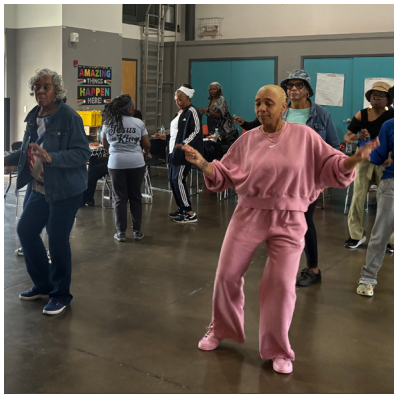
# 2025–2026 GRANTEE SNAPSHOTS

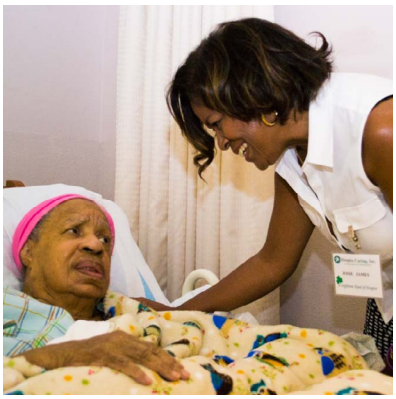
National COMMUNITY CARE CORPS











*Volunteer Power Supporting Health at Home*

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# COMMUNITY CARE CORPS:
## Empowering Communities Through Volunteer-Driven Care




Community Care Corps is a national initiative fostering innovative local programs with volunteers providing essential nonmedical assistance to older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers. By helping individuals maintain their independence, health, and well-being, Community Care Corps and its grantees across the country address urgent and growing national need.

The number of adults aged 65 and older in the United States is expected to double to 70 million by 2030, and each year approximately 44 million Americans provide an estimated 37 billion hours of unpaid, informal care for older adults and individuals with chronic illnesses. So often support for family caregivers is unaffordable and inaccessible, particularly in rural and historically underserved communities. As outlined in the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers, cultivating a robust, coordinated approach to caregiver health and well-being is both urgent and essential.

Community Care Corps is administered by the Oasis Institute, with support from USAging, the Caregiver Action Network, and the Altarum Institute. It is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Administration for Community Living. Through this partnership, the program awards grants to local organizations across the country to establish, enhance, and grow volunteer models that deliver vital nonmedical assistance such as respite care, meal delivery, transportation, and social connection.

Since its inception in 2019, Community Care Corps has funded 144 grantees, that have collectively served more than 8,000 caregivers and 26,000 care recipients nationwide. Grantees have drawn on diverse groups of volunteer, including college students who gain service-learning opportunities to older adults eager to give back. And these agencies have pioneered peer-to-peer models that engage older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities as active contributors.

Community Care Corps grantees are building creative, innovative, practical programs that make volunteer-driven caregiver support accessible and responsive. Their work reflects a shared conviction: that with the right infrastructure, investment, and support, improved health, wellness and independence is achievable for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers in communities across the country.

# FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

## AgeSpan, Inc.

Lawrence, Massachusetts | agespan.org

AgeSpan, Inc. is an Area Agency on Aging serving 28 cities and towns in northeastern Massachusetts. It provides older adults, people with disabilities, and family caregivers with social support services that help clients age independently in their communities. Services include home-based care, home delivered meals, protective services, and supportive living programs.

AgeSpan serves several communities in which families serve as primary caregivers for grandchildren or loved ones with dementia. Families may not want to involve non-family caregivers, and outside help is often prohibitively expensive. Yet providing this level of care takes an emotional and physical toll on family caregivers.

AgeSpan's Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) provides support to these caregivers. Family Caregiver Support Specialists help caregivers navigate their unique situations through problem-solving, needs assessment, care planning, education, emotional support and training that promote caregiver wellness. One-on-one counseling sessions help caregivers navigate resources and manage care for their loved ones and themselves. Services include referrals to community-based services, caregiver support groups, habilitation therapy, respite scholarships, grandparent campership, and caregiver relaxation events. There are over 1,000 families enrolled in the FCSP, around 400 of whom are actively receiving support services.

To extend the reach and impact of the FCSP, AgeSpan developed a pilot program to recruit and train 10-15 volunteers to be matched with families requiring support, including enhancing capacity for Spanish language services. In particular, AgeSpan is recruiting former caregivers who have received FCSP support when caring for their own loved ones who want to mentor other caregivers.

FCSP volunteer training includes Community Care Corps offerings such as CPR training, person-centered approaches, safe spaces, and bystander intervention, reporting abuse, neglect, and exploitation. AgeSpan supplements these offerings with training in support group facilitation and Dementia Friends certification. Volunteers also receive travel stipends so they can observe caregiver support groups and become familiar with how the FCSP assists families. AgeSpan has developed a two-way learning model including an advisory board which will also leverage volunteers' own caregiving experiences to improve the FCSP program. This model gives volunteers a meaningful and rewarding experience and simultaneously improves both the quantity and quality of the support AgeSpan provides for family caregivers.



> *"I'm pretty resourceful when it comes to getting help, but it's been hard to find support of this kind. This program is an unbelievable asset in the community. The only ones who have really helped me are AgeSpan.*

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# ALS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

## ALS Northwest

Portland, Oregon | alsnorthwest.org

ALS Northwest has provided comprehensive support and advocacy to more than 2,500 people living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) while advancing research for new treatments and an end to ALS. ALS Northwest enhances quality of life through no-cost programs that enable individuals with ALS to communicate, function safely at home, seek medical care, and travel.

ALS is a progressive, terminal neurological disease with no known cause or cure and an average life expectancy of two to five years after diagnosis. The average age of onset is 65, and as the disease advances, it systematically strips away the ability to walk, speak, swallow, and breathe. Because a person with ALS may require around-the-clock personal care, basic household tasks become enormously difficult to sustain. The resulting burden on family caregivers is severe, with significant impacts on mental health and overall wellbeing. ALS Northwest continuously documents these needs through hundreds of home visits and ALS clinic appointments, and more than 6,800 support communications logged in a single year, ensuring the volunteer program responds to real, expressed community need.

