

AGING AND VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Creative Regional Solutions for Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties



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LTCOP Alive Inside Film a Big Success - Help Continue the Momentum

In our area, "one husband had not noticed his wife's presence for many years and had shown little indication he had any awareness of his environment. While listening to his favorite music through headphones and an iPod, he leaned his head on his wife's shoulders and told her he loved her."

Over 200 people attended the Sundance Award Winning documentary film *Alive Inside* at the Carolina Cinema in Asheville on November 13. *Alive Inside* traces Music and Memory founder Dan Cohen on his journey to help those with Alzheimer's and other dementias reawaken their souls through the simple, profound experience of listening to their favorite music. The film reveals how the healing power of music can triumph where traditional treatments fall short, and has inspired thousands of care professionals and volunteers to join the effort. For anyone who was unable to attend the showing, *Alive Inside* is now available to purchase from various vendors or rent from Netflix.

The *Just Press Play Project* (formerly called Music and Memory) at Land of Sky is working toward establishing individualized music in every long-term care facility in our area. Not only does personalized music increase a person's awareness, it reduces the use of potentially damaging medications such as anti-psychotics and the aggressive behaviors that can lead to the use of these medications.

Showing the film raised over \$1300 and donations continue to arrive including cash donations, iPods, iPhones, and DVDs that will be used to get residents in long-term care connected to their favorite music. Here's how you can help:

- Donating and/or collecting gently used iPods, iPhones, over-ear headphones (Sony preferred), and original CDs. You can drop them off at Land of Sky.
- Making, delivering, and/or checking donation boxes in the region.
- Spending time with a resident and compiling a personalized playlist.
- Identifying corporate sponsors in your community to bring a *Just Press Play* program to a facility.
- Making a financial contribution. The average cost of start-up for an individual is around \$100 for the music, iPod and headphones. Make a tax deductible contribution payable to Land of Sky Regional Council and write in the memo line *Just Press Play*.

Just Press Play implementation also includes applying for a grant to fund the program in at least four facilities and offering two workshops:

1. ***Just Press Play Workshop for Long-Term Care Administrators*** describes the science behind the music, the facility benefits, and the keys to success.

Land of Sky Regional Council • March 12, 2015 • 8 - 11 am

Inclement weather date is March 26

CEU applications for Nursing Home and Adult Care Home Administrators have been submitted. Breakfast will be provided. The cost is \$15. RSVP to Janice at (828) 251-6622.

2. ***Just Press Play How-Tos Workshop*** for Long-Term Care staff, music teachers, music students, volunteers and the general public provides details about the costs, equipment, and procedures for implementing personalized music.

Land of Sky Regional Council • April 9, 2015 • 3 - 5 pm

Inclement weather date is April 27

There is no charge to attend. RSVP to Janice at (828) 251-6622.



Donation box for iPods, iPhones, headphones and original CDs.

AAA Area Agency on Aging

The Area Agency on Aging is a leader and catalyst in helping older adults in our four county region lead more independent, vibrant lives. Part of the national network of aging agencies established by the Older Americans Act, we work to strengthen home and community care for older adults.

The Home and Community Care Block Grant, or HCCBG, allows local groups to make decisions about what services are most needed by older and disabled adults in their county, how much money needs to be allocated to the service, and what agency will provide the service. Last year more than 3600 seniors were assisted in our region.

AAA

Here's to You, Louise...Transylvania County is a Better Place Because of You!

Louise Koontz began her career in social work spending 9½ years in Adult Developmental Activities Program (ADAP) in Ashe County. After working in ADAP, she began at New River Mental Health. Eventually, Louise returned to her birthplace of Balsam Grove, North Carolina, with her son and daughter.

Louise started with the Transylvania County Department of Social Services (DSS) on February 18, 1992. Her first position was with Child Protective Services and then managed the Adult Home Program, Foster Care, and the Adoption Program. Eventually, Louise became the manager of Adult Services, Adult Protective Services, the Work First Employment Program, and the chair of the Transylvania County Council on Aging.

In addition to her duties at DSS, there are several agencies, causes, and programs that she works just as hard for. She is a champion not only for Land of Sky, but for the American Cancer Society and has headed up the fundraising efforts for county employees for years.

Louise is "one awesome lady" stated Jeanne Lytle, Social Worker with Work First Employment Program. She is "a beautiful soul, inside and out," said Lee Stewart, member of the Transylvania County Council on Aging. Louise is "one of the Adult Day Services biggest supporters. Her support and assistance has been such a help both personally and professionally. Love you." remarked Andrea Rackley, a RN at KOALA.



Louise Koontz

Louise "is fiercely protective of the people who work under her and with her, holds us accountable, corrects us with care, a wonderful supervisor and friend, she is honest and loyal, has a great deal of insight and enthusiasm to make each program a success, always gives tasks her very best efforts, deeply knows the programs she supervises." stated many of Louise's colleagues at Transylvania County's Department of Social Services.

KOALA Program Director Robert Anderson remarked, "I am forever grateful for the rides to work during inclement weather. I especially enjoyed those mornings, standing by the road in the snow, watching you drive right by me, forgetting you were to pick me up. Seeing you throw your hands in the air and bringing the car to a stop will never be forgotten."

