



*Building Engagement
and Independence
in Communities*



2022-2023

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 of volunteer programs 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 Institute and with funding through a cooperative agreement from the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), the Community Care Corps awards grants to local organizations across the country to establish, enhance and grow volunteer models to meet the growing need for these types of assistance.

Family caregivers are the backbone of our nation's long-term care system; their contributions and sacrifices demand more visibility, recognition and support. Without the essential support provided by family caregivers, millions of older adults and people with disabilities would not be able to live at home in their communities. Developed with extensive input from family caregivers and the people they support, the **National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers** details recommendations for governments, communities, employers and others to build a comprehensive system of family caregiver support. The national strategy calls on all of us to leverage the strength of our community-based organizations, family caregivers and volunteers to ensure community living is a reality for everyone.

In alignment with this cause, Community Care Corps grantees implement innovative volunteer models to provide various forms of nonmedical assistance to family caregivers and the older adults and adults with disabilities whom they support. Services such as caregiver education and skills training, respite programs, care coordination, friendly visiting, peer-to-peer support, non-emergency nonmedical transportation and home modifications help enable older adults and adults with disabilities to maintain their independence, health and well-being. These services provide reassurance to caregivers that their loved ones are receiving the support they need and deserve, and gives them the time and capacity to address their own needs, which is essential to sustaining a healthy caregiving role.

This publication, *Community Care Corps: Supporting Healthy Community Living*, highlights how the 2022-2023 grantees tailor support to meet the needs of their diverse communities, including rural service areas, historically marginalized and underserved populations, as well as individuals living with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We hope these snapshots encourage creativity and innovation as readers cultivate their own volunteer models to support older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers in their communities.



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.

Fostering Community with Intergenerational Assistance

A Little Help

Denver, CO | www.alittlehelp.org

A Little Help (ALH) of Colorado aims to increase older adults' ability to live independently in their homes on their own terms while building stronger, more integrated communities. Borne out of the collective village movement, ALH is led by volunteers who support aging Coloradans with daily tasks such as yard work, snow removal, grocery and medication delivery and transportation. Volunteers also provide virtual friendly check-ins, resource and technology navigation and caregiver respite. ALH also combats social isolation and loneliness through its innovative intergenerational programming that is reawakening purpose and building community. ALH's success is derived from centralizing its work with the communities' voice in mind.

To remedy challenges northern Coloradans experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic while fostering community, ALH serves older adults by mobilizing volunteers who coordinate virtual alternatives to intergenerational events, provide transportation to vaccination appointments, in addition to support with various household tasks. In conjunction with its standard programming, ALH partners with Vivo, a virtual fitness program, to pilot a strength training program for older adults and volunteers in a small group setting to promote connection among participants. ALH has successfully implemented its model in metropolitan Denver, northern Colorado and the Western Slope, with the desire to continue to grow. Partnering with Village-to-Village Network (VtVN), ALH will be facilitating the collaboration and sharing of best practices between villages.

ALH targets difficult to reach, isolated older adults living in urban, suburban and rural communities by serving them in their homes. Centralizing its work with the communities' voices in mind, ALH collaborates with communities to identify and prioritize marginalized and low-income neighborhoods, including Spanish-speaking populations and other communities of color. To make the model sustainable and accessible to underserved communities, ALH shifted to a pay-what-you-can membership model, eliminating cost barriers. ALH conducts outreach at older adult affordable housing, libraries and various other community locations to increase visibility and awareness of its services. At the root of ALH's work is neighborly connection and relationship building. Through volunteer engagement via social events and leveraging neighborly resources, ALH fosters a sense of belonging for older adults in its community.

Contact Information:

Hilary Simmons, MPH

Executive Director

A Little Help

2755 South Locust Street, Suite 220

Denver, CO 80222

720.242.9032

hilary@alittlehelp.org



What can I say, without A Little Help, I would not be in my home now. It seems whenever I have a problem and need help with fence repair, gutter cleaning, snow shoveling, or yard clean up, they are there to help. They have also provided rides to my doctor, dentist, and hair appointments. They do this with a smile and a willingness to help. The kindness and caring of these wonderful people are beyond belief. I am so grateful for everything they do!!

—Participant



Volunteer Helping Hands

CaringMatters, Inc.

Gaithersburg, MD | www.caringmatters.org

CaringMatters (CM) is a nonprofit based in Gaithersburg, MD whose mission is to provide social support and community education so that no one dies or grieves alone. CM provides direct services to address the unmet needs of vulnerable older adults and their caregivers living in Montgomery County who are facing serious illness. Through a network of trained volunteers, CM's Volunteer Helping Hands program (VHH) supports clients in their homes through nonmedical services such as companionship, help with errands and household tasks, and transportation to medical and social service appointments. CM supports caregivers by providing respite care through caregiver support groups that serve as a safe space for caregivers to meet and discuss challenges they are facing in their caregiver journey. Lastly, the Whole You program, a partnership between CM and local hospital cancer centers, offers formal and informal community support to ease social-emotional stress for individuals undergoing treatment.

Montgomery County's population of adults age 60 and older, 37 percent of whom live alone, is the fastest growing age group in the county. A large portion of this population falls between Medicaid eligibility and having just enough private resources to afford the services they need, which poses challenges to aging at home independently. Assistance provided through the VHH program helps alleviate the financial strain of home health assistance for older adult residents. Additionally, in-person or virtual support for caregivers helps combat social isolation and strengthens self-care approaches that enable caregivers to continue to provide care in healthy ways.

With Montgomery County being home to a number of low and moderately low-income older adults living independently, CM supports older adults receiving Social Security benefits, Medicaid coverage, and those who receive other means-based public assistance. CM is leveraging research from the county's recent ZIP Code ranking project that measures resident vulnerability based on socio-economic status, to prioritize service expansion specifically in those areas.

Contact Information:

Amy Fier

Senior Director, Patient & Caregiver Services

Caring Matters

518 S. Frederick Avenue

Gaithersburg, MD 20877

301.869.4673

amyf@caringmatters.org

“

Being an only child with one remaining parent, I did not know where to turn to when my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer. A friend referred me to CaringMatters. Their team helped me handle every aspect of her care, from recommending home nurses to paying her regular visits and helping me plan for her passing. They are truly angels on earth.”