In response, ALS Northwest has expanded its successful ALS Volunteer Program which has provided people living with ALS and their caregivers with robust nonmedical support since 2023. The volunteer program operates through two distinct service tracks. 'Helping Hands' matches volunteers one-on-one with families for practical household support such as cleaning, meal preparation, pet care, and yardwork. 'Caregiver Mentor' pairs caregivers with peer mentors for emotional support and companionship, with matches available both in-person and virtually.

To support volunteer recruitment, ALS Northwest formalized group volunteer opportunities for corporations and community organizations, strengthened retention through community-building events and a volunteer e-newsletter, and expanded a volunteer ambassador program to extend peer-to-peer recruitment into rural and harder-to-reach areas of Oregon and Southwest Washington. Taken together, these efforts ensure that more families will be served with practical assistance and friendly companionship, fostering increased wellbeing among families facing ALS while saving them money, time, and energy.



> *"I can definitely say I look forward to speaking with D. It's very comforting and helpful talking to someone who's been through the grueling process of caring for a spouse with ALS. Every situation is different but that doesn't diminish the value of connecting with someone who's walked a similar path. Highly recommend having a mentor.*

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# TRUSTED RIDE CHAPERONE PROGRAM

## Ascension St. Agnes Foundation

Baltimore, Maryland | ascension.org

Ascension St. Agnes (ASA) is an accredited, full-service teaching hospital that offers emergency services and a wide variety of inpatient and outpatient services. ASA serves surrounding communities that experience some of the highest needs and highest incidence of diabetes, hypertension, and obesity in Baltimore City and the State of Maryland.

Many of the hospital's surrounding neighborhoods experience socioeconomic challenges, including low-income levels, high unemployment, low educational attainment, and chronic conditions that become more prevalent as people age.

One third of the community that ASA serves has identified a lack of transportation as a leading barrier to health care. In response, ASA developed the Trusted Ride Chaperone program. ASA's volunteer chaperones are trained and certified to respond to the needs of older adults with chronic health conditions.

The Trusted Ride Program's innovative approach provides volunteer chaperone support as well as rideshare transportation assistance. Trained volunteers provide door-through-door assistance, ensuring participants get to appointments and back home safely. Volunteers also provide telephone support before and after appointments to reduce social isolation, improve health education, and connect program participants with community resources.

ASA's model enables increased access to health care for participants and supports the Maryland hospital system, potentially reducing the number of unnecessary hospitalizations and readmissions.

Goals for the 2025–2026 include connecting 100 family caregivers to local respite services through the new Chaperone Connect component, recruiting 20 new volunteers, and serving 250 older adults and 150 adults living with a disability. An ongoing return-on-investment study is examining the program's impact on appointment no-show rates and emergency department visits, helping to support the case for replication across the Ascension national health ministry.

By expanding transportation access and caregiver connections, the Chaperone Program addresses the intersection of social isolation, health care barriers, and caregiver burnout in communities where these challenges converge most acutely.



> *"I am 76 years old, and my husband is 78 years old. I could not have gotten to my appointment without the transportation that was provided. The staff were very professional and helpful.*

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# VOLUNTEER HELPING HANDS; CAREGIVER PEERS AND MENTOR PROGRAMS

## CaringMatters

Gaithersburg, Maryland | caringmatters.org

CaringMatters serves vulnerable adults and families facing serious illness or grieving the death of a loved one. The agency's mission is to provide social support and community education so no one dies or grieves alone. CaringMatters has four program areas: Patient and Caregiver Services, Adult Bereavement, Children's Bereavement, and Community Education. CaringMatters also increases community awareness and advocacy about end-of-life concerns, advance care planning, and grief. Services are free of charge.

In Montgomery County, Maryland's population of adults age 60 and older is growing rapidly, especially those age 85 and older. This group is racially and ethnically diverse with Asian, African American, and Hispanic families more likely to rely on family caregivers for extended periods, often without access to paid home care. A county government study has documented transportation barriers to medical care, and the county's Home Care Program maintains a waiting list of low-income, isolated adults with moderate to severe disabilities.

CaringMatters has expanded three programs to address these needs. The Volunteer Helping Hands program is growing to serve 125 older adults, with volunteers providing an average of four hours per week of in-home companionship, household assistance, errands, meal preparation, respite care, and transportation. In-person and virtual Caregiver Peer Support Groups are growing from two to four groups, serving 45 caregivers facilitated by trained volunteers. And a new Caregiver Mentor program pairs 12 caregivers with six volunteer mentors recruited from CaringMatters' volunteer community for individualized, flexible one-on-one support. A new Volunteer Coordinator position has been created to support recruitment, training, and retention across all three components.

By connecting isolated older adults and their caregivers with consistent, compassionate volunteer support, CaringMatters is extending its mission of accompaniment through one of life's most demanding chapters.



> *"Each of you provided me with exceptional support, and I am truly thankful for your kindness, generosity of spirit, and the wisdom and experience you shared with me and with the other members of the group. You are a great team, and I have learned not only coping skills and strategies, but also caring skills—how to care for others.*

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# TRANSPORTATION FRIENDS FOR KUPUNA

## Catholic Charities of Hawaii

Honolulu, Hawaii | catholiccharitieshawaii.org

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) has been a cornerstone of support for Hawaii's communities since its founding in 1947. Programs provide a range of services to help individuals and families in need, including housing assistance for those at risk of homelessness, senior programs to support aging with dignity, and counseling services for those with emotional challenges, trauma, or substance abuse. For older adults, CCH offers services to support independence such as caregiver education and training, transportation, social engagement programs, case management, and housing counseling.

In Hawaii, 19 percent of seniors age 65 and older live alone—an increase of 51 percent over the last decade. And the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has documented the links between transportation barriers and missed health care, worsening chronic conditions, and increased emergency visits. The City and County of Honolulu's 4-Year Area Plan for 2023–2027 identified lack of transportation options as a significant concern. The Aloha United Way reported that over 43 percent of older adults struggle to make ends meet, threatening their health, safety, and well-being. These challenges are particularly acute in Oahu's rural areas, including the Leeward Coast and North Shore where public transit is limited and many seniors are unable to reach medical care, grocery stores, or social activities.

