



SENIOR
CONNECTION CENTER INC.
YOUR AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

PROUDLY SERVING OLDER ADULTS,
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND
CAREGIVERS THROUGHOUT
HILLSBOROUGH, MANATEE,
POLK, HIGHLANDS &
HARDEE COUNTIES

2015
ANNUAL
REPORT



INTRODUCING

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Senior Connection Center is your Aging and Disability Resource Center, as well as the designated Area Agency on Aging serving Polk, Hillsborough, Manatee, Highlands and Hardee Counties for more than 35 years.



As a nonprofit, everything we do is to help older adults and persons with disabilities live with independence and dignity. Our name - Senior Connection Center - relates directly to our vision: to be the recognized community leader who connects older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers with the information, resources and services they need. Combined, these statements guide us both in the work we do today and the plans we make for the future.

Our Mission:

To help older adults and persons with disabilities live with independence and dignity.

extra help in order to stay safely at home, a co-worker who is trying to balance the responsibilities of raising children and caring for aging parents, a neighbor who can no longer drive safely, or a friend who is trying to figure out their Medicare coverage or a hospital bill. That someone could also be you, either today or sometime down the road.

So, if you or someone you know needs us, please contact us at Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER or www.SeniorConnectionCenter.org. We look forward to connecting with you soon!

Our Vision:

To be the recognized community leader who connects older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers with the information, resources and services they need.

As I reflect upon my first full year as President & CEO of Senior Connection Center, I want to take this opportunity to remember our accomplishments and recognize the many people who have helped to make this a rewarding and memorable year.



First of all, I want to say how grateful I am to be working with a team of such smart, resourceful and hard working people. Our staff members are truly committed to our mission, and they demonstrate it every day with a spirit of caring and compassion that warms my heart. Our SHINE volunteers never cease to amaze me. Not only do they devote countless hours to providing seniors with the help they need to navigate the maze of Medicare, but they are also committed to their fellow volunteers, showing each other support and encouragement that goes way beyond the call of duty. I greatly appreciate the information and insights that the members of our Board of Directors and Advisory Council are always willing to share, helping to guide us to better serve the older adults who live throughout our five-county service area. And, I appreciate the high quality, hands-on work that our service providers do for our clients every day. With all of us working together, I am confident that the seniors of our community are in good hands.

Senior Connection Center continues to be a strong organization, both fiscally and programmatically. Our ever-increasing commitment to responsibility and excellence is demonstrated by the fact that our annual financial audit by the independent accounting firm of Cherry Bekaert indicated no findings and our annual monitoring by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs also had no findings.

Our combined strategy of working hard and working smart to provide excellent service was recognized by the Tampa Bay Business Journal when they named Senior Connection Center winner of the 2015 Nonprofit of the Year Award in the Health & Human Services category (over \$10M).

We know there will always be more work to do and more people who need our help, but the strength of our team and the support of the community we serve keeps me energized and committed to our mission to help older adults and persons with disabilities live with independence and dignity.

Charlotte McHenry
President and CEO

MANY PEOPLE IN
OUR COMMUNITY
NEED OUR HELP

421,426
seniors (60+)
reside in our five-county
service area



97,457
live below 125%
of the poverty level.
That's 24%
of local seniors!

45,603
are probable
Alzheimer's
cases



116,898
are living
alone



Nearly 1/3
have at least one disability,
such as hearing loss,
vision impairments,
or are just too frail
to adequately care
for themselves.

62,977
veterans over the age of 65
live in our service area



Senior Connection Center continues to be the important link to maintaining wellness and quality of life for our older residents. They are a force of strength in our communities, as they provide information and guidance to our aging population. Support is available for everyone, from the well to the frail, with programs on healthy aging, nutrition and chronic disease self-management, and the knowledgeable staff work with families to help older adults remain as independent as possible. We are proud this work was acknowledged by the Tampa Bay Business Journal, which named Senior Connection Center the 2015 Nonprofit of the Year in the Health and Human Services category (over \$10M). It has been an enlightening and wonderful experience to be involved with the Board of Directors. My hope is that the many discussions and decisions made over this past year will empower the agency and staff to continue their important work well into the future.

