seniorconnections-va.org

Senior Connections



Volunteer Appreciation

Older Americans Month

The Capital Area Agency on Aging

Q2 2023

Senior Connections
The Capital Area Agency on Aging

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About Us

Senior Connections is the state designated Area Agency on Aging for Planning District 15 which covers the City of Richmond and the counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, and Powhatan. We provide services, information, advocacy, and referrals for older adults, persons with disabilities, and caregivers. Most of our services are able to be provided at no cost (or little cost) to recipients thanks to Federal, State, and Local funding along with donations received from individuals, businesses, and community organizations.



How Can I Help?

Senior Connections provides expensive and essential services such as Food, in Home Care, Emergency Services, Transportation, & Activities to Reduce Social Isolation. With your help, we are able to provide these services at no cost to those who qualify. Your vital contributions and advocacy truly make a huge impact. You can help by making a donation today or by supporting us on social media and helping to spread the word about the agency.

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



FROM THE

Director

Once again, as we look on a truly remarkable quarter, we have much to celebrate and appreciate. The past few months have been particularly memorable for Senior Connections.

We held our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event on April 20th to celebrate and honor the dedication and tremendous efforts of the volunteers who support the work of all areas of the agency. We couldn't do what we do without them. Then, on May 1st, we kicked off Older American's Month celebrations with activities, proclamations, and multimedia content. While we think every month is older American's month, it is great to have May so designated each year.

It was fitting that we then hosted our first-ever Open House on May 3rd – an event that turned out to be a resounding success! It was a day filled with joy, laughter, shared stories, and valuable connections. It warmed our hearts to see so many familiar faces, as well as a number of new ones, coming together. I want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who took the time to participate in our Open House. Your presence and enthusiasm truly brought our mission to life: fostering connection, promoting healthy aging, and celebrating the richness of life in all its stages.

Truly, good people are doing good things at Senior Connections. In this spirit, let us continue honor the incredible individuals in our communities who bring so much wisdom, experience, and strength to our lives. They inspire us to grow, connect, and keep on learning.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Amy Strite

Amy Strite
Executive Director

Contents

FROM THE DIRECTOR Pg. 02

NEWS & INFO
Farmers' Market Expansion Pg. 03
PÉTANQUE Social Group Pg. 04

VOLUNTEER VOICES
Volunteer Appreciation Event Pg. 05
Notes From the Field Pg. 05
Volunteer Recognitions Pg. 06

MINDFUL MOMENTS
The Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Movement Pg. 07

HEARS TO YOU
A tribute to individuals helping those experiencing hearing-loss Pg. 09

HOW TO SUPPORT US Pg. 10

Contact Info

WEBSITE
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PHONE
804-343-3000

GIVE YOURSELF A BOOST AGAINST COVID-19

The chances of severe illness from COVID-19 increase with age. This is why CDC recommends that adults 65 years and older receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Getting Vaccinated
helps against severe illness, hospitalizations, and death

People 65 & Older
who received both doses of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccines showed a 94% reduced chance of COVID-19-related hospitalization

Boost Your Defenses
Boosters help your immune system stay alert against COVID-19 and newer variants.

NEWS & INFO

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Expanding

DARS has been awarded $1.6 million to expand the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services a two-year $1.6 million grant to expand the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) in Virginia. The new grant will:

- Expand coverage of SFMNP in Virginia through local Area Agencies on Aging and local governments that enroll low-income seniors. Currently, participating AAA regions cover less than 50 percent of the state; this expansion will reach 90 percent coverage in 2023, and 100 percent coverage in 2024.

- Increase the individual voucher amount from $45 to USDA's maximum allowable amount of $50 per eligible participant.

- Adjust the income eligibility of the program from the current 150 percent of the federal poverty level to 185 percent, which has the potential to reach 70,000 more eligible individuals.

- Implement an electronic payment system of SFMNP funds to modernize the banking process for authorized vendors.

SFMNP, also known as Farm Market Fresh, is designed for low-income individuals, ages 60 and older, to apply for coupon booklets in exchange for fresh, locally grown produce and fresh cut herbs from authorized farmers at participating farmers' markets throughout Virginia.