In Hawaiian, "kupuna" means elder. CCH's Transportation Friends for Kupuna (TFK) program has volunteers who provide free transportation or escort assistance to older adults 60 years and older who live independently and need door-through-door assistance on Oahu. TFK currently provides approximately 100 chaperoned trips monthly and is a lifeline for older adults who cannot obtain reliable transportation. Without transportation and/or chaperone services, they often struggle to receive medical care, shop for essentials, or participate in social activities.

CCH is expanding TFK's services to help ensure that more of Oahu's most isolated older adults can access the medical care, nutrition, and social connection they needed remain independent and engaged in their communities.



> *"Before Transportation Friends for Kupuna, I had to cancel doctor's appointments because I had no way to get there. Now I feel supported, connected, and able to take care of my health again.*

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# AGING LIFE PROGRAMS, RIDE AND HOPE MINISTRIES

## Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany

Albany, New York | ccrcda.org

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany (CCDA) is one of the largest private social service agencies in upstate New York, helping an estimated 75,000 people each year in the 14 counties of the Albany Diocese. CCDA's mission is to recognize human need at every stage of life and respond to all people. Its continuum of services spans food security, emergency assistance, mental health, domestic violence, disability services, and senior support programs.

The six rural Upstate New York counties targeted by this initiative (Columbia, Greene, Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie, and Herkimer) face challenges that make independent aging exceptionally difficult. The older adult population is growing rapidly, with Otsego County recording New York State's highest growth between 2010 and 2019 and many living alone. The number of people age 85 and older in Herkimer County has doubled since 1980. Poverty rates are significant with 12 percent of Herkimer older adults, for example, living below the federal poverty level. All six counties are designated Health Professional Shortage Areas for primary care, dental, and mental health services. Rural communities, seasonally hazardous roads, limited public transit, and food deserts compound these barriers.

CCDA's Aging Life, RIDE, and Hope Ministries programs respond to these needs by matching trained volunteers with older adults for transportation, companionship visits, light housekeeping, yardwork, grocery runs, pet care, and minor home maintenance. CCDA has recruited, trained and deployed 89 volunteers across its Aging Life, RIDE, and HOPE Ministries programs who have served 278 older adults and 15 adults with disabilities. All volunteers receive comprehensive training, including trauma-informed care, person-centered approaches, and elder abuse recognition, and are supported by CCDA's existing Elder Care Managers, Volunteer Coordinators, and robust data tracking infrastructure.

CCDA aims to serve several hundred older adults, helping them remain safe in their homes, reducing isolation, and relieving caregivers in some of Upstate New York's most under resourced communities.



> *Jennifer B. helped with my recertification for Section 8 housing and SNAP benefits, which required a lot of papers to be faxed. She also assisted me with shopping at Walmart. When I have an appointment, even at short notice, she bends over backwards to get someone to drive me.*

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# SENIOR VILLAGE CENTRAL PROGRAM

## Central Community House

Columbus, Ohio | cchouse.org

Central Community House (CCH) offers holistic, multigenerational programs that help individuals and families. Services include senior programming, social work and case management, youth programming, innovative arts education, community-building activities, and basic needs assistance.

Low-income older adults in Columbus' Near East and South Side neighborhoods experience significant challenges, including social isolation, unsafe housing, poor health outcomes, transportation challenges, and limited support networks. Market forces have further increased housing instability and weakened both formal and informal systems of support.

With 89 years of trust in the community, CCH is uniquely positioned to identify unmet needs and connect neighbors to resources. CCH provides a welcoming, multigenerational environment where older adults engage alongside children, families, and neighbors, helping reduce the stigma of ageism often associated with senior-only spaces.

Through the Village Central program, older adults in the Near East and South Side neighborhoods are connected to resources that support aging in place safely, comfortably, and with dignity. Like a sturdy handrail on a difficult set of steps, Village Central offers steady support that helps older adults move forward with greater safety, confidence, and connection. Services include wellness and social programming, educational activities, field trips, navigation and case management, basic needs support, and minor home repairs and maintenance.

CCH has developed a strong volunteer network grounded in a philosophy of neighbors helping neighbors. Volunteers support older adults through companionship, basic needs assistance, wellness activities, technology support, and housing-related assistance, helping strengthen social connection and independence.




> *"This program helps me feel like I'm not alone. It reminds me that there are still people nearby who care, who will show up, and who want older adults like me to stay connected, safe, and part of the community.*

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# PASSAGES MEDICAL CHAPERONE PROGRAM

## Chico State Enterprises – PASSAGES

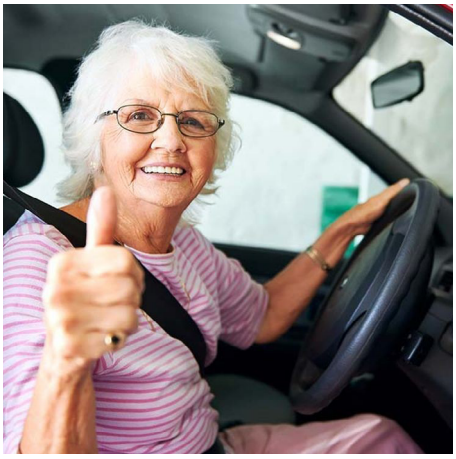
Chico, California | passagescenter.org

Passages is an Area Agency on Aging that serves five rural counties in Northern California: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Plumas, and Tehama. Sponsored by Chico State Enterprises, Passages provides support and direct services to older adults, enabling them to age in place at home. The programs offered include Information and Assistance, Caregiver Support, Ombudsman Services, Medicare Counseling, and AmeriCorps Senior Volunteer services.

Many older adults in Butte County face challenges accessing public transportation, making them more susceptible to loneliness and isolation. To address this issue, Passages has implemented the Medical Chaperone Program, which offers door-to-door transportation for older adult clients attending medical appointments and outpatient procedures. Volunteers in the Medical Chaperone Program meet with clients before their appointments to record questions and follow up afterward to address any concerns. These volunteers also help retrieve prescriptions and offer ongoing support for future appointments. To build a sense of connection and trust, volunteers collaborate with the same participants until they no longer need services.