Barbara Herrington
Board Chair



To introduce you to the many services provided by Senior Connection Center, follow along with the case study of a 79-year-old woman named Rose.

Rose relied on a cane to walk. She was finding it harder and harder to get to the store and prepare her own meals. A friend told her that she just started receiving home delivered meals and suggested Rose contact the Elder Helpline to see if she might be eligible to get home delivered meals too.

1-800-96-ELDER

ELDER HELPLINE /
INTAKE & SCREENING

We connected Rose with the following community services:

- Free door-to-door transportation for the elderly
- Dept. of Children & Families to complete a SNAP / Food Stamps application

We connected Rose with the following Senior Connection Center services:

- **Long-Term Care Screening** – Rose was screened for eligibility for home delivered meals and other services.
- **SHINE** (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) – Rose’s SHINE counselor determined that Rose’s income and assets should qualify her for two Medicare financial assistance programs. The programs ended up saving her \$305 a month in out-of-pocket Medicare expenses. Her SHINE counselor also reviewed Rose’s insurance plan and helped her settle that disputed medical bill, which was caused by a coding error at the doctor’s office.
- **Health & Wellness Classes**
Matter of Balance Class – for balance and strength training as well as education to reduce her fear of falling.
Living Healthy Every Day – to teach her about the importance of eating well, exercising, socializing with others and finding ways to incorporate these behaviors into her lifestyle.



The next day Rose called 1-800-96-ELDER. She explained to the Elder Helpline Specialist at Senior Connection Center that she was interested in getting home delivered meals like her friend did. After chatting a while with Rose, the Elder Helpline Specialist found out that in

addition to finding it challenging to get to the store and shop for groceries, Rose was also having difficulty getting to her doctors’ appointments and the drug store to pick up her prescriptions. Finding transportation was part of the problem, but Rose admitted she was becoming increasingly more afraid to walk outside her home. She had fallen a few times and was worried that if she were to fall again, she would seriously injure herself.

As the conversation continued, Rose indicated she was on a tight budget, making it hard to pay for groceries as well as all of her medications. Further discussion revealed that Rose was frustrated about a medical bill she received for a service she thought was covered by Medicare. Home delivered meals would certainly be appreciated, but we recognized that Rose had several other pressing issues that needed to be addressed.

Remember, the original reason for Rose’s call was to find out about home delivered meals. As you can see, Senior Connection Center does a lot more than just quickly answer someone’s question or provide a phone number. As our name implies, we help connect seniors to all the services they need.

Most people connect with us by calling our **Elder Helpline** at **1-800-96-ELDER.**

Our Elder Helpline Specialists listen carefully to each caller, and we ask follow-up questions, to ensure we identify their needs and address their concerns.

We also answer hundreds of inquiries through our web site: www.SeniorConnectionCenter.org

These resources provide information and assistance to local seniors, as well as peace of mind to their long distance relatives and caregivers.

We connect seniors and their families to the most appropriate resources available, such as:



Many seniors learn about us at community outreach events.

Our Team of Outreach Staff and Volunteers spend hundreds of hours every year, informing seniors, business professionals and other community partners about the many services we offer, as well as enlightening them about the dangers of elder abuse and exploitation.



Please contact Senior Connection Center if you would like to arrange for a speaker to come to your business, civic or community group meeting or place of worship.

Call Patricia at 813-676-5609

In Home Services
...
Nutrition and Meal Programs

Our Outreach team attended **148 events** in 2015, reaching **9323 seniors** with information about available services and resources.

Screening and Medicaid Eligibility Assistance



Consumer Protection
...
Transportation Providers

Senior Employment
...
Volunteer Opportunities



Legal Assistance Providers
...
Retirement

Rental and Housing Assistance

Every year, approximately **60,000** calls come into our Aging & Disability Resource Center through the Elder Helpline. We treat every caller with the care and respect they deserve.

**We are here to help:
1-800-96-ELDER**

1-800-963-5337



Our Elder Helpline is comprised of a professional, helpful, and friendly team of people who truly value the population we serve. We want our staff to be known not only for the knowledge each member possesses, but also for their care, their kindness, and the special attention they provide to each and every person who contacts us. This is what our elders deserve and we consider it an honor to serve them.