We applaud you for your many years of service and achievements. Thank you for sharing all of your personal wisdom and expertise. Our heartiest congratulations and best wishes for your retirement!

FCSP

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

Caring for someone with a chronic illness such as dementia, heart disease, Parkinson's disease or stroke can be stressful physically, emotionally and financially. In 2015, the Family Caregiver Support Program will help our region's caregivers balance their lives by providing *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* classes.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an educational program designed to provide caregivers with the tools they need to take care of themselves. Caregivers will be better prepared to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Communicate their feelings
- Balance their lives
- Make difficult decisions
- Locate helpful resources

Participants attend six, 2½ hour class sessions. *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* is an evidence based program developed at Stanford University and proven to be effective in reducing caregiver stress and improving caregiver wellbeing. There is a \$25 fee to cover the cost of the Caregiver Helpbook provided to all participants. Agencies and organizations that serve family caregivers should contact Land of Sky if they would like to serve as a program site.

Caregivers and others interested in taking classes should contact Carol McLimans at (828) 251-7439 or carol@landofsky.org

Dial 2-1-1

If you need help and don't know where to start, dial 2-1-1 or toll free (866) 401-6342. Operators can be reached 24 hours a day every day. 2-1-1 information and assistance specialists help callers identify their needs and connect them with services.



The Family Caregiver Support Program was established to help family and informal caregivers care for their loved ones at home for as long as possible. FCSP provides information to connect caregivers with resources; counseling support groups and education; respite (short term relief for caregivers; and short term to one time only services.

Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty) can assist caregivers of people with dementia by providing a Family Consultant to help resolve caregiving issues. They can connect caregivers with community resources and arrange funding to help pay for temporary relief, known as respite. Project C.A.R.E. helps reduce caregivers stress and exhaustion so that people with dementia can remain at home for as long as possible.

A&VS CarePartners PACE

CarePartners PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) is excited to announce the approval of our program for resident in Buncombe and Henderson Counties to begin operations immediately, with an effective enrollment date for participants of March 1st, 2015. PACE is a Medicare and Medicaid option that provides community-based care and services to people age 55 or older who otherwise might need to move to a skilled nursing facility. PACE was created as a way to provide frail elders the ability to remain living in their homes for as long as possible. Nationally, there are 106 PACE programs in 31 states.

To be eligible for CarePartners PACE, one must: Be 55 or older; Live in the PACE service area; Eligible for Skilled Nursing Level of Care; and Be safe at home at the time of enrollment, with PACE services. For more information, call (828) 213-8442 or contact Laura Baker-Seseika at (828) 770-7223 or lbaker-seseika@carepartners.org.

A&VS TRIAD Comes to Henderson County

According to data provided by the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (NCOSBM), Henderson County had 34,109 residents age 60 and over in 2013. This represented approximately 31% of the total population of the county. NCOSBM also projects that in 2034 there will be 44,820 county residents aged 60+, which will be nearly 36% of the county total.

With a rapidly increasing elderly population comes greater potential risk of exploitation and abuse of older adults. In an effort to address the needs and inherent risks associated with an increasingly aging population, TRIAD Henderson County was formed during the spring of 2014.

Triad is a partnership of law enforcement, older members of the community and service providers for older adults. An outgrowth of the community policing movement of the 1980's, TRIAD was first formed in 1988 through efforts of representatives from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the National Sheriff's Association (NSA). TRIAD is not an acronym, but represents a group of three. TRIAD's goals are to reduce the amount of crime against older adults and to lessen the fear of crime that often is experienced by senior citizens.

Most TRIADS provide outreach to seniors to educate them on frauds, scams, victimization and abuse. They also provide a forum where older citizens can meet with law enforcement and local aging service providers. This provides the benefits of helping safeguard participants against crime, reducing unwarranted fear of being victimized and educating them about services available in the community that they may not be aware of.

Curt Crowhurst, Chair of TRIAD Henderson County explains, "TRIAD Henderson is based around partnerships in the community between Law Enforcement Agencies, Department of Social Services, Henderson County Council on Aging and Senior Service providers by better understanding exploitation and abuse issues facing the elderly. TRIAD provides information and resources to the elderly on their safety and security within Henderson County. TRIAD Henderson strives to empower the elderly to "Say NO" to exploitation, abuse and neglect."

People who are interested in promoting the security of the aging population of Henderson County are welcome to participate in developing strategies and programs by joining Triad Henderson County.

If you want to get involved with TRIAD Henderson County, or would like more information concerning related activities, you can find it on Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Triad-Henderson-County/473783246090468>. You may also contact TRIAD Henderson County by phone at (828) 400-4541, or via email at curt@ccseniorservices.com.



Are you unemployed, at least 55 years old, earn a total family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level? The Senior Community Services Employment Program can provide you with training to gain meaningful part-time work experience in community service at a non-profit or governmental organization, as well as unsubsidized employment in the private sector.

Community-based prevention programs save lives and money. They also support older adults in maintaining optimal physical, mental, and emotional health. Health Promotion and Disease Prevention efforts are focused on partnering to deliver evidence-based health promotion programs; reducing the number of falls and fall related injuries; and self-managing of chronic diseases.