In 2022, over 10,000 seniors enrolled in SFMNP. "We hope to double the number of seniors using the vouchers over the next two years to increase access to healthy foods and in turn, healthy outcomes," said Kathy Hayfield, DARS Commissioner.

For more information on SFMNP, visit **FarmMarketFresh.org**



Les Boulefrogs

A look at the Ageless Appeal of Pétanque

Pétanque (pronounced “pay-tonk”) is a fun outdoor game where players aim to toss or roll hollow steel balls called “boules” close to a small wooden ball called a “cochonnet”. Typically played in teams of two or three, points are awarded to the team whose balls are nearest to the cochonnet after all the balls are thrown. The game continues until a team scores 13 points. Noted for its blend of simplicity and skill, Pétanque is an excellent game for all ages and is especially enjoyed by older adults.



The **Richmond** area Pétanque group is called **Les Boulefrogs Petanque Club of Virginia**. The group has a wide age span of members ranging from the fabulous forties into the exciting eighties. They enjoy the fun game and comradery while getting a little exercise (standing, walking, bending, underhanded throwing), fresh air, and sunshine. The group hosts picnics and pot lucks during the year to celebrate some holidays and events such as Mardi Gras, Memorial Day, Bastille Day, and Labor Day. **Les Boulefrogs Petanque Club of Virginia** is always looking for new folks of all ages and ability to come join in the fun. They have extra boules available for visitors and guests. So, stop by and see what it’s all about!



Where: Chimborazo Park Playground in Richmond (3200 East Broad St)
When: Thursday evenings at 6pm and Sundays at 2pm
Want more info? Check out **Boulefrogs.com**
or contact Karen Rankin (President) at **kwren@hotmail.com**

50 Greatest Hits!





This April, we celebrated a milestone with a heartwarming **50th Anniversary Volunteer Appreciation Event** hosted by Senior Connections. The air was filled with jubilation, laughter, and camaraderie, a testament to the vibrant and caring community we've fostered over the past five decades.

The impact of our volunteers' tireless dedication and unwavering support has been monumental. Words cannot express the immense gratitude we feel for their service. Their spirit and devotion not only make Senior Connections a better organization but also create a ripple effect of kindness and positivity in our community. As we look back on this memorable event and towards the future, our hearts are filled with appreciation for the hard work of our incredible volunteers.

POSTS FROM THE FIELD



Bon Air Friendship Café Volunteers Linda Powell and John Beaston with Shana Beverly, Volunteer Services.



Shana and Karen from Senior Connections' Volunteer Services visited the Bon Air Friendship Café, engaged in a lively trivia game with the participants, and met the café's manager and volunteers.

AmeriCorps Seniors

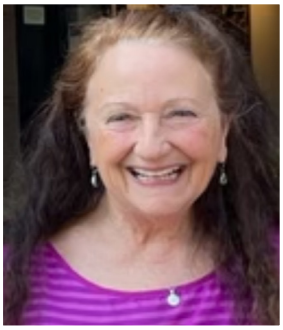
AmeriCorps Seniors National Convening

The first convening held in person since 2019. AmeriCorps Seniors Program Directors from across the country, came together in Washington DC to learn about best practices and ways to improve their programs. Carol Ayars, our AmeriCorps Programs Seniors Manager, and Lee Owens, our AmeriCorps Seniors Programs Coordinator both attended on behalf of the agency.

Prior to the Convening, Carol Ayars, AmeriCorps Seniors Programs Manager, visited the Capitol to help educate US Senators & Representatives from Virginia about the AmeriCorps Seniors Programs. Pictured is US Representative Jennifer McCellan (left) and Carol Ayars (Right).



RECOGNITIONS

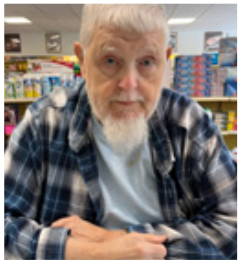


Congratulations to RSVP Volunteer, Deirdre Arnowitz!

