

*Volunteer Power
Supporting Health at Home*



2023–2025
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 and 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 and Altarum, and with funding through a cooperative agreement from the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), Community Care Corps awards grants to local organizations across the country to establish, enhance and grow volunteer models to meet the increasing need for vital nonmedical assistance.

For too long, support for family caregivers has been unaffordable and/or unavailable, especially in rural and historically marginalized and underserved populations. As detailed in the [National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers](#), there is a great need to cultivate a robust, coordinated approach to promote caregiver health, well-being and quality of life. It is also critical to ensure older adults and adults with disabilities are supported in preserving their independence and connection to community.

Volunteers have long been a mainstay of the systems that provide respite, meal delivery, transportation and social interaction, among other essential supports, for family caregivers and their loved ones. Charged with expanding our nation's framework to support family caregivers, older adults and adults with disabilities, Community Care Corps has proudly funded 109 grantees since its inception in 2019. To date, grantees have served more than 8,000 caregivers and 26,000 care recipients across the country.

Grantees have successfully tapped into college populations seeking experiential service-learning, leveraged the volunteer power of older adults seeking opportunities to give back to their communities, and engaged family caregivers and adults with disabilities in peer-to-peer models of support. Grantees are working at the local level to inspire and maintain systems and environments conducive to accessible and responsive caregiver support. They are accomplishing this by engaging younger generations who will comprise our future workforce and through empowering older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers to share their experience and wisdom.

This publication, *Community Care Corps: Volunteer Power Supporting Health at Home*, spotlights the indispensable work that the 2023–2025 grantees are conducting to increase the availability of direct supports for family caregivers, older adults and adults with disabilities in their communities. We hope these snapshots inspire innovation and motivation to leverage our collective strength to ensure healthy community living is achievable for all.



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.

Compassionate Volunteer Transportation Services

Aging Forward

Kansas City, MO | www.aging-forward.org

Aging Forward (previously Shepherd's Centers of America) is a national network of community-based affiliates focused on the social, civic and spiritual dimensions of healthy aging. Aging Forward aims to alleviate loneliness and isolation by fostering connections between older adults and empowering programs in the community. Aging Forward offers support services such as transportation, handy helpers, friendly visits, grocery shopping, respite care and other informal support services. According to the U.S Census Bureau, nearly one-third of older adults live alone and do not have a reliable source of support for certain physical, emotional and practical assistance. To support these solo agers, Aging Forward has launched a volunteer driver companion initiative in partnership with two affiliates: Peninsula Shepherd's Center in San Diego and Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church in Northern Virginia to provide nonemergency medical transportation and personalized assistance to appointments and outpatient screenings.

Through the volunteer driver companion program, Aging Forward offers reliable and compassionate door-through-door transportation and supportive services to solo agers to help enhance access to essential health care services to promote overall health and well-being within the community. Aging Forward recruits volunteers with diverse backgrounds and skill sets and equips them with robust training, including safety protocols, communication techniques and cultural sensitivity training, to ensure they deliver compassionate and person-centered assistance. Aging Forward is committed to providing more than just a ride with its volunteer driver program. Not only do volunteers provide consistent and timely transportation, but they also offer companionship and emotional support during what can often be stressful medical appointments. Aging Forward promotes meaningful connections that alleviate feelings of social isolation and anxiety in program participants.

Aging Forward is leading the volunteer driver companion program by offering volunteer training, technical assistance and evaluating program impact. Peninsula Shepherd's Center and Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church coordinate efforts in their regions through recruiting, screening, training and matching volunteer companions and managing service delivery. With these experiences gained, the goal is to promote replication of volunteer driver companion services across the Aging Forward Network.

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The volunteer's care and kindness turned my medical procedure from scary to manageable. I'm deeply grateful for the warmth of the volunteer, who drove me to my appointment, patiently waited with me and offered a helping hand after my procedure. Her encouraging words and unwavering support throughout the entire process were truly a blessing.

—Client

”



ALS Volunteer Program

ALS Northwest

Portland, OR | www.alsoregon.org

ALS Northwest has provided care services to more than 2,500 individuals with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), their families, caregivers and health care professionals. As the central source for services and education for people with ALS, the organization's mission is to discover treatments and cures and to serve, advocate for and empower people living with ALS to live their lives to the fullest. Responding to feedback from home visits, clinic interviews, survey responses and ongoing communications through the care services team, ALS Northwest has launched two nonmedical assistance programs: the Caregiver Mentor Support program and the Helping Hands program.

ALS Northwest has found that the most common needs for individuals living with ALS and their caregivers are practical assistance with daily tasks and one-on-one peer connections. The Helping Hands program utilizes volunteers to provide nonmedical assistance such as cleaning, meal preparation and pet care. Volunteers often engage with participants in their hobbies to deepen their connection and foster inclusion and belonging. The Caregiver Mentor Support program, which allows caregivers to connect with others who have cared for a loved one with ALS, seeks to empower caregivers, offer them opportunities to engage in self-care, learn from each other's lived experience and ultimately combat caregiver burnout and feelings of isolation.

ALS Northwest provides services from the time of diagnosis through end of life. Through its volunteer program initiatives, the organization raises awareness about ALS, hosts educational events, conducts fundraising and leads advocacy campaigns to engage and support the ALS community. Through these efforts, the organization fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility so that support for individuals living with ALS is embedded in the community.

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After living through ALS with my own dear husband, I was left wishing I would've known what I know now during the battle. So, I decided to volunteer with the Caregiver Mentor Support program in hopes of giving some comfort, encouragement and insight to another family who is now living with ALS. To my surprise, it quickly became a two-way mentor program. The first time I was too numb to feel. But with my mentee, we can express sorrow and heartache as well as joy and laughter.

—Volunteer

”

Transportation Assistance

Area Agency on Aging, Region One

Phoenix, AZ | www.aaaphx.org

Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Region One, is a nonprofit organization in Phoenix, AZ, whose mission is to partner with the community to foster innovative programs and services that enrich quality of life for older adults, caregivers and diverse populations. To adapt to changing lifestyles and respond to unmet needs, the AAA in Phoenix develops, funds, administers and coordinates programs and services in Maricopa County, AZ, for adults aged 60 and older, family caregivers, adults with disabilities and individuals diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Maricopa County is the fourth largest county in the United States, and older adults make up 21.5 percent of the population, most of whom live alone on a fixed income or below the poverty line. With transportation identified as a high priority need for many of these individuals who no longer drive, AAA Region One has focused its efforts on expanding its volunteer transportation program to help individuals remain safe at home in their community.

Transportation to medical appointments is a high priority need for many older adults who no longer drive. AAA Region One has been using AmeriCorps members and community volunteers to provide safe and comprehensive transportation to medical appointments since 2010. With the enhanced volunteer model, AAA Region One can now expand its reach to older adults who have expressed a need for companionship after critical procedures.

By bolstering its volunteer recruitment and retention strategies and eliminating barriers to onboarding volunteers, AAA Region One aims to recruit 30 new volunteers who will provide transportation chaperone assistance to an anticipated 200 older adults. In addition to the unmet transportation need this program is addressing, AAA Region One seeks to foster social connections between participants and volunteers to support overall well-being.

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The new volunteers who are being recruited with this funding provide an opportunity to expand our services and meet a very important service gap in providing support to older adults and persons with disabilities who may have no one else to assist them as they manage their health.

—Program Leader



Trusted Ride Chaperone Program

Ascension St. Agnes Foundation

Baltimore, MD | www.healthcare.ascension.org

Located in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area, Ascension St. Agnes (ASA), has a long history of providing holistic care to diverse populations. ASA is an accredited, full-service teaching hospital that offers emergency services and a wide variety of inpatient and outpatient services. ASA is surrounded by neighborhoods impacted by poverty, unemployment and chronic health conditions. Through a Community Health Needs Assessment, ASA identified a significant gap in transportation needs for those who require hospital services and, in response to this need, developed the Trusted Ride Chaperone program.

