

HHS SC 2-28-18
Jim McGuire

House Silver Key Coalition Testimony
Health and Human Services Subcommittee

February 28th, 2018



My name is Jim McGuire and I am the Director of Research at the Area Agency on Aging 1-B serving Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair and Washtenaw counties. I am speaking to you today with my Silver Key Coalition colleagues from across the state as Chair of the Coalition, which was founded to advocate for state support for non-Medicaid senior in-home services provided through the Aging and Adult Services Agency. This senior population is a priority because while the near poor may have incomes and savings above the poverty level, they often have high out-of-pocket health and long term care costs that make them worse off financially than those eligible for Medicaid.

Coalition representatives are here to thank you for your past support, and to request a **\$3 million increase** for FY 2019. We are pleased to report that your support has enabled us to provide in-home services such as meals on wheels and in-home care to **20,000** more seniors with activity of daily living limitations over the past four years. We are serving a **half a million** more home delivered meals each year to homebound older Michigianians than were served in 2014, and in FY 2017, we cut the number of seniors waiting for Meals on Wheels in half. **We are making progress toward our goals.**

While the home delivered meal wait list has decreased, the demand for in-home services continues to grow. This growth is closely linked to the rapid growth of Michigan's aging population. For example, **between now until when legislature completes their FY 2019 budget this June, there will be a net increase of 13,000 more seniors in the state of Michigan, including 840 more seniors over the age of 85.**

As Michigan's aging and family caregiver network strives to serve the growing aging population, the Silver Key Coalition projects that we will need to serve an additional **700** more senior in the home delivered meals program, and an additional **2,600** more individuals with other in-home services in FY 2019 if we are to keep up with demand. This will require a \$3 million increase. We request that any increase be split so one half million (17%) is directed to Home Delivered Meals, and \$2.5 million (83%) is directed to other in-home services in the Community Services line-item of the AASA budget.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We will be following up with you and delivering an infographic on the powerful **Value Proposition** of these services soon.

Appropriations Subcommittee on
Health and Human Services

Feb 28, 2017

Testimony for the Silver Key Coalition

Christine Vanlandingham, Fund & Product Development Officer
Region IV Area Agency on Aging, St. Joseph, MI

Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) Budget Testimony:

The impact of Michigan's investment in Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) services is magnified by local dollars leveraged; the Aging Network's robust quality assurance and provider monitoring process; and by connecting consumers to existing community resources before tapping into AASA funded services.

I am Christine Vanlandingham, Fund and Product Development Officer at Region IV Area Agency on Aging serving Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties.

Local Dollars Leveraged:

Area Agencies on Aging and local service providers leverage local resources effectively extending state investment in AASA-funded services for older adults. *In FY 16, the aging network leveraged an additional cash match of .72 for every state dollar invested in AASA nutrition and in-home services.*

Those additional cash resources came in the form of contributions from local funders, corporations and individuals. In-kind contributions in the form of equipment, supplies, services and other expendable property leveraged *increase that local match ratio to .93 for every state dollar invested*.*.

The clear majority of AASA service recipients have lower incomes** and cannot afford to privately pay for needed care. AASA services provide a very limited amount of assistance that often allows them to avoid or greatly delay reliance on Medicaid funded long-term care. Seniors find great value in these services and often voluntarily contribute toward the cost of their care. *In Region IV, 43% of seniors receiving AASA funded services contribute toward the cost of their care.* Their contributions range from \$3 to \$1,734 per month. These cash contributions from seniors receiving services extend the reach of state funds allowing the aging network to provide more seniors

with services to help them maintain independent living.

Connecting consumers to existing community resources:

The aging network extends the reach of AASA services and reduces the wait list by providing seniors with Care Management services and connecting consumers to existing community resources. Seniors receive an in-home consultation with a nurse or social work care manager to assess needs and identify community resources to meet those needs. *In Region IV, 58% of AASA Care Management clients served in FY 17 were connected to existing community resources to meet their needs without tapping into AASA-funded ongoing services.*

This care management expertise and in-depth knowledge of community resources *significantly extends the reach of AASA funded services and allows for targeted use of AASA-funded services to fill un-met needs and gaps in care.*

Network committed to Quality:

The Aging Network develops, nurtures and maintains a statewide network of service providers to deliver high quality service. In Region IV, 80 organizations from small businesses to non-profit organizations and larger corporations are vetted through a robust credentialing process to ensure service providers meet minimum requirements prior to onboarding into the AAA Provider Network.

New Provider Orientation sets the foundation for expectations regarding both administrative and service delivery quality requirements. Quarterly Provider Meetings are held to inform and assist providers in meeting those standards and expectations. New providers are re-evaluated after the first quarter of service and all providers re-credentialed annually.

Region IV AAA also runs monthly checks of the OIG and SAMS exclusion lists for all staff and external providers to ensure individuals and businesses excluded from participating in Federally-funded health care programs are not providing services under the AASA program.

These practices assure older Michiganders receive quality in-home services.

Consumer satisfaction and service needs are monitored with consumer contacts as needed and at minimum every 30/60 days and visits as needed and at minimum every 90/180 days. Consumer satisfaction surveys are conducted annually. In Region IV, 91% of clients report their AASA services help them stay at home; 96% say services are

delivered in a way that respects them, their wishes and their lifestyle choices; and 96% say they receive quality care.

In Conclusion, the Aging Network employs effective strategies to leverage local resources to extend the reach of AASA funded services and assures older Michiganders receive quality in-home services through a robust network of highly vetted providers. Those AASA-funded services are efficient, effective and fill critical gaps for Michigan's older adults and their caregiver. They also provide Michigan with a strong return on investment allowing older adults to live in their own home and communities and prevent or delay accessing Medicaid-funded long-term care.

I respectfully ask that you support the Silver Key Coalition's request of \$3M additional investment in Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) to serve the 6,043 seniors currently on wait lists for in-home service programs. This appropriation will allow Michigan's Aging Network to continue the work to reduce wait lists.

Thank you.

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*FY 2016 NAPIS Participant and Services report
**AASA Annual Report FY 2017



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Silver Key Coalition

February 28, 2018

The Honorable Edward Canfield, Chair, and
Members of the House Appropriations Health & Human Services Subcommittee
Room 352, House Appropriations, State Capitol Building

Re: **FY 2019 Department of Health and Human Services Budget**

Dear Chairman Canfield and Subcommittee Members:

On behalf of AARP Michigan, we appreciate this opportunity to highlight the following items in the proposed FY 2019 Department of Health and Human Services budget. These items particularly impact the extent to which older adults in Michigan can live safely, independently, and in good health as they age.

Non-Medicaid In-Home Senior Services

As part of Michigan's Silver Key Coalition, AARP urges Michigan lawmakers to invest an additional \$3 million in state funding (GF/GP) for home-delivered meals and other in-home senior services in the FY 2019 Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) budget. This \$3 million increase is needed to address the remaining waitlists for these services and to meet the increased need anticipated for FY 2019 due to growth in the senior population.

These services are extremely important to older adults and their families. Often, simply providing assistance with the "activities of daily living" – help with things like shopping, laundry, and meals – can be the difference that allows someone to remain in their own home, rather than go to a nursing home. These services can also be the difference that allows an individual's family caregiver to remain in the workforce, avoiding lost productivity for Michigan businesses.

MI Choice Medicaid Waiver, PACE and MI Health Link

AARP supports increased access for older adults to home and community-based services (HCBS) through the MI Choice Medicaid Waiver program. MI Choice provides HCBS for older adults who qualify for Medicaid and who, without those services, would need to move into a nursing home. Increasing access to MI Choice is a win-win for our state. AARP research shows that the overwhelming majority of Michigan residents prefer to "age in place" in their own homes and communities. In addition, rebalancing Michigan's long term care system – that is, allowing a greater share of the people needing services to remain in their homes – can also save taxpayer dollars. Medicaid dollars can support nearly three older

adults or people with disabilities in home and community-based services for every one person in a nursing home.

AARP also supports the continued expansion of integrated care options for consumers through the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and MI Health Link options, which are currently available for persons in only certain parts of the state.

Respite Care

AARP urges Michigan lawmakers to increase access to respite care services for family caregivers, particularly those caring for a loved one with dementia. The majority of family caregivers are employed in full or part time work during their caregiving experience. Respite care, such as adult day services or periodic visits in the home, can help provide family caregivers a much needed break and a better opportunity to balance and maintain their work, caregiving and other responsibilities. Greater access to respite services for family caregivers – particularly on an emergency basis – has been one of the needs identified by family caregivers in AARP Michigan’s work as part of the Michigan Dementia Coalition over the past year. We also look forward to sharing more information with you on the Michigan Dementia Coalition’s broader findings and recommendations later this year, upon finalizing our report.

We appreciate this opportunity to share AARP’s priorities with the subcommittee, and thank you for your work on these important issues. If you have any questions or if there is further information we can provide, please feel free to contact Melissa Seifert at 517-267-8934 or mseifert@aarp.org.

Respectfully,



Lisa Dedden Cooper
Manager of Advocacy



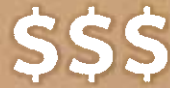
Melissa Seifert
Associate State Director, Government Affairs

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(4) social welfare organization that advocates on issues that matter the most to people age 50 and over, and their families. AARP has approximately 1.4 million members in Michigan. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates.

HHS SC 2-28-2018 Jennifer Howard



220,000 people are expected to have Alzheimer's disease in Michigan by 2025.



Medicaid costs for Alzheimer's care in Michigan are expected to **increase by 29.7%** from 2017 to 2025.

The MDCSP helps dementia patients stay in their homes longer, which increases their quality of life and combats the disease's rising costs.