Deirdre has been selected as the National Service Awards Virginia AmeriCorps Seniors Member of the Year! Award winners are invited to the Governor's Mansion this October to receive recognition alongside other volunteers, and will be included on the inaugural "Serve Virginia Honor Roll" which will recognize volunteers and community organizations from across the Commonwealth.



Sam Shiplett, Volunteer for Senior Connections' Volunteer Money Management Program and Dale Gentz, Volunteer for Senior Connections' VICAP (Virginia Counseling and Assistance Program) and Senior Medical Patrol (SMP), were both nominated for the Chesterfield County Senior Volunteer Hall of Fame for outstanding volunteer service to our Agency and the community.





Stacey Lopez, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Volunteer Coordinator while visiting Senior Connections, holds our pop top collection jar. Our grand total to date is 77,474 collected tabs and growing! We have some small pop tab donation collection houses available.

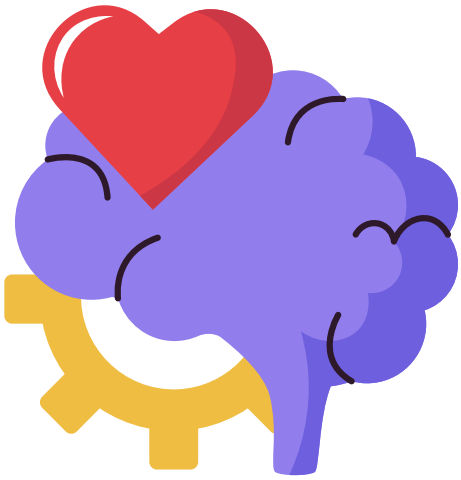


The Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Movement and Aging Services: A letter to You

from Zoe, Director of Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed Care Initiative

This past year, Senior Connections committed to embarking on a Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed (PCTI) Cultural Change Journey that I am incredibly excited to be a part of. I want to explain this movement and the value it holds, not only for us as human beings, but as staff members, volunteers, or partners of Senior Connections, an agency devoted to uplifting and supporting the lives and dignity of older adults, people with disabilities, and their families and caregivers in our region.

The PCTI approach was built off a budding area of research that studies trauma and resiliency, the harmful impacts that individual, historical, and workforce trauma has on many aspects of health, as well as the ability to find and support resiliency and healing. It brought in new ways to understand one another and our systems of care. Although there are many definitions of trauma, one way to begin thinking about it is: when our internal and external resources become overwhelmed and we experience emotional, physical, or psychological threats to our well-being or survival, or to someone we love. These experiences can lead to diseases later on in life or other conditions. Research has shown that systems that aim to help can unintentionally exasperate past experiences of trauma, or might lack cultural humility and equity for the people they serve and employ.



Certain parts of environments or situations can also remind people of past traumatic experiences and be triggering. However, there is always an ability of systems to make changes to offer more healing, help build resiliency, and mitigate harm caused by a past trauma. Like individuals, systems can evolve, and oftentimes this requires a cultural change process, just like the journey we are beginning here. This process hopes to help the organization become aware of what changes can be made to support the recovery of all who interact with the agency. This might look like changing a policy to become more equitable, or offering wellness practices to employees while at work. Across the nation, organizations and the systems they are a part of have come together on a mission to recognize and respond to trauma and make changes to organizational



policies, programs, spaces and in all that they do to help support wellness and empowerment for both clients and staff, and adapt environments as needed. Nationally, there have been six set principles established to help guide this work and support recovery with other best practices encouraged, such as promotion of positive social connection. We will explore these and what they mean and look like in upcoming publications.

This approach has been inspired by the fact that we've each lived through collective traumatic experiences like COVID-19 plus other unique experiences that no one else has; we've paved our way forward through our own means or the support of others. Collectively, we have reached a point of culmination where this awareness is asking to be brought to the surface so we can all be seen, supported, and empowered to find recovery. In agencies serving older adults, the understanding of past trauma can be paired with the positive idea of post-traumatic growth at any age, contributing to needed anti-ageist sentiments. This growth might look different for each of us, but it's the potential that matters the most.