One third of the community that ASA serves has identified lack of transportation as a leading barrier to health care. Before this program's launch, there were no rideshare or volunteer transportation programs in the Baltimore area providing door-through-door service. ASA's volunteer chaperones are trained and certified to respond to the needs of patients with chronic health conditions. ASA's Trusted Ride Program's innovative approach provides volunteer chaperone support accompanied with rideshare transportation assistance. The trained volunteers provide door-through-door assistance, ensuring participants get to their appointments and back home safely. Volunteers also provide telephonic support before and after appointments to reduce social isolation, improve health education and connect program participants with community resources. Evaluators working with ASA, noting a lack of similar volunteer chaperone programs in the area, estimate that without this program 92 percent of program participants would have missed their medical appointments.

To continue growing this volunteer chaperone program to respond to evolving community needs, ASA is focusing its efforts on building a robust network of fully screened and trained volunteer chaperones to continue helping older adults and adults with disabilities attend their non-emergency medical appointments and outpatient procedures. Not only does ASA's model benefit program participants by facilitating increased access to health care, but it benefits the Maryland hospital system because this transportation assistance has the potential to significantly reduce the number of unnecessary hospitalizations and readmissions.

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It has been such a blessing that the Chaperone Ride Program was initiated and put in service. I'm in my late eighties and by living alone, appointments and a lack of transportation was a constant stress factor. When I was made aware of the service, it was like an answer to a prayer. I find them to be professionally efficient, yet kind and so helpful. Great personalities!

—Client

”



Empowering Independence

Association for Learning and Mentoring Services

Nanuet, NY | www.almsny.org

The Association for Learning and Mentoring Services, Inc. (ALMS), seeks to empower youth and families in New York and New Jersey through volunteer programs and services that promote positive social and civic values. ALMS strives to address its community's unique challenges through food pantries, delivery services and community outreach initiatives. Building upon its existing services, ALMS developed the new Empowering Independence program that provides comprehensive support to older adults, individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their family caregivers in New York City and Rockland, NY, as well as Bergen and Essex County, NJ.

The Empowering Independence program pairs volunteers and participants needing help with medical appointments, errands and yard work. To combat food insecurity in the area, ALMS provides food access and delivery and facilitates group social activities at several of its food pantry sites. Through its volunteer model, ALMS offers activities, meals and transportation to older adults on Medicare and Medicaid who otherwise may not be able to participate in programs like adult day care because of costs. In addition to assistance offered to program participants, the Empowering Independence program also offers respite to caregivers through support groups, workshops and guest presentations on caregiving topics. ALMS also offers several Senior Day trips to take older adults from both New York and New Jersey to places they may not experience otherwise due to their physical and economic limitations.

Both West Harlem and Queens, NY, have the most diverse older adult population in New York state. Thus, ALMS focuses its outreach on non-native English speakers, minorities, low-income individuals as well as individuals with disabilities based on the unique challenges these populations face and their significant representation in the area. ALMS is partnering with the United Way of Rockland County, the NYPD Community Affairs at the 26th Precinct, Columbia Community Services (the nonprofit arm of Columbia University) and the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of New York and New England to reach these groups and provide them with additional nonmedical assistance. Charged with meeting the needs of diverse groups, ALMS has recruited several volunteers who are fluent in Spanish, Russian, French and Arabic. ALMS plans to continue to grow its volunteer network to provide more nonmedical assistance to its community and foster an inclusive community network.

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I am very grateful to ALMS and Community Care Corps for providing the senior socialization programs and day trips. Both my mother and father used to stay at home all day, and I noticed that they were depressed. Now they look forward to meeting friends and volunteers and are a lot happier.

—Caregiver



Pet Assistance Linking Support

Benjamin Rose

Cleveland, OH | www.benrose.org

Benjamin Rose is a Cleveland, OH, based nonprofit organization founded in 1908 whose mission is to support all people to age well through research, consumer-responsive services and client advocacy. Benjamin Rose continues to develop and manage innovative long-term programs, services and supports to respond to needs at the local and national level. One of these programs, Pet Assistance Linking Support (PALS), focuses on supporting both pets and people, addressing a need that is often overlooked by other programs and services for older adults and their caregivers. PALS matches volunteers with older pet owners who need assistance with basic pet care tasks, such as dog walking and feeding. This volunteer pet care assistance aims to reduce the stress of caregiving tasks and provide older adults with additional social support.

Older adults in the Cleveland area are often impacted by persistent poverty or inequality. To further strengthen the impact of PALS, Benjamin Rose has partnered with Neighborhood Pets and One Health Organization, both of which engage people who are affected by poverty. These organizations offer support to pet owners and understand that the relationship between the health and well-being of people and their pets are linked. Through these partnerships, PALS offers opportunities for intergenerational interactions and educates its volunteers about aging and the human–animal bond.

Benjamin Rose is partnering with academic institutions that will offer consistent pools of volunteers. Through providing this nonmedical assistance, student volunteers experience firsthand the positive impact of the role of pet ownership in older age and how social determinants of health not only affect people, but their pets as well. This unique program aims to demonstrate how programs supporting older adult pet owners can ease caregiver burden and assist older adults and their pets to live independently at home.



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CCC Silver Supports Program

Blount County Community Action Agency

Maryville, TN | www.blountcaa.org

Blount County Community Action Agency (BCCAA) provides resources that create and sustain self-reliance for vulnerable individuals striving for stable well-being with the ability to thrive in their homes and communities. BCCAA offers a variety of Senior Service programming to address food and meal access, pet care, social connection, door-to-door transportation services, home repair services for those experiencing physical mobility challenges and much more. Every three years, BCCAA conducts a Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment to identify local needs and tailor their programming accordingly. Three major gaps identified included a lack of housing options, increased food/meal insecurities and expanded and enhanced support for older adult residents. To address these needs, BCCAA developed the CCC Silver Supports project designed to assist older adults to safely “age in place.”



CCC Silver Supports is enhancing and expanding BCCAA’s services by engaging more volunteers and serving more older adults through their tenured Smoky Mountain Meals on Wheels Program and SAFER Homes Ramp Services. The program’s innovative component is its partnership with a home-sharing program that links older adult homeowners who would like to rent a room in their home to a compatible tenant. This housing model is intended to assist older adults who feel lonely and isolated in connecting with someone with similar interests, as well as address the lack of local housing options and ease the burden of housing expenses on individuals living alone. Volunteers help older adults create an account profile based on their personal requirements and preferences so that they can be matched with a suitable roommate.

The vision of BCCAA is that everyone in the community is knowledgeable of available services, supported to become self-sufficient and equipped to live to their full potential. As a member of the Community Action Network, which aims to eradicate the causes and conditions of poverty and acknowledge the inequities and barriers to economic security, BCCAA has prioritized embedding diversity, equity and inclusion principles into its program outreach and delivery.

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I used to worry if I would have enough food for a meal every day. Now I not only have a delicious, healthy meal every day, I have a new, kind and happy friend who brings me my meals and chats with me and pets my dog. I am so blessed to be cared for by the Meals on Wheels program!

—Participant



CASS Housing Program

CASS Housing

Fort Wayne, IN | www.casshousing.org

CASS Housing (CASS), an organization in Fort Wayne, IN, was founded with the charge to find alternative long-term housing solutions for families and their adult children with disabilities. Its mission is to create innovative and safe housing with supports that empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to maximize their potential and grow in their independence. This mission is realized through CASS's three pillars of programming: supported residential housing, individualized support and educational life skills programming. There is an increasing need for affordable housing for individuals with IDD that is equipped with the supports they will need to live and engage in their community. CASS is addressing this need through its launch of a new volunteer program that supports adults with IDD who reside in independent living homes.

CASS is enhancing its current programs by partnering with the Volunteer Center, a nonprofit in Fort Wayne, IN, using a database that supports volunteer recruitment efforts. This streamlined volunteer management approach connects volunteers directly to CASS and can track their hours, thus increasing CASS's capacity for program implementation. Programs that have grown in popularity include the meal preparation class series, where participants are taught how to prepare healthy meals at home; the independent living skills class, which teaches cooking and housekeeping, healthy relationships, financial literacy and community engagement; and the mentoring program.

