

SENIOR CONNECTIONS

THE VISITOR

a newsletter for friends of senior connections

Volume 49

March 2012

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



Senior Connections Honor Roll

With gratitude, we honor and remember those for whom a contribution has been given

In Honor of:

Your "Bridge work"

Florence and Art Hurter

"Seniors in my life"

Diane Fellin

"Our gift of Sarah"

Mildred Kaplan and family

Emily Anderson

Eric and Christina-Mai Just

My daughters Joan and Diane

Hub Dretzka

Anna Bisaro

Joan Edwards

Janice Brown

Steven and Jolie Krasinski

Al and Ellen Butkus

Bruce and Margaret Sents

Patty and Bob Reece

Michael and Jori Witt

John McKnight

Marion Flynn

Phyllis Schlueter

Michael and Rhoda Kamin

Al Butkus' 60th birthday

Dan Selke

Mike and Pat Cherry

Diane Fellin and Joan Battle

Emily Clarke and Joan Battle

Valerie Clarke

Emily Kastrul Clarke and Rob Clarke

Susan Barker

Emily Clarke

Ericka Foster

Carol Comeau

Mary Lou Mooney



Sophie Ewald

Elaine Hendricks

Karyn Glass

Stanford Glass

M. Eleanor Kaufman

Joseph and Ellen Sanford

Ann McMahon

Beth Tannar "thank you

enriching my mother's life; she has loved every one of her girls!"

My friend, Wendy Klinkner

Penny Gardner

Marysia Lisowski

Wendy Klinkner

Mary Jean Lytle

Marguerite Lytle

David Peterson

Lindsay Christensen

Anna Reed and Florence Siebert

Betty Smitherman

Barbara Sittler

Emily Hart

Barbara Sittler, Wendy

Klinkner, Emily Stephens and

Glynis Doyle

Alliene Edson

William Soule

Donald Soule

Penny Whiteside

Ann Searles

In Memory of:

Bernice Betton

Rose and Bob Johnson

Pearl Chardell

Renee Welsch

Jerlene David, my sister

by Betty Smitherman

Byron Friedman

Elsie Jacobson

by Dorothea Jacobson-Wenzel

Jean Gessner Kastrul

and Jeff Kastrul

Susan Barker

Lois Levine

Judy and Bill Cottle

Eva Mae Longston

Barbara Roberts

Mary Ann McCudden

and Annie Northcut

Agnes Curtin

My husband Robert Messenger

Joyce Messenger

Ray and Eve Osterkamp

Marsha Ettema

Hans Sittler,

Joe and Jeanne Sittler;

Harvey and Kate Whitfield

Barbara Sittler & Harvey Whitfield

My Grandma Rose Schencker

Elaine Lewis

Geneva Slama

Lisa Slama

John and Frances Wilczynski

Charles and Donna Kitchen

Mary Woeber

Amy Keefner

In Gratitude to All Our Faithful Donors in 2011!

\$499 and above

Al and Ellen Butkus
Deborah Cross
Dan and Glynis Doyle
David and Mary Ann Grumman
Penny Whiteside
Christopher Cain
Michael and Rhoda Kamin
Harvey Whitfield and Barbara
Sittler



\$99-499

David and Stephanie Altman
Crissy Anderson
Emily and Luke Anderson
Susan Barker
Joan and Daniel Batlle
Bethel AME
Hubert Bowles
Emily and Robert Clarke
Agnes Curtin
Alliene Edson
Paolo and Diane Fellin
Nathan and Ericka Foster
Sanford Glass
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Eleanor Grumman
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Hubert Dretzka
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Marsha Ettema
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Marion Flynn
Sulie Friedman
P.J and C.W. Gardner
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Elaine Hendricks
Margaret Henningsen
Arthur and Florence Hurter
Dorothea Jacobson-Wenzel
Robert and Rose Johnson
Eric and Christina Just
Mildred Kaplan
Eleanor Kaufman
Amy Keefner
Wendy and Jerry Klinkner
Steven and Jolie Krasinski
Rupert Krieg
Ruth Locin



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McCaffrey
Martha Mackin
Pauline Mayo
Isabel McCoy
John McKnight
Thomas and Ann McMahon
Joyce Messenger
Mary Lou Mooney
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Robert and Diane Parker
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Johannes & Julia Weertman
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Michael and Jori Witt

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In-Kind Donors

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Luke Anderson
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Julie Flores
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Julie Neely
Jon Wetzel
Betty Wilmoth
Kellogg Cares-Northwestern
University

Annual Appreciation Tea and Fundraiser
May 20, 2012 ~ 2 p.m. to 4p.m. ~ at the King Home



Please mark your calendars for an afternoon of Tea and Visiting, Music and Laughter as we celebrate our Seniors and their Visitors, honor our Donors and present the 2nd annual Butkus Award. Help us grow and flourish as we do some Fundraising for Senior Connections as a stand-alone Nonprofit! Plan to stop by our "Giving Tree" to purchase a Leaf or Crane to help us expand our program to meet the needs of our community as we move into our 21st year.