Passages is expanding its network of screened volunteers, ensuring that all volunteers undergo thorough onboarding and training. This training includes guidelines for assisting veteran participants, those with compromised mobility, individuals experiencing isolation or depression, and those living with early memory loss. All Passages volunteers are trained to serve as peer mentors using the Healthy IDEAS model, which is an evidence-based approach to help identify older adults showing signs of depression and to engage them in empowering activities that can alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation. After completing their training, volunteers are well-equipped to connect participants with the necessary resources.

The Medical Chaperone Program at Passages will expand throughout the service area. By broadening both its geographic reach and organizational infrastructure, Passages aims to serve several hundred clients annually by providing rides and companionship, thereby reducing social isolation and improving health outcomes for older adults in some of California's most rural and underserved communities.



> *My wife leaves Quincy, CA, each winter to snowbird in Arizona. I miss her very much, but I understand she enjoys visiting friends and family and escaping from the cold. The PASSAGES transportation program has been a huge relief for me because, shortly after my wife left, I experienced a flare-up of my heart disease and needed help getting to my doctor's appointments in Reno, which is an hour's drive from Quincy. I really appreciate my volunteer, Tim. We have great conversations while driving to Reno. I feel like I have made a new friend, and that's helped with the loneliness and feeling helpless.*

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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# PIONEER VALLEY MEMORY CARE INITIATIVE

## Cooley Dickinson Hospital

Northampton, Massachusetts | cooleydickinson.org

Cooley Dickinson Hospital is an acute care community hospital in Hampshire County, Massachusetts with the mission of providing exceptional, compassionate, and personalized care to its patients and communities. It offers extensive inpatient and outpatient services, including geriatric, medical/surgical, orthopedic, obstetric/gynecologic, psychiatric, palliative, emergency, ambulatory, diagnostic, primary care, and rehabilitation services. As a member of the Mass General Brigham system, Cooley Dickinson provides patients with local access to some of the world's leading medical researchers.

In 2019, a Community Health Needs Assessment identified the significant needs of older adults and people living with dementia in their community. People living with dementia typically need support to maintain quality of life. Interventions like in-home, collaborative care can delay cognitive and functional decline and reduce social isolation. Families of individuals with dementia often experience social isolation, which significantly impacts their well-being and quality of life.

In response, Cooley Dickinson has expanded the Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative (PVMCI), a free program that empowers older adults living with dementia and their family caregivers to improve their quality of life, supports aging at home and remaining connected with communities. The PVMCI team works with families at home to provide personalized support, education, resources, and social and community connections. PVMCI also runs support groups for family caregivers, a Memory Cafe, and a volunteer program where interested families are paired with volunteers from our partnering organizations. Volunteering to help people with dementia presents unique challenges and opportunities. So all volunteers are trained by PVMCI staff and can participate in a monthly support group. PVMCI is enhancing its current volunteer model as part of its efforts in continuing to provide a host of supports and services to its community.

By systematically expanding into communities and building a replicable partnership model, PVMCI is helping ensure that no family facing dementia in western Massachusetts faces those challenges alone.



> *"I learned more about dementia in my first meeting with my PVMCI Memory Care Specialist than I have previously learned, particularly regarding my spouse's inability to recognize he has memory loss and his inability to make complex decisions. I am much more prepared for what lies ahead, understanding and accepting that I will need to keep learning to best care for my spouse.*

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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# DUET: PARTNERS IN HEALTH & AGING

## Duet

Phoenix, Arizona | duetaz.org

Duet is a non-profit organization promoting health and well-being through its vitally needed, services to homebound adults, family caregivers, and grandfamilies. Services include transportation to the doctor and grocery store, friendly visit and in-home assistance, caregiver support groups, peer mentoring, educational workshops, and personalized guidance. Duet partners with individuals, businesses, non-profits, municipalities, government organizations, and faith communities to provide services free of charge to clients. Hundreds of compassionate volunteers help fulfill Duet's mission.



Between 2010 and 2020, Arizona's Latino population increased from 1.9 to 2.4 million—32.5 percent of Arizona's population. People age 65 and over were the fastest growing group, with its population increasing 55.5 percent. According to AARP Arizona, nearly 900,000 Arizonans serve as family caregivers, including 260,000 caring for a loved one with dementia and 62,000 grandparents raising grandchildren. Latino caregivers are less likely to access community support and formal care services due to cultural and other issues, which creates a disproportionate impact on their mental and emotional well-being. The National Council on Aging reports that 80 percent of adults age 60+ have too few resources to pay for services needed to live independently. Those who are homebound face greater challenges.

> *"I really am overwhelmed at the care and attention given to the caregiver! These people REALLY GET IT! I am grateful and beyond because I know I could not have made this journey without Duet!*

Duet: Partners In Health & Aging, along with Novle, a Latino-owned multicultural communications firm, has developed a new community engagement model to help eliminate the barriers preventing Latino and Hispanic older adults from accessing Duet's services. The program includes more recruitment of multicultural volunteers to assist Maricopa County Latino family caregivers, kinship caregivers, and homebound adults with respite care, mentoring, transportation, and other assistance. The model emphasizes relevant, practical solutions that support family caregivers and older adults in maintaining their independence and well-being, ensuring no one is left without the needed vital assistance.

By leveraging Novle's expertise and incorporating community input, Duet is creating a sustainable model that empowers Latino caregivers and homebound adults to thrive. Duet is extending its decades-long mission of service to Latino families who have historically been hardest to reach and who need connection and support most.

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# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

## Elderbridge Agency on Aging

Mason City, Iowa | elderbridge.org

Founded in 1974, Elderbridge is an Area Agency on Aging serving a 29-county rural region 16,000 square miles across North Central, Northwest, and Central Iowa. The agency serves older adults, caregivers, and people with disabilities through case management, health promotion, nutrition, elder rights protection, and volunteer engagement to empower individuals to pursue independent, healthy lives.

The communities that Elderbridge serves face significant and growing unmet needs. By 2030, Americans age 65 and older will outnumber children for the first time in U.S. history, and rural Iowa is already feeling this pressure acutely. Many older adults require assistance with transportation, meal preparation, and household tasks, while a nationwide health care worker shortage limits the availability of formal services. Social isolation compounds these challenges, particularly in the region's rural counties.