—Client

”



Finding Meaning and Hope

Duet: Partners In Health & Aging

Phoenix, AZ | www.duetaz.org

Located in Phoenix, AZ, Duet: Partners In Health & Aging provides no-cost services and support to promote the health and well-being of homebound adults, family caregivers, grandfamilies and members of faith communities. To respond to the needs of the growing number of dementia family caregivers in Arizona and across the country, Duet has implemented an innovative resiliency-based program, Finding Meaning & Hope (FM&H). Based on Dr. Pauline Boss's book about navigating complex grief, isolation and ambiguous loss associated with dementia caregiving, these 10-week long workshops consist of activities and discussion conducted by trained and certified volunteer facilitators. Duet has also developed the Meaning & Hope Institute, a virtual community that connects dementia family caregivers to valuable resources and serves as a training hub for volunteer facilitators. More than 90 percent of FM&H participants report reduced stress since attending the workshop.



Building on the foundation of human connection and support it has established, Duet is focused on reaching a greater number of dementia family caregivers and serving populations that are often overlooked, including caregivers from tribal, immigrant and refugee communities. To achieve this, Duet is increasing its number of partner organizations. Duet's newest partners include Unlimited Potential, which is supporting the Spanish translation of the FM&H series, and the So' Tsoh Foundation, which is helping to bring FM&H to the Navajo Nation. Additionally, Duet has begun offering wrap-around services, including support groups, educational webinars, peer support and personalized guidance to respond to the desire for ongoing support.

To continue scaling this effort nationally, Duet is enhancing facilitator recruitment and establishing a train-the-trainer model that allows experienced senior facilitators to train other volunteers to facilitate workshops. This volunteer-led program model allows for low-cost replication while delivering maximum impact. Now wrapping up its second year, Duet is focused on securing bridge funding to increase the number of program participants and to attract more sponsors and mutually supportive partnerships.

Contact Information:

Justin McBride

Program Manager

Duet: Partners In Health & Aging

10000 North 31st Avenue, Suite D200

Phoenix, AZ 85051

602.274.6793

mcbride@duetaz.org



We heard over and over again (from participants) that the time spent in the group and what they learned was what got them through each week. I can say that most weeks it was just what I needed too, to keep giving and guiding. As my co-facilitator often says, 'that group fills our cup.'

—Program Leader



Caregiving & Aging Program

FamilyMeans

Stillwater, MN | www.familymeans.org

FamilyMeans, headquartered in Stillwater, MN, supports caregivers across the lifespan and provides meaningful opportunities to volunteers through its successful and established respite model. In Minnesota, hundreds of thousands of family caregivers serve as essential pillars of support for people living with a chronic health issue or disability. Family caregivers require support and resources to be able to rest and tend to their own needs. To address the gap in respite services due to local home care staffing shortages and the post-pandemic loss of many adult day programs, the multifaceted Caregiving & Aging Program offers an array of services to caregivers no matter where they are in the caregiving process.

In addition to the established in-home respite and Day Out! Group respite programs, FamilyMeans implemented a new evening group option to offer increased flexibility to caregivers who continue to work and may not be able to take advantage of daytime support. This year, to continue increasing the number of service entry points and continued opportunities for respite, FamilyMeans introduced Community Connection, a respite program for caregivers of people living with early onset dementia, which includes multi-week sessions built around a theme and takes place in partnership with other community organizations. Along with enhancing all respite options through new and improved volunteer recruitment strategies, FamilyMeans social workers continually assess needs to confirm appropriateness for service selections and settings.

Caregivers benefit from respite services by connecting with community volunteers who are attentive and supportive to their unique needs, interested in their welfare and consistently supportive. Hence, FamilyMeans prioritizes volunteer and participant matching, sourcing appropriate program spaces and engaging staff who possess a range of expertise. While the shifting volunteer landscape has been challenging to navigate, FamilyMeans is implementing its inclusive volunteerism action plan developed in 2022 aimed at deploying innovative recruitment and retention strategies to maintain a sound volunteer base.

Contact Information:

Dan Bohnker

Volunteer Resources and Respite Coordinator

FamilyMeans

1875 Northwestern Avenue South

Stillwater, MN 55082

651.789.4055

dbohnker@familymeans.org



My caregiver and I both appreciate the opportunity to spend time with others. FamilyMeans programs give us both a chance to do that.

—Participant



Supportive Care for Dementia

Hospice of the Valley

Phoenix, AZ | www.hov.org

Hospice of the Valley (HOV) provides compassionate hospice and palliative care to people living in central Arizona. Offering a comprehensive continuum of care, HOV supports families from early stages of serious illness, before hospice care is needed, through end of life. Care and support for people living with dementia and their families is a special focus because of the unique physical and emotional demands associated with dementia caregiving. Caring for a loved one with dementia often leaves caregivers and family members feeling overwhelmed, anxious and isolated, with little time and support to tend to their own well-being. To address the significant unmet need for in-home respite for dementia family caregivers and reduce cost barriers, HOV developed the Supportive Care for Dementia (SCD) program, an in-home supportive services program for people living with all stages and types of dementia who are not receiving hospice care, to help them maintain independence at home. SCD offers monthly in-home Dementia Educator visits, a 24-hour nursing line and physician phone support for medications, advance care planning and volunteers providing non-medical respite for caregivers. HOV's College Partners program is an innovative volunteer model that engages college students in serving SCD clients and their family caregivers.

Extensively trained College Partner volunteers provide nonmedical respite assistance, companionship and socialization to SCD individuals and families. With initial plans to engage students from just one local college, HOV has since connected with three additional local colleges that have embraced the College Partners program as an innovative community volunteer experience to enhance academic study. HOV provides student volunteers with ongoing training, college scholarship opportunities and, after one year of service, Dementia Capable Certification that can be included in future school or employment applications.

Located in the racially, culturally and linguistically diverse region of central Arizona, SCD strives to deliver culturally sensitive outreach and care. To accomplish this, SCD is working with dementia educators who are bilingual in Spanish and English, actively recruiting more bilingual and multicultural student volunteers and expanding outreach to Spanish-speaking communities with translated materials. Additionally, SCD provides care to older adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities who develop Alzheimer's disease. SCD also works with specially trained veteran volunteers to serve the 20 percent of clients who are veterans.

Contact Information:

Holly Cottor

College Partners Program Coordinator

Hospice of the Valley

1510 E. Flower Street

Phoenix, AZ 85014

602.636.6381

hcottor@hov.org



I want to express my gratitude and appreciation for all the support and love of mom's volunteer, Danielle, from Hospice of the Valley's College Partners Program. When Danielle started visiting with my mom, I had no idea just how incredibly supportive she would be. Not only does she visit my mom almost every week, but she leaves an impression on her. My mother has Alzheimer's disease. Most days she doesn't recall when she has a visitor or even who she spoke with on the phone, but she always remembers when Danielle stops by. She has taken the time to get to know my mom and her likes and dislikes. She spends real quality time with her and provides her with the companionship that she needs. Danielle has been like another sister. I feel like I can depend on her to advocate and care for my mother as if she were her own. We are just so blessed that she has come into our lives.