There are no other organizations in Northeast Indiana providing housing services that support accountability and independence for individuals with IDD. Each of CASS's programs are uniquely tailored to support individuals with IDD and propel them towards independent living. In its model, volunteers can lead programs by working with the Independent Living Skills Director, who is a licensed teacher with a master's degree in special education, to determine the area of interest and plan the classes. As a volunteer-led program, costs remain low, allowing these programs to be more widely accessible to individuals interested in participating.

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What I like about CASS is that I am not lonely. CASS is more than just a home, it is a community. It gives me a place to live and have friends.

—Participant



PASSAGES Medical Chaperone Program

Chico State Enterprises—PASSAGES

Chico, CA | www.passagescenter.org

Chico State Enterprises sponsors PASSAGES, an Area Agency on Aging that serves five rural counties in Northern California: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Plumas and Tehama. PASSAGES' mission is to provide support and direct services to older adults so they can live independently and age in place. PASSAGES provides multiple programs that include Information and Assistance, Caregiver Support, Ombudsman Services, Medicare Counseling and AmeriCorps Senior Volunteer services. The Butte County Association of Governments recently conducted a community assessment revealing that Butte County's older residents are increasingly vulnerable to isolation due to a lack of public transportation services. In response to the negative impact this is having, PASSAGES launched the Medical Chaperone Program.

PASSAGES Medical Chaperone Program serves Butte and Colusa counties by providing door-through-door transportation to clients for medical appointments and outpatient procedures. PASSAGES partners with AmeriCorps Retired and Senior Volunteer Program to enhance its outreach and recruitment efforts and current transportation model. The PASSAGES Medical Chaperone Program provides participants with volunteer chaperones who meet them prior to their appointments to review any questions they may have for the medical staff, remind them about any medications and follow up after the appointment to see if the participant has any questions or concerns. These volunteers also retrieve prescriptions and provide ongoing support for future appointments. To foster a better sense of connection and trust, volunteers engage with the same program participants until the participants terminate services.

To support its enhanced volunteer model, PASSAGES ensures that all volunteers undergo extensive onboarding and training, including training on assisting veteran participants, participants with compromised mobility, those who may be isolated or depressed and those living with early memory loss. All PASSAGES volunteers are trained to serve as peer mentors utilizing the Healthy IDEAS model, an evidence-based model to help volunteers identify older adults exhibiting signs of depression and engage them in empowering activities to overcome feelings of loneliness and isolation. Upon completion of training, volunteers are equipped to connect participants with necessary resources.

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At age 96, I recently stopped driving. It was so hard to give up my car and independence. Then I met a volunteer with PASSAGES Medical Chaperone Program. She is so nice! She not only takes me to my medical appointments, but to the grocery store, the dog groomer and my sister's house. I don't know what I would do without her. I've grown very fond of her.

—Client



Nutritional Support Services

Christine B. Foundation

Bangor, ME | www.chrisbfund.org

The Christine B. Foundation (CBF) is a unique organization addressing an equally unique need; nutritional support services for people with cancer living in Bangor, ME. CBF's mission is to support those facing cancer by extending access to healthy food, nutritional information and community connections, all of which are essential to their strength and comfort. This organization began as a single fundraising event to support other cancer services in the Bangor region and has since evolved into an organization led by two staff and a team of dedicated volunteers disseminating more than 100,000 medically tailored meals to the Bangor region.

Cancer is a critical health issue in Maine, where over 9,000 people were newly diagnosed with malignant cancer in 2019, as reported in the 2022 Maine Cancer Snapshot report. Direct access to nutritious foods is critical to patients because cancer and its treatments can affect how and what one eats, food tolerance and the utilization of nutrients. CBF consists of a network of volunteers who process, assemble and distribute medically tailored food across 11,500 square miles. Volunteers engage and often foster strong connections with meal delivery participants. CBF volunteers also work with dietitians and chefs who host recipe development classes and other educational activities for program participants and the public. CBF is expanding and enhancing their food distribution capabilities by increasing volunteer recruitment, retention and support, implementing mileage reimbursement and hiring a volunteer coordinator.

CBF engages municipal and state governments, health care organizations and other community agencies to reduce cancer mortality rates by ensuring that all food delivered by CBF is medically tailored based on USDA-directed guidelines. CBF volunteers curate each food package using a person-centered approach, considering dietary and physical challenges faced by clients, caregivers and other household members. CBF's client base draws from communities with poverty rates as high as 18.1 percent. CBF, the only organization in its region to provide medically tailored food and wraparound services at no cost, aims to expand its services into more rural areas and continue to ensure access to quality and healthy food.



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ComoConnects Volunteer Chaperone Program

ComoConnects

St. Paul, MN | www.comoconnects.org

The mission of ComoConnects in St. Paul, MN, is to organize community volunteers, professionals and family members to provide care for their neighborhood older adults that supports choice, dignity and independence. ComoConnects believes in neighbors helping neighbors and fosters this sense of connection and involvement through its spectrum of services bringing together neighborhood health professionals, volunteers, caregivers and community leaders to provide high-quality, short-term care. Many of the older adults that ComoConnects serves face mobility and financial challenges that are often barriers to attending their medical appointments. As a prominent presence in the community, ComoConnects created a volunteer chaperone program to address this issue.

ComoConnect's transportation program provides older adults with chaperoned transportation to and from non-emergency medical appointments. To better accommodate increased demand for this support, ComoConnects expanded its volunteer and recruitment efforts, trained volunteers to be compassionate and active listeners and continued to coordinate transportation services. The volunteer chaperone program's intent is to continue improving accessibility, providing emotional support and facilitating preventive care, resulting in improvement in overall well-being and quality of life.

With dedication to supporting older adults in its community, ComoConnects continues offering its host of nonmedical assistance programs, including grocery delivery, chores support, homemaking, foot care, community blood pressure clinics, caregiver support, respite, telephone assistance, friendly visitor programs and much more. Volunteers can connect transportation chaperone participants with these programs to continue to increase their quality of life and foster a sense of connection and support.

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I find volunteering at ComoConnects an adventure. I have met so many fascinating people while driving them to their appointments. Their personal stories are so incredibly intriguing that often we continue to talk as my car is parked in front of their home after their appointment. And then we are both excited to see each other when we are paired up again for another ride. It is truly a joy to volunteer for ComoConnects. I am proud of the work I do and to make a difference in such a beautiful community."

—Volunteer



Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative

Cooley Dickinson Hospital

Northampton, MA | www.cooleydickinson.org

Cooley Dickinson Hospital, an acute care community hospital in Hampshire County, MA, has a mission to provide exceptional, compassionate and personalized care to its patients and communities. In 2019, Cooley Dickinson Hospital conducted a Community Health Needs Assessment identifying the significant needs of older adults and people living with dementia in their community. The findings led to the creation of the Pioneer Valley Memory Care Initiative (PVMCI). PVMCI is a no-cost collaborative program that empowers and supports older adults living with dementia and their family care partners in improving their quality of life, aging in their homes and remaining connected to their communities. 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.

PVMCI volunteers meet with older adults with dementia and their family caregivers for social visits. While volunteers are engaging with program participants living with dementia, caregivers have an opportunity for much-needed respite. PVMCI partners with the Amherst, Easthampton and Northampton Neighbors Village to Village network organizations that provide volunteer support to older adults living in their respective communities. PVMCI provides volunteers from these organizations with dementia training, connects them to PVMCI program participants and provides ongoing support through monthly volunteer education and support groups. This partnership not only expands the reach of the PVMCI program and allows for more people living with dementia to access services, but it fosters a greater understanding of dementia and the importance of the person-centered approach.