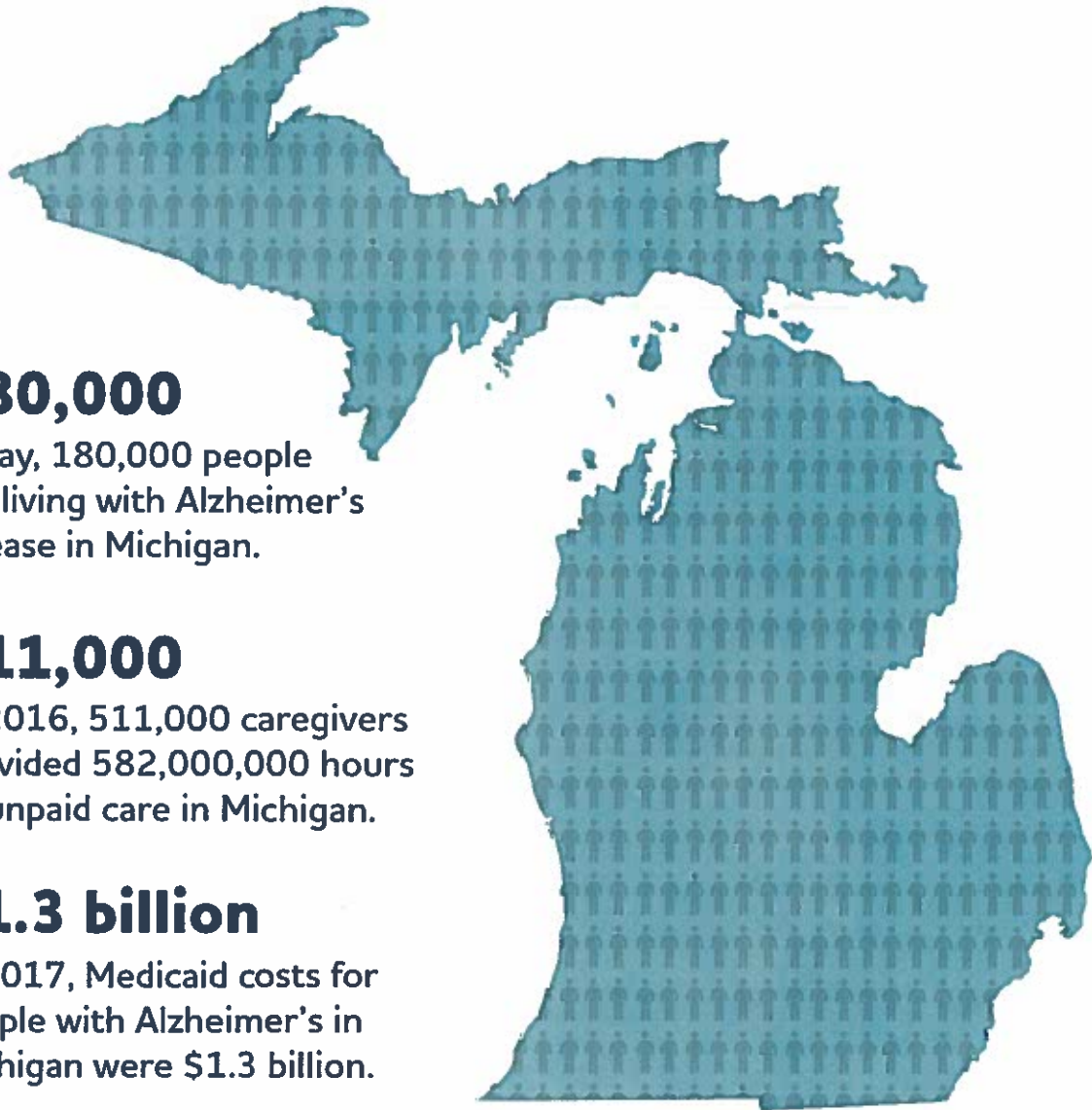
- 🔗 The MDCSP provides social work expertise, in-home care counseling, and person-centered planning to families affected by dementia.
- 🔗 The program **connects people to resources and education, services** that the Alzheimer's Association provides today.
- 🔗 During its pilot program, the MDCSP **reduced long-term care placement by 23%** in the counties it served.
- 🔗 The Alzheimer's Association seeks \$550,000 in the State's FY 2019 budget to expand this program and serve families affected by dementia, saving citizens, the State, and private insurance **millions of dollars.**

\$550,000 in the FY 2019 budget would:

- 🔗 Provide for nine (9) Care Counselors to be deployed across the State;
- 🔗 Reach over 380 families affected by Alzheimer's disease and dementia annually;
- 🔗 Expand the MDCSP to Ingham, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Livingston, Oakland, St. Clair, and Wayne counties while continuing to serve Macomb, Monroe, and St. Joseph counties;
- 🔗 Inform and strengthen Statewide dementia policy efforts by providing experts with evaluation and data; and
- 🔗 Diffuse dementia care costs to families, taxpayers, and public benefit programs;

KEEP MICHIGAN'S SENIORS AT HOME WITH THE MDCSP

(MICHIGAN DEMENTIA CARE & SUPPORT PROGRAM)



180,000

Today, 180,000 people are living with Alzheimer's disease in Michigan.



511,000

In 2016, 511,000 caregivers provided 582,000,000 hours of unpaid care in Michigan.



\$1.3 billion

In 2017, Medicaid costs for people with Alzheimer's in Michigan were \$1.3 billion.

Alzheimer's is taxing on our state in more ways than one, and the numbers continue to rise.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, House Appropriations Subcommittee for Health and Human Services
FROM: Gilda Z. Jacobs, President and CEO
DATE: February 28, 2018
SUBJECT: FY 2019 Budget for Health and Human Services

On behalf of the Michigan League for Public Policy, which has been advocating for Michigan families and children for more than 100 years, I am urging you to support several key proposals in the governor's 2019 budget. Understanding the restraints of this year's budget, we hope that you will join us in supporting these continued investments and new funding recommendations to ensure the health and safety of Michigan families.

For 2019, we offer the following recommendations for health services:

- **Support continued investment for the Healthy Michigan Plan:** Passed in 2013, the Healthy Michigan Plan has provided high-quality care to over 670,000 Michiganders with low incomes and has resulted in positive benefits to Michigan's economy. As the fate of the Affordable Care Act is safe, at least in the immediate term, we urge lawmakers to continue to provide the financial support needed to continue this successful program.
- **Fight emerging public health threats:** The governor has recommended additional funding for local public health agencies that are on the front lines in handling issues regarding air and water pollution and their effects on Michiganders.
- **State psychiatrists wage increase:** Working with the Civil Service Commission, the Department of Health and Human Services has requested a wage increase to attract and retain psychiatrists to our state psychiatric hospitals. Our state hospitals provide important services to our most vulnerable and long wait times can be incredibly difficult and painful for those needing services. By increasing wages, pay for psychiatrists will come more in line with those of our Great Lakes neighbors and allow individuals in need of support to more quickly access care.
- **Prenatal smoking prevention:** While we appreciate the recommendation of additional funding for local public health agencies, we hope that the Legislature will look for additional funding to support the reduction of prenatal smoking. Almost 1 in 5 births in Michigan are to a mother who smoked during her pregnancy.

(over)

- **Ongoing support for Flint:** As the Flint water crisis continues, we urge the Legislature to continue its support of the city and its families. Lead exposure is not a one-time thing and has been proven to have long-term effects. Because of that, the needs of the city's residents will change and we hope that lawmakers will continue to support the city and its recovery.

Please contact me if you would like additional information. We appreciate your consideration of our recommendations.

2019 BUDGET PRIORITIES

Staying true to its vision that Michigan residents of *all* races, places and income levels should have the opportunity to thrive and find economic security, the League has identified the following budget priorities for 2019:

1. Meet the basic needs of Michigan children, older adults and persons with disabilities

- **Income Assistance:** Increase the annual clothing allowance for children in families receiving income assistance through the Family Independence Program and living below the poverty line.
- **Food Assistance:** 1) Preserve the “heat and eat” policy that increases food assistance to 340,000 Michigan residents; and 2) Reverse the state’s decision to apply an asset test to food assistance, a move that discourages families with low incomes from saving the small amount of money needed to handle a family setback or crisis, and has administrative costs to the state.
- **Healthy Food Deserts:** Increase investments in programs that reduce the number of “healthy food deserts” such as the Corner Store Initiative, the Double Up Food Bucks program and initiatives to expand healthy food access for child care providers.

2. Make sure all Michiganders have access to needed healthcare

- **Medicaid and the Healthy Michigan Plan:** Defend state and federal funding for Medicaid, the Healthy Michigan Plan and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- **Healthy Pregnancies and Births:** Fund initiatives to prevent prenatal smoking. State dollars for programs to reduce prenatal smoking have been reduced significantly while almost 1 in 5 births in Michigan is to a mother who smoked during her pregnancy.

3. Help working parents find affordable, high-quality child care and early education services

- **Eligibility for Child Care Assistance:** Incrementally increase the state’s very low income eligibility thresholds to help make high-quality child care a reality for all families—with a focus on parents with low wages for whom the cost of care is prohibitive.
- **Access to Adequate Supply of High-Quality Child Care:** Support small child care businesses so they can accept more children with state subsidies by moving from hourly payments to weekly or biweekly—a standard encouraged by federal law and a practice in most other states.
- **Expand Access to a High-Quality Preschool:** Provide sufficient funding to ensure that all eligible 4-year-olds can receive a high-quality preschool education through the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), and expand GSRP services to 3-year-olds from families with low incomes.

4. Strengthen public education in Michigan—beginning early

- **Early Literacy:** Michigan must: 1) Expand funding for evidence-based home visitation programs that help pregnant women and families with young children address the challenges faced as new parents—programs that have proven to increase financial security, reduce child abuse and neglect, and improve health and educational outcomes; and 2) Fund comprehensive programs for children from birth through third grade to improve reading proficiency, including resources needed by schools to implement the new third-grade reading law, and outreach to families to understand the state’s retention policy—which could disproportionately affect children of color.
- **Students in High-Poverty Schools:** The School Aid At-Risk program is the state’s best vehicle for helping students in high-poverty schools and must be fully funded.

- **Adult Education and Access to Postsecondary Programs:**

- Expand funding for adult education programs, which has been cut by 70% despite strong need.
- Reinstate Part-Time Independent Student Grants that were at one time provided to nontraditional students who are more than 10 years out of high school.

5. Strengthen immigrant integration in Michigan. Create a \$5 million immigrant integration fund to ensure the social and civic integration of immigrant residents through community-based language programs and citizenship classes. English language proficiency and citizenship are important keys to economic mobility and have a positive ripple effect on our state economy.