—Caregiver



Social Engagement with Virtual Reality

Lifespan of Greater Rochester

Rochester, NY | www.lifespanrochester.org

A nonprofit organization based in Rochester, NY, since 1971, Lifespan provides nonmedical, community-based services for older adults and their care partners. Lifespan offers a wide array of programs for older adults and their care partners, with the newest program combining volunteer respite and virtual reality interventions to serve caregivers of individuals living with dementia or chronic illness. Recognizing that living with dementia or chronic illness or caring for someone with these diagnoses can contribute to social isolation and feelings of loneliness, Lifespan is implementing a virtual reality intervention to foster engagement and interaction for people with disabilities and care partners.

Virtual reality (VR) is an immersive experience that can simulate real or imagined environments. Lifespan trains volunteers to engage participants in their homes via VR programs that consist of thousands of pre-programmed activities. Care partners and care recipients alike can engage in a variety of activities ranging from visiting old neighborhoods to swimming with dolphins. Volunteers undergo thorough training to conduct VR activities and they are also trained to initiate other engaging activities and offer alternative forms of support. Lifespan works with two social work professors who are evaluating the VR program and how the VR engagement reduces feelings of social isolation and loneliness with participants.

To support a robust and diverse community, Lifespan is dedicated to recruiting Black/African American, Latinx and/or LGBTQ+ volunteers and families. Black and Latinx care partners are less likely to be connected to formal services, and currently less than 10 percent of the caregivers Lifespan serves are from these communities. Lifespan is intentionally recruiting care partners, care recipients as well as volunteers from these communities to address these disparities and develop a volunteer force representative of the people they aid.

Contact Information:

Kelly Allen, LMSW

Program Manager, Partners in Caring Respite

Lifespan of Greater Rochester

1900 South Clinton Avenue

Rochester, NY 14618

585.244.8400 ext. 246

kallen@lifespan-roch.org



I am totally sold on this resource for folks with or without dementia. I hope that there is some way I can continue to help you with this project.

—Volunteer



Social Support in Affordable Housing Communities

Lutheran Senior Services

St. Louis, MO | www.lssliving.org

Lutheran Senior Services (LSS), based in St. Louis, MO, is a faith-based, mission driven, nonprofit organization that specializes in enhancing life for older adults by creating places, services and opportunities for people to age well with purpose and fulfillment. LSS has grown from a single site to one of the nation's largest nonprofit senior living networks, providing a wide range of services from residential communities to affordable housing, and home and community-based services. LSS understands the need for affordable nonmedical and social support services. Senior Connections Plus, an expansion of their Senior Connections Volunteer program, addresses the gap in its affordable housing communities for additional resident support. LSS' volunteer model aims to increase older adults' ability to live independently, reduce social isolation among care recipients and provide meaningful experiences for its volunteers.

To further understand the needs of its community, LSS completed a needs assessment of its affordable housing residents to identify communities with the greatest need for nonmedical assistance. The volunteer model serves the three highest scoring communities—Hylton Point II, Dunn Road and Rose Hill House residents. People living in these communities are predominately African American, have low monthly incomes and face numerous barriers to receiving services they need. LSS provides these residents with companionship and assistance that often would not be attainable to them otherwise.

Volunteers in these communities assist with light housekeeping services, laundry, social support, and engage residents on a digital communication platform to help them better use devices to connect with family and friends. LSS volunteers attend a training on the impact of social isolation, purposeful relationships, communication skills, and many other topics so they are prepared to foster meaningful relationships with the residents they engage. Once trained, each volunteer is paired with a specific resident and asked to honor a three-month commitment for two, two-hour visits each month to build rapport with the resident and foster a sense of community. The Senior Connections Plus model emphasizes the importance of social connection and the role it plays in living a meaningful and purposeful life.

Contact Information:

Diane Sinclair

Director of Volunteer & Community Engagement

Lutheran Senior Services

1150 Hanley Industrial Court

St. Louis, MO 63144

314.373.4071

Diane.Sinclair@LSSLiving.org



We are excited to have the support of the Community Care Corps grant to offer our Senior Collections Plus volunteer program! Providing light housekeeping, laundry and digital assistance will help our residents remain independent in their apartments.

—Program Leader



Hoarding Support Program

Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia

Philadelphia, PA | www.jfcsphilly.org

Jewish Family and Children's Service (JFCS) is a trusted, multiservice safety net provider serving individuals and families across generations and cultures in the Greater Philadelphia region. Among the wide array of comprehensive programs JFCS offers to support independence and stability for community members, the Hoarding Support Program addresses the emotional, physical and practical risks associated with hoarding disorder. JFCS launched its Hoarding Support Program in 2015 to offer individualized care management and support services to their clients affected by hoarding.

As unmet needs have only intensified due to the COVID-19 pandemic, JFCS continues to find ways to enhance and grow the Hoarding Support Program. In addition to one-on-one, in-home support to ensure client and home safety, JFCS coordinates the Buried in Treasures (BiT) Support Group, a 16-week structured therapeutic group program that enlists and trains individuals with lived experience as volunteer facilitators. Due to the success of the BiT groups, JFCS is increasing the number of groups offered in 2022-2023 by coordinating concurrent volunteer-led and staff-led groups. In addition, JFCS is strengthening its response to the increased need for direct client support by field testing a Hoarding Disorder Peer Support Specialist Certification curriculum based on research, evidence-based practices and current treatment modalities.

Continuing to grow the volunteer component of the program and developing the peer specialist certification will enhance JFCS's effectiveness, promote sustainability and establish potential pathways to employment for people living with hoarding disorder. To continue spreading the word and increasing awareness of the support offered by the Hoarding Disorder Program, JFCS is expanding its outreach to organizations that do not specifically address hoarding but serve clients who are receiving mental health services through case management, therapy and health centers.

Contact Information:

Courtney Owen

Program Officer

Jewish Family & Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia

345 Montgomery Avenue

Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

267.256.2100

cowen@jfcsphilly.org

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It's been a long haul. My possessions—old mail, books, cases of soda, multiple bottles of peroxide, thousands of CD's and so much more— threatened to drown me. JFCS provided guidance and hands-on assistance over a long period to make that sea recede and order be found. Today that journey continues.

