



2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Proudly serving
older adults,
persons with
disabilities and
caregivers
throughout
Hillsborough,
Manatee, Polk,
Highlands &
Hardee counties.

AT A GLANCE



We are a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that has been working to improve the lives of local seniors for nearly 40 years!

We serve as the Area Agency on Aging and the Aging & Disability Resource Center for Hillsborough, Manatee, Polk, Highlands and Hardee Counties.

Our mission is to help older adults and persons with disabilities live with independence and dignity.

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

Our core values are Respect, Compassion, Teamwork, Quality and Work / Life Balance.

Our dedicated team of more than 100 employees and volunteers uphold these core values as we work together every day to fulfill our mission and reach our vision.

If you or a loved one needs our help, please reach out to us by calling 1-800-96-ELDER or visit SeniorConnectionCenter.org.

A MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Since I took on the role of President & CEO at Senior Connection Center in 2014, every year has brought new challenges and, along with them, increasing rewards. The year 2017 was no exception!



Perhaps the most memorable challenge we faced in 2017 involved responding to Hurricane Irma. So many seniors within our service area were severely impacted by the rain and high winds Irma delivered, leading to downed trees, long-term power outages, and damage to homes and roofs. Immediately afterwards, individual seniors and local service organizations looked to us for guidance and support. Thanks to funds collected at our Rise & Shine fundraiser, along with grants from n4a, the Weinberg and AARP foundations, we were able to deliver emergency funds to help many vulnerable seniors get their homes repaired, their yards back in shape and their lives back on track. Helping others through cooperation with such wonderful community partners has been both inspirational and gratifying.

In 2017, we also spent many months advocating for the continuation of funding for our SHINE program. Advocacy efforts took place on a statewide as well as a national level and, as this Annual Report goes to print, we are still unsure if any federal funding for SHINE will be continued after March of 2018. As you will see when you review page 7 of this report, SHINE has effectively delivered critically important services to thousands of Medicare beneficiaries in a very efficient, cost-effective way. Just the thought of this program disappearing is beyond disappointing for all of us who devote our lives to helping seniors, but it is potentially devastating for the countless seniors who turn to SHINE to navigate the confusing Medicare maze to make the best, cost-effective health care decisions possible.

These contrasting incidents demonstrate how much we can accomplish when we work cooperatively to face a challenge, as well as how much there remains to be done. I hope my message and the information in this report will inspire you to support Senior Connection Center, perhaps by becoming a volunteer or by simply making a donation on our website: www.SeniorConnectionCenter.org, so we can continue to help older adults and persons with disabilities live with independence and dignity.

Please know how much I appreciate your interest in and support of Senior Connection Center.

Best Regards,
Charlotte McHenry
President & CEO

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



As Chair of the Board of Directors of Senior Connection Center for the last two years, I have witnessed true dedication to serving the needs of our elders and persons with disabilities and their caregivers. The agency's focus is continuously on the

independence, dignity, health and well-being of the persons served. The caring and professional staff gives hope to those who are unable to deal with the resolution of complicated and time consuming issues. This hope is given with love and compassion. All of us should make every possible effort to tell others about the many services Senior Connection Center provides and that a financial contribution to this organization would be a great investment in our community.

Ben Darby, Board Chair

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY

Join us in improving the lives of older adults, persons with disabilities and their caregivers by making a donation to Senior Connection Center.

Simply visit our website SeniorConnectionCenter.org



or call **Patty Suarez** at **813-676-5616**.

Thank you for your support!

MANY PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY NEED OUR HELP

604,494

seniors (60+) live in our 5-county service area. That's nearly 24% of the population.

112,055

local seniors are over the age of 80

93,427

live below 125% of the Poverty Level

137,000

More than
are living alone

185,141

have at least one type of disability, such as hearing or vision loss or are just too frail to adequately care for themselves

**Source: Florida Department of Elder Affairs - 2017 Profile of Older Floridians.*





SENIORS, ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR CAREGIVERS:

There is “No Wrong Door” when it comes to contacting Senior Connection Center for help.

To demonstrate this point, we would like to introduce you to Anna, whose relationship with Senior Connection Center began several years ago with a call to our Elder Helpline, and has continued over time as her health status and needs continue to change...

Anna's Story...



Anna first contacted Senior Connection Center in 2011. She called the **Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER** looking for assistance with transportation to the hospital for diagnostic testing. Although Anna was not yet a “senior,” she suffered from a brain tumor that had left her disabled and was

dealing with some other serious health conditions.