6. Provide appropriate justice for juveniles. Fund implementation of “Raise the Age” legislation to ensure that 17-year-old youths are not treated as adults in the criminal justice system. Michigan is one of five states that automatically charges 17-year-old youths as adults.

Michigan League for Public Policy

2019 BUDGET PRIORITIES

Protect State and Federal Funding for Healthcare Coverage for All Michiganders

— LEAGUE RECOMMENDATION —

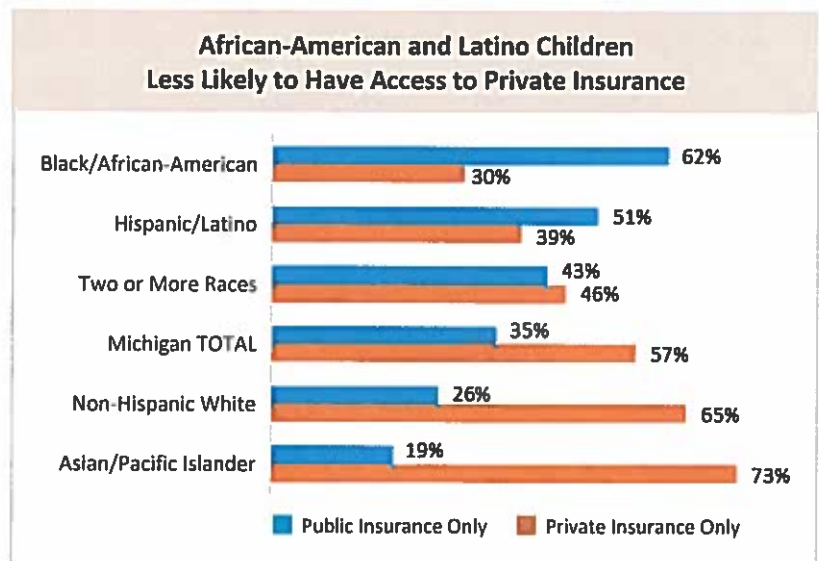
Protect state and federal funding for Medicaid, the Healthy Michigan Plan and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

BACKGROUND: Continuation of the Medicaid program, the Healthy Michigan Plan and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP, or MICHild in Michigan) is critical to the League's goal of ensuring that all Michiganders are insured and have access to healthcare. Michigan was among the states that elected to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and since 2014 over 650,000 individuals have received health coverage and care as a result. The Michigan Legislature has appropriated sufficient state funding for the program through the end of the 2017-18 budget year.

- **Changes at the federal level threaten healthcare coverage in Michigan.** There are many threats to the progress Michigan has made in reducing the number of uninsured residents, including the recent tax reform bill signed by the president that eliminates the ACA mandate for healthcare coverage—a move that can destabilize healthcare markets—and Congressional failure to pass a long-term, clean CHIP reauthorization. Threats at the federal level continue, including the possibility of changes to Medicaid financing through harmful block grants or per capita caps.
- **Michigan has a history of effectively covering children.** Healthcare coverage for children has been a high priority for the state and was increased by the passage of CHIP and the ACA at the federal level.
- **Fewer children of color have access to private health insurance.** Only 30% of African-American children in Michigan and 39% of Latino children have private insurance largely through employers, compared to 65% of non-Hispanic White children. Cuts in publicly-funded insurance are likely to increase inequities for children.

WHY IT MATTERS:

- **Michigan residents who are insured are much more likely to receive less expensive preventive and primary care.** Following Michigan's implementation of the Healthy Michigan Plan, over 80% of enrollees had a primary care visit and reduced reliance on the emergency department as their primary source of care from 16% to just 1.7%.
- **Access to health insurance has improved outcomes for children and adults.** While access to insurance is not the only influence on health outcomes, it does improve economic security for families, increase the likelihood of regular well-child and primary care visits, expand access to screenings for potentially expensive chronic illnesses like diabetes, and improve access to needed prescription drugs.
- **The Healthy Michigan Plan helped Michigan's economy grow.** The Healthy Michigan Plan resulted in 30,000 jobs annually, \$2.3 billion in additional personal spending power, and \$150 million in state tax revenue as a result of added economic activity. Uncompensated care by hospitals fell by nearly 50% across the state.



HMS SC 2-28-18
Elizabeth Kelly



Adult Shelter and Recuperative Care Center

249 Baldwin Avenue Pontiac, MI 48342


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Testimony --- Emergency Shelter Program Requesting \$4 per diem increase

My name is Elizabeth Kelly and I am the Executive Director of HOPE. We operate two shelters in Pontiac in Oakland County but do not restrict shelter access to any particular city or county....anyone experiencing homelessness is welcome. HOPE Adult Shelter is the only low barrier emergency shelter in Oakland County. We serve both men and women and the facility has 62 beds. Our second shelter, HOPE Recuperative Care Center, is the first "medical respite" type of shelter in Michigan. This facility serves 15 medically complex homeless individuals who are "discharged to home" from an inpatient hospital setting but have no home to go to. HOPE Recuperative is a respectful place for them to begin the healing process.

I want to begin by stating how much we truly appreciate your support of the \$4 per diem increase that we are now receiving through our Emergency Shelter Program grant. This was the first increase in this grant in more than a decade, and this welcome raise in our per diem has been critical to helping a small agency like HOPE better make ends meet.

I'd like to share with you what this increase of \$4 a night per guest means to a small agency like HOPE. When an individual comes to one of HOPE's shelters, they receive shelter, meals, case management and overnight shelter in a bed with linens, three meals, case management, nursing care, and onsite services and coordination with mental health providers, housing providers and primary care. In other words, we are not just a place to flop for the night. We are a place where safe shelter becomes the vehicle for resolving the individual's homelessness once and for all. We operate these two shelters 24/7/365 days a year with 29 staff serving approximately 650 unique individuals annually on an annual budget of \$750,000.



HOPE

Elizabeth Kelly
Executive Director/CEO

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HOPE's staff are college educated and are social workers, nurses, and other human service professionals. Preserving the individual's dignity through trauma informed care while we are working with them is our overriding priority.

Your support of the \$4 increase has allowed us to finally provide this hard-working college educated staff, some with advanced degrees, with a modest raise. Most have been making \$12 per hour since they came to HOPE. They understand the economic challenges experienced by HOPE's guests because they, too, struggle financially.

The population we serve includes individuals who are chronically homeless, those with serious and persistent mental illness, some struggling with substance abuse, military veterans with PTSD including those from the Viet Nam War, those fleeing domestic violence, some experiencing sudden economic hardship through job loss and/or medical catastrophe and as well as those who are just simply poor and undereducated with few job prospects.

We understand the poverty that HOPE's guests experience as we stretch a dollar to the max to ensure we meet our mission to shelter and resolve the homelessness of those who cross our threshold . HOPE is involved in advocacy that will help an individual more expediently resolve homelessness. We provide pest control, clothing, shoes/boots, hygiene items, adult diapers, socks, underwear. Our water bills alone run more than \$1000 a month for showers and laundry for this large number of guests that we house. Because we operate 24/7/365 we provide round the clock supervision and guidance. We help guests with everything from literacy training to finding an apartment. We stretch our meager staffing with social work interns and community volunteers. On dangerously cold weather emergency days, often I must abandon my executive director duties to provide additional staffing to those following our recommendations to shelter in place. We are that pressed to fund appropriate staffing. Yet another small increase in the per diem can yield greater results that put Michigan on the path of resolving homelessness.

We are hoping you will consider another \$4 increase to our per diem in the budget you are now considering. This will translate into an increase of just under \$100,000 to HOPE's budget. Yet the impact of that modest increase to what we and other shelters can do to expeditiously resolve the homelessness of those we

serve will be a bargain for Michigan's taxpayers. With an additional increase in the per diem of \$4, HOPE can add a second case manager which will allow shelter guests to have more intensive navigation and case management which should result in quicker resolution of their homelessness.

This requested increase in the per diem will allow us to create critically needed post housing supports such as healthy leisure groups to help individuals through the transition from homelessness to housed. Often folks are inexperienced tenants, or don't know how to establish healthy friendships. Defaulting to old ways often results in a repeat of homelessness, which is more expensive to Medicaid and the healthcare system, more expensive to the mental health system with failed housing increasing the individual's cost to "the system" including increased risk of incarceration and hospitalization.

Lastly, this requested increase in the per diem is an investment that will allow HOPE to add a staff to all shifts at HOPE's shelters. This doesn't sound like a lot, but this results in better management of guest needs which should translate into more served with shortened length of stay....which puts us more solidly on the path of resolving homelessness in Michigan, and restoring the value of each of these individuals as productive citizens of our state.

On behalf of all those experiencing homelessness in Michigan and the agencies who serve them, I thank you for considering our request to increase the Emergency Shelter Program grant funding by an additional \$4 in the next budget. I thank you for the raise that you provided us this year which helps us tremendously with staff retention of experienced staff.

Elizabeth Kelly, Executive Director/CEO
HOPE Adult Shelter and Recuperative Care Center
249 Baldwin Avenue
Pontiac, MI 48342
248 499 7345

Emergency Shelter Program Overview

HHS SC 2-28-18
T. GAINES
E. MOON CARTER

What is the Emergency Shelter Program (ESP)?

- The ESP started in 1991 as a partnership between The Salvation Army and the State of Michigan to provide emergency overnight lodging to households experiencing homelessness
- The original shelter per diem amount was \$10 per bed night
- The Salvation Army administers the ESP on behalf of MDHHS
- The ESP provides funding for emergency shelters as well as motel services where shelters are not available or at capacity

Fiscal Year 2017

- The ESP funded 62 emergency shelters and 29 motel service providers
- The ESP reimbursed 731,680 shelter bed nights and 767,080 bed nights overall
- 283,883 (39%) of the shelter bed nights and 310,639 (40.5%) of all bed nights were TANF

Fiscal Year 2018

- The ESP received a \$4 increase in the shelter per diem from \$12 to \$16 (\$3.7 million total)
- After an application process in the summer of 2017, the ESP is now funding 68 shelters and 34 motel service providers
- The ESP staff expanded the minimum standards required of ESP shelter providers to include not allowing sobriety to be a condition of entry while continuing to promote nationwide best-practices in shelter service delivery

What has been done with \$4 increase?

