Proudly serving older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers throughout Hillsborough, Manatee, Polk, Highlands & Hardee Counties.
A Message from the President & CEO

How Are We Making our Mark?

2019 marks my 5th year as President & CEO of Senior Connection Center – not to mention the preceding 20+ years I have worked for this incredible organization.

My tenure gives me a unique, historical perspective on how Senior Connection Center became the organization it is today and the impact we have had on our community… In other words, how Senior Connection Center is making its mark.

When I think about the amazing fact that this organization received more than 99,000 calls for help in 2019, it makes me immensely proud of our team of staff and volunteers who accomplished this feat. These caring individuals are dedicated to serving seniors, disabled adults and their caregivers, by directing them to the programs and services they need, helping them make sound decisions about their healthcare and insurance options, and assisting them in maintaining their independence and dignity. I think you will agree that the work we do and the impact we have on people’s lives are profound ways to make our mark.

I am equally proud of the fact that our Crisis Fund initiative continues to prevent so many seniors from “falling through the cracks” when an extenuating circumstance happens in their life. The increasing donations we continue to receive from our Rise & Shine fundraising events, combined with the grants we have been able to secure for this project, will allow us to continue making our mark on these vulnerable seniors, one life at a time.

This position has allowed me to collaborate with national, regional, and local community partners in working to improve the lives of seniors and persons with disabilities. I hope to further make my mark as I serve on the Executive Committees of both the Florida and Southeastern Associations of Area Agencies on Aging, the local Dementia Care and Cure Initiative, the Humana Impact project, and others who share my passion for helping older adults.

And finally, I decided to initiate a new way to make my mark: by guiding a motivated and talented group of Senior Connection Center staff through our first Aspirational Leadership class. Helping prepare these individuals to make their mark in future leadership roles has certainly been rewarding for me, and I hope it proves to be equally valuable for each of them.

I think you can see that Senior Connection Center provides many opportunities for people to make their mark in a truly meaningful way: by working, volunteering or making a donation that supports our efforts to improve the lives of older adults and their caregivers every day.

Best regards,

Charlotte McHenry
President & CEO

Make Your Mark is the 2020 theme for Older Americans Month.

Here are some of the ways we Make Our Mark at Senior Connection Center...
A Message from the Board Chair

It is with great pride that I look back upon my many years of service on Senior Connection Center’s Board of Directors, especially these past two years as I served as Board Chair.

I have seen this organization evolve as our population of seniors and disabled adults continues to grow and their needs become more complex. Not only has Senior Connection Center responded to these challenges by implementing new programs, expanding services, and streamlining processes, but they have consistently done so with genuine compassion and concern for the people they serve.

Helping older adults and persons with disabilities live with independence and dignity is what this organization is all about, and I thank all of you who have supported Senior Connection Center in fulfilling their mission. Whether you are a volunteer, a business sponsor, a donor, or someone who has encouraged a senior to call the Elder Helpline, your efforts help make this organization strong, effective, and relevant for the many members of our community who need our help today, as well as those individuals and families who will need our help in the future.

Sincerely,

Lilly Ho-Pehling
Board Chair

620,000
Nearly 620,000 seniors (60+) live in our 5-county service area. That’s more than 20% of the population.

113,000+
More than 113,000 local seniors are over the age of 80.

23,000
Nearly 23,000 seniors are legally responsible for their own grandchildren.

107,000
More than 107,000 local seniors are living alone.

67,000
Approximately 67,000 local seniors live below 125% of the Poverty Level.

190,000+
More than 190,000 seniors in our community have at least one type of disability, such as dementia, hearing or vision loss, or are just too frail to adequately care for themselves.

Source: Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Make Your Mark!

The 2020 theme for Older Americans Month is Make Your Mark. Each of us can interpret the meaning of that phrase and decide how we might implement it for ourselves.

• Connect with us to find services for yourself or someone you care about.
• Join our team of volunteers.
• Make a tax-deductible donation to Senior Connection Center today.
Making our Mark by Listening and Talking to Seniors...

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

We are here to help:

Whether we are addressing a group of seniors at a community setting or spending time, one-on-one, to discuss the specific concerns of a senior or their caregiver, our dedicated team of outreach staff and volunteers are making their mark by listening to these individuals and directing them to the programs and services they need.

In 2019, Senior Connection Center participated in 138 community events which allowed us to provide 5,824 individuals with accurate, reliable and useful information that empowers them to make sound decisions and allows them to maintain their independence and dignity. We also trained 158 business professionals and students to recognize and report elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

If you would like to arrange for a speaker at your place of business, civic or community meeting, place of worship, or other place where seniors and their caregivers can learn more about Senior Connection Center, please call Patricia Henderson at 813-676-5609.

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

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 website:

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
- Legal Assistance Providers
- Adult Day Care
- In Home Services
- Senior Employment
- Rental and Housing Assistance
- Screening and Medicaid Eligibility Assistance

This year, more than 99,000 calls came into our Aging & Disability Resource Center/Elder Helpline. We pride ourselves in treating every caller with care and respect.

We are here to help:

Here’s what one of our Elder Helpline callers has to say...

“I was about to give up hope on finding help with my 88-year-old dad, but then I found out about your elder helpline. Not only did you give me the information I asked for, but you also told me about some other services I didn’t even know were out there. Thanks for spending the time to help me out and letting me know I can always call back if I need anything else down the road.” ~ Rhonda M.

This year SCC went to the Wauchula Train Depot to host our second annual Hot Topics and Cool Tips for Seniors event.