—Client

”



Nonmedical Assistance for Visually Impaired Adults

MAB Community Services

Brookline, MA | www.mabcommunity.org

The Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MABVI) strives to help visually impaired older adults across Massachusetts remain independent and socially engaged by matching them with trained, long-term volunteers. MABVI's volunteer program is one of only a few across the country in which trained volunteers provide older adults with visual disabilities with one-on-one connection and support. As people today are living longer, more older adults are experiencing loss of eyesight due to age-related diseases such as diabetes, macular degeneration and cataracts. MABVI's volunteer program caters to the unique needs of older adults living with these visual impairments, helping to ensure they can live full and satisfying lives.

Massachusetts is home to about 129,800 legally blind adults, and it is estimated that one in three older adults will have some form of vision-reducing eye disease by age 65. There are programs in place to serve individuals who are legally blind, but these exclude those experiencing vision impairment, so these individuals are referred to MABVI. The demand for MABVI volunteers has increased by 200 percent in the fiscal year 2022, emphasizing the need for this programming. MABVI volunteers are taught to “do with and not for,” the participants they assist, to promote independence in their own homes, while providing needed companionship and vital assistance. MABVI volunteers must complete a formal orientation that includes sighted guide instruction, as well as training on activities that build community. These volunteers have a six-month minimum commitment to service, which fosters an extreme sense of trust and long-term positive presence in their participants' lives.

One hundred percent of those served by the new MABVI volunteer model will be adults with visual disabilities, but MABVI also works closely with local municipalities that have sizable BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities, and high-need, low-income populations. In their efforts to be diverse and inclusive, MABVI is strategizing organizational capacity to recruit new BIPOC communities and recruiting more bilingual staff and volunteers to support this incoming diverse population.

Contact Information:

Alexandra Maggio

Director

MA Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired,
a division of MAB Community Services

200 Ivy Street

Brookline, MA 02446

888.613.2777

amaggio@mabcommunity.org



My other volunteer is a walking partner, and this has been great. I like to walk fast but when you walk with a cane it isn't as enjoyable as much as to walk with someone else and have them navigate. She picks me up and we do several loops around the park and talk the whole while. We are both musicians, so we have things to talk about. It's been wonderful.

—Participant



Indianapolis Home Repair Program

NeighborLink Indianapolis Foundation, Inc.

Indianapolis, IN | www.nlindy.org

Home repairs rank as one of Indianapolis' most pressing issues experienced by homeowners who have low incomes. Serving homeowners in Indianapolis since 2013, NeighborLink Indianapolis Foundation (NLI) addresses this unmet need by providing home repairs at no cost to homeowners who are 62 and older or live with a disability and live in a household that earns 150 percent below the federal poverty line. To help these homeowners age in place safely, NLI enlists dedicated volunteers and home repair professionals to provide no-cost repair services that promote safety, habitability and accessibility.

The poverty rate of older African American adults in central Indiana is almost three times the level of older White adults and home repair concerns disproportionately affect Black homeowners. As a result, NLI typically serves African American women living alone with an income under \$1,246 a month. NLI can offer these individuals assistance with trained and motivated volunteers and through partnerships with local businesses and community services. Volunteers come to NLI in a variety of ways, the primary gateway being through groups organized by workplaces, schools, churches, etc. There are also "Handy Volunteers" who possess an array of skills in home repairs. NLI offers volunteers community-focused opportunities to interact directly with homeowners and implement repairs ranging from accessibility improvements to exterior painting, to gutter cleaning and HVAC and roof repairs.

Through providing this no-cost assistance, NLI seeks to alleviate financial hardships faced by low-income older adults while also improving safety and comfort for homeowners. The program also helps reduce caregiver stress, provides safer environments for individuals to receive care and support, and helps stabilize family situations and the neighborhoods themselves.

Contact Information:

Rachel Nelson

Executive Director

NeighborLink Indianapolis

3421 N. Park Avenue

Indianapolis, IN 46205

317.286.2740

rnelson@nlindy.org



“

Terri notes that she and her sister take turns helping with their mother, Virginia's care. She said, 'Now that we have access to this program, there is no need to uproot mom from her home of 75 years.

—Program Leader

”

Making Independent Living Possible for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

On My Own of Michigan

Troy, MI | www.onmyownofmi.org

On My Own of Michigan is a metropolitan Detroit nonprofit organization dedicated to making independent living possible for people with developmental disabilities. Founded in 1997 by parents of young adults with disabilities, On My Own provides a unique blend of skill-building experiences, social activities and independent living support to teens and adults with autism, Down syndrome and other cognitive impairments.

Nationwide, less than 25 percent of adults with developmental disabilities live independently. Barriers to independent living include a lack of safe, affordable housing options and a lack of programs providing the necessary level of support to achieve independence. On My Own helps eliminate these barriers by offering personalized independent living experiences and supports and has helped hundreds of adults with developmental disabilities live on their own.

To better serve its clients, On My Own understands the importance of engaging volunteers who are representative of the communities they serve. As a result, its volunteer model focuses on recruiting underrepresented social work and special education students, specifically partnering with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), male-identifying and LGBTQ+ students, to serve as long-term interns.

Contact Information:

Jennifer Roccanti

Executive Director

On My Own of Michigan

1250 Kirks Boulevard, Suite 300

Troy, MI 48084

248.649.3739 ext. 223

jennifer@onmyownofmi.org



“

I've been able to develop my social work skills and get hands on experience working directly with members of On My Own of Michigan. Every day has been a learning experience. I feel valued as a member of the team and am more than happy with my experience so far.”

— Volunteer

”

The Sharing Network

One Community

Brooklyn, NY | www.onecommunitynyc.org

One Community addresses inequality and promotes fair access to resources and opportunities in the Fort Greene/Clinton Hill neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY. As part of its COVID-19 emergency response, the organization discovered widespread social isolation and loneliness among older adults living in local public housing developments. To ameliorate and reverse the consequences of isolation, One Community established the Sharing Network, a low-tech program that fosters social connectivity and supportive relationships among participants.

As many residents do not use the internet, the Sharing Network provides access to activities via participants' phones, even landlines. Volunteers lead 15-18 friendly, fun and engaging conversations and activity groups each week. This year, One Community is recruiting additional volunteer moderators to broaden its extensive programming, which already includes a variety of topical, artistic and spiritual-themed conversation groups, as well as artmaking, chair yoga and needlework activity groups. Crucially, these groups provide safe spaces where moderators actively support participants' emotional and cognitive well-being. By fostering a welcoming atmosphere, they facilitate the formation of interlocking social circles and friendships.