- Shelters reported the ability to hire additional staff to assist in case management
- Shelters have started or expanded other services to help households in their move towards housing, including assistance with transportation and finding income
- Shelters have received some help in covering the costs of operation, including utilities

Case for Additional Increase

- There continues to be a need for a short-term, safe place for homeless households to go
- Before FY18, shelters had not seen a funding increase since 2003 while the cost of running shelters has increased
- Michigan still lags behind other states in shelter funding. Other states and communities are spending between \$25 and \$78 per night for singles.
- The ESP staff would use this to continue to raise expectations of shelters and push towards best practices in all areas of shelter service delivery
- In current job market, this would allow shelters to hire and pay staff a wage that would attract and retain quality workers providing case management and other services
- Most shelters still must raise additional funds to cover their costs so an additional increase would alleviate some of that pressure and allow more attention to be paid to shelter operations and service delivery
- The Proposed Senate Subcommittee Bill for FY18 stated the intent to provide another \$4 per bed night increase in FY19.

Cost

- An additional \$4 increase would again cost approximately \$3,744,800 (40% could be TANF)

ESP Budget Presentation

- Thank the committee for the time to speak
- The \$4 increase for FY18 is much appreciated and we pass along thanks for that from the shelter providers, and most importantly, the individuals and families that are benefitting daily from the increased investment in assisting them on their journey from homelessness into housing
- In the Senate budget proposal last year, it was noted that the intent was to do an additional \$4 per diem increase for FY19. Our hope is that this is still under consideration as the need remains for the safe, short-term accommodations that are provided by the Emergency Shelter Program providers across the state.
- The \$4 increase last year was the first increase to Emergency Shelter Program funding since 2003 and we have already seen some great strides being made to benefit those we serve in FY18.
- I would like to highlight a few of the ways this increase directly impacted the homeless population that is being served with these funds:
 - In Oscoda, a shelter was able to pay a part-time case manager who had been volunteering. This position now has regular hours and allows the shelter to provide follow-up services to households for up to 2 years after leaving the shelter in an effort to keep them housed.
 - In Port Huron, a men's shelter was able to accommodate the changing demand for shelter beds in the community by doing a minor remodel and creating a space which means men will not be on the street at night.
 - In East Lansing, a family shelter reports that the \$4 increase has helped them re-house families faster which has them on pace to serve more families in FY18 than in prior years.
 - In Benton Harbor, Battle Creek, and Decatur, these funds have been used to improve case management with the hiring of additional staff and/or TA around Housing First and best-practices in shelter service delivery.
- While the \$4 increase has no doubt improved shelter service delivery across the state, an additional increase for FY19 would mean even greater services being offered to those who are searching for permanent housing.
- Shelter across the state have provided thoughts on what could be done with another increase. These ideas include:
 - Continuing to increase support services like transportation, education, vocational training, and vocational placement
 - Paying staff competitive wages to reduce turnover and create consistency with case management and service delivery
 - Moving part-time case managers to full-time to increase availability of case management
 - Update the layout of the shelter to include space to serve different populations (single dads with kids, transgender, etc.) based on the need in the community
 - Additional case management training for staff to keep them updated on the best practices nationwide in shelter service delivery
- Those are just a few examples and there are many more we could offer if time allowed.

- The Emergency Shelter Program will continue to provide safe, short-term emergency accommodations to those most in need across the state. Our hope is that the increase that was intended during the budget process last year will be funded so shelter providers can have the resources to continue to find real, impactful ways of providing services to homeless individuals and families across the state.
- We do not wish to come and seek an increase year after year. We are, again, extremely thankful for the increase last fiscal year.
- Our goal with an additional increase, as always, would be to work with shelters to ensure when episodes of homelessness do occur that households have a warm, safe place to go and that the episodes are rare, brief, and end with households obtaining and maintaining housing
- I want to thank the committee for your time today. I know the shelters and the households they serve appreciate your consideration of a per diem increase for FY19 as well. Thank you.



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HHS SC
2-28-18

Michigan Senior Volunteer Programs

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TESTIMONY

February 28, 2018

Representative Canfield, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.

I'd like to begin by sharing a recent story from a Foster Grandparent who was tutoring a five year old girl and how they worked together to meet a challenge. "I will refer to her as "Sparrow". Sparrow would come to our session each day determined that she couldn't identify most letters or the sounds they make, and certainly did not know how to read or spell any sight words. Growing weary of hearing the words "I don't know" and "I can't," I decided to give Sparrow the opportunity to switch roles, enabling her to be in control of the session only if she agreed to correct me. In a couple of days, she rose to the occasion by correcting my misspelled words, catching me every time I mispronounced a letter, etc. Each time, letting out a most gleeful giggle, (which is nothing short of a taste of heaven to my soul). Now she has acquired confidence, and is more determined than ever that she indeed "CAN"! And I have witnessed yet another bright light switching on in the mind of a child."

We are speaking on behalf of the Senior Volunteer Programs of Michigan, which includes the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), Senior Companion Program (SCP) and the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA), Michigan's Senior Volunteer programs provide meaningful opportunities for older adults, age 55 and better, to engage in service in their local communities. Michigan is home to 19 Foster Grandparent Programs, 14 Senior Companion Programs and 20 Retired & Senior Volunteer Programs. Together, we serve 73 of Michigan's 83 counties.

Foster Grandparents are low-income older adults who provide sustained one-to-one attention and assistance to vulnerable children, with the purpose of improving self-esteem and supporting the child's ability to learn and succeed in school and life. Foster Grandparents commit an average of 20 hours per week to provide a stable, caring relationship for children who often come from chaotic and unpredictable environments. In exchange for their service, Foster Grandparent receive a small, non-taxable stipend of \$2.65 per hour. In 2017, 1,028 Foster Grandparents provided service in 1,373 educational settings and supported over 5,493 children who are academically delayed, lacking self-esteem or motivation, experiencing

behavior or social problems and are at risk of dropping out of school, all of which can cause additional economic stress on our communities.

Senior Companions are low-income older adults who play an important role in supporting frail seniors and adults with disabilities in their quest to live independently for as long as possible. Senior Companion volunteers add richness to the lives of their clients, while providing access to their community, including grocery shopping, transportation to medical appointments, and opportunities for socialization. Similar to Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions receive a small, non-taxable stipend for their service. In 2017, 504 Senior Companions supported in-home and long-term care services for 2,522 Michigan citizens at risk of institutionalization. Senior Companions help seniors live independently in the communities where they choose to reside.

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), one of the nation's largest volunteer efforts, invites older adults to utilize their skills, talents, and life experience to make a difference in their community, through direct service and collaboration with established non-profits, schools, government, and public organizations. RSVP Volunteers serve their communities by tutoring and mentoring children, providing companionship, support, and medical transportation for older adults, protecting the safety of their peers through partnerships with law enforcement, and supporting the health of our state's lands and waters. Each year nearly 7,000 RSVP Volunteers contribute in excess of 600,000 hours of service to nearly 1,200 organizations, projects and communities across Michigan. RSVP volunteers do not receive a stipend and do not have an hourly requirement for their service.

For more than 40 years, the Michigan Legislature has recognized the value and importance of one of our state's strongest resources, our senior volunteers. In fiscal year 2017, \$4.4 million in state funding administered by AASA, coupled with local and federal funding, allowed the Senior Volunteer Programs to provide high quality, life enhancing volunteer opportunities for older adults, while assisting nonprofit, health care, and government organizations in achieving their missions and expanding services.

An increase of \$1,000,000 for expansion of the three Senior Volunteer Programs would provide for approximately 161,744 additional volunteer hours and increase the program's capacity to better serve the growing population of older adults. Approximately 66,000 of those hours would come from FGP, 47,000 from RSVP and 48,000 from SCP. This would provide an estimated value to Michigan communities of nearly 3.9 million dollars*; almost 4 times the cost of the proposals.

In closing, thank you for your support over the years, and we look forward to your continued support in the future.

***Based on the independent sector estimated rate for 2017.**

Testimony Provided By:

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Senior Corps Volunteer Programs of Michigan

Foster Grandparent Program
Retired & Senior Volunteer Program
Senior Companion Program



Statewide Highlight Book

2016

The Senior Corps Volunteer Programs of Michigan

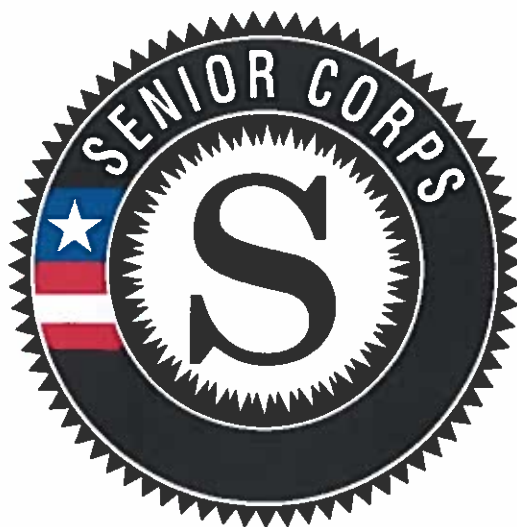
Since the early 1970's both Congress and state legislatures across the country have recognized the value and importance of one of our nation's most valuable resources...our senior volunteers.

In 1973 Congress formalized their appreciation of older adults engaged in volunteer service through passage of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, which authorized funding for the programs of the National Senior Service Corps: the Foster Grandparent Program, Retired & Senior Volunteer Program, and Senior Companion Program.

Michigan is home to 20 Retired & Senior Volunteer Programs, 19 Foster Grandparent Programs and 13 Senior Companion Programs. Together, we serve 73 of Michigan's 83 counties and provide high quality, life enhancing volunteer opportunities for older adults, while assisting nonprofit, health care, and government organizations in achieving their missions and expanding services.

The Senior Corps Volunteer Programs of Michigan celebrate success due to federal, state, and local funding partnerships. They are not entitlement programs, but rather programs where productive adults who wish to have a stake in Michigan's future, contribute to the well-being of our children, families, seniors and communities.