HPDP

Fall Prevention Tips for Winter Weather



Family Caregivers Enjoyed Appreciation Day

In November, 50 family caregivers from our region gathered at The Lutheran Church of the Nativity in Fletcher to get a few hours of pampering, fun, and relaxation. They enjoyed chair massages, mini-makeovers, aromatherapy, quiet music, and spirited drumming. It was a time to celebrate the family caregivers who give so much of their time to others.

One participant said, "Thank you for arranging such a fun and relaxing day where I did not have a concern for anything but to just share the day with others who know the struggles and trials of the life we live daily. You have blessed me greatly!"

Masters of Ceremony were Taylor McLennon from Home Instead Senior Care, and Ernie Konkoli and Suzannah Tebbe-Davis from Home Watch Caregivers.

In contrast to dropping temperatures, winter months bring warmth through holiday celebrations, family gatherings, soft sweaters, and well lit fireplaces. While these pleasantries are often experienced indoors, outside winter weather can inspire heartwarming ambiance with picturesque scenes of white fluffy snow and glittering ice. Don't let a fear of falling restrict your view of these winter wonderlands. Instead, you can apply these simple solutions when faced with a slippery situation.

Carry Kitty Litter - Salt is great for melting snow, but as an alternative (or in combination with) try scattering cat litter over icy surfaces. Cat litter works well for producing friction under foot or traction behind a spinning car tire. When walking, sprinkle a generous pinch over slick spots you encounter for a safer crossing.

Winterize Your Footwear & Assistive Devices - Before stepping outside for even the briefest moment, take care to wear shoes designed for walking in the snow or add sole covers made to grip ice and increase stability. Don't forget your cane or walker, or worst yet leave it behind because it's not equipped to grip ice. Ice-gripper tips can be purchased from a variety of retailers, including medical supply stores, Wal-Mart, and even Home Depot. Most products are affordable and easy to equip to your assistive walking devices. In fact, the price of winterizing your footwear and assistive walking devices diminishes when you compare the expense(s) incurred from a fall. Examples: financial cost, decline in self-sufficiency, physical repercussions (both permanent and temporary), impaired quality of life, etc.

Additional actions you can take all year round that can strengthen your stability and reduce your risk for falling include:

- Schedule and attend routine vision and hearing checks.
- Talk to your doctor about medication side effects and fall prevention strategies.
- Inspect your home for trip hazards and low lighting; make repairs or adjustments to correct issues found.
- Develop an exercise regimen that focuses on building strength and better balance.
- Enlist the support of friends and family to preserve optimal independence.

The WNC Fall Prevention Coalition is a great resource for learning more about local health initiatives and evidenced-based programs designed to keep people independent with a high quality of life. A list of service providers and professional s specializing in fall prevention strategies can be found on <http://wncfallpreventioncoalition.org/>.

Source: Mindy Oxman Renfro, PT, PhD, DPT, GCS; Chair, American Physical Therapy Association's AGPT Balance & Falls SIG; Lead, Montana's Falls Free Coalition; University of Montana Rural Institute/ MonTECH programs.

Living Healthy also known as Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, developed through Stanford Patient Education, is a six-week workshop for people with any type of ongoing health problem. Participants learn to manage symptoms such as pain, fatigue & depression; increase endurance; use medication effectively; improve communication skills, eat well; handle stress; and more!

The WNC Fall Prevention Coalition is committed to reducing the number of falls and fall-related injuries in Western North Carolina. The Coalition is comprised of community volunteers and representative of 35 local agencies. The Coalition has three areas of focus: provider education, community awareness and education, and community screening and referral.

How Project C.A.R.E. Can Support a Caregiver in a Crisis

One Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty, the only aging program that serves the 34 westernmost counties) client deserving of special attention is Kathy Wilson who is recuperating at home from a heart attack she suffered earlier this month. While driving to her home in Sylva from an appointment, she felt pain in her chest which she attributed to indigestion. The pain intensified and forced her to pull off the road. Emergency responders arrived within minutes, transported her to Angel Medical Center, and eventually to Mission's Heart Center by ambulance.

A hospital social worker called Kathy's son in Atlanta after learning that her husband has Alzheimer's disease and could offer no help. Kathy explained that he would likely become extremely agitated if he were to receive a call informing him of her heart attack even though he might soon forget the cause of his discomfiture. It was getting dark and Kathy would not be coming home. Fortunately, their son was able to drive from Atlanta and stay with him until she returned home.



Kathy Wilson

Kathy, who is always thinking, called her Project C.A.R.E. Family Consultant, Nancy Hogan, from the hospital during her first night at Mission. She knew she would need some help once she returned home. Cindy Miles, the Family Caregiver Support Specialist at the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging, referred Kathy to Nancy for Caregiver Care Management. Nancy alerted Cindy of Kathy's heart attack.