PVMCI takes a collaborative and dynamic approach to providing nonmedical assistance to people living with dementia. PVMCI staff convene quarterly with local organizations serving older adults and participate in monthly calls with organizations who utilize the Care Ecosystem model for serving people with dementia. These convenings allow those who are doing similar work to share lessons learned and best practices to continue to enhance programs for people living with dementia. Additionally, PVMCI is uniquely positioned as a program of Cooley Dickinson Hospital. When a patient is diagnosed with dementia at the hospital, they can be referred directly to PVMCI and in turn, when people living with dementia have medical concerns, PVMCI staff can refer participants directly to Cooley Dickinson's geriatric department.

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Every couple of weeks, our volunteer meets us in a park with his dog and spends an hour with my partner who has dementia. It's always beautiful to see him respond happily to the volunteer's easy-going, friendly manner, and I know that he is having a lovely time while I read or walk nearby. My partner gets a break from me, and I get a break from caregiving.

—Caregiver



Caring Connections

Council on Aging of Central Oregon

Bend, OR | www.councilonaging.org

The Council on Aging of Central Oregon (CoA), an Area Agency on Aging, has a prime focus on keeping older adults fed, safe and connected throughout its Central Oregon service area. CoA provides many services and supports, including Meals on Wheels, nutrition education, information and referrals, support groups and respite, Medicare counseling, home repair and the Caring Connections program, amongst others. Caring Connections, a CoA volunteer model, matches a volunteer with a participant, based on similar backgrounds and interests, for a weekly phone call or in-person visit to foster meaningful engagement, provide safety checks and support family caregivers.

According to Meals on Wheels America, in 2019, about 23 percent of older adults in Oregon lived alone, putting them at a higher risk for social isolation. Caring Connections aims to address this rise in social isolation by expanding its current virtual program to in-person visits and events to facilitate deeper relationships and meaningful engagement as well as provide opportunities for transportation and chore assistance. Caring Connections aims to address three unmet needs of older adults in central Oregon: social engagement and connection, transportation and access to care. To further increase the capabilities of the program, CoA is purchasing a handicap accessible van, recruiting assistants to help with client onboarding and surveys, and implementing new training opportunities for volunteers to make the program more accessible to people with disabilities and/or dementia. CoA sees enhancing the Caring Connections program as an opportunity to enroll and onboard more participants and volunteers in underserved communities. CoA is translating its materials to Spanish and working with partners in the community to learn best practices for making this program accessible to the Spanish-speaking community.

Caring Connections has enhanced the program participant experience and focused efforts on enhancing the volunteer experience. Working closely with the volunteer department, Caring Connections expanded its volunteer training to include trauma-informed care, effective communication, grief and loss training and compassionate communication. Caring Connections also creates opportunities for volunteer-to-volunteer information exchanges, regular check-ins between the program manager and volunteer and will add additional training sessions throughout the year.

Contact Information

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Caring Connections Program Manager

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“

This whole thing has truly changed my life. It's so nice to have friends again! I'm forever grateful.

—Participant

”



Elderbridge Volunteer Program

Elderbridge Agency on Aging

Mason City, IA | www.elderbridge.org

Elderbridge Agency on Aging, a nonprofit organization serving a 29-county region in north central, northwest and central Iowa, advocates for and empowers older adults, caregivers and individuals with disabilities to pursue independent and healthy lives. As an Area Agency on Aging, Elderbridge is designated as an Aging and Disability Resource Center, which means it supports programs for adults with disabilities, as well as older adults, by providing information and making referrals to partner agencies. Elderbridge has a long history of providing services to its community through direct service and contracted providers. Over 20 percent of Iowa's population will be over 65 in 2030 and will outnumber those under 18 for the first time. Due to the increasing number of older adults in its community, Elderbridge is expanding and enhancing its current volunteer program to continue supporting older adults so they can remain at home.

Elderbridge offers a variety of nonmedical assistance to its clients: a medical transportation program, errand buddy program, friendly phone call program, relocation services, respite, household chore assistance, and translator/ interpreter services. To further combat social isolation and expand its impact, Elderbridge developed three innovative programs. The Happy Mail Program engages volunteers who send cards, postcards, jokes and crossword puzzles to older adults who have self-identified as being lonely. The CommUNITY Kindness project is an intergenerational program that offers free yard work to older adults. Lastly, Elderbridge hosts a Santa for Seniors Project, where older adults facing poverty receive Christmas gifts from community members. By growing its volunteer network, Elderbridge has been able to expand these programs that play a vital role in fostering a safe and inclusive environment for older adult community members.

Elderbridge promotes its services in locations that community members frequent: libraries, post offices, congregate meal sites, speaking events, etc. Elderbridge also discusses its programs at local coalition meetings and shares its resources for dissemination to the community. Through these efforts, Elderbridge strives to ensure those who need access to these services are aware of them. Elderbridge supports its volunteers by providing mileage reimbursement for nonmedical transportation assistance. Volunteers also have monthly check-ins, an enhanced volunteer match process and annual appreciation events.

Contact Information

Laura Allen

Volunteer Coordinator

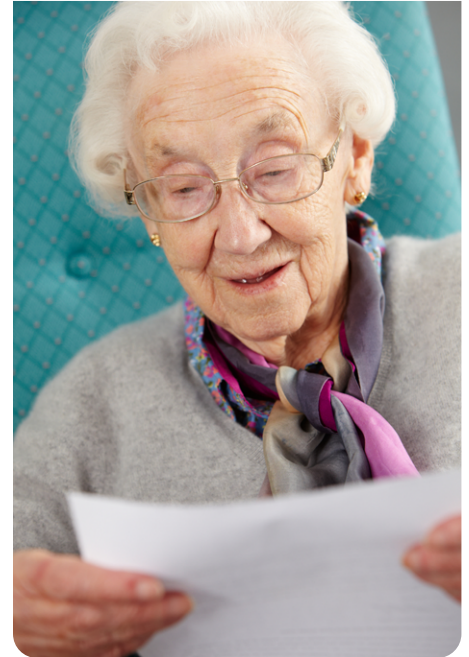
Elderbridge Agency on Aging

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“

I have been asked to be a part of the Elderbridge Happy Mail Program. I am hopeful that by sending an elder a postcard with a cheerful, uplifting message that it brightens their day. The Happy Mail Program is a wonderful way to remind older adults that they are being thought of, cared for and not alone.

—Volunteer

”

Transportation Assistance Program

Faith in Action Georgetown

Georgetown, TX | www.faithinactiongt.org

Faith in Action Georgetown (FIAG) formed in 2001 when a group of local churches in Georgetown, TX, came together to meet the growing need for transportation services for older adults in the community. FIAG prides itself on addressing mobility, companionship, safety and overall well-being for older adults in its community. To fill gaps in transportation, FIAG provides volunteer chaperone transportation for rides to grocery stores, appointments and social outings like lunch, shopping and trips to the movies. Through years of providing transportation services to the community, FIAG has a continuous gauge on transportation needs and is expanding its programming to better meet the needs of older adults.

In Georgetown, there are no affordable door-through-door transportation services for older adults. FIAG provides no-cost, person-centered, door-through-door transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping and personal errands. To expand its transportation efforts and alleviate the volume of rides demanded of existing volunteers, FIAG established a new program called Pay Your Pal, which provides mileage reimbursement to clients to incentivize them to ask friends, family members or neighbors for rides. FIAG is also implementing a new program that offers educational events for participants, including arts and crafts, technology education, Medicare/ Medicaid information, mindfulness, fall prevention, physical exercise and other topics as requested.

To ensure the transportation program is inclusive of Georgetown's Spanish-speaking population, FIAG engages Spanish-speaking volunteers and a Spanish-speaking service coordinator. FIAG collaborates with the Georgetown Nonprofit Transportation Collaborative, which consists of six local nonprofit organizations, to strategically assess Georgetown transportation needs and possible solutions. FIAG also collaborates with the City of Georgetown regarding its new plan to address the city's transportation needs.

Contact Information

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“

Thank you so very much. Knowing that you are out there is comforting—it actually reduces our fear of the future.