This highlight report will demonstrate how the Senior Corps Volunteer Programs serve as a safety net for vulnerable citizens, resources, and communities and how each of the senior volunteer programs positively impacts the values Michigan residents hold dear.



Michigan's Senior Corps Volunteer Programs

Return on Investment

Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)

During 2016, 1,664 Foster Grandparent Volunteers, serving in 19 programs across the state, contributed 968,349 hours of service, working with 5,557 children at risk for juvenile delinquency, academic delays, and lack of development of appropriate social skills, to help them succeed in educational settings.

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

Michigan is home to 20 RSVP projects. During 2016, 8,000 RSVP Volunteers helped to build the capacities of nearly 1,900 government, not-for-profit, and healthcare organizations. In total, RSVP Volunteers provided more than 680,500 hours of service across Michigan.

Senior Companion Program (SCP)

During 2016, 735 Senior Companion Volunteers, serving with 13 Michigan programs, contributed 495,447 hours to support 2,297 frail older adults in maintaining their ability to live independently.

73 of Michigan's 83 counties have at least one Senior Corps Program

Program	Annual Service Hours	Federal Funding-Corporation for National & Community Service	State Appropriated Funding-Aging & Adult Services Agency	Local Funds Leveraged	Total Funding	Value of Volunteer Service*	Return on Investment (ROI)	ROI Percentage
Foster Grandparent	968,349	\$3,753,859	\$2,233,600	\$828,160	\$6,815,619	\$15,512,951	\$8,697,332	127.61%
RSVP	681,544	\$1,392,182	\$627,300	\$641,697	\$2,661,179	\$10,918,335	\$8,257,156	310.28%
Senior Companion	495,447	\$1,122,165	\$1,604,400	\$841,069	\$3,567,634	\$7,937,061	\$4,369,427	122.47%
	2,145,340	\$6,268,206	\$4,465,300	\$2,310,926	\$13,044,432	\$34,368,347	\$21,323,915	

*Value assigned to an hour of volunteer service: This value was derived by averaging the minimum wage in Michigan for FY 2016 (\$8.50) with the rate assigned to the value of an hour of volunteer service by the Independent Sector (\$23.54). The Independent Sector value of an hour of volunteer service is based on the average hourly earnings of all nonagricultural workers as determined by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Independent Sector increases this figure by 12% to estimate for fringe benefits. When averaging the two rates, we have assigned a dollar value of \$16.02 to an hour of volunteer service in Michigan.



Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)

Foster Grandparents are low-income older adults, who provide sustained one-to-one attention and assistance to vulnerable children, with the purpose of improving self-esteem and supporting the child's ability to learn. Foster Grandparents commit an average of 15—20 hours per week to provide a stable, caring relationship for children who often come from chaotic and unpredictable environments. In exchange for their service, Foster Grandparents receive a small, non-taxable stipend of \$2.65 per hour.

During 2016, 1,664 Foster Grandparents contributed nearly 969,000 hours toward mentoring more than 5,500 Michigan children who are academically delayed, lacking self-esteem or motivation, experiencing behavior or social problems, and who are at-risk of dropping out of school. The volunteers served at more than 750 sites, including in Early Childhood Centers, Elementary and Faith Based Schools.



Foster Grandparents
Share Today. Shape Tomorrow.

As a Foster Grandparent I am given the opportunity to share my time and whatever literary skills I possess with some wonderful children. Each one is unique in his/her personality and family background. Some must struggle through the hardships of dyslexia, speech impediments, ADHD, etc. I welcome the daily challenge of finding new, inspiring ways to help them absorb the necessary knowledge of their grade level.

I'd like to share a recent story of tutoring a five year old little girl and a challenge that was met. I will refer to her as "Sparrow."

Sparrow would come to our session each day adamant that she couldn't identify most letters, or the sounds that they make, nor did she know how to read, or spell any words. Growing weary of hearing the words "I don't know" and "I can't," I decided to give Sparrow the opportunity to switch roles, enabling her to be in control of the session.



Within a couple of days Sparrow rose to the occasion by correcting my misspelled words and catching me when I mispronounced a letter. Each time, she'd letting out a most gleeful giggle, which is nothing short of a taste of heaven to my soul.

Sparrow has now acquired confidence, and is more determined than ever that she indeed "CAN!" And I have witnessed yet another bright light switching on in the mind of a child. I am blessed.

Bonnie is a new volunteer Grandma to the Foster Grandparent Program and just couldn't wait to share with NEMCSA FGP staff that the teacher of Mio's Head Start asked her to increase her volunteer hours from 15 to 24 per week. Bonnie stated "the Foster Grandparent Program has changed my life and I wish I joined up 10 years ago".

At almost 70 years old, Grandma Bonnie says that since she began interacting with the children a few months ago, she "feels like she's 30." Her improvement in health has been confirmed by her physician who encourages her to keep doing what she's doing as a Foster Granny, telling her "you're looking younger every time I see you." And who doesn't want to look younger?

Grandma Bonnie, FGP volunteer



Montcalm FGP Summer Reading Program

Summer learning loss is the loss of academic skills and knowledge over the course of summer holidays. The loss in learning varies across grade level, subject matter, and family income, but on average summer loss is estimated to equal about 1 month of schooling.

The Montcalm County Summer Reading program was started to help reduce the effects of summer learning loss. During the four-week Foster Grandparent Summer Reading program, 10 Foster Grandparents provided 660 hours of tutoring support for 34 children. All students showed improvement in their reading levels as a result of participation in the program.



Greenville Schools Superintendent, Linda Van Houten writes of the program, “The Foster Grandparent program has provided a priceless opportunity for the students of Greenville Public Schools. This opportunity for students to receive one-on-one support in the area of literacy development makes a difference in those students’ lives. In our age of technology and visual media, most students do not find the time to work on specific reading skills as in the past. We are finding that we need to facilitate these opportunities for students in order to get them to be engaged which is what it takes to really learn the skill. This summer program does exactly that; facilitate the structure, learning environment and staffing it takes to give these students the skills they need to be successful.”

“The children have been a joy to work with especially when I see their smiles as they reach new learning goals”- Grandma Wendy

The Best Part About Being a Foster Grandparent...

“I enjoy the hugs I get, as my own grandchildren don’t live nearby. I enjoy seeing the looks on the kids’ faces when they realize they finally figured something out.”

– Grandma Carleen, Thumb Area Foster Grandparent Program,
Peck Elementary School



Foster Grandma Ilene has lived in Lakeview most of her life. Lakeview is where she raised her five children, and where she put her love of early childhood education into practice.

For more than 40 years, Ilene has been very active in Brockway Wesleyan Church. In 1978, she founded Brockway Christian Academy, a ministry of Brockway Wesleyan Church. Ilene taught kindergarten through 2nd grade at Brockway Christian Academy, until her retirement in 2009.

Upon retirement from teaching, Ilene stayed at home for a year. However she found her love of educating children far outweighed retirement. She returned to Brockway as a volunteer monitor until Grandma Hazel, a former Foster Grandparent, convinced her to expand her horizons and become a Foster Grandparent at the age of 75.

On November 29, 2015 Brockway Christian Academy was dedicated in Ilene's honor for her years of devotion to her family, friends, church, and community. Today, at 81 years old, Ilene lives independently, drives her own car and continues to serve as a Foster Grandparent at the school she helped found.



Stella is 97 years old and has been a volunteer with the Foster Grandparent Program for over 12 years, but her dedication to service in the schools extends well beyond that. Giving several hours of her time each week in the Homer School District has been a passion of Stella's for over 50 years.



Having Stella in the Foster Grandparent program at Community Action of South Central Michigan has been a great joy for all staff and fellow volunteers. Stella sets the bar for extraordinary volunteers and is a highly respected and valued participant in the program. Stella is always available and willing to do whatever is necessary. And no matter what curve ball is thrown her way, she manages everything easily with a smile on her face.

Of the 12 years that Stella has served in the Foster Grandparent program, she has spent 7 of them in the classroom of Sarah Smith. Sarah shares that, *"Her help to me and service to our children is absolutely invaluable. I simply do not know what I would do without her."*

Teacher Appreciation:



“All the children love Grandma Fredricka! They would all love to sit and work with her at once. She treats them all with tenderness many are seemingly lacking at home. We are grateful to have her!”

- Mrs. Steptoe, K Teacher

“Grandpa is very popular with the children, He sings with them, plays with them and works on their reading, alphabet, recognition, number recognition and phonetic sounds”

- Mrs. Forstner, Headstart Teacher

“Grandma Thelma is such a pleasure. She has the children’s well-being and success in mind. She is a large part of our first grade family.”

- Mrs. Rankin, 1st Grade Teacher

“Grandma Janice loves to focus on our needy students and checks their emotions daily as they come in. Soooo helpful and has made great connections with the students.”

- Mrs. Albert, 3rd Grade Teacher

“Grandma is a great partner to have. She is very positive and very supportive to both me and my students! Our class doesn’t feel whole/complete when Grandma Judy is not here!”

- Mrs. Burton, K Teacher



Living History

Elizabeth is a Foster Grandmother to students in the multi-age classrooms of Ms. Sutherland and Ms. Jeppesen through Monroe County’s Foster Grandparent Program.

As a Foster Grandparent Volunteer, she spends her days in school giving hugs, eating lunch with the children, praising them for their efforts and, during Black History Month, she teaches them about the past.

During the month of February, as students at Paddock Elementary School are celebrating Black History Month, Elizabeth, a former civil right activist, is telling children stories about her youth and the part she played in the civil rights movement. Her contribution to the classroom fulfills the goal of the Foster Grandparent Program, which is to provide benefits to both the students and the volunteers.

Sands said what she likes best about her job is the children. She dislikes "snow days," because she looks forward to seeing the children every day and getting hugs.

Grandma Cassie of Isabella County has been serving as a Foster Grandparent for over 35 years. She has impacted the lives of a tremendous number of students and to this day, through tutoring, mentoring, and serving as a supportive adult, changes lives in the fourth grade classroom in which she serves. In December 2016, Grandma Cassie celebrated 96th birthday. Students from the entire school helped celebrate by creating 96 giant paper candles to line the hallway, complete with tissue paper flames.