While Kathy had accepted educational and emotional support, she had not yet utilized other services available to her. With assistance from Nancy and Cindy, home-delivered meals have now been arranged for Kathy and her husband while she recuperates and she will be receiving a \$500 respite voucher from the Family Caregiver Support Program for temporary in-home assistance. With their encouragement, Kathy is considering enrolling her husband in Jackson County Adult Day Care and possibly relying on public transportation to get him there and back. She would like to return to her part-time job at a local commercial print shop as soon as possible. She enjoys her work because she is very social and it gives her a reason to get out of the house and to take a break from caregiving responsibilities at home. She also "escapes" from her duties by photographing the natural world around her and by writing poems.

Kudos to Kathy for all that she is and does!

Family Caregiver Support Program Announces New Caregiver Assistance Options

The Family Caregiver Support Program provides a variety of services including information about community resources. People caring for a frail older adult are often unfamiliar with community resources and find it confusing and difficult to navigate the maze of federal, state, county, and local programs that may be helpful for them and the person they care for. Land of Sky Regional Council's Family Caregiver Support Program compiles and print *Senior Services Directory* for Madison and Transylvania counties and partners with others to update and print these directories for Buncombe and Henderson counties.

We have created a new directory listing services most often requested by those caring for a frail older person in our region. Our new *Caregiver Assistance Options Directory* can be accessed on the Land of Sky Regional Council website. Printed copies may be ordered by contacting Family Caregiver Specialist Carol McLimans at (828) 251-7439 or carol@landofsky.org. We want caregivers, aging services providers, and others to know what resources are available and encourage them to seek assistance.

STHL Senior Tar Heel Legislature

The Senior Tar Heel Legislature was created to provide information to senior citizens on the legislative process and matters being considered by the North Carolina General Assembly; promote citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues; and assess the legislative needs of older citizens by convening a forum modeled after the North Carolina General Assembly.

CRC Community Resources Connections

Community Resource Connections for Aging and Disabilities is a federal and state initiative to reduce the confusion that many have experienced in trying to find services, often resulting in making multiple telephone calls before finding help. CRC core functions include information and assistance, options counseling, streamlined access, transitions partnership with hospitals and nursing facilities.

LTCOP Welcoming Back Nancy Smith-Hunnicuttt to the Ombudsman Team

Nancy Smith-Hunnicuttt joined the ombudsman team at Land of Sky in December. Previously, Nancy was the first full-time ombudsman at Land of Sky and worked here for 14 years. During that time she introduced Julia Gibson and Ruth Price, the other two ombudsmen, to the importance of advocating for resident rights. It is an incredible privilege to have her come back to Land of Sky. Most recently Nancy was employed at Mission where she developed the Dementia Responsive Care Program, one of the few in the country, especially at the time she initiated the program. Nancy was also instrumental in creating the Asheville caregiver support program Children of Aging Parents. Nancy is well-known and highly respected in our region as an advocate for older adults.

Nancy is a Certified Mediator, has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology/Psychology from Wake Forest University, and has taken Graduate Classes in Gerontology at Western Carolina University. She speaks locally and nationally on topics related to dementia and quality care in hospitals and long-term care settings. As a Geriatric Care Manager/Ombudsman in California she provided comprehensive care management for homebound elders; researched, developed, and opened one of the first adult day centers in northern CA serving individuals living with dementia and their caregivers. Her publications include: *Dementia Responsive Acute Care at Mission Hospital in Asheville, NC*, North Carolina Medical Journal, January/February 2005; *Caring for Aging Parents (CAPES) Wellness and Resouce Guide* 2005, 2014. *A Caregiver's Guide for Families* 1995; and *Long Term Care Directory: A Guide to Resources*, Land of Sky Regional Council, 1991.

On a personal note, Nancy is a fine musician (plays violin and piano and sings in her church choir), has two sons, and is married to Greg Smith-Hunnicuttt.



L-R: Ombudsmen Ruth Price, Nancy Smith-Hunnicuttt, and Julia Gibson

A&VS Walgreens Receives Aging Award

Walgreens was awarded the Corporate Partnership Award from the Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging (SE4A) in late 2014. The award recognizes outstanding contributions of organizations that have enhanced the quality of life of older adults in the Southeast region. Walgreens collaborates with Area Agencies on Aging across the state. Below are some local efforts with aging providers:

- Collaborates with Buncombe County and Henderson County Triad, a coalition of public and private sector partners united to improve the safety and well-being of older adults, to allow an information table at each monthly Walgreens Senior Day staffed by law enforcement, first responders, and aging providers to distribute material on elder abuse, fraud, exploitation, and scams with a goal to prevent crimes against older adults.
- Sponsored flu clinics and wellness information tables for the 2011, 2012, and 2013 Active Aging Week Wellness Expo with over 500 older adults attending each event.
- Donated numerous recyclable bags, snacks, and trinkets to various regional conferences for older adults and caregivers.
- Sponsored the 2012 Land of Sky Regional Council Annual Celebration.
- Collaborated with the Partnership of Substance Free Youth in Buncombe County to sponsor Drug Takeback Day.
- Store managers volunteered at the 2012 Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging Conference at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville.
- Donated hundreds of greeting cards and calendars from a recently acquired Kerr Drug. These cards will be given to older adults in the community throughout the year in particular to celebrate regional Centenarians birthdays. The calendars were used as art projects for a adult day care center and several long-term care facilities.

