



Fall 2015, Volume 57

The Visitor

The mission of Senior Connections is to recruit, train and support volunteers who visit and befriend isolated adults in our community.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT SENIOR CONNECTIONS

Tea Letter Assembly

10 am, Saturday, October 31, 2015

Senior Connections (535 Custer Ave., Evanston)

We need volunteers to help us assemble our “Stay-at-Home Tea Letter” for our Annual Fund Drive. Come for the FREE pizza, soda and fantastic company, and help us put together our mailing to over 600 of our friends and supporters.

Senior Connections Fall Luncheon

11 am, Saturday, November 14, 2015

Reba Place Church Meeting House (620 Madison St., Evanston)

Join us for a delicious lunch from Urban Table followed by entertainment provided from students of the Beacon Academy! RSVP to Wendy Klinkner at wendy@senior-connections.org.

“The Best Day of My Life So Far” Story Group

10:45 am, Thursdays

The Merion (1611 Chicago Ave., Evanston)

This weekly program, co-sponsored with SASI, provides an opportunity for seniors to gather together to write their own stories, exchange reminiscences, and have the stories posted on our own blog. This informal, loosely structured program has been shown to open creativity and socialization for seniors. Each session lasts about an hour, is free, and everyone is welcome. Please join us to be volunteer scribes, listen to stories being told – and encourage seniors you know to join us!

Inside this issue:

State of the Non-Profit: From the Desk of Barbara Sittler	2
Tapestry of Friendship Sponsors	3
Food for the Soul: From the Desk of Wendy Klinkner	4
Tapestry of Friendship Donors	4
In Memoriam	5
In Gratitude	5
Temperance Trikonasana	5
Wish List	6

STATE OF THE NON-PROFIT: FROM THE DESK OF BARBARA SITTLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

We had a wonderful evening September 12th at our **Third Annual Tapestry of Friendship Fundraiser**. Board members and staff gathered together with our donors, friends, seniors and volunteers to raise the roof and fund Senior Connections' continuation of our work to reduce isolation among the elderly in our community. In the pages to come, you can see pictures from the event and the names of the many businesses that sponsored the Fundraiser or gave generously to provide raffle and auction items to the event. We were blown away by the support we received from the community! Here is an edited version of remarks I gave at the fundraiser to give you a flavor of what it is that your support, and the dynamic support of so many in our community, provides as well as a snapshot of our efforts over the past year to increase outreach into the community.

"Our seniors regain their sense of hope, jump-start their zest for living and help foster a renewed sense of future and purpose. For our volunteers the rewards are just as plentiful: years of experience, perspective, and advice."

"Today, at our third annual Tapestry of Friendship Fundraiser, as I look at all of you who have given of your time and heart to join us today and have opened your pocketbooks to help sustain our mission, I cannot help but think how your presence here today and your affirmation of Senior Connections, is itself building a Tapestry of Friendship on a community scale.

We are a resource that is unique for older adults in that we fill in the gap that other wonderful providers of basic services to the elderly cannot. While these service providers are essential to the health and welfare of older adults in need, we exist to do something different but that is no less essential.

By matching up an older adult in a one-on-one mutual friendship with a community volunteer, we are able to loosen the effects of loneliness and isolation. Through engaging with their volunteer, our seniors regain their sense of hope, jump-start their zest for living, and help foster a renewed sense of future and purpose. For our volunteers, the rewards are just as plentiful: years of experience, perspective, and advice.

As you sustain Senior Connections, **it is our hope that you feel connected with our mission and purpose in ways that touch and restore your own hearts and spirits.** For it is surely true that we are all of us better off together than alone, we are better people when we give and we share, when we listen and we learn from each other, and that these gifts of connection between people are the essence of our own humanity.

Together with other organizations and the city of Evanston, we are also building a stronger community-wide Tapestry of Friendship - one that will enhance our collective efforts to serve and support our entire citizenry. This year we forged stronger links for older adults through advocacy and collaboration among our partners.