Grandma Cassie uses her age and experience as a wonderful tool for helping students learn. When students are studying specific historical events, such as Pearl Harbor, Grandma Cassie is able to share her personal experience and memories.

The benefits of the Foster Grandparent Program go far beyond the educational and emotional impact on the students served. Grandma Cassie receives a different set of benefits from her volunteer service. Not only does she get daily hugs, endearment and appreciation, Grandma Cassie also credits her involvement in the Foster Grandparent Program for her longevity.



It's extremely difficult to choose one story that describes the impact Grandpa Ken has had on my students over the ten years he's spent in my 3rd grade classroom.

One story that comes to mind is of a young girl whose home life was chaotic. Her parents fought constantly and threatened divorce on a daily basis, while her four brothers exhibited bad behavior to get attention. Everyday she threatened to run away. In 3rd grade, she met Grandpa Ken, who spent time with her each week, listening, supporting, mentoring, and making her feel important.

Today, as a junior in high school, she still stops by to see Grandpa Ken and give him hugs, thanking him for helping to change her life. She is now a confident, independent, successful teenager, primarily earning A's in high school. An amazing example of the impact a Foster Grandparent volunteer can have in the life of a child.

—Mr. Telfer, 3rd Grade Teacher



Have you ever watched a program in action and thought...I wish they had that when I was a kid?

It's that perspective that brought James to the Foster Grandparent Program. Believing he could have benefitted from a mentor and additional adult role models as a child, James serves as a Foster Grandparent to help kids stay on track, stay focused in school, and prevent discipline issues. James states "Some kids are slower learners, have no active father or mother figure and need someone to lean on to stay on task." James also emphasizes the need for kids to feel respected. "If a kid gives you a high five, you need to give them a high five back! They accept you, and you need to respect and accept them as well." Each and every day Grandpa James tells the kids they are special, as they deserve positive reinforcement.

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

(RSVP)

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), one of the nation's largest volunteer efforts, invites adults age 55 and over to utilize their skills, talents, and life experience to make a difference in their community, through direct service and collaboration with established non-profit, government, health care, faith-based, and public organizations. RSVP Volunteers serve their communities by tutoring and mentoring children; providing companionship, support, and medical transportation for older adults; protecting the safety of their peers through partnerships with law enforcement and supporting the health of our state's lands and waters.



Last year, 8,000 RSVP Volunteers contributed in excess of 680,000 hours of service to nearly 1,900 organizations, projects, and communities across the State of Michigan. Participating in special projects or committing time on a weekly basis, RSVP Volunteers contribute when and where their interests lie. We have chosen to highlight some of our special projects and partnerships in an effort to provide a genuine understanding of who we are, what we do, and our joint impact on life in Michigan.

RSVP

Lead With Experience

Home Delivered Meals

According to Ellie Hollander, President and CEO of Meals on Wheels American, the Meals on Wheels ‘more than a meal’ model addresses three of the biggest threats of aging: isolation, hunger and loss of independence. Hollander states “more than ever, we must join forces to meet the needs of the fastest growing population in America who want to be able to live at home for as long as they can. It not only makes economic sense to enable seniors to stay healthy and safe at home, but it improves the health and vibrancy of our communities and our nation at large.”

In most Michigan communities, RSVP Volunteers assist in delivering meals to older adults living independently. The RSVP projects listed below play the lead role in ensuring meals are delivered in their communities.

Kalamazoo & Calhoun Counties:

RSVP has been supporting the Meals on Wheels Program in Kalamazoo and Calhoun counties since 1973. Each day 750 seniors receive fresh, made from scratch nutritious meals, along with caring smiles and friendship from volunteers. In 2016, 65 RSVP volunteers provided more than 3,900 hours of service in support the Meals of the Wheels program, serving 1,300 clients.

Dickinson & Iron Counties:

One of the main focus areas of service for the RSVP project serving Dickinson & Iron Counties is home delivered meals. Nearly one quarter of the RSVP volunteers in this service area support the Meals on Wheels Program. During 2016, 50 RSVP Volunteers provided in excess of 5,700 hours of service to deliver meals to 470 program participants.

Crawford & Roscommon Counties:

RSVP of Crawford and Roscommon Counties currently provides all of the volunteer drivers for the home delivered meals program of the Crawford County Commission on Aging. Over the past year, 26 volunteers have provided 2,333 hours of service to deliver 30,926 meals to 155 older adults in Crawford County. Of those receiving meals:

- ◆ 63% of program recipients reported that this was their main source of food each day.
- ◆ 78% percent of recipients said having the RSVP volunteer made them feel less lonely; and
- ◆ 76% of participants reported that their volunteer made them feel connected to more people.



Transportation Services

Linda is 78 years old, lives independently, and struggles with the daily challenges of multiple sclerosis. Her nearest relatives are two sisters that live in Wisconsin. She lives in senior housing community 26 miles from her primary care physician. Linda relies heavily on the RSVP Transportation program for access to medical care. In her words, "The transportation program means everything to me. I have no one that lives close to me. It is so great to be able to count on this program. What else would I do if I didn't have it?"

According to the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center, transportation is critical to enabling older adults to live independently, in terms of accessing medical and other essential services. Michigan's Aging and Adult Services Agency reports that transportation is the highest need for older adults and people with disabilities, with a lack of reliable rides contributing to health decline, increased isolation, less medical care and poor nutrition.

For many older adults and disabled persons, access to routine medical care can mean the difference between independence and institutionalization. In numerous Michigan communities, medical transportation services provided by RSVP Volunteers are the key to seniors maintaining health and independence.

RSVP of Kalamazoo County: For more than 30 years, RSVP of Kalamazoo County has been offering supportive services for older adults through a program called **Volunteers 4 Seniors**. Among the services offered through **Volunteers 4 Seniors** are friendly visiting, shopping assistance, telephone reassurance and transportation services.

The need for transportation services, specifically medical transportation services, has increased more than 90% in the past 2 years. In 2016, 316 rides were provided by 26 RSVP Volunteers.

Marquette County RSVP: Long and difficult winters present additional challenges for independent older adults living across the Upper Peninsula. RSVP of Marquette County addresses this community need by providing non-emergency medical transportation services for adults age 60 and over.



Linda, a participant in the RSVP transportation program and volunteer driver, Jim. Jim reports that he enjoys driving because it gives him an opportunity to meet new people and help them.

During 2016, Marquette County RSVP had 47 dedicated volunteer drivers who provided medical transportation services for 189 older adults. Over the course of the year, volunteers provided transportation to 1,189 medical appointments.

Tax Preparation & Assistance

According to a national survey of tax preparation services, the average cost of tax preparation can range from \$159 for a standard 1040, to nearly \$300 for taxpayers choosing to itemize deductions.

AARP Tax Aide, the nation's largest, free volunteer-run tax preparation and assistance service, serves low- and middle-income taxpayers with special attention to those ages 50 and older. However, taxpayers of all ages are welcome.

Tax Aide Volunteers participate in an extensive training course and annual certification testing. Following completion of certification requirements, volunteers have the skills to complete Form 1040 and Schedules A, B, D, C, & EIC, and State Income Tax Returns & Credits.

RSVP Volunteers operate and volunteer with numerous Tax Aide sites across the state, saving low income taxpayers money on preparation fees, and bringing money to local economies by ensuring participants receive the refunds and credits they qualify for.

Between February 1, 2016 and April 15, 2016, RSVP Volunteers supported Tax Aide programs in the following areas:

Mecosta, Lake and Osceola Counties:

- * 15 RSVP Volunteers provided 3,174 hours of service, completing 1,806 tax returns

Washtenaw County:

- * 17 RSVP volunteers prepared returns for 830 households, totaling \$225,000 in Federal refunds and \$310,000 in State refunds. Also, clients have seen an increase of \$250,000 in food assistance benefits thanks to the Home Heating Credits prepared by the RSVP Tax volunteers.

Bay County:

- * 20 RSVP Volunteers prepared over 1,700 returns bringing more than \$1.25 million in Federal refunds back to Bay County.

Western Upper Peninsula:

- * 7 RSVP Volunteers provided 1,311 hours of service to complete tax returns for 530 clients, resulting in more than \$ 470,000 in state and federal refunds.

Through RSVP Volunteer service, low-income and older adult Michigan taxpayers saved an estimated \$775,000 in tax preparation fees.



RSVP Cares About Food Security

RSVP of Van Buren County, in partnership with Senior Services of Van Buren County, works to provide food assistance to those in need through two food distribution programs: Commodities and Food Trucks.



Commodities Distribution: Each month, commodities provided by Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency are distributed at three locations throughout the county. Residents of Van Buren County who meet income requirements receive boxes filled with basic food staples and cheese. RSVP volunteers serve at the three distribution sites, assisting with packaging and carry-out services. During 2016, 12 RSVP volunteers provided 425 hours of service to assist with commodity distribution, resulting in the distribution of over 1000 boxes of food to low-income seniors.

Food Trucks: In 2016, Senior Services of Van Buren County received a grant from Feeding America which provided for monthly offerings of fresh produce, baked goods, frozen meats, dairy products and much more. Low-income residents were eligible to receive 25 pounds of food per month. Regardless of the weather, RSVP Volunteers stepped up to help distribute food when the trucks arrived. Over the course of the year, 18 RSVP Volunteers contributed 420 hours working with the food truck program and distributed more than 26,000 pounds of food.



When asked about the importance of the programs, 92% of those receiving food assistance from SSVBC and RSVP indicated that it is extremely important to their food security. It also frees up dollars they would have spent on food that can now be used for things like utilities and medications.

It is common for children in underserved communities to have challenges with obtaining nutritional foods.

On an average day in Michigan, 1 in 5 children experiences hunger. A lack of consistent nutritious food limits cognitive development in children, making it difficult to concentrate in school and perform at their best.

In Muskegon County 8,870 kids are considered food insecure, meaning that they lack consistent access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. To assist in meeting the needs of these children, RSVP of Muskegon & Oceana Counties provides volunteer support to the Kids Food Basket Program. Volunteers address childhood hunger by packing and distributing Sack Suppers to students in underserved schools within the community.