Elderbridge's Volunteer Program helps meet needs by offering non-medical, direct services to older adults to support their independence and well-being. Program volunteers provide a range of services including transportation, telephone reassurance, in-person companionship, assistance with chores, respite care, organizing, and seasonal events such as Santa for Seniors and CommUNITY Kindness. Operational volunteers assist Elderbridge with fundraising and administrative tasks and serve on the Board or Advisory Council.

Elderbridge is enhancing the Volunteer Program through training, support systems, and recognition. This includes volunteers education in client well-being, safety, and elder abuse prevention. Volunteer retention efforts include regular events, activities, awards, and mileage reimbursement for travel. Elderbridge is expanding services by recruiting new volunteers and providing tools to support community events, food bank runs, decluttering, and downsizing. The agency has introduced a dedicated caregiver volunteer to address caregiver needs and expanded key programs. This includes telephone reassurance services for isolated individuals and "Happy Mail" outreach to underserved counties, ensuring isolated clients receive at least one handwritten note per quarter. Through these efforts, Elderbridge improves the well-being of older adults, ensuring they receive the care and resources needed to safely age in place.



> *"My food bank runner has been so helpful. She always calls me when she is at the food bank, so I know exactly what they have available that day. She drops the food off at my house because I can't wait in line due to my back and not having transportation.*

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# FAITH IN ACTION GEORGETOWN

Georgetown, Texas | faithinactiongt.org

Faith in Action Georgetown (FIAG) provides free, door-through-door transportation for Georgetown, TX, residents age 65 and older who cannot afford a vehicle or don't drive for health reasons. Faith in Action's paid drivers and dedicated volunteers offer transportation for medical appointments, grocery shopping, personal errands, and social engagements. FIAG has built a strong reputation as a reliable, volunteer-driven transportation service, adding a van program offering weekly grocery and social rides, a Buddy Program providing telephone companionship, and a Pay Your Pal initiative offering mileage reimbursement for clients who have friends or family willing to drive.

Georgetown is one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States. According to the 2020 Census, 36 percent of its residents are age 65 and older—nearly double the national average. For many, transportation is a primary barrier to essential services including medical care and access to fresh food. A 2020 survey found that 83 percent of FIAG clients cannot afford rideshare fees, and many lack access to or prefer not to use technology required for services like Lyft. Georgetown's fixed-route transit system offers discounted fares but does not provide the personalized, door-through-door assistance FIAG's clients rely on. A 2023 Client Survey found that 84 percent of clients reported making new friends through FIAG, demonstrating the program's impact on social connection alongside transportation access.

FIAG is expanding its current roster of nearly 200 volunteers to meet the growing demand. The agency is recruiting 70 new volunteers to serve 200 new clients, for a total of 850 enrolled clients and 18,000 rides. The rides serve clients with medical appointments and grocery shopping. FIAG is also piloting a "Pathways" rideshare model in which a paid driver provides rides without waiting during appointments, freeing capacity for volunteers to serve more clients. Client education programs cover topics such as Medicare, fall prevention, technology, and financial safety.

For many clients who don't have nearby family or friends, FIAG is a lifeline offering not just a ride, but a relationship that fosters dignity, independence, and connection to the community they call home.



> *My experience has been wonderful, I couldn't be happier. It made it so that I didn't have to worry about my rides. My children live far away, so it took the burden off of them to go back and forth. It has been a godsend.*

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# CARING CONNECTIONS NEIGHBORHOOD HUB

## Jewish Family Service of Metro Detroit

West Bloomfield, Michigan | jfsdetroit.org

Jewish Family Service of Metro Detroit (JFS) was founded in 1928 to assist vulnerable Jewish households. JFS is now a nonsectarian human services organization serving over 15,000 individuals annually across Oakland, Wayne, and Macomb counties. Its mission is to enhance lives through service and ensure that no one faces challenges alone. Services cover Older Adult Services, Mental Health, and Safety Net Programs. Older Adult Services include multiple specialized programs empowering people to age with dignity and independence, including geriatric care management, dementia support, and meal delivery.

In Southeast Michigan over 25 percent of residents are age 60 or older. Alzheimer's disease prevalence is projected to triple by 2030. This places immense pressure on family caregivers, who often experience heightened stress, exhaustion, and limited access to respite care and supportive resources. In Metro Detroit, caregivers report challenges navigating fragmented services across multiple agencies while managing loved ones' complex needs. The need for wrap-around services, such as transportation and long-term care planning, is urgent. Low-income families, especially bilingual and refugee communities, face compounded barriers. Approximately half of the caregivers JFS serves live below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, further limiting access to services.

In partnership with The J, the Alzheimer's Association Michigan Chapter, and Dementia Friendly Saline, JFS has launched the Mindful Connections Neighborhood Hub to address these unmet needs. The hub will create a dementia-friendly space for caregivers and their loved ones. It is an alternative to institutionalized care, offering a community-focused space where caregivers and care recipients access integrated, dementia-friendly services to address complex challenges. Programs include Memory Cafes, group respite, bilingual community health support, and tailored family services.

By reducing service fragmentation, this project will enhance caregiver resilience, improve outcomes, and create a sustainable support system for under resourced families in Metro Detroit.



> *"I have been attending the Memory Cafes every month. It gives me a chance to connect with others and gives me a break from all I must do in my caregiving role.*

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# NORTH STAR COUNCIL ON AGING

Fairbanks, Alaska | fairbanksseniorcenter.org

The North Star Council on Aging (NSCoA), locally known as the Fairbanks Senior Center, anchors aging in place services across Interior Alaska. Meals on Wheels is the core of its service model, providing daily nutrition, safety checks, and social connection for older adults who are homebound, isolated, or experiencing food insecurity. This program is supported by a broader network of services that includes transportation to medical appointments, home safety and modification support, congregate dining, technology access, and wellness programming that help older adults maintain independence and dignity.