By implementing PCTI Care for older adults and all people, we are voicing and promoting the ability to grow and find healing throughout the lifespan and into elderhood. Recovery from trauma is important any age, but recovery from trauma in later life, whether recent or from the past, tells us that we are not bound by our experiences of trauma. That healing is not on a clock. Transformation, for both people and systems, is always a possibility.

By implementing this work for older adults, staff, volunteers, and community partners, we are not only furthering the value that Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed approaches have on any health sector, we are affirming the value that older adults hold as a whole and the ability to find growth and heal at any age. This movement can help uplift the mission of Senior Connections, to empower older adults to live with dignity and choice with an improved quality of life. So many of you are already adding positive ripples by changing the lives of those who live in our community and connecting them to services they need to live and age well, and to find healing. For instance, when you seek out wellness resources to meet the demographics and languages for the older adults and family caregivers you serve, you're supporting pathways to healing. When you ask for help in managing your own recovery, you're already forming healing pathways for yourself and the people around you. With your continued help, support, and input, Senior Connections is on its way to be a leader in this work, contributing to PCTI Care models for the Long-Term Care Services network. Know that your presence in our community is so appreciated, valued, and irreplaceable. I look forward to continuing this discussion and journey with you all and together exploring how we can better see and support each other across the lifespan.



Hears to you!

A tribute to individuals who are helping those experiencing hearing-loss by LEE OWENS

Have you ever heard it said that "you don't know what you don't hear"? If you are one of the 48 million Americans who suffer from hearing loss, this can add up to a wealth of knowledge being lost. Hearing loss is the third most common health condition in the U.S., behind only arthritis and heart disease. Fortunately, for those suffering from hearing-loss in the Greater Richmond area, there are many great resources available that offer the treatment, advocacy, and support. We want to shine a spotlight on 3 Richmond area individuals who are dedicated to helping those experiencing hearing-loss live happier, more vibrant lives.

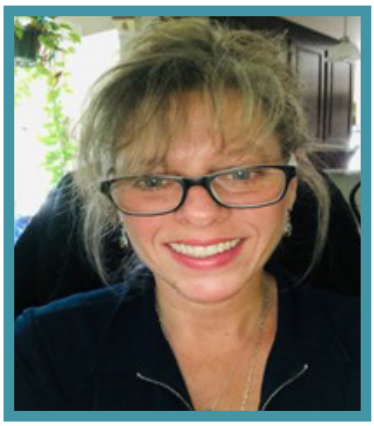


Dr. Leah Ball- Combining technology with compassionate care

As Dr. Leah Ball worked repairing hearing aids at her Audiologist father's when she was in high school, she had little doubt about what would become her life's work. "One day a severely hearing impaired 5-year- old thanked my dad for the gift of hearing, and I realized the impact that this gadget was making on people's lives." As an Audiologist with Richmond Hearing Doctors, Ball has combined her love of people and technology in order to provide quality care to her patients. In one particular case, Ball, recounts how one of her recent patients had not spoken to his brother in 2 years because he had a difficult time hearing over the phone. Although he was able to communicate with his brother in an in-person setting, the COVID pandemic made this type of communication impossible. Ball explained to him that modern technology had made it possible to integrate hearing aids to smart phones via Bluetooth. After setting up this connection, Ball helped the individual make the call to his brother. "When we called his brother via Facetime together and he spoke to his brother for the first time in 2 years, he cried. I cried" said Ball.

Larry Herbert- Promoting advocacy and education

When one is suffering from hearing-loss, it becomes much harder to enjoy many of life's simple pleasures that are enjoyed by others. Enabling those with hearing loss to enjoy these activities has been the mission of Larry Herbert. Herbert is the President of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Greater Richmond Chapter, an organization that advocates for the welfare and interests of those experiencing hearing loss.



As the president of HLAA Greater Richmond, Herbert has successfully advocated for hearing-loss sufferers at both the local and national level. "In the last couple of years, we worked with the Altria Theatre to provide captioning for Broadway productions" says Herbert. In addition, Herbert works to educate those with hearing loss on technological developments that help them live more enjoyable lives. This includes an app that can be purchased on smartphones that measure if the amount of noise in a restaurant is suitable enough for an individual with hearing issues to be able to hear conversations.