We were happy to assist Anna by going through her transportation options until we found her an affordable, suitable ride service. We encouraged Anna to get back in touch with us if she needed additional assistance with transportation or any other type of help.

We heard from Anna a few years later, when she found out she was going to need surgery. She had held onto the Elder Helpline number and felt comfortable reaching out to us again for help. We connected Anna with the appropriate community resources to provide medical equipment and supplies for her recovery at home, as well as getting short-term assistance with cleaning her house. She was then referred to our **SHINE** program, where Anna received assistance with contacting her Medicare plan to obtain the home health benefits she would need after her surgery. Her SHINE counselor did some additional research and was able to determine that Anna was eligible for a special Medicare subsidy program that would significantly reduce her prescription drug costs.

Although Anna recovered from her surgery, she began developing additional significant health conditions. It was becoming more and more difficult for her to

perform the tasks necessary to take care of herself and maintain her home. Anna wanted to stay in her home, but she knew that without some help, she would have to go into a nursing facility. In 2016, Anna was assessed by SCC's **Long-Term Care Services** staff. Based on her circumstances, she was placed on the waitlist for in-home services, which would include assistance with personal care, cleaning her home, and receiving home-delivered meals. With this type of help, Anna would be able to safely stay in her home.

Fortunately, in October of 2017, Anna was told she could begin receiving those Medicaid funded services in her home. All she would have to do now was complete a medical certification form with her doctor. This may not sound like a big undertaking, but Anna had no way to get to the doctor's office to complete the form. Her limited income and high expenses left her with so little money, she simply could not afford to take a taxi to her doctor. Once again, Anna's Elder Helpline Specialist worked with her to complete an application for Senior Connection Center's **Crisis Funds**. Anna was approved for the Crisis Funding and SCC arranged and paid for her transportation to the doctor, who completed and submitted her medical certification.

Anna will now begin receiving the long-term care services she needs to continue living in her home, something she desperately wants to do for as long as possible.

Anna is an actual client of Senior Connection Center. Her name has been changed to protect her privacy. Anna's story demonstrates how difficult it can be to understand health insurance coverage and navigate the maze of service providers, especially for someone with serious health issues. Although her original call was about finding help with transportation to her medical appointment, we were able to assist Anna in obtaining:

- Medical Equipment and Supplies
- Assistance Cleaning her Home
- Home Delivered Meals
- Home Health Services
- Lower-Cost Prescription Medications
- Transportation to her Doctor's Office
- Long-Term Care Services in her Home

Senior Connection Center is here to connect Older Adults, Persons with Disabilities and their Caregivers to the services they need to maintain their independence and dignity.

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:

Consumer Protection
...
Transportation Providers

Adult Day Care
...
Utility Payment Assistance

Legal Assistance Providers
...
Retirement



Screening and Medicaid Eligibility Assistance

8,469

Our outreach team attended 150 events in 2017 reaching 8,469 seniors with information about available resources and services.

Rental and Housing Assistance

In Home Services
...
Nutrition and Meal Programs

Senior Employment
...
Volunteer Opportunities

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.

79,000

This year, nearly 79,000 calls came into our Aging & Disability Resource Center/Elder Helpline. We treat every caller with the care and respect they deserve.

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

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

Here's what some of our Elder Helpline callers have to say...

- “Thank you for allowing me to share my problems with you and thank you for all the help you offer us seniors. I use the Elder Helpline quite often. When we have no idea of the help that is available to us you always steer us to the right place”
- “My husband and I would like to thank you for helping us with our transportation problem and food which was needed. We hope you have a wonderful holiday”
- “Your Elder Helpline is a great service for me and many elderly people, so keep up the good work! Thank you!”





The gateway for low-income, frail and at-risk seniors to secure Long Term Care services in their homes.



Long Term Care (LTC) services, which are state and federally funded, can include home-delivered meals, personal care, adult daycare, medical transportation, and caregiver respite.

Many people don't realize that Medicare does not typically cover Long Term Care services. Since funding for LTC services is limited, clients are screened for eligibility and prioritized depending on their level of need. We notify clients when funds become available and assist them in enrolling for services. The Florida Legislature has increased funding for State LTC programs, which has allowed more seniors to receive services, but due to the high demand, there is still a waiting list.

Although we assist many frail elders, there are many more waiting for help.

In 2017
we helped
needy seniors
by funding:

- 864,092 Meals
- 85,813 Hours of Homemaker Services
- 46,575 Hours of Personal Care Services
- 72,425 Trips to Doctor Visits, Meal Sites and other important appointments

At any point in time in 2017, more than 7,000 local, at-risk seniors were waiting for services to help them remain safely in their homes.