An Ombudsman is an advocate for long-term care residents' rights and is responsible for investigating complaints made by, or on behalf of, nursing and adult care home residents. We work with residents, family members, concerned citizens, facilities, and public or private agencies to enhance the quality of care and life for residents in long-term care.

The Ombudsman Program works in conjunction with Nursing Home (NH) and Adult Care Home (ACH) Community Advisory Committees (CACs) in each county to serve residents in long-term care facilities. CACs are volunteers appointed by county commissioners who visit facilities, interact with residents, and advocate for quality care in the homes.

Ombudsman Program Supports Goals of Consumer Voice

The Ombudsmen staff at Land of Sky Regional Council recognizes that many of the problems found in our nursing homes are due to lack of adequate staffing. In response to this, we will be participating with The National Consumer Voice to further several national goals related to staffing.

The National Consumer Voice is the leading national voice representing consumers in issues related to long-term care, helping to ensure that consumers are empowered to advocate for themselves. They are a primary source of information and tools for consumers, families, caregivers, advocates, and ombudsmen to help ensure quality care for the individual. The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care was formed as the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform (NCCNHR) in 1975 because of public concern about substandard care in nursing homes. The National Consumer Voice is the outgrowth of work first achieved by advocates working for Ralph Nader and later for the National Gray Panthers. For more information on how to get involved go to theconsumervoice.org.

These goals include support of the following:

1. In 2014, a campaign was launched to advocate for a minimum of 4.1 hours of direct nursing care daily for each resident. There is currently no federal or state minimum staffing number set.
2. On July 31, 2014, H.R. 5373 was introduced by Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky. The bill would require all nursing homes receiving Medicare or Medicaid to have a registered nurse (RN) on duty twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week. Under current federal law, nursing homes are only required to have an RN eight hours per day, no matter how large the facility or how acutely ill the residents may be.
3. On October 6, 2014 President Obama signed the Improving Medicare Post-Acute Care Transformation (IMPACT). This act provides \$11 million in funding for the development of a system for collecting data on nursing home staffing levels through verifiable payroll data. This data is currently self-reported by nursing home and has been proven to be inaccurate, inconsistent and difficult to verify. The National Consumer Voice had been advocating for such a system for two years. This information is vital to nursing home consumers and their families in order to make informed decisions when choosing a nursing home. The amount of direct care staff is directly related to the quality and safety of resident care. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services are now left with the task of operationalizing this system.

The Ombudsman Program at Land of Sky Regional Council will be relaying information about these staffing campaigns to residents, families, and the general public throughout the year and will work toward educating the public about these key issues.

Community Advisory Committee - Why Volunteer?

"Being a volunteer gave me empathy to see and feel what the other families were dealing with today," wrote Linda Burrell, new Community Advisory Committee (CAC) volunteer for the Buncombe County nursing home committee, after a recent quarterly visit. "I think being a volunteer gave me strength to ask 'How are you? Would you like company for a few minutes?' Being a volunteer helped me deal with my own grief and still reach out to those that needed something..."

Burrell, continued, "I have no idea if this explains why I want to volunteer, how it makes me a good volunteer, and how I can contribute to those in nursing and rest homes....I want to be a voice for those that have no one to speak for them and/or have their back."

If you are interested in becoming a CAC member for Buncombe, Henderson, Madison or Transylvania county, contact Ruth Price, Julia Gibson or Nancy Smith-Hunnicuttt at (828) 251-6622.

VS Volunteer Services

Volunteer Services involves, empowers, and enriches the lives of volunteers and those they serve within the community. We connect adults 55 years and older with the people and organizations that need them most. Become a mentor, coach, or companion to people in need, or contribute your job skills and expertise to community projects and organizations.

The Senior Companion Program brings together volunteers age 55 and over with adults in their community who have difficulty with the simple task of day-to-day living. Companions help out on a personal level by assisting with shopping and light chores, interacting with doctors, or just making a friendly visit.

RSVP Changing Leadership for the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

In December, Patti Cameron, a 10-year veteran of Land of Sky, decided it was time to leave her post as RSVP Coordinator and explore other opportunities in our region. "It has been a great honor to work and learn from the many RSVP volunteers and partnering agency staff over the past decade," Patti said. "I am truly blessed to have had this experience."

Patti began her career at Land of Sky as RSVP Coordinator, connecting seniors who are 55 and better with volunteer opportunities throughout our four county region. Through the years, she nurtured and molded the program into a vibrant piece of the fabric of our community. During her tenure, she increased the amount of active volunteers in the program and made connections with new nonprofit organizations. Last year, Patti recruited five new nonprofit agencies to RSVP, bringing the total to 68, while managing more than 470 active volunteers.

"Over a decade of my life has been spent with LOSRC, and I will always be grateful for the lessons I have learned and friendships I have made here," she said. "My next chapter includes spending more time with my family and pursuing new challenges in the non-profit sector."

While we will miss Patti in the Volunteer Services Department, we are happy to announce that Ann Whisenhunt will be assuming the role of RSVP Coordinator beginning in February. Ann, who is a native of Western North Carolina, brings lots of experience to our team. She is currently coordinating an RSVP program in South Carolina.