Zeke Barbosa
Information & Referral Manager



Our Services Directly Help Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Maintain their Dignity and Independence.

Many help seniors to remain in their homes, thereby postponing and even preventing expensive nursing home placement.

IN 2015... We helped needy elders by funding:

Nearly 1 Million Meals

94,236 Hours of Homemaker Services

57,183 Hours of Personal Care Services

67,377 Trips to Doctor Visits, Meal Sites and other important appointments.

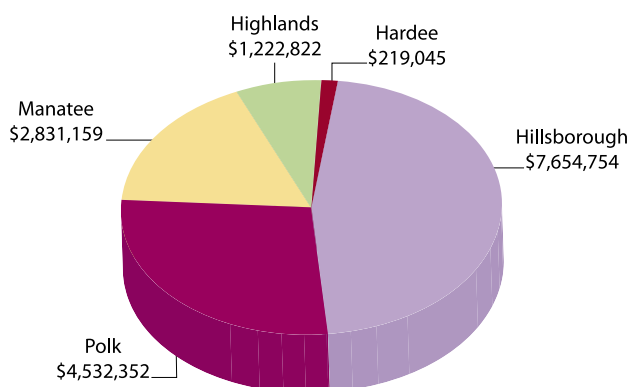
Programs Administered by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) Through Area Agencies on Aging / Aging and Disability Resource Centers:

- Older Americans Act Programs (OAA)
- Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP)
- Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (EHEAP)
- Community Care for the Elderly (CCE)
- Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI)
- Home Care for the Elderly (HCE)
- Local Services Program (LSP)

Grant Awards and Services Provided by the Senior Connection Center:

- Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- Elder Helpline (OAA)
- Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE)
- Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers (MIPPA)
- Health & Wellness (OAA)
- Elder Abuse Prevention (OAA)
- Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Service Program (VD-HCBS)
- Community-Based Care Transitions Program (CCTP)

CONTRACTED BUDGET 2015 \$16,450,132 Million Total Funding



EDUCATING SENIORS: THE FIRST STEP TO EMPOWERMENT

At Senior Connection Center, we believe in providing seniors and caregivers with the information they need to make the best decisions possible. We offer several programs that focus on providing clear, concise, honest and unbiased information on an array of topics that impact seniors the most.



SERVING HEALTH
INSURANCE
NEEDS OF ELDERERS

We know that navigating the maze of Medicare and health insurance options can be overwhelming for anyone. That is why Senior Connection Center has a team of more than 50 highly trained SHINE volunteers who are committed to helping seniors make informed choices regarding their Medicare and

In 2015, our 50+ SHINE volunteers touched the lives of more than 33,000 seniors. Whether we are providing general information about Medicare or helping a client pick the right supplemental insurance plan, resolving someone's billing discrepancy or assisting them in finding help with prescription drugs and other out-of-pocket expenses, our volunteers certainly do shine!

other health insurance benefits, from understanding original Medicare to picking the right prescription drug plan. We can answer questions about Medigap and long-term care insurance as well as help sort through Medicare claims and appeals. We also assist Medicare beneficiaries with applying for financial assistance programs to help lower Medicare costs. Our services include individual counseling as well as providing educational presentations to community groups on a variety of health insurance topics. All SHINE services are free, confidential and unbiased.

ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION

It is estimated that more than a half million older Floridians were the victims of abuse last year. The perpetrators of this abuse are oftentimes the very people who have been entrusted with the care of that older adult. Types of abuse can include financial exploitation, physical and sexual abuse, malnutrition, dehydration, medical neglect, broken bones and burns. Senior Connection Center works diligently to raise awareness and educate the community about this serious issue. We also train the employees of companies that serve seniors about how to identify and report this horrific problem.

Our Elder Abuse team reached nearly 7,000 seniors with information about protecting themselves from becoming victims of abuse and trained 126 professionals about how to identify and report elder abuse.



A MESSAGE FROM THE VOLUNTEER MANAGER / SHINE LIAISON



My first year serving as Volunteer Manager and SHINE Liaison for Senior Connection Center has been both challenging and rewarding beyond my expectations. I am so lucky to work with such an amazing team of volunteers. They are always willing to go the extra mile, and are as committed to helping each other as they are to helping the Medicare recipients in our community. Our SHINE counselors and staff members are always thinking of new and better ways to reach more seniors and provide them with the individual help they need, from picking a Medicare plan to finding help in covering their out-of-pocket expenses. They don't just provide information or advice, they provide compassion and peace of mind. I am honored to lead this team of SHINE counselors and excited to see how they will continue to inspire me in the coming year.