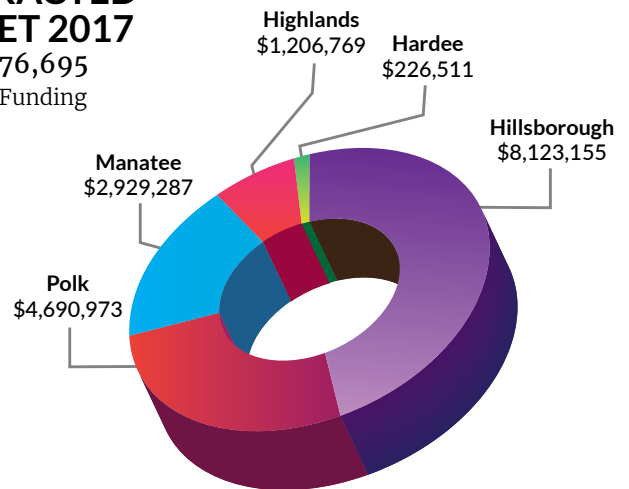
Since LTC programs can postpone and even prevent frail elders from going into a nursing home, they actually provide a savings to taxpayers.

The average annual cost of care for a senior enrolled in Community Care for the Elderly is just \$8,046 compared to \$64,770 for nursing home care.

CONTRACTED BUDGET 2017

\$17,176,695

Total Funding



Programs Administered by Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) Through Area Agencies on Aging:

- 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)
- Statewide Medicaid Managed Care Long Term Care (SMMC LTC)
(This program is jointly administered by DOEA and the Agency for Health Care Administration)

Other Grant Awards and Services of 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)
- Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (OAA, Florida Health Network & Humana Foundation)
- Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (University of South Florida)

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.



SHINE is here to guide Medicare beneficiaries, their caregivers and loved ones through the confusing maze of Medicare. Senior Connection Center's team of approximately 50 SHINE Counselors help educate and empower people to make the best decisions about Medicare and other health insurance benefits, including understanding original Medicare, picking the right prescription drug plan, decyphering Medicare claims and applying for programs that can lower their Medicare costs. SHINE Counselors are trained to provide unbiased advice and assistance with anything Medicare-related, so people have the information they need to make the best choices.

In 2017,
our SHINE Counselors
documented 15,682
client contacts

- 8,335 were low-income
- 4,005 were disabled
- 4,753 were over the age of 75, 1,530 of those were 85+
- 1,143 needed assistance in a language other than English

We helped 791 low-income
individuals apply for
Medicare Savings
Programs, leading to a
combined savings of more
than \$1.2 Million annually.

The 416 low-income
individuals we helped apply
for the Extra Help Program
saved about \$4000 each
annually on their prescription
drug expenses

In 2017, our SHINE volunteers touched the lives of an additional 19,195 seniors and their caregivers through education & information sessions and outreach events.

A MESSAGE FROM A SHINE CLIENT

Recently my wife turned 65 and retired on the same day, making her eligible for Medicare and ending our high quality employer-assisted health insurance. During my career, I spent a couple of years in HR consulting, even getting a life and health insurance license as a job requirement. Even though I never actually worked in the insurance industry, I assumed that background and little casual study would be enough to allow me to understand our options, so we could make good decisions about the coverages we needed. Boy was I wrong!

Given the complexity of the programs, the lack of accessibility to advice from the government, and the commercial providers' self-interest, I felt a bit helpless. I had read about SHINE in the newspaper and decided to call.

The SHINE Counselor was diligent in reaching me, despite my chaotic schedule. After an hour or more, she had answered all my questions and given me guidance on issues I didn't even realize existed. It was obvious that she was willing to spend whatever time was needed to help us. And that her interest was in our wellbeing, not financial gain for herself or her employer.

I can only imagine the trouble less educated people have with our current system. SHINE and its volunteer counselors are real heroes to a community that really needs help with a very important issue!

Sincerely,
Riley F.
March 30, 2017



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

OUR HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAMS HELP SENIORS GET HEALTHY AND STAY HEALTHY

Senior Connection Center's Health & Wellness program offers evidence-based classes in the most convenient and affordable way possible. First, we train members of the community to become certified to teach our classes, which they do on a voluntary basis. Then, we partner with community organizations, such as churches, clinics, senior living facilities and senior centers, to host the classes and help recruit participants. We also work with sponsors and foundations who help to fund these programs.