"Moving from another great RSVP program in Charleston, SC, I welcome the opportunity to return to the North Carolina mountains. The Land of Sky RSVP volunteers and staff have a solid and successful history of engaging in community needs and solutions, and I am eager to be a part of the team," Ann said.

Prior to moving to Charleston, Ann worked for 25 years in the nonprofit sector in Western North Carolina specifically with special events and volunteer management. For close to 15 years, she was the House Director of the Rathbun House of the Lewis Rathbun Wellness Center and was tapped as the Interim Executive Director during its transition to the Mission Health Foundation. She has also held positions as volunteer coordinator for Four Seasons Hospice in Henderson County, Director of In-The-Oaks Episcopal Center in Black Mountain, and Cultural and Special Events Supervisor for the City of Asheville Parks and Recreation Department.

Her combination of qualifications, experience, and personality will be a great addition to the Volunteer Services Department. Patti will be returning in February to provide training and to pass the baton to Ann as the next leader of RSVP. "It is with a heavy heart that I leave the program, but I am confident that Ann will bring a new energy and experience to RSVP making it even stronger," Patti said. Ann will be joining the Volunteer Services team in February. Welcome Ann!



Patti Cameron



Ann Whisenhunt



Successful MLK National Day of Service

An estimated **200** volunteers gathered at Eliada Homes to work on six "Hands On" service projects that benefit local non-profits and schools in the region. The numbers: **34** no-sew fleece blankets for Project Linus children in crisis, **155** "adopt me" bandanas for Asheville Humane Society's shelter pets, **140** math skills games for Buncombe County elementary school students, **148** handcrafted cards of encouragement for local Veterans and home-bound seniors, **76** notes of thanks to local first responders - our hometown heroes, and **100** matching game sets to help preschoolers sharpen their minds.

The Foster Grandparent Program connects volunteers age 55 and over with children with exceptional needs. Their efforts enhance a child's physical development, improve the children's self-esteem and, in general, they serve the children as invaluable role models. Their service and kindness fosters hope in the hearts of the children.

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program connects volunteers age 55 and over with service opportunities in their communities that match their skills and availability. From building houses to immunizing children, from enhancing the capacity of non-profit organizations to improving and protecting the environment, RSVP volunteers make a difference.

National Volunteer Week (NVW), April 12-18, is about inspiring, recognizing, and encouraging people to engage in their communities. It's about demonstrating to the nation that by working together, we have the strength to meet our challenges and accomplish our goals.

The Volunteer Services Department of Land of Sky Regional Council is grateful to the hundreds of volunteers who serve in our region through the Foster Grandparent Program, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, and the Senior Companion Program. Through these programs, volunteers served over 215,500 hours in our community's schools, child care centers, senior centers, and numerous other non-profit organizations. We are honored to celebrate the volunteers that have given some to our region.

This is the perfect opportunity for your organization and volunteers to seize the moment and share the national spotlight that National Volunteer Week deservedly receives. Join us in celebrating the service of the special volunteers that work with you!

Our nation's commitment to serve and better its communities through volunteerism remains strong and a top priority. Volunteering and Civic Life in America, the annual research report released by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the National Conference on Citizenship, reported that one in four Americans volunteered through a community organization and two-thirds helped their neighbors last year. In 2014, Americans volunteered nearly 7.7 billion hours with an estimated value of nearly \$173 billion. This estimate does not include the more than 138 million Americans (62.5 percent) also engaged in informal volunteering in their communities, helping neighbors with such tasks as watching each other's children, helping with shopping, or house sitting. Volunteers provide critical support to our nation's nonprofit, civic, and faith-based organizations, offering time, skills, and monetary support. What age group that contributes the most hours? It's adults 65 and older.

Established in 1974, National Volunteer Week is dedicated to encouraging people to seek out ways to engage in their communities. NVW is a program of the Points of Light Foundation and highlights the volunteer efforts of thousands of people, events and community projects throughout the nation.

The Senior Companion Program awarded six volunteers for their years of service during the annual holiday recognition event in December. Deputy Executive Director Danna Stansbury awarded each with a plaque and thanked them for their continued service to the senior citizens of our region.

"In military terms, you are our 'boots on the ground,'" Stansbury said during the event. "You go out every day and make great things happen in our community, and we appreciate your service and your willingness to make a difference."

For 5 years of service: Dot Cody – Madison Department of Community Services; Barbara Henderson – Council on Aging of Buncombe County; Jacqueline Henderson – Council on Aging of Henderson County; Alice Payton – CarePartners Hospice; and Mary White – Hot Springs Home Health (not pictured).

Cecilia Miller was recognized for 15 years of service for the residents of Laurel Wood Apartments. As a volunteer, Cecilia has served more than 15,800 hours since beginning with the Senior Companion Program in 1999.

In total, these recipients have served 31,366 hours as Senior Companion volunteers, working to keep the frail and elderly living independently in their homes. Congratulations to all award recipients!