—Client”



Georgia Southern University Volunteer Chaperones

Georgia Southern University Research and Service Foundation, Inc.

Statesboro, GA | www.georgiasouthern.edu

The Center for Social Gerontology at Georgia Southern University strives to engage the community with current knowledge and research from the gerontology discipline. Its mission is to provide high-quality volunteer experiences that enrich the lives of volunteers while helping homebound older adults and individuals with disabilities maintain their dignity and independence in their homes. The Center's cornerstone program is the Georgia Southern University Area Senior Companion Program (SCP), which matches volunteer companions to program participants based on needs, abilities and distance. Volunteer companions offer companionship, assistance with simple chores, transportation and meal assistance. The Center is enhancing the SCP by incorporating chaperone and transportation services.

According to the Georgia Department of Aging, transportation is a widely reported issue across the state. Bulloch County, where the Center is located, is a rural community with a large population of older adults who often need to be transported up to 50 miles outside of the county to access certain health services. To increase access to quality health care, the Center has established an intergenerational Volunteer Chaperone program based on the Trusted Ride model, in which volunteers provide door-through-door assistance to older adults for their nonemergency medical appointments. Two volunteers assist each program participant; one volunteer serves as the driver, and the second volunteer rides along to assist the participant with getting to and from the car and in and out of the facility.

The Center is utilizing screened and trained Georgia Southern University students as volunteer chaperones and drivers to foster intergenerational collaboration among college students and SCP participants. Through this experiential learning, students can learn the realities of aging and living with a disability, especially in rural areas. The program also presents opportunities to address the deeply rooted stigma and discrimination often faced by older adults and those with different abilities.

Contact Information

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Age Well/Live Well

Iona Senior Services

Washington, DC | www.iona.org

Iona Senior Services, a nearly 50-year-old nonprofit organization in Washington, DC, offers citywide and regional programs, support groups, respite for caregivers, community dining sites and adult day health care centers at multiple locations. Iona's mission is to support people as they experience the challenges and opportunities of aging through education, advocacy and community-based services that help people age well and live well. Iona has been a significant source of support for isolated older adults through its Helpline, Dementia Care Navigator and Money Management programs, and it is now expanding its host of supports with the implementation of the Age Well/Live Well Friendly Visitor program.

This volunteer program screens, trains and matches adult volunteers with older adults in the community who could benefit from greater companionship and support. The program is focused on supporting homebound individuals, older adults with cognitive or physical impairments and individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Volunteers provide social interaction and mental stimulation through conversation and activities, help facilitate referrals to other Iona-administered resources and provide respite support for caregivers. Volunteers may also run errands, serve as medical escorts and help with small tasks around the home, such as organizing and setting up basic technology. To ensure high-quality support, Iona maintains a one-to-one volunteer-to-participant ratio, which incorporates intentional matches designed to foster trust and friendship over time.

Iona focuses support on older adults and caregivers from the African American community due to the high prevalence of dementia in this population. As the District of Columbia has one of the highest population percentages of LGBTQ+ individuals in the United States, Iona is also committed to supporting the LGBTQ+ community through education, outreach, advocacy and partnership with the Age Well/Live Well program.

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I enjoy the visits and conversations we have; even though we are nearly four decades apart in age, we have many things to share—and at 99 years old, I am amazed at what he remembers! And we have a routine, as fellow sea service veterans, when I am leaving his home. As I open the front door, I turn and salute him—as a junior officer would to a senior officer on the bow of a ship—and I ‘request permission to go ashore.’ As always, he returns my salute smartly, and says, ‘permission granted’.”

—Volunteer



Island Senior Resources Helps

Island Senior Resources

Island County, WA | www.senior-resources.org

Island Senior Resources (ISR) was founded in 1972 to support the health and well-being of the aging population in Island County, WA. Through its early home-delivered meals program, ISR learned of the many unmet needs of older adults on Whidbey & Camano Islands and developed an Aging and Disability Resources program called ISR HELPS. To support older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers, ISR HELPS offers services and community resources, including, but not limited to, nutrition, caregiver support, case management, medical transportation, medical equipment lending, peer support groups and benefits counseling services. Due to the isolated geography of the islands, inaccessible public transport and limited mobility on rural roads, ISR observed that many older adults who are living on fixed incomes are experiencing the negative effects of social isolation.

Recent focus groups and surveys of the broader community also identified social isolation as the number-one problem facing its older adults. To combat the health risks associated with social isolation and increase equitable access to its services, ISR launched the ISR CONNECTS program to further embed service offerings and engagement across Whidbey Island's three administrative districts, supported by aging and disability resource specialists. ISR CONNECTS teams, comprised of staff and volunteers, conduct rapid assessments of physical and cognitive status for all participants within their geographic boundary. This information gathering informs localized outreach workplans that consider team capacity, the needs and abilities of ISR clients and what resources are available to community members within reasonable proximity. Those activities range from trips to local parks, accessible walks around the island, transportation and conversation around community meals, thrift store shopping sprees using program gift cards and get-togethers for games.

To improve equitable access to this valuable social connection and nonmedical assistance, ISR is focused on expanding outreach to its most vulnerable communities by cultivating relationships with local churches, cultural associations and other trusted community organizations to connect with more insular communities. ISR continues to build on the successes of its current door-to-door programs to reach more clients door-through-door, enhance its volunteer pool, provide respite to family caregivers and provide a more sustained and sustainable approach through neighborhood-centric programming.

Contact Information

Bailey Todd

ISR Connects—C3 Program Manager

Island Senior Resources

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It felt SO good to laugh and to play! You made me feel like a queen for the day. I have not laughed or had this much fun in years.... The good juju has lasted, and as I drifted off to sleep last night, I wrapped each of you in a blanket of gratitude then fell into slumber with a smile on my face.

—Participant



Aging Strong Program

Jannus, Inc.

Boise, ID | www.jannus.org

Jannus, Inc., a nonprofit organization in Boise, ID, seeks to promote health, advance public policy and create economic opportunities. Jannus offers over 20 different programs designed to help people at every stage of their lives be healthy, happy and economically stable. The population of people in Idaho over age 65 is projected to increase 30 percent by 2031. This demographic shift presents both opportunities and areas of unmet need, particularly in more rural areas of Idaho, where the cost of home care typically surpasses the national average. Due to this growing need for support, Jannus established the Aging Strong Program dedicated to improving the quality of life for older adults socially, healthfully and economically.

The Aging Strong Program is comprised of three volunteer-powered services designed to combat social isolation, decrease burnout and improve quality of life for older adults and their family caregivers. Legacy Corps offers nonmedical respite services, resource referrals and transportation. Powerful Tools for Caregiving equips family caregivers with resources and tools to better sustain caring for their loved ones, reducing caregiver burnout. The Memory Café is a place where family caregivers and their loved ones can come together in a safe environment. All Aging Strong programs and projects share a common goal: to serve the aging population by keeping them connected to their community.

The Aging Strong Program calls for a balance of service to self and service to others. Jannus adopted a “Volunteer Village” model which cross-trains volunteers interested in multiple roles, thereby increasing its volunteer power and ability to serve more individuals. With its enhanced Volunteer Village model, Jannus has provided more in-home nonmedical respite, increased the number of Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes and increased the number of Memory Cafés held in Southwestern Idaho.

Contact Information

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We all look at our lives and look at what we do in our lives. If you want to look back and see that you have done some things that are meaningful to other people, I think this is a great, great program. And if there is any way this program can grow, it is only going to benefit the older adults in our community.

—Volunteer



People Living With Disabilities Program

Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia

Bala Cynwyd, PA | www.jfcsphilly.org

Since 1855, Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia (JFCS) has been a trusted safety net provider for the Greater Philadelphia region with a mission to strengthen individuals and families across generations and cultures to achieve stability, independence and community. JFCS provides comprehensive programs and services that help its community members cope with challenges that arise throughout life. One of JFCS's core support services is its People Living With Disabilities (PLWD) Program, which works to empower individuals with disabilities to achieve stability, independence, a sense of community and an enhanced quality of life.

