowers community members to reach their highest levels of health and wellness. Because Greenbrier County, WV is rural with a dispersed population, the community is missing many services like public transportation and shopping assistance that are available in more urban areas, posing a barrier to the ability of residents to age in place. CRCH is aware of many community-based organizations operating food pantries and clothing closets, but staff and community members identified a host of errands, chores and supports only offered by informal networks of friends, family or neighbors. No organizations in Greenbrier appeared to be providing similar assistance at a significant level across the county. To continue identifying and addressing these unmet needs, CRCH partnered with five other community organizations to establish the Greenbrier Community Care Corps (GCCC). GCCC's rural model connects clients in the community to volunteers to help with an extensive menu of assistance that enable participants to live independently, reduce caregiver stress and build community cohesion, including, but not limited to, meal preparation, laundry, yard work, home maintenance and companionship.

The Greenbrier Community Care Corps model builds on WVSOM's organizational resources as well as an existing countywide network of relationships developed by the Greenbrier County Health Alliance (GCHA). Through this collaboration, community ambassadors from the GCHA help recruit volunteers possessing traits representative of community demographics and identify older adults, adults with disabilities and caregivers who would benefit from GCCC assistance. The community ambassador program through GCHA targets communities that are typically underserved and underrepresented to ensure that GCCC reaches members across all sectors of the community.

WVSOM is developing new technology infrastructure to support program implementation and data management for GCCC consisting of online registration and phone software to identify referral needs. CRCH intends to expand their partnership base and invite neighboring counties to join the program.

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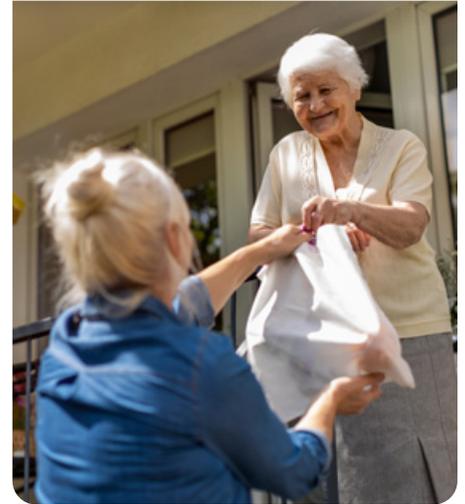
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We are excited to help launch this program in Greenbrier County and believe everyone who takes part will find it rewarding. Volunteers will be able to schedule enjoyable service activities that align with their schedule, make new connections, and serve others in our community.

—Program Leader



Conclusion

The 2021-2022 Community Care Corps grantees began their work during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which presented its own set of unique challenges. As the nation adapts to living with COVID-19 and learns to strike a balance between virtual and in-person service delivery, Community Care Corps grantees have continued to display considerable creativity in their approaches to respond to the needs of older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers. As we look to the future, we know that grantees will apply lessons learned and continue to adapt and adjust as they safely and meaningfully serve their communities.

This publication provides a brief snapshot into the extensive work of each of these grantees, and we encourage you to learn more about their work and to explore how other organizations can implement innovative models in pursuit of this mission. To learn more about the work of Community Care Corps and access resources for prospective applicants, visit www.communitycarecorps.org.

Funder Acknowledgement

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