We have built upon our relationship with [the North Shore Senior Center](#) to ensure that seniors have the opportunity for engagement, while sharing concerns about well-being and access to services that are better handled North Shore Senior Center.

State of the Non-Profit (continued)

We have joined together with SASI for two projects: "The Best Day of My Life So Far", a weekly writing group for and by seniors, and an event on end-of-life issues featuring Dr. Linda Emanuel.



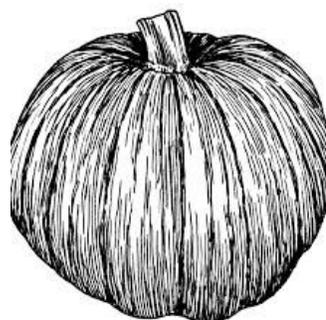
Through my participation in the 10-month Leadership Evanston course we now have a cohort of hundreds of leaders in Evanston, from the Evanston Police and Fire, to the Evanston Library with Books on Wheels, Northwestern University and ETHS, the Evanston Community Foundation and the Evanston Arts Council that wants to expand arts to all ages,



The City of Evanston has engaged in a 5-year partnership with the World Health Organization on the Age-Friendly Evanston Initiative and Senior Connections is proud to serve on the Affordable Housing Task Force within this partnership. We are also participants on the annual Aging Well Conference planning committee. With a newly re-energized association with the Fleetwood Jourdain Center and Theatre, we continue to build our core of seniors and volunteers across all of Evanston to share the extraordinary lives that these seniors and their volunteers lift up to each other and the community at large."



This truly is a Tapestry of Friendship that steers us forward into greater and greater collaboration to support the entire community of Evanston. We thank you all for making this happen.



**3rd Annual
Tapestry of Friendship
Fundraiser**

Gold Level Sponsors



Wade Street Group at
Morgan Stanley



Silver Level Sponsors



DR. JULIAN BAILES

Bronze Level Sponsors



GDL Accounting & Tax
Services





FOOD FOR THE SOUL: FROM THE DESK OF WENDY KLINKNER, DIRECTOR OF VOLUNTEERS

Our seniors often ask us, “Why is this person volunteering? Why would this person want to spend time with an old person like me?”

This is a question we faithfully pose to our visitors when they begin their involvement with Senior Connections. In our fast-paced life, what stirs our volunteers of all ages to get up at the crack of dawn on a Saturday to spend time with their senior sorting through their mail, helping him/her navigate the computer, adding an extra hour to their errand running to take their senior grocery shopping; or to make time in a full day’s schedule to share a cup of tea with their homebound friend?

Here are some of their responses:

From an Iranian woman, the spouse of a NW grad student, “I cannot work here, but while I am in the States I can immerse myself in the American culture and give back at the same time.”

“They all seem to have one thing in common- they know the intangible gift that comes from investing in another person’s life. Giving and receiving adds richness to one’s life.”

A grad student in the NW School of Journalism, “helping others and giving back is a priority for me and that is why I wanted to seek out a volunteer opportunity before my classes started.”

From another student, “if I can add joy to someone else’s life, I know that joy will come to me as well.”

“My grandparents are too far away to visit, but somehow investing in an older person’s life here makes me feel better- like I am not forgetting our elders.”

From an empty nester, “I want to do something purposeful with my time now that my kids are out of the house.”

From a former Senior Connections’ Board member, “Senior Connections give me an opportunity to be Christ’s hands and feet.”

Our visitors come from all walks of life - far and

3rd Annual Tapestry of Friendship Fundraiser

THANKS TO OUR DONORS:

- Alley Gallery
- Amy Keefner
- Jan Bollig
- Boltwood Restaurant
- Bridge House Tavern
- Al Butkus
- Chicago Public Media and “Wait, Wait Don’t Tell Me”
- Constellation Brands
- Del Frisco’s Double Eagle Steak House
- Downtown Evanston
- Felix Hotel
- Fleetwood Jourdain Theatre
- Found Restaurant
- Dr. Doris Graber
- Jerry’s Finest Meats
- Koi Restaurant
- Italian Village Restaurant
- Lyric Opera
- The Merion
- MilleFioril Florist
- Jackie O’Connor Pilates
- Peet’s Coffee
- Jim Pether
- Quartet Quality Printing
- Rebecca Sturgeon Massage
- Schaefer’s Wine, Food and Spirits
- Senior Connections Culinary Team
- 6 Degrees Tavern
- The Spice House
- Trattoria D.O.C.
- John and Dawn Van Alphen

Food for the Soul (continued)

near, but they all seem to have one thing in common - they know the intangible gift that comes from investing in another person's life. Giving and receiving adds richness to one's life.