The PLWD program is expanding to increase community integration and socialization opportunities by adding additional volunteer support across four core program areas. The Baking With a Mission program brings together adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and neurotypical middle school students to bake goods together that are then sold to the community to raise funds for individuals and families facing food insecurity. PLWD's Social Justice Advocacy Program brings together a group of neurodiverse participants and volunteers to work on priority issues related to disability rights that impact people with disabilities and their caregivers. JFCS provides training, advocacy workshops and guidance as this group develops an advocacy agenda and discovers ways to impact policy. In PLWD's enhanced Friendly Caller Program, volunteers who are trained to monitor changes in feelings of loneliness, anxiety and depression conduct friendly phone calls to program participants. Lastly, JFCS offers a Caregiver Support group, where caregivers of individuals living with disabilities can share their experiences, offer peer-to-peer support and participate in various social activities.

JFCS's PLWD Program volunteer engagement strategies promote change by creating replicable programs that impact the broader community through intergenerational interaction, cross-disability connection and advocacy training. Through its person-centered and trauma-informed practices, JFCS promotes greater understanding and teamwork between adults with disabilities and community members of all ages.

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“

Baking With a Mission makes me feel good because I am helping others. Usually, in my life, I need others to help me.

—Participant

”



Compassionate Companions

Jewish Family Services of Greenwich

Greenwich, CT | www.jfsgreenwich.org

Founded in 1983, Jewish Family Services of Greenwich (JFS-G) has been responding to existing and emerging community needs in the Greenwich and Stamford area by providing case management, behavioral health services, assistance for homebound older adults and refugee resettlement and legal services. In addition to this wide array of supportive programming aimed at reducing barriers to healthy community living, JFS-G has implemented the new Compassionate Companions door-through-door transportation program, which seeks to reduce missed medical appointments and feelings of social isolation among older adults and adults with disabilities.

Feedback from local adult service providers indicates that transportation and companionship are two of the most client-requested services in Greenwich and Stamford. Both cities are home to large hospitals, clinics and medical specialty resources; however, unreliable, inaccessible and cost-prohibitive transportation services often prevent older adults and adults with disabilities from receiving medical care or preventive treatment. Many older adults live alone, have low incomes and do not own a car. The limited transportation options that do exist fail to address riders' emotional and physical safety needs. The Compassionate Companions program seeks to close this gap by providing door-through-door transportation and accompaniment. Riders are accompanied by a trauma-informed, trained volunteer companion who ensures their safe entrance to the doctor's office and comfortable acclimation upon returning home. JFS-G is working with TrustedRide, Inc., to facilitate scheduling, develop a volunteer orientation that is complementary to existing programs and to vet and train volunteers to the program's standards.

To engage as many potential participants as possible, JFS-G works with the Greenwich Commission on Aging, River House Adult Day Center and Stamford Senior Center for client referrals and conducts community outreach and awareness activities with other organizations and care navigators. JFS-G is also exploring a partnership with a local university to coordinate a community health field work rotation through the Compassionate Companions program for nursing students to earn credits toward their degree.

Contact Information

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“

I don't know what I would have done without Compassionate Companions, I appreciate their discretion and fast response to get me to my rehabilitation center safely.

—Participant

”

Assistive Technology Installation

Meals on Wheels New Mexico

Albuquerque, NM | www.mow-nm.org

In 1972, Meals on Wheels New Mexico (MOWNM) was established to provide nutrition, compassion and friendship to homebound neighbors. With no qualifications for services, MOWNM offers clients home-delivered and medically tailored meals, financial relief, wellness checks and social interaction. To enhance the overall quality of life of its clients, MOWNM has implemented the new Assistive Technology Installation (ATI) program. To better help clients receive their meal delivery safely and without injury, the ATI program trains volunteers in how to install a variety of in-home assistive devices to increase their client's independence and ability to age with dignity at home.

One in four New Mexican older adults live alone and, upon intake, 32 percent of MOWNM clients report falling in their home in the last three months. The rapid increase of the older adult population, coupled with food insecurity and safety concerns expressed by meal delivery drivers led to the pilot of this assistive technology program. With mobility and hearing loss being two primary challenges facing older community members, drivers discover many clients experiencing difficulty hearing doorbells, opening doors and navigating their homes safely to receive their essential meal deliveries. To remedy these challenges, trained volunteers install flashing doorbells for hard of hearing/deaf clients, assistive handrails for clients with difficulty walking, easy to turn doorknobs for clients with arthritis and expandable door hinges for clients who use walkers/wheelchairs. MOWNM surveys clients to gauge their assistive technology needs and coordinates with a contractor who trains volunteers in safe installation and repairs.

While certain assistive devices, such as hearing aids and ramps, are provided by some local organizations, the forms of technology provided through the ATI program must often be purchased and installed by individual homeowners, which can pose financial burden. At no cost to the client, MOWNM supports the safety of individuals with low income who may not otherwise be able to access these much-needed assistive technologies. In addition to installations and repairs, volunteers are charged with fostering meaningful connections with clients outside of the wellness checks that are standard with meal delivery. Once the program pilot is complete, MOWNM hopes to coordinate volunteer installation days with local businesses, including electric and construction companies, to achieve even greater impact and interest in the community.

Contact Information

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Our experience with Meals on Wheels has been so positive. I have enjoyed meeting your volunteers. Your service to the needy of New Mexico is commendable!

—Client



Elder Care Resource for Cherokee and Adair Counties

NE Oklahoma Connection Group

Tahlequah, OK

The NE Oklahoma Connection Group is a minority-owned nonprofit serving tribal communities in northeast Oklahoma. Located within the 14-county Cherokee Reservation, NE Oklahoma Connection Group focuses its community support in Cherokee and Adair counties. The newly organized Eldercare Resource Project seeks to address the unique challenges faced by tribal elders and their care partners in rural Oklahoma by providing help around the house, offering social engagement opportunities and facilitating transportation to medical appointments.

Many older adults in the community are homebound due to limited mobility or chronic conditions, live with family who work outside of the home during the day, or do not have family; all of which are barriers to receiving the assistance they need to remain healthy and engaged. NE Oklahoma Connection Group partners with the National Indian Women's Health Resource Center and Yuhaah Senior Housing in making referrals to ensure those most in need are participating in the Eldercare Resource Project. The project connects older adults and families with volunteers who complete yard work, laundry, grocery shopping and provide transportation to and from medical appointments. Also, older adults and their families may engage in volunteer-led community activities such as bingo, dance classes and group exercise hosted by local senior living facilities and faith-based institutions.

To continue recruiting participants, NE Oklahoma Connection Group meets with local tribal leaders, service providers, elder nutrition programs, transit providers and older community members who have a pulse on what the community needs. To alleviate the financial pressures of caregiving and volunteer labor, NE Oklahoma Connection Group offers stipends to neighbors, family, friends and volunteers who provide care and assistance.

Contact Information

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I like listening to their stories and many don't have family to talk to. They sure have some funny stories and I have learned a lot from them. It is sad to see how some live and the needs they have. Some have primary garden foods, where they grow their own food and can the food for the winter. Being a volunteer has made me feel grateful that I can help elders and people with disabilities.

— Volunteer



Dementia Care Services in Southwest Los Angeles

OPICA Adult Day and Counseling Center

Los Angeles, CA | www.opica.org

OPICA Adult Day and Counseling Center has been serving adults with memory loss and their families in the West Los Angeles area for more than 45 years. In addition to care management, support groups, counseling, training and education, OPICA coordinates enrichment activities for individuals with early through late-stage dementia. To bring these essential dementia care services that engage and support individuals with dementia and their care partners to underserved communities, OPICA has expanded its service to neighborhoods in Southwest Los Angeles. Through this expansion, OPICA seeks to provide support in a sustainable manner despite the potential lack of institutionalized community resources available in the area.