From the Director...

Dear Friends,

In many ways this edition of the newsletter is my favorite of the year. It is so amazing to gather in one place all of the gifts we have received in the past year. As you read through this newsletter, may you marvel, as we do, at the bounty we have received from you – our donors. In the pages to follow you can see that each and every one of you are the tangible and concrete foundation of Senior Connections that carries us forward in word AND deed. It is humbling, as the Director of Senior Connections, to see the regular demonstration of your support of this small organization through your gifts of money, hours of service and words of encouragement and faith in our work. Thank you!!



But on to the news! As you can see from our new masthead, we started our new year as an independent nonprofit with a beautiful new logo created by graphic designer Julie Risko Neely, a long-time volunteer visitor with Senior Connections who is a genius with design and translated our mission into a look that we feel captures the essence of Senior Connections. We love our new look and hope you do too. Of course no logo can just sit there without a new website to join it, so with the help of computer/web master volunteers Luke Anderson and Jon Wetzel, we have a young but ever growing website that you can reach at www.senior-connections.org

Independence has meant that many of the office functions that had been handled by Reba Place Church are now on our plate. Through the generosity of the Ellen F. Butkus Endowment, we have been able to meet the technological challenges thrown our way by instituting office efficiencies and upgrading our copier, installing a computerized financial package, updating our database software, (and learning how to use it) and joining the 21st century. Soon we hope to have the capability to accept donations electronically on our website and really look like the big kids☺.

We continue to receive requests for volunteers to visit our ever growing population of older adults here in Evanston and are delighted to find that as the requests come in so do the volunteers who wish to use their time and presence to bring the community to older adults.

This year we are working to expand our presence in Evanston by forming partnerships with other organizations that work with older adults. If you know of a group that may wish to participate in planning and outreach with us, please let us know! We are also working with Evanston Township High School and hoping to build a volunteer base of younger folks who also have much to bring to Senior Connections. *(Just imagine the computer skills and social networking they could help us with!)*

Finally, and importantly, we continue to seek out opportunities for larger sources of support through grant writing, development of sponsorships and, new this year, an Advisory Board.

Please know that we are here because you keep us here. We are driven by your belief in the importance of what we bring to the community. **YOU** are Senior Connections and **YOU** should be proud.

Thank you,

Barbara

We bring Holiday Cheer and Receive the best gifts in return!

By David Hovde, Senior Connections Board Member

Hoping to brighten the holidays of some of the seniors in the community served by Senior Connections, board members stuffed stockings at their December board meeting and delivered them to seniors in the following weeks. Stocking stuffers included: hand cleanser, markers/pens, calendars, tea bags, sugarless candy, and candy with sugar, hot chocolate, tissues, lotion, shampoo, key chains, stamps, and mini-flashlights.

As a board member, I had the privilege of delivering a stocking to Ronald. While talking to him in his apartment, I noticed the many books he had about different countries and asked him about them.

Ronald explained that he loves to travel to other countries to learn about them. He told me a story about when he drove a Land Rover across Kenya and had to drive through a big pool of water in the middle of the road not knowing how deep the water was. Somehow he made it across. Hearing about his many travels amazed me.



soon and his gratitude for the stocking.

I also had the privilege of delivering a stocking to David. David could not be at his home as he would like, but was recovering from health problems in a rehabilitation center. David expressed his hope to be home

It was a blessing to deliver the stockings and make connections with seniors like Ronald and David. I also appreciate meeting weekly with the senior I was newly matched with, Vera. Vera and I are part of the same church community and have known each other many years. Vera says she appreciates Senior Connections now more than she used to. She says that it is now difficult for her to do many things physically so she is blessed by having someone like me drive her places, and move larger items for her. We are both grateful for Senior Connections.

Dear Senior Connections,

I am writing you to express my great gratitude for connecting me with Ellen [student, not SC founder] who comes to visit me every Sunday afternoon. She is an upcoming graduate student in Biochemistry and has a background of interest in astronomy which was my career field at the Adler Planetarium for 28 years, after seven years of grad school at NU in the Dearborn Observatory. Ellen's visits brighten my day with our conversations on both our subjects of interest. Thank you for bringing us together and for the joy we share. God bless you in your kind and generous work and outreach to both students and elders. I feel that I play a role of an interested and caring uncle or even a grandfather for a girl far from home and relatives, just as I am far from my own relatives. Ellen is becoming for me a niece and granddaughter since my own grown children have had no children thus far. She fills a lonely place in my heart.