Fairbanks and the surrounding region are home to more than 20,000 adults age 60 and older—which is 21 percent of the population. The number of adults age 80 and older is projected to reach over 5,000 by 2035, a 211 percent growth rate. This rapid growth puts increasing pressure on local systems. The region has fewer than 300 independent and assisted living beds, leaving many older adults without higher level care options and placing complex care responsibilities on families and community programs.

Aging in place is the default long term plan for most older adults in Fairbanks. Community programs, volunteers, and informal caregivers carry much of the responsibility for helping older adults remain safe at home. To meet these challenges, NSCoA has structured its Community Care Corps volunteer program around Meals on Wheels. All home delivered meal volunteers are now integrated into the Community Care Corps framework, which strengthens wellness monitoring and rapid response support. The volunteer corps has grown from 60 to over 100 volunteers and is supported by a full-time Volunteer Coordinator and a part-time Home Assessor.

Volunteers are trained in wellness checks, elder abuse, and financial fraud awareness so they can identify concerns that might otherwise go unnoticed. Volunteers provide dependable daily contact during meal delivery and often become the first to notice when an older adult's needs or circumstances begin to change. They also bring information about the Home Assessor and other supportive and educational programs.

The Home Assessor follows up with a focused in-home visit, identifies needs, and connects the senior to home modifications, transportation, pet care support, or partner agency services.

This Meals on Wheels-centered model strengthens support for older adults in one of the most remote and resource-constrained regions in the country. By combining daily nutrition with vigilant wellness checks, proactive assessments, and coordinated community partnerships, NSCoA enables hundreds more older adults to age safely, independently, and with dignity in their own homes.




> *The staff, drivers, cooks, and the implementation of the whole program is worthy of much more recognition and praise for such an outstanding impressive service and meal quality. Keep up the great job. Extra praise and recognition to the drivers that continue to show up in all weather conditions!*

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# ‘HELP NEXT DOOR’ FRIENDLY HELPER PROGRAM

## Region IV Area Agency on Aging

St Joseph, Michigan | areaagencyonaging.org

Region IV Area Agency on Aging (RIV AAA) has served as the leading resource, advocate, and coordinator of aging, caregiver, and disability services in Southwest Michigan since 1974. Serving Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties, RIV AAA works to improve health, independence, and quality of life for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers, especially those with high needs. Through a network of more than 100 community partners and service providers, RIV AAA connects thousands of residents each year to services and supports that help them remain healthy, safe, and engaged in their communities.



Around 37 percent of the region’s 80,000 adults age 60 and older live alone, increasing the risk of social isolation and loneliness. Transportation barriers, workforce shortages, limited access to caregiving services, and emergency preparedness challenges compound these risks, especially in rural and high need communities.

RIV AAA’s ‘Help Next Door’ Friendly Helper Program addresses these needs by mobilizing trained volunteers to provide nonmedical assistance to help people remain connected, supported, and independent. Volunteers provide transportation, meals, companionship, minor household help, and emergency preparedness support. Volunteer training combines live instruction with on-demand learning through Trualta. Program operations are supported through the Mon Ami volunteer management platform. The program is building a sustainable volunteer infrastructure to strengthen community capacity and create a scalable model that can be replicated in rural communities facing similar challenges.

> *“If I had not had your program’s help, I would not have been able to do work in my garden this year. I grow my own organic food and love to do it, but it’s hard for me now to bend over. I feel better just doing things when someone else is there. It is a huge help and makes a difference in my health.*

As the region’s community care hub, RIV AAA is uniquely positioned to identify individuals with unmet needs, coordinate volunteer supports alongside professional services, and leverage a network of community partners to address social isolation, transportation barriers, food insecurity, safety concerns, and other needs. By connecting volunteers with individuals who might otherwise go without assistance, ‘Help Next Door’ strengthens community connections, supports caregivers, and helps older adults and people with disabilities remain safely and independently engaged in their homes and communities.

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# SENIOR DISASTER SUPPORT

## Seniors in Service of Tampa Bay, Inc.

Tampa, Florida | seniorsinservice.org

Seniors in Service of Tampa Bay provides solutions to community challenges by engaging volunteers age 55+. Founded in 1984, they leverage the time, talent, and experience of older adults to provide companionship to isolated elders, support disheartened veterans, tutor and mentor struggling students, and feed hungry families. Each year, they engage more than 1,900 volunteers who serve over 13,000 individuals across Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco counties.

Across Seniors in Service's three-county service area, 26 percent of residents are age 60 and older, with 23 percent of those—more than 183,000 individuals—living alone, leaving them vulnerable during disasters. Studies show that those who receive social support from trusted individuals after disasters are less likely to experience long-term trauma, yet in the aftermath of back-to-back major hurricanes, Seniors in Service found many older adults remained stranded or isolated well after immediate disaster response efforts concluded. They encountered older adults in high-rises without working elevators for days, mobile home residents who had lost everything, and isolated individuals still struggling with recovery and insurance claims months and even years later. Many of these older adults didn't know their neighbors to ask for help when they needed it most.

This experience launched Seniors in Service's innovative new Senior Disaster Support volunteer program to serve the region's most vulnerable older adults before, during, and after disasters. Each year, 20 trained volunteers lead monthly, recurring Disaster Support activities in senior communities. The goal is to help older adults meet their neighbors through social engagement activities and learn together about preparedness and response so they can support each other through all types of disasters, including hurricanes, fires, extreme heat, medical emergencies, elder fraud, and more. This model builds trust within the community, empowers seniors to support each other, and increases their ability to live independently.

By embedding disaster preparedness within ongoing companionship services, Seniors in Service ensures that Tampa Bay's most vulnerable older adults are connected, supported, and better equipped to weather whatever comes next.




> *"I live alone, and my family lives out of state. Every hurricane season would be a huge source of anxiety. I never knew how to prepare or whether to evacuate, so I often did nothing. Thanks to the Senior Disaster Support program, I now face each hurricane with confidence, knowing I'm prepared with supplies and an evacuation plan if needed. Even more valuable than the disaster preparedness plan is the relationships I've built with my neighbors. I know we can prepare together, and we'll be there to help each other through the recovery, too.*

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# WELL AGING PROGRAM

## Somang Society

Cypress, California | somangsociety.org

Somang Society (Somang) provides programs for Korean American family caregivers and older adults in Southern California. Since 2007, Somang has supported Korean Americans through volunteer services, education (caregiving, dementia, well-aging, advance care planning), caregiver support groups, and early-stage dementia "Care Class" groups. Somang also offers online educational videos and newsletters. Services are provided in partnership with faith, senior housing, and non-profit groups.