Kyrie-Leigh Chambliss

Volunteer Manager / SHINE Liaison

If you have a passion for helping seniors and would like to volunteer for Senior Connection Center, please contact Kyrie-Leigh Chambliss at 813-676-5593

WE HELP SENIORS

GET HEALTHY...

Senior Connection Center conducts several Health & Wellness Classes for seniors who want to get healthy and stay healthy. Tai Chi and “A Matter of Balance” classes help prevent falls, which is the major cause of injury and hospitalization for older adults. Living Healthy and Healthy Eating Every Day classes are proven to be effective in improving the health and well being of participants who are suffering from such chronic conditions as diabetes and hypertension.

We served 555 clients in our Health and Wellness programs in 2015, but we couldn't have done it without the help of dozens of community partners, including senior centers, churches, clinics, and senior living facilities. These organizations not only host classes, but help us advertise and recruit participants who need our help.



We also greatly appreciate our Volunteer Instructors, who have been trained and certified to deliver these evidence-based programs to seniors throughout our community.



ACTIVE LIVING EVERY DAY

“I’m really enjoying the encouragement and friendships that are being built.”

TAI CHI

“Beautiful teacher. Excellent instructor who speaks clearly. I understand the instructions. I will miss her.”

LIVING HEALTHY

“This class was enjoyable and very informative, and I would highly recommend it to anyone who deals with chronic conditions.”

HEALTHY EATING EVERY DAY

“I enjoyed talking about the obstacles to healthier eating and coming up with strategies to deal with the obstacles. We learned to build confidence to eat better.”

WHAT OUR GRADUATES HAVE TO SAY...

A MATTER OF BALANCE

“I learned to slow down and move more deliberately.”

SUCCESS STORY – TAI CHI

When Ms. E started our Tai Chi class, she was walking with either a cane or an upright walker as a result of having seven strokes. At first, she could not do the classes while standing, so she did the exercises while sitting in a chair. Slowly, Ms. E’s physical abilities improved. She began to do the Tai Chi exercises while standing for longer and longer periods of time every week. *By the last class, Ms. E. was able to do the entire class while standing and she was able to walk freely without using the cane or walker!* She expressed that she felt much better and was very thankful for the Tai Chi classes because she knew they were the reason for her success.



...AND STAY HEALTHY

Dear Senior Connection Center:

I have just completed the Living Healthy class, and I feel it was the best and most informative program I have ever spent my time participating in. Diana and Izora were the best. They answered any and all questions and the problem solving helped all of us. I have a chronic condition and am in constant pain. The tool box of self-management was ever so helpful. Thank you so much for providing this workshop for us. The girls need to be applauded for doing an excellent job.

Sincerely yours,

D.M.

DIRECTOR OF HEALTHCARE INITIATIVES

I chose to work in the field of Health & Wellness because I enjoy helping people by empowering them with the information and the tools they need to improve their lives. Applying my knowledge to helping seniors has been incredibly rewarding. Every time I witness a participant's progress - like when they go from walking with 2 canes to 1 cane to not needing a cane at all - I get as excited as they do! It is also heartwarming to see class participants support and encourage each other, sometimes forming lasting relationships that continue after the classes are done. Helping people take control of their own health is an important component of our agency's mission and I am happy to support it in the work I do every day.



—Jamie Baker

HELP FOR VETERANS

Senior Connection Center manages the local Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Service Program, a service which gives disabled veterans the flexibility to manage their own care budgets, including hiring family caregivers. This service allows many veterans to remain living at home with their loved ones. We are proud to report that Senior Connection Center is providing ongoing assistance to 73 disabled veterans, more than any other such program in the country.



"I have been honored to coordinate such a wonderful program. The veterans we serve are so appreciative of the services they receive. They are always very thankful and I am proud to be of whatever service I can be to them. They deserve it all!"