Top L-R: Dot Cody, Barbara Henderson, Jacqueline Henderson
Bottom L-R: Alice Payton, Cecilia Miller

Volunteer Services is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, an independent federal agency created to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. More than five million Americans are engaging in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and United We Serve.

Through grants and other resources—including the energy and efforts of more than 330,000 citizens age 55 and over—Senior Corps helps meet the needs and challenges of America’s communities. Grants administered through Senior Corps provide funding for RSVP, Senior Companion Program, and Foster Grandparent Program.

2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the Foster Grandparent Program. The belief that inspired its founding in 1965 could not be truer today. Namely, that low income elders have extraordinary gifts to share with vulnerable children in a wide variety of settings across America.

The social, emotional and academic support offered by loving volunteers has transformed the lives of both the children and volunteers. This simple, cost effective formula has stood the test of time, having weathered winds of political change to emerge in 2015 as a trustworthy and relevant model to serve at risk children for the next 50 years.

The Foster Grandparent Program was developed by Sargent Shriver as part of Lyndon Johnson’s “War on Poverty.” Shriver, who served as Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity under the Johnson Administration, said of the Foster Grandparent Program on its 35th anniversary: “We did not have to do any studies before we started Foster Grandparents. One day I visited children with intellectual disabilities in an institution and saw that they needed more attention - attention that the staff could not give them. These children needed to be held, to be read to, to have someone play games with them. Later that day I visited a Senior Citizens Center. They needed something to do, somebody to shower their affection upon, somebody to help.” Shriver was determined to bring these two groups of people together and because of his vision, the truly unique Foster Grandparent Program was born.*

What makes FGP so effective and unique? Below is a partial list of reasons cited by Foster Grandparent Directors at the Senior Corps National Conference in San Antonio in May, 2014.

- Intergenerational nurturing relationships offer extraordinary continuity, week after week and year after year. The amount of service hours makes the relationships unique, as volunteers help individual students one on one, but also become part of the culture and fabric of the classroom and school.
- Performance measures and impact stories document both the academic and social/emotional growth of children. The unique intergenerational relationships with a “grandpa” or “grandma” builds skills, self-confidence and self-esteem in a way not replicated by a younger volunteer, as valuable as that experience may also be.
- Children learn from positive role models about being good citizens and the importance about caring for others and giving back. Life experiences of elders can be shared to offer historical details young people might not otherwise learn about.
- Negative Stereotypes of “old people” are broken down, which help break down ageism in future generations.
- Published papers, including those noted by CNCS, document the health benefits, both mental and physical, that accrue to volunteers.
- Financial support from tax-free stipends, mileage reimbursement and meal allowances allows low income volunteers the opportunity to serve in meaningful, high impact volunteer positions.
- Volunteers gain a sense of purpose and build skills through on-going training and service.
- Stipends paid to volunteers are spent directly in local communities for food, shelter and other daily living needs. 80% of federal grants are mandated to go directly to volunteer benefits, supporting critical financial needs for volunteers whose spending boosts the local economy.
- Research supports the social and financial risks of children not reading by 3rd grade, and preschoolers not prepared to enter kindergarten. Addressing these two needs are critical focus areas for FGP, and years of performance measures, whether rolled up nationally or not, document FGP impact in these areas.
- Funding cuts are negatively impacting FGP volunteer stations, which are challenged to provide the staff and volunteers to meet the needs of the children they serve. While not replacing paid staff, stipended volunteers are a cost effective way to assure that sites have capacity to respond to growing needs.

Whatever the future winds of change may bring, FGP will remain strong if it demonstrates both flexibility to new ideas, while holding fast to the tried and true principle of the life changing bond between Foster Grandparent and child. As the founding visionary, Sargent Shriver, said, “Foster Grandparents work for two reasons - it’s about human relationships and it is simple.” Amen!

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS & EVENTS

February

- 2 **LGBT Elder Advocates Board Meeting**, LOS, 2:30 – 4 pm
- 3 **Buncombe County Aging Coordinators Consortium (BC ACC) Planning Committee Meeting**, United Way Building Classroom 1, 9 – 10:30 am
- 11 **CRC Leadership Team Meeting**, LOS, 10:30 – 12 pm
- 11 **Senior Volunteer Services Advisory Council Meeting**, LOS, 2 - 4 pm
- 16 **Senior Companion Volunteers In-Service**, LOS, 9 am – 1 pm
- 17 **Foster Grandparent Volunteers In-Service**, LOS, 9 am – 1 pm
- 18 **Culture Change in Aging Network (CCAN) of Buncombe County Meeting**, LOS, 10:30 am – 12 pm
- 19 **Advanced Care Planning Workshop**, OLLI (UNCA Reuter Center College for Seniors), 3 - 5 pm
- 19 **Family Caregiver Support Program Advisory Committee Meeting**, LOS, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm
- 20 **Dementia: Embracing the Moment Workshop for Caregivers**, Calvary Episcopal Church - Choir Room, 2840 Hendersonville Road, Fletcher, 1 - 3 pm. \$15 fee. Limited to 20 individuals. Contact Cappy Tosetti at 707-7201 or cappy@att.net for more information or to register.
- 26 **BC ACC Meeting**, CarePartners Conference Room, 2:30 - 4:30 pm
- 27 **Supercharge Your Marketing**, Piedmont Triad Regional Council, Kernersville, 8:30 am - 4 pm. Attending this conference will provide a unique learning opportunity for organizations to evaluate their marketing programs and embrace better ways of “doing” marketing and provide inspiration and tools for better ways to promote services, raise funds, and create revenue-generating service packages for expanded capacity. \$65. For more information contact Allison Brown, Program Planner for Aging at (336) 904-0300 or abrown@ptrc.org