Korean Americans are one of the fastest-growing Asian American subgroups, especially in Southern California, New York, and New Jersey. Older adults are one of the highest need Asian American and Pacific Islander groups, with language and other barriers to health care and social services. Annually, Somang serves thousands of first-, second-, and third-generation Korean-American older adults and family caregivers, many who are older women with limited English proficiency. With 68 percent of adults age 65 and older likely to face disability or cognitive impairment, the need for proactive, tailored preparation is urgent.

To address these challenges, Somang Society is expanding its "Well Aging" educational sessions, personalized care consultations, and recorded resources for older Korean American adults. The main audience is Korean American caregivers with limited English proficiency and other challenges. The goal is to increase caregivers' knowledge, readiness, and confidence while enhancing older adults' understanding and preparedness for independent living. Trained bilingual volunteers and interns will lead interactive sessions with hands-on exercises, guiding participants in creating a personalized 'Well Aging' care plan.

Somang works with local partners to enhance offerings, including Alzheimer's Orange County, through the U.S. Administration for Community Living Alzheimer's Disease Project Initiatives. This enables Korean-language dementia training, caregiver education, support groups, and care navigation services based on the UCSF Memory and Aging Center Care Ecosystem model of care.

The anticipated impact is multi-dimensional: stronger caregiver confidence and preparedness, enhanced senior readiness for independent living, and a replicable, fully documented model, including curricula, facilitator guides, and training manuals, that other organizations serving similar groups can adopt.



> *"I learned a great deal about well-aging and healthy aging from our instructor today. Brain health and memory are issues that directly affect us. It made me rethink dementia.*

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# VOLUNTEER RESPITE CARE COMPANION PILOT

## Southern Maine Agency on Aging

Biddeford, Maine | smaaa.org

Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) delivers life-saving services that keep older adults safe, supported, and connected in the homes and communities they love. In its 53rd year, SMAA serves over 20,000 older and disabled Mainers annually through Meals on Wheels, adult day programs, Medicare counseling, evidence-based falls prevention, caregiver support and education, and volunteer-based companionship programs.

Maine has the highest percentage of residents aged 65 and older of any state in the nation and faces a severe shortage of home care aides. AARP estimates that nearly 11,000 hours of personal care needs go unstaffed each week in Maine, while 166,000 unpaid family caregivers provided 155 million hours of care in 2021. This burden creates deep economic, social, mental, and emotional strain, leaving caregivers unable to work, socialize, or access the self-care needed to sustain their role. SMAA's Family Caregiver Program engaged 23 percent more caregivers in support groups and 44 percent more in trainings between 2023 and 2024, reflecting surging demand.

To address this growing crisis, SMAA has launched the Volunteer Respite Care Companion Pilot to match 20 trained volunteers with 20 older adults and their caregivers for weekly in-home visits of up to three hours. Volunteer Care Companions provide companionship, light assistance with instrumental activities of daily living, and meaningful engagement. This frees caregivers for health care appointments, social events, exercise classes, or SMAA's existing caregiver education programs. Matching is guided by in-home assessments that consider care needs, shared interests, and cultural competencies. One client described the visits as the highlight of his week, and the impact extends to his volunteer companion, who shared, "I would have never had a friend like him if it hadn't been for this. I'm richer because of it." A Project Manager oversees recruitment, screening, matching, and ongoing support for all participants.

SMAA is building a replicable core model that reduces caregiver burden, increases social connection for care recipients, and strengthens Southern Maine's safety net for older adults and their families.



> *My experience has been wonderful, and I couldn't be happier. It made it so that I didn't have to worry about my rides. My children live far away, so it took the burden off of them to go back and forth. It has been a godsend.*

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# CULTIVATING CARE: A GARDEN-BASED MEMORY CAFE

## University of Hawaii Center on Aging

Honolulu, HI | manoa.hawaii.edu/aging

The University of Hawaii Center on Aging (UHCOA) works to enhance the well-being of older adults through interdisciplinary and collaborative efforts in research, educational programs, and service to the community. The Center is an organized research unit focused on applied, translational, action, and community-engaged research with attention on the populations of Hawaii and the Asia Pacific region. UHCOA has a long history of improving dementia care and services for families in Hawaii, including piloting and scaling programs such as Savvy Caregiver, Dementia Friends, and interdisciplinary memory clinics.

Hawaii's population age 65 and older increased by more than 40 percent between 2006 and 2020. By the end of 2023 older adults represented 28 percent of the state's total population. Among elders, 43 percent struggle to make ends meet, 37 percent have a disability, and 57,000 live alone. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders face disproportionate health burdens, with Native Hawaiians experiencing on average 14 fewer healthy years than other ethnic groups. No Memory Cafes previously existed in Hawaii, so there is a significant gap in dementia-specific community support.

To meet these needs, UHCOA developed an innovative new volunteer program called "Cultivating Care: A Garden-Based Memory Cafe" to support people living with dementia and caregivers through community-based programming run by trained university student volunteers. It takes place at Ho'ōla 'Āina Pilipili—an accessible community garden on the University of Hawaii campus. UHCOA recruited 24 student volunteers to facilitate monthly Memory Cafe sessions and conduct friendly phone check-ins with participants in between meetings. The program adopts the Ibasho philosophy ("a place where one can belong") to empower people with dementia and their caregivers as co-designers of cafe activities. Evidence-based non-pharmacological interventions such as gardening have been shown to improve wellbeing for people with dementia. The café model provides a welcoming, stigma-free social setting.

By training the next generation of aging professionals, Cultivating Care will both reduce isolation for families living with dementia and seed the workforce pipeline for Hawaii's rapidly growing older population.