—Sue Ann Valenti
Veteran Services
Contract Coordinator

"This program has helped me regain a quality of life I didn't have before. With the help of my caregiver, I am able to get outside more which is something I was unable to do before."

— M.C., Gulf War Veteran

"I can't thank you enough of how many needs are being met. I am so happy to be able to receive services in my home."

— D.M., Korean War Veteran

2015 HIGHLIGHTS AND HAPPENINGS

A lot has happened at Senior Connection Center over the past year. Here's a glimpse at some of our favorite events, partnerships, projects and innovations that made 2015 a year to celebrate!

Tampa Bay Business Journal named Senior Connection Center the 2015 Nonprofit of the Year in the Health & Human Services category (over \$10M)



2015 marked the 50th Anniversary of the Older Americans Act, the legislation that led to creation of Area Agencies on Aging across America and continues to guide us every day in our service to older adults.

Our SHINE team kicked off this year's annual Medicare Open Enrollment Period by hosting the Volunteer Phone Bank at NewsChannel 8 on October 7th. Once again, our volunteers SHINED as they helped hundreds of callers with their questions about the changes in Medicare and the enrollment process.

Get Into the Act was the theme for Older Americans Month 2015.

Visit our Facebook page at facebook.com/SeniorConnectionCenter.org to see how we got into the act of celebrating older adults by sharing their inspirational stories and photographs.



BE ON THE LOOKOUT IN 2016 FOR...

A new version of our **Care Transitions Program**, which will allow us to help more patients successfully recover at home after being released from the hospital.

Senior Connection Center's Rise & Shine Inspirational Breakfast & Awards Ceremony

Save the Date: Wednesday, May 25th
Embassy Suites Tampa – USF
Tickets and Info at:
SeniorConnectionCenter.org

Be prepared to be amazed and inspired!

Senior Connection Center Community Conversations

Join us to discuss Older Americans Act funding, issues affecting local seniors and possible solutions.

Manatee County

April 22nd
Bradenton Central Library

Polk, Highlands & Hardee Counties

May 19th
Bartow Library

Hillsborough County

June 16th
Senior Connection Center Tampa

All meetings will begin at 10:00 AM.
More information at
SeniorConnectionCenter.org

Thanks to Suncoast Federal Credit Union for supporting our Elder Abuse Prevention efforts by funding educational sessions for banking and other professionals to help seniors protect their assets.



We formed a partnership with Florida Health Networks to support and expand our evidence-based health and wellness programs.

Thanks to the Professional Philanthropy Network of Tampa for selecting Senior Connection Center as the recipient charity for their May 2015 after-hours fundraiser!

A new partnership with USF and Tampa Family Health Centers helped us obtain funding for a part-time Elder Helpline position to better assist with the additional referrals.

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Helping Our Needy Ones Respectfully



Board Executive Committee

Front Row (left to right):
Lilly Ho-Pehling, Secretary; Barbara Herrington, Chair; Glenn Jones, Treasurer

Back Row: (left to right):
Dr. Larry Schonfeld, Former Board Chair; Ben Darby, Vice Chair



A MESSAGE FROM THE ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIR



I'm just one of those people: I see a need and I have to respond with action. For me, it started

with my AmeriCorps training, where I was involved with in-home respite programs, senior day care centers and elder justice activities. Then I moved on to Hillsborough County's Meals-on-Wheels. Now I volunteer on Senior Connection Center's Advisory Council and at the VA Hospital, which is next to my "military heart." Helping seniors will always be a labor of love for me.

Joe Bodden

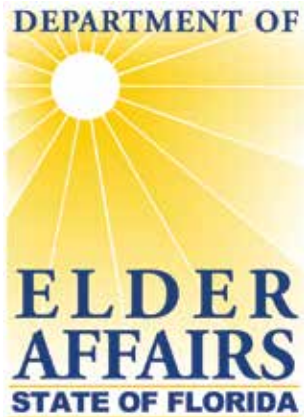
Advisory Council Chair



We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors.



To us, it's personalSM



Proudly serving older adults, person with disabilities and their caregivers throughout West Central Florida



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Phone: 813-740-3888 / Fax: 813-623-1342
Elder Helpline: 1-800-96-ELDER
SeniorConnectionCenter.org