Lisa Mottesheard- Helping people live independently

Lisa Mottesheard is firm in her belief as to who should be concerned about hearing loss. "Hearing protection is a must for all ages, as we are all exposed to loud sounds such as music, fireworks, loud toys, machines and equipment" she says. Motteheard, the community outreach manager for CaptionCall, knows this from first hand experience, as many of her family members struggle with noise induced hearing loss. At CaptionCall, Mottesheard assists seniors daily

with captioning telephone services and technology so that they can communicate independently and with confidence.
Needless to say, Mottesheard has found her work with CaptionCall to be extremely rewarding. "I love advocating in our community to raise awareness on hearing loss related programs and services that are available at no cost." She also emphasizes the importance of hearing tests for people of all ages. "Just like blood pressure checks, eye exams, dental checkups & annual physicals, having your hearing tested can play a huge part in your overall wellness and is just as important."

Now hear this!
If you believe that you may be experiencing hearing loss, it is never too soon to seek treatment. Being proactive about finding the right tools and resources to deal with hearing loss could make a world of difference in your quality of life. At the same time, let's commend all of those who work diligently on behalf of those with hearing loss. Hears to you!

HEARING LOSS RESOURCES

Hearing Loss Association of America
(Greater Richmond Chapter)
hlaagreaterrichmond.org

Richmond Hearing Doctors
Richmond Office: (804) 282-0022
Midlothian Office: (804) 818-0000
richmondhearingdoctors.com

CaptionCall
(833) 691-1600
captioncall.com/order-now

Hearing Loop Information
hearingloop.org



YOUR SUPPORT

We couldn't do what we do without your generous support. Thank you so much!

Senior Connections depends on the generosity of individuals, corporations, and organizations who support our efforts to enhance the quality of life for older adults and support caregivers.

WAYS TO HELP

- Make a financial gift. Donations are tax-deductible. You can donate using the QR code below or visit **seniorconnections-va.org/give/donate** for more options.
- Volunteer your time. Volunteers help provide much needed information and services to the community. Spread the word! Tell people about Senior Connections. Like and share our social media posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube.
- Ask your employer if they make matching gifts.

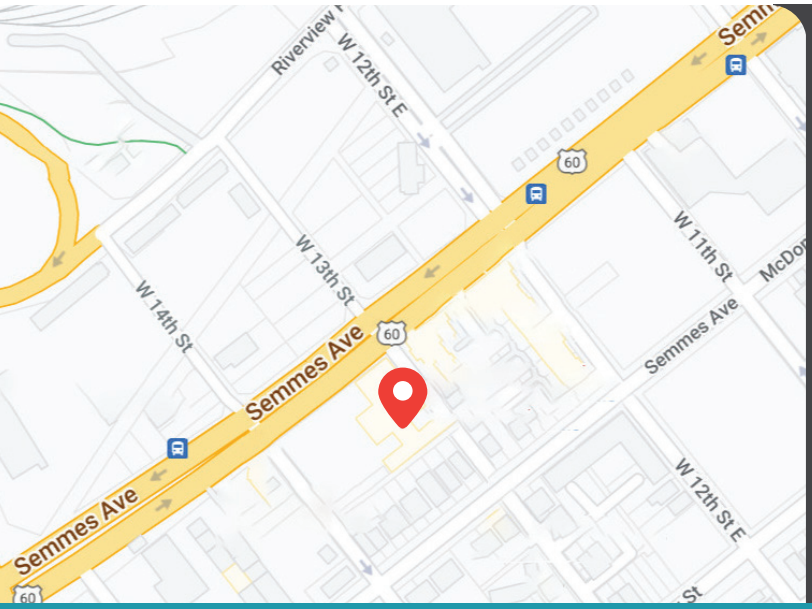
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Senior Connections

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Aging UNBOUND

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH



OUR NEW ADDRESS

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