> *"My mom, Doris, surely enjoyed her outing! She felt like the 'star' having been interviewed and included in the photos and videos. Everyone was so kind to my mom. Thank you!*

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# EPIC (EMPOWERING PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE)

## The University of Southern Mississippi

Hattiesburg, Mississippi | usm.edu

The Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) at The University of Southern Mississippi has served as Mississippi's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) for more than 47 years. IDS works to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families by promoting independence, employment, self-determination, and community inclusion through training, technical assistance, education, and support services.

IDS developed EPIC (Empowering Pathways to Independence in Communities), a volunteer-driven program designed to increase opportunities for adults with disabilities to build independent living, employment, leadership, and community engagement skills. EPIC addresses a gap in services for transition-age youth and adults with disabilities who often face barriers to employment, transportation, social connection, and access to community-based supports.

EPIC uses trained volunteers, university students, community partners, and peer mentors to offer individual and group opportunities focused on career readiness, workplace skills, independent living, self-advocacy, social communication, and community participation. Participants gain experience through service projects, employment preparation activities, leadership development, and real-world learning experiences to build confidence and independence.

EPIC participants have completed community service projects, developed resume and interview skills, explored employment pathways, strengthened communication and self-advocacy skills, learned new vocational skills, and increased involvement within their local communities. The program has created meaningful connections between individuals with and without disabilities, fostering understanding, inclusion, and community engagement.

By removing financial barriers and providing services at no cost to participants, EPIC has helped individuals access training and supports that may not otherwise be available. The program continues to demonstrate how volunteer-driven services can strengthen communities while empowering individuals with disabilities to pursue their goals, increase independence, and improve their overall quality of life.



> *"Being part of EPIC has been one of the most meaningful parts of my week. I've really enjoyed getting to work directly with individuals, helping with training, and just being involved in everything we do. It's been fun, but I've also learned so much, especially about communication, leadership, and how to support others in a real way. Getting to build relationships and see people grow has been my favorite part.*

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# CARE TRANSITION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

## The New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department

Santa Fe, New Mexico | altsd.nm.gov

The New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD) is the lead agency supporting older adults and adults with disabilities so they can live safely in their homes and communities across New Mexico's 33 counties, 23 pueblos and tribes, and the Navajo Nation. ALTSD oversees the state's Area Agencies on Aging to elevate the quality of care at senior centers, offers advocacy through the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, and provides intervention through the agency's national award-winning Adult Protective Services program. The organization serves 40,000 older adults statewide through 56 subrecipient contractor providers and 131 senior centers. NMAAA providers serve tribal members through off- reservation senior centers and programs.

Nearly 20 percent of New Mexico residents are age 65 and older. By 2030, the state is projected to have the third largest percentage of older adults in the nation. Fourteen percent of older adults in New Mexico live at or below the poverty level and rural counties face near-total public transportation deserts, high rates of food insecurity, and limited caregiver support. The five counties targeted—Taos, Rio Arriba, Curry, Otero, and Socorro—serve older adults who are particularly vulnerable upon transitioning from long-term care, facing unclear income situations, cognitive and physical limitations, and a lack of reliable caregiving support.

ALTSD is partnering with the Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging to expand and refine its successful Volunteer Driver Program pilot into the Care Transition Volunteer Program (CTVP), extending services to individuals transitioning from long-term care facilities in five rural New Mexico counties. The CTVP provides adults age 60 and older who are transitioning from long-term care facilities with volunteer-based transportation, chore, and companionship services.

Expanding services and targeting those transitioning from long-term care will create a comprehensive support system which promotes aging in place. CTVP is also developing a model of volunteer engagement with older adults that can be adapted by Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations.



> *[After multiple strokes] I was really destitute. Everything changed when I was connected with the Care Transition Volunteer Program—and with Michelle. From the very beginning, Michelle became more than just a volunteer. She became a steady presence during one of the most vulnerable times in my life. When I had surgery she stayed with me for three nights. I would have been completely alone without her. Now she makes sure I'm eating, helps with groceries, and checks in on me. She genuinely cares. She works hard, and it shows.*

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# VIRGINIA DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

Richmond, Virginia | virginiadsa.org

Virginia Down Syndrome Association (VDSA) provides support and services to individuals with Down syndrome (DS) and their families across the entire lifespan. VDSA services cover central Virginia and the Charlottesville, Williamsburg, Shenandoah Valley, Fredericksburg, Hampton Roads, and Southern Virginia regions. VDSA supports parents and caregivers in navigating health care and disability systems, empowering and educating people with DS and increasing community awareness. Support begins when parents welcome babies with DS and continues with care coordination, referrals, enrichment and social wellness, caregiver support, and education and employment programs for people with DS.

The average lifespan of a person with DS has increased dramatically from 25 years in 1983 to approximately 60 today. This creates growing demand for programs that support independent living, mental health, and social wellness. Individuals with DS face higher rates of depression and anxiety, especially during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Research shows that friendships are among the strongest predictors of quality of life for this group. Parents of children with developmental disabilities are at increased risk for stress, and families identify respite care as essential to continuing in their caregiving roles.

To increase social connectedness for family caregivers, VDSA engages volunteers to provide wraparound peer support including mentoring, support groups and education programs. The agency has expanded its First Call program matching new families with seasoned, trained mentor parents by engaging more volunteers who serve more families with children are over age one, and families who learned of the program when their children were older. VDSA has implemented a structured, peer-facilitated approach to its educational webinars, social gatherings and support groups to foster greater caregiver connections and opportunities for skills building. VDSA contracts with language access services to ensure resources and services are linguistically and culturally competent.

By investing in both the adults with DS and the caregivers who support them, VDSA is building a more expansive, inclusive community where individuals with Down syndrome can lead fulfilling, self-determined lives.



> *When my family was overwhelmed and unsure where to turn, the Virginia Down Syndrome Association responded immediately and made us feel seen and supported. They took the time to understand our situation, showed up in person to help review my daughter's suspension, her behavioral plan, and guided us with compassion and deep knowledge of Virginia education laws. During one of the most difficult moments, when my daughter was hospitalized, they stood by us, offering both advocacy and emotional support. Their presence reminded us that we were not alone, and their help truly made a difference for our family.*

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