The Baldwin Hills, Crenshaw, Leimert Park and West Adams neighborhoods are predominantly home to Black and Latino individuals and families, populations that are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease than their white counterparts. This increased risk of developing dementia, coupled with a dearth of coordinated dementia care and respite, has left a wide service gap in the community. To address the lack of adult day care, unaffordable care management and inaccessibility of other community resources, OPICA is utilizing dedicated, well-trained volunteers to identify and collaborate with existing community supports and introduce new programming to these neighborhoods. Partnering with a skilled and experienced Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) with deep connections in these communities, OPICA is using MFT and social work interns to provide case management services, facilitate support groups and offer individual counseling to clients with memory loss and their families. Culturally relevant and accessible programs are available in English, Spanish and other languages.

Engaging graduate students as volunteer interns provides a highly motivated, easily replenished and cost-effective volunteer base. Supervised by licensed professionals who are well skilled in person-centered practice and cultural competence, volunteer interns benefit from experiential learning that supports their academic course of study and training requirements. Many volunteer interns remain at OPICA on a contracted basis and serve as consistent support to caregivers and individuals with dementia with whom they have formed meaningful relationships. OPICA continuously gathers feedback from other community agencies to gauge the appropriateness of their services.

Contact Information

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I am the sole caregiver for my mother with Alzheimer's [and a sister with Stage 4 cancer]. You and this program are helping me find resources and information that I didn't know existed, such as the new changes to Medi-Cal that allow us to qualify for, find and order a free wandering device. We have someone to talk to who 'gets it.' And my mom has been participating in the OZ program each day, doing yoga, dancing, playing games and making new friends.

—Participant



Prevencion y Ejercicio Suave Activa Su Salud! & Generation WE

Proyecto Juan Diego

Brownsville, TX | www.proyecto-jd.org

For 21 years, Proyecto Juan Diego (PJD) has been an inspiration of hope for low-income families in Brownsville, TX, empowering them to stay healthy, independent and actively engaged in their community. PJD tailors its programs to address the unique health and economic challenges of this vibrant border region through preventive health services, educational initiatives and community events, creating a supportive environment where everyone can prosper.

The Cameron Park Colonia in Brownsville is one of 178 such communities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, where the need is profound. According to Adult Protective Services, half of the older adults in this area live with a disability and struggle with limited English proficiency. Isolated from other major Texas cities, this region faces numerous economic challenges, including restricted access to health care, transportation issues and a scarcity of healthy food. The language barriers further impede recent migrants and long-established immigrant families from achieving economic stability. PJD rises to meet these challenges by offering culturally relevant programs delivered in Spanish by staff and volunteers.

PESAS (Prevención y Ejercicio Suave Activa su Salud (Prevention and Gentle Exercise to Activate Your Health) and Generation WE, reflect PJD's commitment to fostering connection and well-being. These programs are designed to enhance social interaction, boost morale and prevent age-related decline among Spanish-speaking older adults and adults with disabilities. The PESAS program focuses on disease prevention and gentle exercise, supplemented by social support, nutrition education and resources from local community partners. This holistic approach empowers participants to take charge of their physical and mental health. The Generation WE program builds bridges across generations, connecting older adults and adults with disabilities to young participants from other PJD initiatives. These intergenerational interactions enrich the lives of all involved, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect. Thanks to the support of the volunteers, there is smooth coordination and delivery of these programs.

PJD collaborates with San Felipe de Jesus Catholic Church and organizations in the area that serve older adults to recruit participants and volunteers. PJD conducts client surveys every two years to better understand the participant experience, gauge the needs of local families and solicit suggestions for program enhancement.

Contact Information

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“

The Senior Adult program has helped me a lot physically and mentally. I have met many people, and it has helped me stay healthy through exercise and living with my classmates. Thank you for being so helpful.”

—Participant

”

Silver Sweepers

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission

Mobile, AL | www.agingsouthalabama.org

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) is located in Mobile, AL, and serves as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) in coastal Alabama providing information and services for older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers in Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia counties. The AAA's mission is to promote the dignity and independence of older adults through advocacy and by overseeing the development of a comprehensive and coordinated system of care that is responsive to the needs of older adults and their caregivers. One largely unmet service need for older adults who are not eligible for these services through health insurance is homemaker or house cleaning services. SARPC receives an average of 25 requests per week for homemaker services. In response, SARPC developed the Silver Sweepers program, which, through multiple partnerships, provides volunteers through multiple partnerships with cleaning and janitorial businesses, provides volunteers to clean the homes of older adults with lower incomes. Individual volunteers are screened and trained through a collaboration between SARPC and an innovative workforce development project that equips individuals to be hired as housecleaners for the private sector. Their training includes a short internship during which they build their cleaning skills by providing free cleaning services to older adults.

As the state's largest AAA, SARPC's service area comprises 183,084 older adults, about 14 percent of whom live in poverty. Additionally, SARPC serves the African American population in a larger proportion due to income and health disparities that result in higher rates of chronic illness and disability. Low-income minority and rural communities face challenges paying for nonmedical home services and are disproportionately impacted by social determinants of health and health disparities, which affects their ability to maintain their independence. Not having a clean home can cause various sanitation and safety issues and result in an inability to locate items such as critical medications. SARPC volunteer housekeepers are responsible for cleaning participant homes using a checklist designed to maintain health and safety standards. Responsibilities include mopping; vacuuming; emptying trash; cleaning mirrors, toilets and showers; and other household cleaning activities. Additionally, volunteers provide participants with SARPC's Senior Resource Directories and call the Aging and Disability Resource Center to provide referrals to other services. Silver Sweepers supports the ability to remain at home and improves quality of life, safety, health and well-being.

Contact Information

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South Alabama Regional Planning Commission

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*What a wonderful program!
As a service manager for low-income senior apartments, I know some of our residents just can't keep their apartments clean anymore, some have very low vision and other medical issues. The older adults are so excited to get this assistance.*

—Service Manager at SARPC



Living Independently Through the Village Movement

The Village Common of Rhode Island

Providence, RI | www.villagecommonri.org

The village movement in Rhode Island began in 2015 and has since grown to a collection of five villages comprising volunteers dedicated to supporting fellow neighbors to live full lives at home in their communities. The Village Common of Rhode Island (TVC) consists of Barrington, Burrillville, Edgewood, Providence and Westerly villages, each led by local steering committees that individually design supports depending on member needs. Forms of volunteer assistance often include transportation, help around the house, safety checks, friendly visits, technology support, errands and social events. To support these pay-what-you-can models, TVC operates a hub-and-spoke model. Central office staff provide management services to each local village, including volunteer vetting and training, data management, communications, budgeting, insurance and service coordination. As a statewide network of villages, TVC seeks to expand and diversify its membership to keep pace with Rhode Island's population of older adults aged 65+, which has grown 32 percent since 2010 and now composes 18 percent of the population.

Many older Rhode Islanders have low incomes and almost half of older Rhode Island householders live alone. Paying for support to remain living independently at home poses great difficulty, and health inequities further exacerbate this problem. Additionally, LGBTQ+ older adults are more likely to face poverty and have poor physical and mental health. To expand the benefits of village membership and participation, reduce social isolation, increase belonging and provide assistance that increases community members' confidence in their ability to live alone, TVC is focused on designing intentional villages to engage diverse older adults from geographically isolated and underserved communities.

To achieve this, TVC has created culturally appropriate promotional materials and engages a bilingual outreach coordinator to conduct Spanish/English community events to ultimately cultivate a village specifically serving the local Hispanic population. To cultivate a village that is responsive to LGBTQ+ needs and desires, TVC has formed focus groups of community members and is prioritizing communication, outreach and community events to foster trust and establish momentum. Additionally, TVC is working to identify a geographically isolated community that is interested and invested in establishing a village to support residents in hard-to-reach neighborhoods.

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My role as a TVC volunteer is motivated by several things. Communities of mutual support are increasingly important as we age. For now, I'm a volunteer because I am able to apply the skills and knowledge I've acquired over my nearly 80 years to help others directly through providing services and indirectly through working with TVC. In the longer term, I hope to be supported by others who join TVC when I need to be more on the receiving end of the benefits TVC and the Villages provide. And finally, being a volunteer is a terrific way to meet and make friends with all the amazing people I call my neighbors."