**With warm thanks,
*Eric***

Founder's Corner

Dear Friends,
Senior Connections undergirds, overarches and moves beyond the aspect of 'services' or 'helping' older adults in the Evanston community. We focus on building relationships, bonds with the potential for long-term friendship, which has mutuality to it and encompasses a depth and creativity which believe is unique to the one-on-one relationship approach.



I say this to clarify what may be a misconception—that Senior Connections' "friendly visiting" relationships simply sit and chat—visit. Encompassed in the relationships that begin with a match-up, committing to regular visits and getting to know one another are experiences we never could have even anticipated, much less requested, as well as practical helps that might never be found on a "list of services."

Adoption of an elder man with no family of his own as uncle and grandpa. Adopted grandma. Adopted granddaughter-both away from their families of origin. Scrabble games and 7Up with NU students. Weekly ice cream cones at the lake. Weekly walks for a blind woman, holding onto a toddler's stroller. Planning a funeral. Serving as a pall bearer. Enjoying a senior's 80th birthday with 50 family members. A book of poetry published. Refrigerator moved. An extensive Shakespeare collection organized. Flowers planted. Reverse mortgage procured, thus preventing home loss. A great granddaughter enrolled in a Head Start program. Wheelchair transport. Weekly grocery trips. Visits to a senior's husband in a nursing home. Mail reviewed. Bills paid. Daily support stockings applied on a volunteer's way to work. A visit to the barber shop a man owned years earlier, turning out to be the last week before he died without warning. A senior's move to life with a caring nephew in another state after another family member's financial abuse. Care for a beloved pet.

Yes, Senior Connections fills a unique, but not a small, niche. The friendships our visitors offer answer a universal need. We build community. We treasure what elders can still contribute. We build bridges between generations. We decrease the serious risks of isolation. We support each pair of friends with professional guidance and lavish encouragement.

You have a choice in how you invest in your community. Financial or volunteering, analyze the lists and graphs and budgets and reports to determine the **actual** value your contribution brings. As I reflect on my last 20 years, I can feel satisfied that the ripples from the pebbles I tossed continue to make waves; and the beached starfish I tossed back into the water lives. Thanks to you who do the same and so much more!

Ellen

FIIVE Chicago Volunteer Opportunity for Older Adults

Center for Independent Futures (CIF), a non-profit organization in Evanston with the mission to form innovative partnerships to create product and service models that give individuals with disabilities and their families the skills and opportunities to realize a full life needs YOUR help! CIF has embarked on a new project called *Fostering Intergenerational Inclusive Volunteer Engagement in Chicago* (FIIVE Chicago) that pairs young adults with disabilities (ages 14-30) and older adults to engage in monthly community service projects together. Examples of volunteer projects include making Valentine cards for soldiers overseas, cleaning up local parks, serving at soup kitchen, and more.

Recruitment for FIIVE Chicago is ongoing, and **CIF is seeking older adults (ages 50+) who would like to volunteer in the community alongside individuals with disabilities.** Volunteer projects will occur on a monthly basis from February - September, 2012. If you would like to try out an activity to see what it's like, or if you'd like to learn more, please contact Lauren Drake ([847.328.2044](tel:847.328.2044)). Lauren is a member of the Senior Connections Board of Directors and is coordinating the FIIVE Chicago program.

Wish List
Assist with web site construction, office help , PR expertise & a
dry erase board, videographer for our Spring Tea.

Senior Connections Board and Staff

President

Joan Batlle

Secretary-Treasurer

Glynis Doyle

Crissy Anderson

Emily Anderson

Emily Clarke

Lauren Drake

Julie Hagwood

David Hovde

Penny Whiteside

Staff Members

Barbara Sittler LCSW;

M. Div.

Director

Wendy Klinkner, LCSW

Director of Volunteers

Senior Connections new email address: wevisitseniors@senior-connections.org

SENIOR CONNECTIONS + 535 Custer Ave + EVANSTON, IL 60202

847-869-0682

See our website at senior-connections.org

Or visit us on Facebook

Save a tree! 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 over. Each newsletter switched to email saves Senior Connections \$2 per mailing, or \$6 a year. With a mailing list topping 500 this can be a significant savings, for us, and for the earth's cleaner air! Thank you