March

- 2 **LGBT Elder Advocates Board Meeting**, LOS, 2:30 – 4 pm
- 3 **BC ACC Planning Committee Meeting**, United Way Building Classroom 1, 9 – 10:30 am
- 3, 5 **CAC Orientation**, LOS, First day for new CACs only, 9 am - 1 pm. Second day for new CAC and refresher course for current CACs, 1 - 5 pm
- 4 **Powerful Tools for Caregiver Workshops** begins, Shaw’s Creek Baptist Church, 64 W Hendersonville Road, 2 - 4 pm. \$25. For more information or to register, contact Renay Knapp, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent, (828) 697-4821 or renay_knapp@ncsu.edu. see page 2
- 11 **CRC Leadership Team Meeting**, LOS, 10:30 – 12 pm
- 12 **Just Press Play Workshop**, LOS, 8 - 11 am. See page 1 for more details.
- 16-17 **Foster Grandparents Volunteers Physicals**, LOS, 9 am - 1 pm
- 16-17 **Senior Tar Heel Legislature Meeting**, North Raleigh Hilton
- 18 **CCAN of Buncombe County Meeting**, LOS, 10:30 am – 12 pm
- 24 **WNC Fall Prevention Meeting**, MAHEC Penland Board Room, 11:30 am – 1 pm
- 26 **BC ACC Meeting**, CarePartners Conference Room, 2:30 - 4:30 pm

April

- 3 **Good Friday**, LOS Offices CLOSED
- 6 **LGBT Elder Advocates Board Meeting**, LOS, 2:30 – 4 pm
- 7 **BC ACC Planning Committee Meeting**, United Way Building Classroom 1, 9 – 10:30 am
- 8 **CRC Leadership Team Meeting**, LOS, 10:30 – 12 pm
- 9 **Aging Advisory Council Meeting**, Marshall Senior Center, 10 – 11:30 am
- 9 **Just Press Play How-Tos Workshop**, LOS, 3 - 5 pm. See page 1 for more details.
- 12-18 **National Volunteer Week**, See page 9 for more information.
- 13 **Senior Companion Volunteers In-Service**, LOS, 9 am – 1 pm
- 14 **Foster Grandparent Volunteers In-Service**, LOS, 9 am – 1 pm
- 15 **CCAN of Buncombe County Meeting**, LOS, 10:30 am – 12 pm
- 22 **LOS Council Meeting including Kathleen Godwin Cole Award Presentation**, LOS, 1 - 2:30 pm
- 23 **BC ACC Meeting**, CarePartners Conference Room, 2:30 - 4:30 pm

Living Healthy with a Chronic Condition

Living Healthy is designed to help participants learn how to take charge of their health. The suggested consumer contribution is \$30 for the six-week series. Contact Stephanie Stewart at (828) 251-7438 or stephanie@landofsky.org

Asheville Family Health Center - Hominy Valley
Tuesday, Feb 24 - March 30
5 :30 - 8 pm

Dr. Wesley Grant Sr Southside Center
Thursdays, March 5 - April 16
5:30 - 8 pm

Honoring Volunteers

Do you know a volunteer whose leadership and service deserves regional recognition? Land of Sky Regional Council’s Kathleen Godwin Cole Award was established in 1990 in memory and honor of Kathleen Godwin Cole who served for several years on the Council’s Advisory Council on Aging and was Chairman of its Contractor Relations Committee. She was also Chairman of the Buncombe County Domiciliary Home Community Advisory Committee for several years.

This award, presented in recognition of National Volunteer Week, is given annually to one Land of Sky Regional Council volunteer, aged 55 or better, who has made major contributions to our region. Nominees need to be from or serve a Region B county - Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, or Transylvania.

For a nomination form, go to www.landofsky.org. The deadline for nominations is Friday, March 27. The award will be presented at the Land of Sky Regional Council board meeting on Wednesday, April 22.

LAND OF SKY

REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Land of Sky Regional Council's **mission** is to provide creative regional solutions to relevant and emerging issues in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania counties while providing a standard of excellence in the delivery of federal, state and regional services for our member communities.



Please recycle this
newsletter!

AGING AND VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Creative Regional Solutions for Buncombe, Henderson, Madison
and Transylvania Counties

Vol 4 - Issue 1: February - April 2015



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Ruth Price - Lead Regional Ombudsman
Sherry Christenson - Aging Programs Specialist - Contracts and ARMS
Stacy Friesland - Foster Grandparent Program Manager
Stephanie Stewart - Aging Programs Specialist - HPDP
Vicki Jennings - Senior Companion Program Manager

Please share this newsletter
with residents, staff, family
members, volunteers and
others interested in our
community.