One Community is actively taking steps to expand the program and establish the Sharing Network as a well-known and trusted resource. It is focused on enhancing referral relationships with community partners that cater to older adults, ensuring that the network becomes widely recognized. Additionally, outreach efforts have been adjusted to include door-to-door campaigns, specifically targeting individuals who are isolated and have limited community ties. This personalized approach helps to recruit participants who may otherwise be difficult to reach. One Community is also working to establish Spanish and Chinese language groups to serve the neighborhood's diverse linguistic communities. Ultimately, One Community aims to enhance the visibility, value and impact of the Sharing Network, with the goal of encouraging local agencies to incorporate referrals into their routine standards of care for older adults experiencing social isolation.

Contact Information:

Dan Nussbaum

Program Coordinator

One Community/Sharing Network

13 Greene Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11238

347.773.4768

nussbaum@onecommunitynyc.org

“

It makes it easier to talk to y'all because I know that y'all are around my age; y'all understand. I'm talking to someone who understands what I'm going through. The same thing! Then I can live with it, because I know I'm not by myself.

—Participant

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Respite and Social Engagement in Philadelphia

Penn Memory Center, University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, PA | www.pennmemorycenter.org

For more than 30 years, Penn Memory Center (PMC) of West Philadelphia, PA has served older adults experiencing memory loss and their family caregivers. The Caring Difference, a suite of programs designed to support families living with dementia, includes two volunteer-based initiatives, Time Together, and the Caring Collective. Time Together is an intergenerational program providing low or no-cost respite and companion care to older adults with memory loss through trained and motivated student volunteers. The Caring Collective trains caregivers on how to support one another in informal ways through listening, validation and problem solving, while creating a space to share solutions and helpful tips.

In Pennsylvania, 500,000 caregivers provide approximately 622,000,000 hours of unpaid work. Because many caregivers themselves live with chronic health conditions and experience depression, PMC offers programming that seeks to alleviate issues for both caregivers and people living with memory loss. Trained Time Together volunteers combat isolation in their communities by providing meaningful companionship to older adults with mild dementia through social engagement, simultaneously providing respite relief to their caregivers. Participants in Time Together also have access to additional programming including memory cafés, cognitive comedy, a caring for the caregiver class and caregiver support groups. The Caring Collective establishes connections between family caregivers that offer empathetic support and help reduce social isolation. Caregivers also receive training on peer-to-peer mentoring, empathy, psychoeducation and healthy boundaries. Receiving this training and support, in turn, encourages participants to help other caregivers along their journeys.

Dedicated to serving diverse populations, the PMC prioritizes underserved groups that have been historically marginalized and adversely affected by poverty and inequality. The PMC focuses its outreach on the West Philadelphia area, which is 71.5 percent African American. The PMC has cultivated relationships with the West Philadelphia African American community by building trust, engaging the community, offering supportive services, facilitating opportunities for research participation and establishing a board of community leaders who advise in efforts to diversify its practice.

Contact Information:

Megan Kalafsky, MHCI

Associate Director of Social Programs

Penn Memory Center

3615 Chestnut Street

Philadelphia, PA 19104

267.624.4282

Megan.Kalafsky@Pennmedicine.upenn.edu

“

I am proud of the support services we have been able to deliver in our community through the Penn Memory Center. People living with dementia disorders, and their family caregivers, experience higher rates of social isolation than the general population. Our medical system is not set up to provide the level of care these folks need, and respite care is not covered by insurance. As of now, the PMC has been able to offer such support to the families in our community through philanthropy and grants. For as long as we can, we will continue to engage communities through programs such as Time Together and The Caring Collective, which promote engagement and social and emotional well-being.”

—Program Leader

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Caring Neighbors Program

Peninsula Agency on Aging

Newport News, VA | www.paainc.org

Peninsula Agency on Aging (PAA) works to enhance quality of life and support independence in older Peninsula residents to help them safely age in place. PAA offers a wide range of services, including care coordination, nutrition, information and assistance, respite care and facilitates access to community resources for older adults and family caregivers. The agency pays special attention to individuals at risk of institutionalization and to those who have low incomes. Older adults in Hampton and Newport News, VA, are more likely than others in the state to live below poverty level, live alone, live with a disability, or need support to continue to live independently. With nonmedical transportation and companion care often unavailable or unaffordable, PAA implemented the Caring Neighbors Program to combat social isolation and enhance transportation accessibility.

The Caring Neighbors Program launched in 2021, offers check-in phone calls, in-person social visits, canine companion visits, nonmedical transportation and light housekeeping. The Volunteer to Work companion aide program, in partnership with home health agencies, seeks to address industry labor shortages by providing volunteers with training and experience that smoothly transitions them into employment. This year, in response to requests for transportation for essential errands and to reduce food insecurity, PAA added an errand and delivery component that allows clients to authorize volunteers to pick up items from a local food bank and assist with grocery shopping. PAA is also partnering with independent and assisted living communities to offer group canine visits to residents multiple times per year.

To help expand its volunteer base and to increase the number of individuals receiving assistance through the Caring Neighbors Program, PAA is developing hyper-local branches through partnerships with neighborhood associations. To ensure newly established branches are equipped to provide support to their neighbors, PAA plans to provide technical assistance and scheduling support. Additionally, PAA continues to engage its social justice committee, comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders, to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion are incorporated into service delivery and community outreach, which has expanded to include additional underserved populations such as the LGBTQ+, Hispanic/Latino and Asian-American communities.

Contact Information:

Kerry Greenhill

Caring Neighbors Program Manager
Peninsula Agency on Aging
739 Thimble Shoals Avenue, Suite 1006
Newport News, VA 23606
757.873.0541
Kerry.Greenhill@paainc.org



I truly appreciate the Caring Neighbors Program. It has helped me immensely, not only to get around to do my errands. If it weren't for them, I wouldn't be able to do things like getting to the grocery store... But also the Caring Neighbors calling people who check in on how we're doing: most of the time I'm by myself, so that's much appreciated. I really appreciate the conversations that we have. That uplifts me when I hear from people.