Since July 1, 2016, RSVP Volunteers have assisted with providing over 78,000 sack suppers to students at three local schools, with the goal of expanding to 11 more schools.

TUTORING, MENTORING, AND EDUCATION

RSVP of Delta, Schoolcraft, Menominee & Marinette Counties has chosen education as a primary focus area of volunteer service for their program. RSVP focuses on education by collaborating with four Elementary Schools to provide the Reading Buddies Program for First and Second Grade Students.

Reading Buddies began in Delta County in 1998 in response to the America Reads Initiative. Today, the goal of the program has expanded to help students achieve benchmark standards of performing at or above grade level in reading and mathematics by the end of the school year.



Reading Buddy volunteers and students take some time to celebrate the success of the program.

Students are assigned to the Reading Buddies program by their teachers. Once a student is matched with a Reading Buddy, the teacher creates individualized goals for the student and Buddy to work toward. Students receive one-to-one support from their Reading Buddy for one hour each week and participation in the program becomes part of the student's curriculum. In addition to assisting students who need additional attention, students who are especially gifted in their skills may be matched with Reading Buddies to enhance their learning and increase potential.

Over the past 20 years, Reading Buddies has grown from serving students in one elementary school to four schools. During the 2015-2016 school year, 112 RSVP Volunteers mentored 380 students which equaled 4,495 hours of Intergenerational Service. Seventy-three percent of the students participating in the Reading Buddies Program demonstrate improved literacy. The success of the program has led to financial support from United Way of Delta County.

RSVP of Macomb County offers the Target Reading Program in local elementary schools. Volunteers are assigned to a classroom, with 25-30 students, and work with small groups, or individual students who need extra attention on specific subjects. Target Reading Tutors also prepare classroom materials for teachers, tutor in afterschool programs, assist with computer usage, read out loud to the class, give encouragement, act as role models and mentor students regarding proper behavior.

Target Reading Tutors commit to a 2-hour block of volunteer time on a particular day of the week, although many volunteer more time or in additional schools. During 2016, 62 RSVP Volunteers provided nearly 4,000 hours of service to tutor and mentor 89 students in 7 Macomb County Schools. The return on investment...tutors are rewarded with big smiles when they enter the classroom.

Sew Crafty

The diversity of RSVP Volunteer opportunities allows for inclusion of older adults ranging from physically active to those who are home-bound.

Many of our home-bound volunteers enjoy keeping their hands busy through craft work. The results of their efforts are both beautiful and incredibly useful, as they help keep Michigan residents of all ages warm.

RSVP of Lansing has a volunteer program called Caring Hearts, which provides opportunities for homebound seniors to create warm items for those in need.

During 2016, the men and women of the Caring Hearts Program created:

- ◆ 4800 hats, mittens and scarves for children and seniors who are in need
- ◆ 1700 wheel chair, walker, and disaster preparedness bags for Meals on Wheels recipients
- ◆ 950 lap robes and quilts, which were distributed to hospice and senior centers in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties.



Winter hats attached to a Christmas tree at a community health agency. Anyone in need is welcome to take what they need from the tree.

RSVP

The Western Upper Peninsula RSVP matches the handiwork talents of volunteers with the needs of low-income families by providing handmade blankets and sweaters for newborn children.

Each year, 10 RSVP volunteers contribute more than 1,100 hours of volunteer service toward knitting, crocheting and sewing baby sweaters, blankets, and toys. RSVP packages the sweaters and blankets into gift boxes, based on gender, and provides them to the Health Department's Maternal & Infant Health Program (MIHP). The MIHP social work and/or nursing staff deliver the gift boxes to families receiving supportive services through the MIHP Program, and the families are able to enjoy a gift made especially for their newborn. On average 80 families are served by the program annually.



Samples of items hand-made by RSVP Volunteers for families in need.



Tuesday Toolmen

Benjamin and his wife, married for 65 years, have never been apart. When Benjamin, who is on dialysis, had a hospital stay followed by rehab in a nursing home, his wife was by his side. As he regained strength, he begged to be home for Thanksgiving but needed an accessible ramp to get in and out of the house. A call was made to Senior Services and the Tuesday Toolmen volunteers came through. "They gave us the greatest gift, bringing our family together."



Tuesday Toolmen began in 1985 as a partnership between Senior Services and RSVP of Kalamazoo County. The program provides basic home repairs and accessibility modifications, including minor electrical and plumbing; repairs to stairs, windows, doors; railings and grab bars, enhanced lighting, smoke and/or gas alarms, and door widening.

In Kalamazoo, twenty-six RSVP volunteers support the Tuesday Toolmen program. During 2016, the volunteers committed 2,173 hours of service to completing more than 140 accessibility modifications for 63 clients.

Bay County RSVP also offers Tuesday Toolmen services. In 2016, 9 volunteers provided 265 hours of handyman services through 71 visits to the homes of Bay County seniors in need of home safety modifications.

The Medicare and Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP)

A program of Michigan's Aging and Adult Services Agency, MMAP is a free health benefit counseling service with the goal of assisting consumers in making informed decisions regarding Medicare and Medicaid Programs.

Across Michigan, RSVP Volunteers serve as MMAP Counselors. Volunteers working with the MMAP program become certified counselors by completing 36 hours of training provided by the State. MMAP volunteers maintain their certification and stay up to date on the latest medical and prescription drug options available by attending two annual seminars. MMAP assistance is available year-round and volunteers meet with clients either at home, in the RSVP office, or at a local senior center. The face to face encounters between clients and volunteers help to alleviate the anxiety associated with choosing an appropriate insurance plan and with navigating the automated phone systems in place with most insurers.

During 2016, more than 30 RSVP Volunteers served as Certified MMAP counselors, providing over 3,500 hours of service in assisting older and disabled adults in navigating Medicare and Medicaid coverage options and other health benefits.



Senior Safety & Reassurance

Safe Seniors, a program offered by RSVP of Huron, Sanilac, Tuscola counties, is a tool to help local seniors “age in place.”



Volunteers call or visit isolated older adults who live alone or are home alone most of the day. During phone conversations seniors and volunteers share updates on the latest news and community events as well as memories of times not so long ago. Visiting volunteers engage in conversation, reading, game playing, walking and other activities agreed upon by the senior, volunteer, and RSVP project. Volunteers are trained to listen for problematic situations and respond appropriately.

Initially the goal was to offer reassurance to family and friends of isolated seniors by providing an additional person to check in on the senior. After the program started it was quickly discovered that the program offers much more than reassurance, it offers companionship. Seniors are less likely to be lonely or depressed when involved with this program, and are more likely to feel they have close ties to more people in their community.



The KISS Program

The KISS (Keeping Independent Seniors Safe) Program, is offered by RSVP of Genesee, Lapeer, and Shiawassee counties. KISS provides daily telephone reassurance checks for adults, age 55 and over, who are living independently in their own homes. Seniors enroll in the program because they desire a daily source of contact, which helps to ensure personal safety and prevents isolation.

In addition to relieving isolation, the KISS Program is responsible for saving the lives of numerous seniors who had fallen ill and needed medical attention. When a senior fails to respond to their KISS caller, volunteers reach out to the client’s emergency contacts and emergency personnel, if needed. Currently, 117 seniors receive daily KISS Calls.

VOLUNTEERS IN POLICEWORK

For more than 10 years, RSVP of Kent county has had a special working relationship with local law enforcement known as Volunteers in Policework or VIPs. Currently, 25 VIPs serve multiple Police Departments throughout the Kent County and the greater Grand Rapids area.

Volunteers provide services that the public needs, but that sworn or civilian staff may not have time to provide, such as fingerprinting children for child ID kits, patrolling shopping centers, checking on homebound residents, or checking the security of vacationing residents' homes. Volunteers act as extra eyes and ears for patrol officers by participating in non-enforcement activities such as citizen patrols or Neighborhood Watch programs.

Volunteers also play a role in enhancing law enforcement-community relations. A community member who volunteers with his or her local law enforcement agency has a better understanding of that agency and law enforcement, as a whole. Like graduates of citizen police academies, VIPs serve as well-informed ambassadors in the community.



Sock it to Us!



During the holiday season, it can be easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of shopping and preparation for family and friends to gather. But there is a special group of community volunteers who start planning and collecting gifts for others before holiday decorations are on the store shelves.

For the past 25 years RSVP Volunteers in Wayne County have participated in Make A Difference Day with their "Sock It to Us" Collection Drive. Socks are collected and distributed to agencies in need throughout Detroit and

Wayne County. This year RSVP broke its all-time collection record of 9,463 pairs of socks.

A total of 28 organizations throughout the Dearborn, Downriver and metropolitan Detroit areas serve as collection sites. The socks are distributed to social service agencies across Wayne County and the recipient agencies of the "Sock It to Us" program distribute the donated socks to their clients during the holiday season and throughout the year, as needed.

RSVP

Pet Food Drive

When speaking with Sharon, one immediately senses how much Francis means to her. Sharon rescued Francis from Animal Control a year ago, and they've been best buds since. Unfortunately, Francis has health problems, which led to expensive vet bills. Receiving free pet food from the Pet Food Bank helps Sharon care for Francis, and allows her to focus on paying the vet bills. Francis has improved Sharon's life; she feels she has a purpose. "I didn't just save Francis, he saved me as well", Sharon says happily.

Supporting a senior's ability to care for their pet and themselves can help them stay living happy, healthy and safe at home. Research shows seniors with pets are less likely to report loneliness and have fewer doctor visits, but caring for a pet can be financially and physically challenging. The pet food bank began in 2004 with a week-long drive to help Kalamazoo County seniors receiving Meals on Wheels, care for their pet companions. The program has now expanded to include Meals on Wheels recipients in Calhoun county.

During 2016, the annual pet food drive collected 416 bags of food and nearly \$1,000 in monetary donations, resulting in assistance to 111 seniors and more than 200 pets.



Recycling

When thinking about recycling, the first things that come to mind are probably paper, plastic, and glass. But, recycling can include so much more than those items we separate into bins and put at the curbside. Thrift shops and libraries play a significant role in the expanded definition of recycling, and RSVP of Washtenaw County supports these efforts through volunteer service.