Yesterday I checked in with one of our seniors to hear how her visits were going with her new friend. She talked animatedly about their excursion to the coffee shop - even in the rain - and how she was excited that she was now going to teach her visitor how to knit. My heart warmed at hearing her excitement, and all the possibilities that were now open to her. Just three weeks earlier this same person, who really has made remarkable efforts to enrich her life in spite of being wheelchair bound, said she was lonely, stuck at home, and it would be nice to have a friend. And *now* she has one.

Life is so much richer when you have someone to share it with. As for the visitor - new to the States and looking for something meaningful and purposeful to do with her time while her husband was in grad school - it was a win/win from the start. I am so grateful to all our volunteers, seniors and visitors alike, who have discovered what is important in life - the immeasurable gift of friendship.

TEMPERANCE TRIKONASANA

Thank you to Temperance Beer and Jennifer Breen for "Temperance Trikonasana", who offered supporters of Senior Connections a great one-hour yoga class focused on "Core and Community" followed by an opportunity to sample some wonderful Temperance Brewed English Style Bitter "SmittyTown" and spread the word about Senior Connections and the work that we do involving seniors and volunteers.



All proceeds from the event went to support Senior Connections - members of whom left the event both limber and refreshed!

IN MEMORIAM:

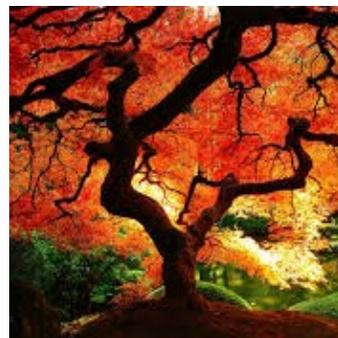
- Ophelia Carter
- Jane Goodman
- Peggy Henningsen
- Walter Leapheart
- Marysia Lisowski

IN GRATITUDE:

- At the Appreciation Tea:

- Brady Richards, Connor Ray, and Joseph DiEdwardo for the musical entertainment.
- Dan Coyne for videotaping interviews with the seniors.
- The girls from the Awana Club for serving.

- Donna Kitchen for the office supplies.



WISH LIST– Calling All Guardian Angels

Office Help - A couple hours a week could help a lot. Know how to work with ACCESS database? Even better!

Weekly Scribe - Just two hours a week and you meet some great new friends! Facilitate the weekly writing group “Best Day of My Life So Far”. Bring paper, pens and a timer, get the writers going on their short stories, listen as they share the amazing stories of their lives with the group, and then after the group adjourns, drop off the stories at the SASI office on Emerson and Ridge. It’s that easy!

Members for our Auxiliary Fundraiser Committee – We need 10 volunteers to help us plan our [25th Anniversary Fundraiser](#), to be held September 2016. Great at planning parties, soliciting sponsorships and donations, love to decorate and be creative? Please consider joining our Auxiliary Committee to help us make the Fundraiser a great success!

Office Supplies - Especially Printer Paper and Office Depot Gift cards.



***My seventies were interesting and fairly serene,
but my eighties are passionate. I grow more
intense as I age.***

— Florida Scott-Maxwell

Save a tree, save two dollars. If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically – *the pictures are in color!* –please email us at barbara@senior-connections.org and we will switch you right over. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please let us know and we will remove you. We do not wish to clog mail boxes with unwanted mail and will use the savings to support more senior friendships!

AT SENIOR CONNECTIONS

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Div., Executive Director**

**Wendy H. Klinkner LCSW,
Director of Volunteers**

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