—Client



Greenville Community Care

Prisma Health-Upstate

Greenville, SC | www.prismahealth.org

Prisma Health (PH), South Carolina's largest nonprofit health care system, houses an Accountable Communities department that implements programs addressing social determinants of health (SDOH). Community Care (CC) in Greenville, SC is one of these programs, providing practical, emotional and spiritual support to vulnerable patients, in community-based settings, who lack the ability to receive or engage in basic support at home once they have been discharged from a hospital stay. The PH CC program is unique because it establishes their volunteer program through a health system to ensure the community's most vulnerable patients receive better quality of life and support through nonmedical needs.

Between 2016 and 2020, 30-40 percent of South Carolina's older adults 65 and older either lived with a disability, lived alone, or were divorced, separated or widowed—all of which are risk factors for social isolation. PH CC addresses this critical need for social engagement by organizing teams of volunteers from churches, medical schools and independent organizations who provide assistance with instrumental activities of daily living such as household chores, transportation, social outings, phone calls and prayers. In addition, CC staff assess patients for SDOH and connect them with additional resources such as chronic disease management, additional health services, legal services and screening for food insecurity.

Many older South Carolinians live at high poverty rates, which poses the risk of early onset morbidity and mortality. Engaging this population can be complex, but CC successfully engages participants through PH providers that refer patients who would benefit from the program. Upon referral, CC enrolls participants, conducts a home visit and explains the details of the program to obtain patient consent. Through its efforts, CC hopes to reduce self-reported depression and anxiety and reduce burden experienced by primary caregivers. To evaluate program impact, PH CC is partnering with the Furman University Institute for the Advancement of Community Health.

Contact Information:

Sarah Key

Manager-AccessHealth Upstate

Sarah.Key@prismahealth.org

Rashanda Abrams

Program Manager- Community Health Improvement

Rashanda.Abrams@prismahealth.org

Prisma Health

712 Grove Road

Greenville, SC 29605

864.417.5752



Our unique partnership with Prisma Health System has allowed us to connect with participants across several counties, ensuring that our community's most vulnerable patients receive support. Not only do our volunteers help reduce social isolation for our participants, but our staff also assesses patients for Social Determinants of Health and connects them with community resources.

—Program Leader



A Safe Space for Older Adults with Memory Loss

REACH Community Respite Ministry

Auburn, AL | www.aumc.net/reach

REACH Community Respite Ministry, based in Auburn, AL, is a volunteer-based social program providing day programs designed to mentally, physically and socially engage people living with dementia to increase their quality of life and provide respite to their care partners. An Alabama Alzheimer's disease task force discovered that 77 percent of caregivers of people living with dementia believe the cost of dementia care is unreasonable. REACH prides itself on responding to this unmet need by implementing this volunteer-based social program seeking to provide quality programming to older adults deserving of independence and purpose.



With the baby boomer generation reaching ages 65 and older and the risk of developing dementia increasing, REACH addresses the need for respite programs that allow more older adults to age in place and for families to experience joy amidst the difficulties of caregiving. REACH offers activities and socialization opportunities outside the home in a safe and caring setting designed specifically for older adults with mild to moderate memory loss or medical impairments. REACH provides a space for participants living with dementia to connect with their peers in a safe, joyful environment, engaging in activities like dominoes, communal singing, art therapy and chair aerobics. Programs are parsed into 30-minute increments to foster optimal interest and engagement. REACH also offers twice-monthly care partner support groups and community-wide dementia education.

To ensure that the older adults and care partners who participate in this program receive quality assistance, all volunteers attend a training session conducted by program staff. REACH is equipped with enough volunteers so that one-on-one participant-volunteer matches can provide a unique person-centered experience. The REACH program model provides a safe and enjoyable environment for people living with dementia, increasing their quality of life while simultaneously offering relief and support for caregivers.

Contact Information:

Sarah Jones

Director

REACH Community Respite Ministry

137 S. Gay Street

Auburn, AL 36830

334.826.8800 ext. 252

sarahj@aumc.net



REACH gives me the opportunity to relax. It lifts the burden of worry for just a brief time. It's changed my life.

—REACH Caregiver



Safe at Home Program

Rebuilding Together New Orleans

New Orleans, LA | www.rtno.org

Rebuilding Together New Orleans (RTNO) provides critical, no-cost home repairs and maintenance to low-income homeowners to improve and maintain their quality of life. Low wages combined with poor quality housing stock pose great difficulty to aging New Orleanians in need of safe, healthy and affordable housing. Many of these neighbors, living with disabilities and unable to work, are forced to live in unsafe conditions, causing their health to deteriorate and drastically decreasing the accessibility of their homes. RTNO's Safe at Home Program delivers accessibility modifications to increase dignity and independence and improve quality of life that are tailored to meet the needs of each client.

RTNO operates the Safe at Home Program through two major tasks: providing outreach and eligibility services to homeowners in need and identifying health risks that lead to the deployment of customized modifications that address individual homeowner needs. RTNO recruits skilled volunteers such as retired carpenters, current contractors and handy workers, as well as unskilled volunteers who receive comprehensive safety and organizational training. The intake and referral process utilizes partnerships with neighborhood associations, health care providers and other city and state agencies to ensure support for those most in need. Safe at Home volunteers helped more than 50 homeowners in 2022 with critical home repairs that demonstrated a positive change in their overall safety, independence and quality of life. Repairs included wheelchair ramp construction and installation, weatherizing home exteriors and repairing roofs.

The need for Safe at Home repairs was exacerbated by Hurricane Ida, which damaged homes that already had deferred maintenance or needed aging in place modifications. RTNO quickly pivoted to provide disaster repairs. The program has expanded to serve 20 additional families and address shifting homeowner needs, including assistance with addressing leaks, water damage and mold, which is critical to maintaining health. The expansion of the Safe at Home program will increase RTNO's impact and contribute to greater confidence in older adults to remain safely in their homes and communities.

Contact Information:

Olivia Parker

Homeowner Relations Manager

Rebuilding Together New Orleans

2801 Marais Street

New Orleans, LA 70117

504.264.1815

info@rtno.org



At Rebuilding Together New Orleans, we believe that everyone deserves the right to live in a safe and healthy home. I mention this because it is not true for so many of us in this city. We are constantly recovering and fighting for our community, and without support from our volunteers and community members we wouldn't be able to do so. We work every day to keep our neighbors and community healthy."

—Program Leader



Patient Companion Program

SeniorAge

Springfield, MO | www.senioragemo.org

SeniorAge, based in Springfield, MO, develops comprehensive, coordinated services to encourage optimal health and independence of older adults. Senior Age serves many older adults who lack relational networks that can provide support and accompaniment during routine medical appointments and treatment. When surveyed, community members supported the concept of a companion volunteer program and many expressed interest in using the program themselves. Thus, the Patient Companion Program was established to address these challenges and help older adults navigate and maximize their health care appointments.