Thrift shops play an important role in reducing waste, by giving new life and homes to gently used clothing, household items, and furniture. In addition to reducing waste, money generated from thrift shop sales are used to support people in crisis situations, such as providing emergency funds for utility bills, food, car repairs, and critical home maintenance or repair.

In addition to supporting recycling efforts at thrift shops, RSVP Volunteers sort, sell and recycle books to provide reading materials to those with limited access, such as the VA Hospital and local prisons, and to help raise funds for local libraries. During 2016, 93 Washtenaw County RSVP volunteers served 13,601 hours at thrift shops and libraries, collecting and recycling clothing, books, and household goods.

RSVP Volunteers: 2016 State Emphasis Area Summary

State Emphasis Area	Number of Volunteers	Number of Hours
Adult Education	272	18,853
Advocacy/Support	444	36,230
Animals	85	5,651
Arts/Culture	542	45,212
Basic Human Needs during Economic Crisis	1122	139,250
Caregiver Respite	134	6,352
Child Enhancement Programs	270	9,550
Children in Foster Care	15	1,696
Children with IEPs/Special Education	29	1,933
Community Leadership	363	7,579
Community Partnerships, Mobilization	609	25,081
Early Childhood/School Readiness	81	3,263
Education K-12	644	31,463
Environment and Conservation	606	52,611
Faith-Based	629	90,774
Food Production and Gardening	206	5,239
Health Care Services/Wellness	1176	112,440
Home Maintenance	51	5,336
Homeland Security& Emergency Management	159	13,939
In-home Care	767	66,754
Individuals with Developmental Disabilities	42	2,297
Individuals with Disabilities, Disability Support	305	21,416
Individuals with Limited English Proficiency	36	5,459
Information & Assistance, Counseling & Support	786	88,180
Intergenerational	1066	103,208
Job Preparedness	87	4,271
Mentoring	378	17,360
Nutrition	966	127,449
Parenting Support & Mentoring	62	5,283
Public Safety	227	19,644
Quality of Life Support in Residential Facilities	467	34,698
Short-term/Transitional Shelters	183	20,604
Transportation Services	436	41,017
Tutoring & Literacy	343	20,861
Veterans and Active Duty Support	244	16,138



Senior Companions **Make Independence a Reality**

Senior Companions are low-income older adults who play an important role in supporting frail seniors and disabled adults in their quest to live independently. Senior Companion volunteers add richness to the lives of their clients, while providing access to the community, including grocery shopping, transportation to medical appointments, and opportunities for socialization. In addition to improving the lives of their clients, Senior Companions find their lives enriched through service to others.

Similar to Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions commit an average of 15—20 hours of service per week, and receive a non-taxable stipend of \$2.65 per hour for their service. During 2016, 735 Senior Companions contributed more than 495,000 hours to support in-home, long-term care services for 3,000 Michigan residents at risk of institutionalization.



Senior Companion Program
(SCP)



Patricia is a Senior Companion Volunteer serving in Mecosta County. She currently serves three in-home clients that benefit in many ways from her visits.

Pat's clients all have medical conditions that prevent them from driving. Because of Pat's service, her clients are able to shop for groceries, have transportation to medical appointments and opportunities to socialize within the community. Having a Senior Companion visit weekly helps to prevent the emotional hardships that living alone can cause.

Client Hazel says "Pat and I go out in the community. As long as I am with Pat I can get around." Pat has no doubt changed the lives of many people she has served over the years she has been a Senior Companion.

Stories of Senior Companions

Linda is a Senior Companion Volunteer who has been serving at the Grayling Nursing & Rehabilitation Community for the past eight years. As a Senior Companion, Linda spends 20 hours a week providing companionship to residents who are most in need of additional social interaction and those with special needs. Recently, Grayling Nursing welcomed a new resident with dementia presenting in the form of anxiety. Linda, who volunteers 4 days a week, has been able to provide a daily dose of comfort and friendship. The agency's Activities Director, Kayla, credits Linda's companionship key to helping reduce the resident's anxiety.

Linda refers to her volunteer service as the "joy of her life". She just loves sitting and talking with her assigned companions and hearing their life stories, especially their childhood stories. She also enjoys assisting her resident companions to pursue their own passions such as reading. Linda may often be found reading to those companions whose vision has diminished.

Activities Director, Kayla, refers to Linda as a wonderful person and a great asset, who is "very creative in the manner in which she reaches out to the residents". Kayla appreciates Linda's ability to connect to the residents, who come from all walks of life.

Linda is pictured here sharing the local newspaper and discussing current events with resident, Jessie. Linda, with her 20 hours per week service and friendly personality, is well known by all residents, in addition to her assigned clients.



Funny, friendly, caring, and always willing to lend a hand....perfect words to describe Grand Traverse Senior Companion Volunteer, Frank!

During his career, Frank worked in security. Upon retirement, he wanted to do something different, but still help people. Volunteering with the Senior Companion Program has allowed Frank to meet that retirement goal. Giving back and helping seniors with things they could not accomplish on their own keeps Frank involved in volunteering. "When you put your whole heart and soul into it, you are going to reap the benefits. Seeing a client realize their full potential is something that keeps me going."



Asked about one of his most memorable moments with the Senior Companion Program, Frank states:

"Being with the clients that are 90+ years old is great. When you spend time with them you get a living history lesson."

Stories of Senior Companions



Born and raised in Mississippi in 1920, 96 year old Elbert has been a part of the Kent County Senior Companion Program for 29 years. Through his years of service, Elbert has served as a Senior Companion at both residential sites and in private homes, where clients were homebound and Elbert was their only link to the outside world.

While he's slowed a little bit over the years, and has contemplated retiring, Elbert remains committed to his Senior Companion Service. He spends his days at Delaware Manor in Grand Rapids bringing joy to others with his smile and positive attitude. Through playing checkers and card games or sitting and reminiscing with the residents, Elbert provides companionship to those in need. In return, he is provided with a sense of purpose and meaning because he knows his volunteer service is making a difference.

Friendly, kind, caring, and a great listener are the words that best describe Senior Companion Volunteer, Peter.

Peter joined the Senior Companion Program 5 years ago to stay active in retirement. Asked how volunteering has impacted his life, Peter states: "I think it has kept me younger than if I wasn't involved. It improves your life when you are active and seeing people each week. I love this. I like the people and getting out visiting them."



Peter has created strong relationships through his service in the Grand Traverse area. "I was visiting one of my clients who was ill in the hospital. Some of his family was there also with him. Hospital staff came in and said it would be best if only family was there at the time. They started asking who I was and when I started to explain my client's niece spoke up and said I was family. It meant so much to be considered family in their eyes."

Stories of Senior Companions



Senior Companions strive to provide companionship and opportunities for older adults to feel connected to the community. Those connections come in various forms, but socialization, assistance to live independently, and access to the community are central to the program.

Senior Companion Nancy and her client, Louis love to go out and about town, shopping, enjoying some sweets, or playing cards. Louis loves all things tools and demolition. So Nancy took Louis on a private tour of Morbark's 1.1 million sq. ft. complex! Morbark invented a portable wood de-barker and they help repair tree chippers, brush chippers and other equipment to assist companies with forestry and landscaping. This was definitely a memorable trip for the two of them.

Several years ago, a senior housing facility in the Grand Rapids area contacted the Senior Companion Program, stating that they had a need for companionship and activity for a number of male residents. Three years later, Senior Companion Robert helps fill that need. Residents line up to sit with Robert and play checkers or other games. Or you may find him sitting and visiting with groups of residents, discussing the latest goings on around town. The housing coordinator states that Robert's volunteer service has positively influenced the lives of many residents. One resident in particular used to stay secluded in his apartment, except for medical appointments. Due to Robert's presence and companionship, he now visits the common room daily to play checkers and even stays for lunch.

Senior Companion Robert was selected as one of the top three Volunteers of the year in 2016.



Celeste has been a volunteer for the Senior Companion Program (SCP) of Oakland and Macomb Counties for nearly 4 years. In her time as a Senior Companion, Celeste has helped more than 16 seniors in their quest to remain living independently.

Senior Companions provide supportive services to help seniors remain living in their own homes, preventing or delaying the need for nursing home admission. The families of Celeste's clients sing her praises for providing them with piece of mind. One client's daughter said "Celeste is an absolute Godsend; I know that my mom is in good hands when Celeste is with her."

Reflecting on her volunteer service, Celeste states that she had the greatest impact on her previous client, Joy. And, in return, Joy had the greatest impact on her. "When I first met Joy, she had essentially given up on life. I started talking about the beautiful paintings around her house and she said that she painted them. I suggested she try to paint, because she hadn't done it in years and just talking about it made her happy. I came over one day and noticed that Joy had a canvas set up and was ready to paint. She was ready to embrace life again even though she knew her body was dying."

Joy was able to create a few paintings before she passed away. One of those paintings, Joy made sure went to Celeste. Celeste says, "I have it in my house and every time I look at it, I think about Joy and what a wonderful person she was. I feel that I helped her to enjoy life again, even though it was for a short amount of time, at least she was happy again."



Senior Companion Volunteer, Eva wakes up each day and gets herself ready to go out and help other seniors in her community. Eva provides at least 14 hours of service each week to seniors who live alone, are frail, have medical issues, are lonely, and many who are homebound. She spends time with 4 seniors each week, providing up to 4 hours of companionship and supportive services. Each client has different needs, which range from transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, transportation for errands, taking them to community events, and best of all, providing the gift of friendship.

Eleven years ago, Eva had left her part time job and wasn't engaged in any regular activity. She decided she needed something to do with her life in her older years and came across a volunteer recruitment Ad in a senior newsletter. She responded to the ad and has been serving as a Senior Companion since.

Eva is making a lasting impact on the clients, families, and communities that she serves. Since starting her journey as a Senior Companion Volunteer, Eva has served over 30 individual clients, for periods ranging from months to years. To date, she has provided 16,037 hours of service to assist older adults to remain living independently. Eva has driven 10,215 miles getting her senior clients to the doctor, grocery shopping, and helping to meet additional needs.