Thanks to the help and support of all these partners, Senior Connection Center was able to provide Health & Wellness classes to 955 participants in 2017!

When it comes to bringing Health & Wellness initiatives to members of the community, our *Combating Chronic Disease* initiative in East Tampa is one of our



proudest success stories. Program graduates are provided personal garden boxes to grow their own herbs and vegetables and are encouraged to participate in support groups to maintain their healthier lifestyle habits. Thanks to funding from the Humana Foundation, this initiative succeeded in improving the health of residents in East Tampa. Because of that success, foundation

funding was continued for another year, so we can expand the borders of this program even further in 2018.

"I found the classes truly interesting and helpful. We learned many interesting facts about nutrition and how the foods we eat affect our bodies. I am now paying more attention to my eating and I am feeling better!"

Marva Blue,

Combating Chronic Disease graduate



"The Humana Foundation is delighted to continue support for Senior Connection Center's *Combating Chronic Disease* program and their wonderful focus on supporting older adults in improving their health and well-being. By using caring relationships to improve health behaviors, we feel there is great opportunity for individuals, families, and communities to be healthy together."

Remy Noble, Consultant, Humana Foundation.



"I am so excited to volunteer with SCC as a facilitator for the *A Matter of Balance* workshop! I am a Physical Therapist who is taking some time "off" of a 9-5 work schedule to care for my young children. This opportunity has granted me the immense pleasure of continuing my interest in assisting older adults to live as informed, as independent, and as mobile as possible. *A Matter of Balance* not only brings people together to educate them, but also invites them to share experiences and solutions. Seeing first-hand, and hearing participants tell of their improvements and accomplishments as they gain relevant insight into how to ultimately prevent falls, is a consistent motivator to me, for it has impacts far and wide. The participants in the classes and the team at SCC have been a true inspiration for me to the power of community."

Pamela Hauenstein, DPT, PT



Participants in our *Living Healthy* and *Eating Healthy Every Day* classes oftentimes sign up for these classes because they are suffering from such chronic conditions as diabetes and hypertension. They are pleasantly surprised to experience how effective the classes are in improving their overall health and wellbeing. Participants in *Tai Chi* and *A Matter of Balance* classes are less likely to become injured from a fall, which is the major cause of injury and hospitalization for older adults.

If you are a senior looking to reduce your risk of falling, improve your health, or if you just want to maintain your current good health, please reach out to our Health & Wellness team for information on a class near you or visit the Health & Wellness page on SeniorConnectionCenter.org.

ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION

We are faced with the startling statistic that more than a half million older Floridians are the victims of abuse each year. Senior Connection Center is dedicated to heightening community awareness about this serious and heart-wrenching issue. We not only educate local seniors about how to protect themselves, but we also train business professionals to recognize and report any signs of abuse or neglect they may see among their elderly clients and customers. In 2017, our Elder Abuse Prevention efforts reached 1,500 seniors and we provided training to 237 business



Senior Connection Center staff members wear purple in solidarity to commemorate World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2017.

professionals. Our Elder Abuse team reached more than 3,600 seniors with information about protecting themselves from becoming victims of abuse and trained 205 professionals about how to identify and report elder abuse.

HELPING MORE PEOPLE IN NEED WITH CRISIS FUNDS AND MINI GRANTS

No matter how knowledgeable and resourceful we are when it comes to finding affordable help for seniors and disabled adults in need, we still encounter situations where we just can't offer the assistance someone needs. This is especially frustrating when we know that a relatively small amount of money at a critical point in time could provide a huge benefit and prevent someone from "falling through the cracks."

This frustration led us to look into developing a Crisis Fund initiative. Thanks to a grant from the WellMed Foundation and the sponsorships and donations collected at our Rise & Shine Awards Breakfast, Senior Connection Center now has money we can use to help a senior or disabled adult divert an imminent crisis. Funds are awarded on a one-time basis and have been used for such things as bus fare so a disabled,



SENIOR CONNECTION CENTER – CONNECTING HEROES WITH SERVICES

Senior Connection Center manages the local *Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Services Program*, which gives disabled veterans the flexibility to manage their own care budgets, including hiring family caregivers. This service allows many disabled veterans to remain living at home with their loved ones. We are proud to report that in 2017, Senior Connection Center was providing ongoing assistance to 79 disabled veterans, more than any other such program in the country.



MEET RANDALL EDWARDS

Randall Edwards is a highly decorated WWII Navy war hero who spent three years as a prisoner of war in Mukden Prison Camp. Although Mr. Edwards has significant hearing loss and is legally blind, he can still recall many details about his time of service to our country. He and his wife, Rosemary, are able to stay in their home with the help he receives from the veterans program.