The Patient Companion Program supports older adults who may not have someone to assist them during medical appointments, which is required by all local hospitals and clinics for basic procedures. Patient Companion volunteers will meet or talk with participants prior to medical appointments or procedures to prepare for the visit. The same volunteer will accompany the older adult to the appointment or procedure, taking notes and confirming after-care steps, and assisting with implementing recommendations for post-procedure or appointment. Not only does this offer critical assistance to older adults, but it also provides peace of mind to family members who can rest assured that their loved one is set up for success in their appointments and after care.

Serving 17 counties in southwest Missouri, SeniorAge understands the importance of offering support to those who may have difficulty accessing services. The Patient Companion Program serves people living with disabilities, people who live in rural areas and those who are adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. In a planned program expansion, SeniorAge will specifically recruit more participants in rural areas. The program is offered on a contribution basis, and the inability to contribute does not preclude anyone from being able to receive assistance.

Contact Information:

Laurie Lundberg

Patient Companion Program Manager

SeniorAge

1735 S. Fort Avenue

Springfield, MO 65807

417.868.9561

laurie.lundberg@senioragemo.org

“

The SeniorAge Patient Companion Program has been invaluable to me. I no longer have any family or friends in the area and without the Patient Companion Program I would not be able to receive the medical treatment that I need.

—Participant

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Friendly Visitor Program for LGBTQ+ Older Adults

Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Elders, Inc. (SAGE)

New York, NY | www.sageusa.org

Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Elders, Inc. (SAGE) is the oldest and largest organization dedicated to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ older adults. Since 1978, SAGE has worked to achieve high quality of life for LGBTQ+ elders in New York City by supporting and advocating for their rights and fostering an understanding of aging in all communities. The Friendly Visitor program supports isolated LGBTQ+ older adults who are homebound or living in care facilities by providing opportunities for assistance and engagement.

As older LGBTQ+ adults are twice as likely to live alone as compared to cisgender/heterosexual peers, SAGE's Friendly Visitor Program fosters support networks and social connectedness that allow them to age in place, safely and independently. The Friendly Visitor Program pairs LGBTQ+ older adults with trained volunteers, called "Friendly Visitors," who commit to regular weekly check-ins for a minimum of one year. This volunteer model not only fosters meaningful connections but educates volunteers to monitor and alert program staff of any changes in their friends' health or well-being. If issues arise, program staff connect clients with appropriate resources and services.

LGBTQ+ older adults have often faced a lifetime of systemic and interpersonal discrimination that can leave them vulnerable to negative health outcomes, loneliness and social isolation. SAGE is focusing on expanding tailored support to underserved populations within the LGBTQ+ community who suffer from additional stressors based on their intersectionality. SAGE is prioritizing outreach efforts to LGBTQ+ older adults of color, transgender, non-binary older adults and people living with HIV. SAGE also seeks to recruit more a diverse population of LGBTQ+ volunteers to support the program.

Contact Information:

Julie Ugoretz LMSW

Friendly Visiting Program Manager

SAGE USA

305 7th Avenue

New York, NY 10001

929.458.0167

FriendlyVisitorNYC@sageusa.org



“

My Friendly Visitor is patient, supportive, and he remembers what I say. He suggests fun and creative outings for us. I value the support and friendship. I enjoy getting to know someone from a younger generation who is easy to talk to. My Friendly Visitor is a good listener and companion.”

—Participant

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Connecting and Supporting Sibling Caregivers

Sibling Leadership Network

Chicago, IL | www.siblingleadership.org

The Sibling Leadership Network (SLN), headquartered in Chicago, IL, addresses unmet needs of sibling caregivers and their families by providing education, support and engagement. When parents are no longer able to fulfill caregiving roles, siblings often become the next generation of caregivers to their own siblings with disabilities, often while caring for their own children or caregiving for their aging parents. Support programs and services have historically been developed for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their parents; however, the supports available to siblings have been limited. As siblings become more involved in providing care for their brother or sister with IDD, their own need for support increases. In Illinois, many individuals with IDD live with family caregivers and very few families receive state agency family support. Recognizing that addressing the needs of sibling caregivers will improve outcomes for their brothers and sisters with disabilities, SLN developed a three-prong approach to address the unmet needs of sibling caregivers: a peer mentoring program, a podcast series and a monthly virtual support program.

The Sib2Sib peer mentoring program trains volunteers to mentor sibling caregivers with the intent to prepare and increase their comfort in supporting their brothers and sisters. This program was so well received in 2022 that SLN now offers two rounds of the program—one in winter and one in spring—to engage more caregivers. To continue enhancing the podcast, SLN is encouraging and inviting more individuals with disabilities to serve as podcast grants to ensure their voices continue to be amplified. Additionally, SLN is finding new ways to inspire sibling caregivers to attend the Sibposium virtual support forums with their siblings with disabilities to foster deeper understanding and connection.

SLN continues to consult its advisory committee, comprised of Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters, Siblings with a Mission and Sibling Support Project, to ensure that program resources are appropriately tailored to meet the needs of sibling caregivers. Participants have reported an increased sense of connection, support and confidence after participating in SLN programs, and many siblings, regardless of location, are drawn to the virtual engagement options that allow them to discuss future planning, caregiving responsibilities, navigating family dynamics and self-care.

Contact Information:

Kaitlin McNamara

Executive Director

The Sibling Leadership Network

332 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 121-S240

Chicago, IL 60604-4332

info@siblingleadership.org



It's so helpful to hear from siblings. Really valuable information but it also gives me the feeling that I will survive this somehow. Because other people have.