—Volunteer



Senior Ride Travel Companions

Traveler's Aid Society of Birmingham

Birmingham, AL | www.travelersaidbirmingham.org

Established in 1907 as a program of the YWCA, Traveler's Aid Society of Birmingham, AL, provides various forms of assistance to aid community members in transitioning from a state of crisis to one of sustained stability. In addition to providing services to displaced community members, Traveler's Aid has been responding to the critical need for nonemergency transportation services to support older adults and adults with disabilities living with low incomes to continue to live independently in their homes in Jefferson County. The Senior Ride program facilitates no-cost transportation for qualifying community members who are not able to secure or manage transportation on their own.

Many Jefferson County older adult residents face transportation dilemmas as they encounter age-related health challenges and safety concerns. No longer able to drive, many residents are forced to rely on other sources of transportation, which are only available in select areas with infrequent service and often cost prohibitive. Jefferson County also possesses the highest percentage of zero-vehicle households. Without reliable transportation options, residents are at risk of deteriorating health, isolation and overall diminished quality of life. By facilitating safe, reliable, personalized transportation to medical appointments, the Senior Ride program seeks to reduce hospital admissions and emergency room visits by encouraging preventive medical care and consistent community connection.

Through the Compassionate Companions program, volunteer chaperones provide supportive nonemergency medical travel assistance to ensure residents not only receive rides to their appointments but also have a companion to accompany them, which can have a significant impact on residents' confidence and feelings of connection to their community. Rides are either supplied by commercial transportation vendors, paratransit or volunteers driving their own cars.

To continuously solicit community feedback, Traveler's Aid Society conducts regular surveys and telephone interviews with clients. Additionally, the organization networks with local universities and colleges to recruit undergraduate and graduate students majoring in health care or social service fields to serve as volunteers. With this community-oriented, intergenerational model, Traveler's Aid Society hopes to inspire lasting relationships between volunteers and community members.

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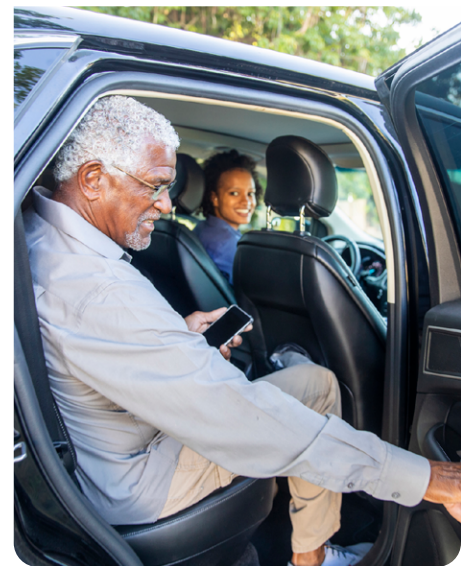
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Having a companion with me when I go to my appointment is a great help. It is good to have someone to talk to. And I will recommend it to anyone. It is a great help. Try it.

—Client



Peer Navigators to Support Students With IDD

University of Kansas Transition to Postsecondary Education

Lawrence, KS | www.ku.edu

The University of Kansas Transition to Post Secondary Education (KU TPE) was launched in 2016 and is the only fully inclusive college program in Kansas for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to obtain a college credential. Designed to complement existing KU student supports, the TPE program provides an avenue to college for people with IDD who have historically not had access to that experience, including taking courses, working in career internships and participating in student life.

Individuals with IDD may have few friendships due to limited experiences navigating the process of building a social network. With a goal of decreasing social isolation and supporting students to expand their social networks through academic and personal interests, TPE pairs students with IDD with trained peer volunteers to facilitate social relationships with other students in academic and social activities. Through its enhanced Peer Navigator program, KU added two new for-credit courses that require 30 volunteer hours and are designed to improve the quality and longevity of supportive volunteers who serve as friends and facilitators within social networks. To achieve this, the quality and intensity of the training has been enhanced significantly. The focus on peer navigation is intended to improve accountability and further develop the skills of volunteer peers, who will carry their experience beyond the college campus into communities where they will live and work in the future.

While TPE provides services primarily to KU students with IDD, it brings many other benefits to the campus community, including presuming competency of people with IDD, modeling ways to support TPE students in respectful ways and spotlighting disability resources. TPE also provides training in instructional methods and opportunities to engage in campus DEIB initiatives. To continue incorporating community input into how the courses and TPE program are administered, KU solicits feedback from students, volunteer peers, faculty, instructors and student services personnel.

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This course has taught me a lot about my own internalized ableism and how I need to address it. Before taking this course, despite my work in special education, I did not view my students as capable individuals. I have learned that, when given the opportunity to do so, people with IDD are extremely capable and independent.

—Peer Navigator



First Call Program

Virginia Down Syndrome Association

Richmond, VA | www.virginiadsa.org

Established in 1983, Virginia Down Syndrome Association (VDSA) provides support and services to individuals with Down syndrome (DS) and their families across their entire lifespan. Originating in Richmond, VDSA services now cover central Virginia and areas around Charlottesville, Williamsburg, Shenandoah Valley, Fredericksburg and Southern Virginia. VDSA is focused on supporting parents and caregivers in navigating the health care and disability systems, empowering and educating individuals with DS and increasing community awareness. Support begins when parents welcome babies with DS and continues in the form of care coordination, referrals, enrichment and social wellness, caregiver support, as well as education and employment programs for individuals with DS. To increase social connectedness among the family caregivers they serve, VDSA engages volunteers to provide wraparound peer support that includes peer mentoring, peer-facilitated support groups and educational programs.

While some levels of stress are considered normal for all parents, research demonstrates that parents of children with developmental disabilities such as DS report higher-than-average stress, which is associated with depression and other aspects of well-being. As parents are sometimes hesitant to access respite services due to concerns with trusting whether their child will be well cared for, VDSA identified the additional needed supports to help reduce caregiver stress and enable individuals with DS to continue living at home. VDSA is expanding its First Call program, which matches new families with seasoned, trained mentor parents by engaging more volunteers who serve more families whose children are over one year of age, as well as families who did not learn of the program until their children were much older. Additionally, VDSA is implementing a more structured, peer-facilitated approach to its educational webinars, social gatherings and support groups to foster greater caregiver connections and opportunities for skills building. VDSA's new program engages volunteers who provide meals, lawn care, minor home repairs and light housekeeping services to family caregivers who may be unable to join other programs and services due to the complex needs and specialized care required to support their loved ones.

Because DS impacts families of every race, ethnicity, language and socioeconomic status, VDSA contracts with language access services to ensure resources and supports are linguistically and culturally competent. VDSA also engages its board, two-thirds of which comprises parents of individuals with DS and at least one adult with DS, to ensure its services are inclusive and responsive to its community's needs.

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I had a great time sharing, listening and offering support. I'm excited for the next chance to do so. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my passion. I received a few texts from families I assist who weren't able to attend, and they mentioned hearing great things about the meeting. I was very happy to see the parents being engaged, open to sharing and supportive of each other. You can tell the parents were appreciative and hungry for information that will improve their situation.

—Program Leader



Conclusion

Following the precedent set by previous cohorts, the 2023–2025 Community Care Corps grantees have exercised ingenuity, leveraged partnerships and connected with their communities to deliver enormous impact to older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers.

As we reflect on the first five years of this national program, we are inspired by their innovation and diligent work to strengthen our nation’s caregiving landscape. We are excited to see what lies ahead for this integral program as we strive to build a comprehensive system of family caregiver support.

This publication provides a brief snapshot into the extensive work of each of these grantees. 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 and consult the new learning library at www.learninglibrary.communitycarecorps.org. To further explore C3’s alignment with National Strategy priorities, we encourage readers to consult our [2024 program impact and alignment report](#), which can also be found on our website.

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