"We have a helper who comes to visit three times a week. She helps around the house and, since we don't drive anymore, she takes Randall to his doctor appointments. Thanks to her help, we are able to stay in our home and Randall can continue to work in his garden, which he really enjoys."

elderly woman living in Pennsylvania could relocate and move in with her son in Florida, a window air conditioner to replace the one that had been ruined during Hurricane Irma, and fumigation services for an elderly man whose home was infested with insects. Forty-five people received Crisis Fund assistance in 2017.

Rise & Shine also provided us with the funds to award four Mini-Grants of \$3,000 each to local nonprofits. These grants support initiatives that have a profound and immediate impact on local seniors and disabled adults whose lives are negatively impacted by poor nutrition, isolation, lack of access to basic dental care or the declining condition of their homes. This year's Mini Grant recipients include *ElderPoint Ministries*, *Volunteers in Service to the Elderly (VISTE)*, *Metropolitan Ministries* and *The Centre for Women*.

2017

Highlights & Happenings

For the third year in a row, *Tampa Bay Times* named Senior Connection Center one of *Tampa Bay's Top 100 Workplaces*. This is a reflection of our commitment to treating our



employees with the same respect, consideration and dignity that we extend to our clients.

Local TV News icon, John Wilson, hosted our second annual Rise & Shine Awards Breakfast, which raised more than \$17,000 (net) in sponsorships and donations. Proceeds from the event



are re-invested in the community in the form of Mini-Grants and Crisis Funds for seniors and disabled adults.



National Council on Aging

The National Council on Aging selected SCC as one of only 11 organizations to form a collaborative to obtain American Association of Diabetes Educators accreditation for our *Diabetes Education Program*. This accreditation will allow SCC to receive payments from Medicare for these classes, thereby providing us with an additional revenue source.

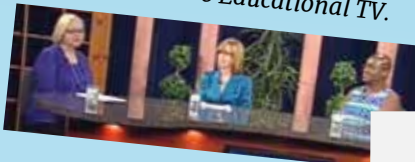
Thanks to Palmas Clinic in Tampa for hosting our pilot class.

SCC's President & CEO, Charlotte McHenry was a finalist for the *Tampa Bay Business Journal's Business Woman of the Year* award in the Government/Nonprofit category.



Congratulations Charlotte!

Our own Patricia Henderson has begun hosting *Aging Matters*, a local cable TV program focused on senior-related issues. You can find archived episodes on YouTube by searching for *Aging Matters Manatee Educational TV*.



Congratulations!

2017 SALT & PEPPER AWARD WINNERS

Pamela Baron

Business & Entrepreneurship

Paddy Moses

Education & Mentoring

Noreen Schramm

Health & Wellness

Jerry Messerman

Arts & Entertainment

Luis Fresquez

Community Service & Philanthropy

2017 SENIOR-FRIENDLY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Humane Society of Tampa Bay



As part of our commitment to address the problem of Elder Hunger in our community, SCC joined forces with other concerned organizations to hold the first, local *End Elder Hunger Awareness Dinner*. This event, which was hosted by Feeding Tampa Bay, drew more than 100 concerned business representatives and local leaders who pledged to find a solution to this prevalent, yet oftentimes invisible problem.

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A Message from the Advisory Council Chair

Each of us has a story to tell...

a story that explains who we are and how the seeds we planted along the way have made us who we are today. I believe if you combine that story with your God-given talents, you'll find fulfillment. For me, growing up meant respecting your elders and addressing them as "Sir" or "Madam." If you were asked to do something for an elder, you didn't groan or complain, you just did it. As I look around today, I'm pleased when I see others still showing that respect, although it doesn't seem to be quite as prevalent as it once was. Serving others, especially seniors, gives me great joy! I find gratification in knowing that I've been able to help someone navigate the healthcare system or help them find community services that they were not aware of. Being a part of Senior Connection Center has given me the opportunity to direct countless seniors to this wonderful organization. The hard-working staff are there because they want to be there, because they want to serve and most of all, because someone along their path has planted the seed to give back to those who have a story of their own to tell. I'm honored to be a part of this caring community of people.



Sherry Reeder, Advisory Council Chair



We gratefully acknowledge
the generous support of our sponsors:

Humana®



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



8928 Brittany Way, Tampa, FL 33619
Phone: 813-740-3888 Fax: 813-623-1342
Elder Helpline: 1-800-96-ELDER

SeniorConnectionCenter.org