—Participant



AVUS Connect™ - AVUS Tech Pals™

United Home Care Services Inc. d/b/a United HomeCare

Miami, FL | www.unitedhomecare.com

United HomeCare's (UHC) mission is to make a difference in the lives of individuals in Miami, FL by offering community-based solutions that promote independence and wellness. For 50 years, UHC has empowered older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers through quality-of-life solutions delivered in the comfort of home settings. AVUS Connect - AVUS Tech Pals™, thrives as a UHC youth-led hybrid volunteer program in which Tech Pals provide companionship and train homebound older adults to use technology to engage in friendly virtual conversations and offer family caregivers resources, technology support and much-needed respite.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted life for older adults and their family caregivers and many of the community services they relied on for regular connection were halted abruptly. The AVUS Connect – AVUS Tech Pals™ model emerged from the heightened consciousness of social isolation and loneliness, as well as an increased recognition of technology as a crucial way to facilitate social connection among homebound older adults. AVUS Tech Pals™ volunteers are recruited from local colleges and universities to engage older adult participants experiencing loneliness and social isolation by empowering them to use technology to enhance their quality of life. Miami-Dade's population of 2.7 million residents is approximately 69 percent Hispanic/Latino. Volunteers are matched to meet the language needs of older adults who are Spanish or Creole speakers. Eligible older adult participants or family caregivers receive no-cost tablets, broadband connectivity, training and guidance to break the barrier of technology and usage. Participants benefit from having access to digital services including telemedicine, banking, entertainment and video-conferencing platforms like Zoom. Virtually and in-person, Tech Pal visits vary by participant for the span of the 18-month program to help foster a better sense of community connection.

This one-of-a-kind effort is supported through partners supplying in-kind resources to furnish 150 tablets, including connectivity, as well as staff and volunteer technology training. The Alliance for Aging, the Area Agency on Aging for Miami-Dade and Monroe counties, and community partner collaborators provide program referrals to extend reach. And lastly, to strengthen intergenerational volunteerism, UHC collaborates with community partners including colleges and universities throughout South Florida primarily from Miami Dade College, Florida International University and Florida Memorial University, a historically Black college with a diverse student body to spearhead all efforts. Volunteers receive valuable service-learning experiences and community service hours.

Contact Information:

Alina Palenzuela

Chief Marketing & Volunteer Engagement Officer
apalenzuela@unitedhomecare.com

Blanca Ceballos

Community Relations Manager
bceballos@unitedhomecare.com

United HomeCare®
8400 N.W. 33rd Street, Suite 400
Miami, FL 33122
305.716.0710



*Generations Working Together
for Older Adult Causes.*



Greenbriar Community Care Corps

West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine

Lewisburg, WV | www.wvsom.edu

The West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine Center for Rural Community Health (CRCH) drives engagement in rural health by building infrastructure that empowers community members to reach their highest levels of health and wellness. Rural counties, like Greenbrier and Monroe, WV, are home to dispersed communities and challenging topography. Many communities lack access to essential services such as transportation and shopping assistance, and, as a result, older adults tend to rely on family, friends and neighbors to provide assistance with errands, chores and other help around the house. With no other organizations in Greenbrier or Monroe counties providing volunteer assistance to support aging in place at a significant level, CRCH partnered with five community organizations to establish the Greenbrier Community Care Corps (GCCC). In 2022, the GCCC connected volunteers to residents in need of assistance with meal preparation, laundry, yard work, home maintenance, companionship and a host of other tasks that don't require special skills or training, to enable older adults and adults with disabilities to live independently.

During the first year of implementation, CRCH learned that the program needed to expand its services and reach more individuals as Greenbrier residents shared that their friends and family in other rural counties were in need and interested in receiving assistance. In response to this need, the GCCC expanded into neighboring Monroe County and continues to modify and add to its menu of assistance to best meet local needs based on community feedback. GCCC also continues to engage more community ambassadors in partnership with the Greenbrier County Health Alliance to help establish trusted relationships with residents from isolated Appalachian communities, whose strength and resilience has a history of manifesting in reluctance to ask for help or support.

To attract more volunteers in support of the program's expansion, GCCC continuously modifies and enhances recruitment tools, trainings and resources. Volunteers are given stipends to defray costs related to volunteer service and travel time, which can add up, especially in rural areas. CRCH also implemented a cloud-based volunteer management software to link volunteers to older adults, caregivers and adults with disabilities requesting assistance, which has increased efficiency and effectiveness. Ultimately, CRCH hopes to build on the social capital and community cohesion fostered by the GCCC to implement the model in other communities across the state.

Contact Information:

Misty Boggs

Program Manager

West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine,

Center for Rural & Community Health

400 Lee Street North

Lewisburg, WV 24901

304.647.6244

mboggs@oste.wvsom.edu



We are pleased to be awarded this grant funding for a second year, this past year we were able to provide more than 2,000 service hours to Greenbrier County residents, and we are excited to offer the service in Monroe County.

—Program Leader



The Senior Circle of Care

Yellowstone County Council on Aging

Billings, MT | www.allianceyc.org

The Yellowstone County Council on Aging (YCCOA) has over 40 years of experience serving older adults and caregivers in Billings, MT, and surrounding areas. YCCOA's mission is to help individuals remain independent in the community with the highest level of dignity possible. This is accomplished through their range of comprehensive services and collaborative efforts. YCCOA's innovative Senior Circle of Care (SCC) seeks to surround older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers with a range of volunteer assistance aimed at helping them to maintain independence in their home.

SCC begins with an in-home assessment conducted by a Community Health Worker (CHW) to identify the needs of participants, then when appropriate, an Occupational Therapist (OT) conducts a comprehensive in-home screening. Screening results are used to engage the appropriate mix of volunteer assistance and resources to meet the participant's unique needs. SCC's range of volunteer services aimed at helping individuals maintain independence in their home include existing nutritional programs, minor home maintenance, outdoor maintenance, financial assistance and medical insurance enrollment. New social engagement opportunities include the Social Buddies friendly calling program and Friend Companions who engage in friendly armchair chats, listening and introducing positivity and encouragement through their face-to-face interactions.

The SCC model addresses disparities experienced by older adults and adults with disabilities in Yellowstone County. SCC's volunteer services engage marginalized and underserved populations in the community through the intake and referral process and through collaboration with Adult Protective Services and Big Sky Senior Services. With the program being flexible, at home, and starting with a needs assessment, individuals with unmet needs can enter the program from outside of community resource providers.

Contact Information:

Evelyn Dempsey
Community Services Director
Adult Resource Alliance of Yellowstone County
1505 Avenue D
Billings, MT 59102
406.259.9666
evelynd@allianceyc.org



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I have been using the RIDES program. My regular driver helps me find items in the store I could not have found on my own. Her eyesight is much better than mine. I was able to attend a purse sale recently thanks to another volunteer driver and found a white purse that is the perfect size. They are all such nice volunteers!”

—Participant

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Conclusion

The 2022-2023 Community Care Corps grantees have been hard at work navigating post-pandemic challenges and responding to intensified needs in their communities. We continue to gain valuable insights from their successes, challenges and adaptations in support of our nation's caregivers, older adults and adults with disabilities.

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

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