FYI - Hot Topics & Cool Tips for Seniors!
Thursday, November 14th
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Wauchula Train Depot
135 E. Main Street

Attention Seniors & Caregivers:
Join us for a Free Lunch while learning about important and timely issues affecting you today...

Help is Just a Call or Click Away

SHINE: Navigating the Ins & Outs of Medicare
Learn about Open Enrollment for Medicare and how SHINE can provide you with free, unbiased counseling to help you pick the best Medicare plan for you.

Getting Healthy & Staying Healthy
Learn how local Health & Wellness classes can help seniors manage, even prevent, chronic health conditions and avoid dangerous falls.

Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia
Learn the most up-to-date information about Alzheimer’s disease, other forms of dementia, and resources for caregivers.

Safety Tips Every Senior Needs to Know
Learn how to avoid scams, protect your assets, and safely utilize technology.

This Event is Free and Open to the Public.
Seating is limited and reservations are required.
For more information call 813-676-5583.

Learn how the Elder Helpline and other SCC services can help seniors and their caregivers find and obtain the assistance they need.

Lunch Sponsored by:
Senior Connection Center’s dedicated team of SHINE staff and volunteers guide Medicare beneficiaries, their caregivers, and loved ones through the confusing maze of Medicare. Our more than 50 SHINE Counselors make their mark by educating and empowering individuals to make the best decisions about Medicare and other health insurance benefits, from understanding original Medicare to picking the right prescription drug plan, deciphering Medicare claims and applying for programs that can lower their Medicare costs. SHINE Counselors provide unbiased advice and assistance with anything Medicare-related, so people have the information they need to make the best decision for themselves, based on their own personal circumstances.

**IN 2019, OUR SHINE COUNSELORS DOCUMENTED 10,857 CLIENT CONTACTS:**

- 5,131 were low-income
- 1,674 were disabled
- 653 needed assistance in a language other than English
- We helped 691 low-income individuals apply for Medicare Savings Programs, leading to a combined savings of approximately $1,121,940 for these beneficiaries in Part B premiums alone.
- The 500+ low-income individuals we helped apply for the Extra Help Program saved an average of $4000 each on their annual prescription drug expenses.
- In 2019, our SHINE Volunteers spent over 7,155 hours providing one-on-one Medicare counseling.

**SHINE and the Elder Helpline: Working Hand in Hand...**

When Mrs. S. called SHINE for assistance in figuring out her Medicare and Medicaid coverage, she also shared with her SHINE counselor that she lived in a mobile home and used a wheelchair. As they continued to talk, Mrs. S. revealed that she was dealing with a rat infestation in her home. She was in a panic because the exterminator she contacted estimated it would cost $900 to treat her home and she did not have enough money to pay for the service. Her SHINE counselor referred Mrs. S. to Senior Connection Center’s Elder Helpline, who referred Ms. S to a reputable exterminator who successfully treated her home for just $100.

**Making Our Mark by Going the Extra Mile for Local Seniors...**

This year, after updating our Medicare Savings Program application process to one that simplified and streamlined the process for our clients, we were able to reduce the average approval wait-time from 45 days to under 5 days! Thanks to this improvement, eligible seniors can begin receiving benefits a full month sooner than before.

Senior Connection Center established a Senior Medicare Patrol Task Force, whose role is to help identify and prevent Medicare-related fraud, scams and abuse. Not only was our program recognized as a best practice approach and shared with other SHINE programs across the state of Florida, but several of our findings resulted in investigations by the Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General.

If you want to make your mark by helping seniors, why not become a SHINE volunteer?

For more information, please contact Amy Hagel at 813-676-5551.

**Congratulations!**

Jean Berken, SHINE Coordinator for Polk County, received the 2019 Harold Barnes Award, which recognized her as Florida’s SHINE Volunteer Leader of the Year. Florida Department of Elder Affairs Secretary, Richard Prudom and Anne Chansler, SHINE Statewide Program Director presented the award at SHINE’s statewide annual leadership meeting.
Long Term Care Services

Senior Connection Center is the gateway for frail and low-income seniors to secure Long Term Care (LTC) services, including Medicaid Managed Care, which allow at-risk elders to safely remain living in their homes and avoid premature nursing home placement.

LTC services can include home-delivered meals, adult daycare, personal care, and caregiver respite. Medicare does not typically cover LTC services and the state and federal funding for these services is limited, so clients are screened for eligibility, prioritized based on need and must wait for funding to become available before we can help enroll them for services. Since funding for LTC has recently increased, we are able to assist more frail elders in obtaining LTC services, but there are still thousands more waiting for help.

In 2019 we helped needy seniors by funding:

- **971,175** meals, either in their homes or at congregate meal sites.
- **93,141** rides to doctor visits, meal sites and other important appointments
- **44,643** hours of personal care services like bathing and dressing
- **91,274** hours of homemaker services

Did you know...

Not only do most seniors prefer to age-in-place at home, but the cost to provide these home- and community-based services to frail and vulnerable seniors is approximately 1/10 the cost of nursing home placement, making Long Term Care the smart thing to do as well as the right thing to do.

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 (E HEAP)
- Community Care for the Elderly (CCE)
- Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative (ADI)
- Home Care for the Elderly (HCE)
- Local Services Program (LSP)

Other Services and Grant Awards Provided by the Area Agency on Aging:

- Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- Elder Helpline (OAA) Older Americans Act Title III-B and III-E
- Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE)
- Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers (MIPPA)
- Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)
- Health & Wellness (OAA) Older Americans Act Title III-D
- Chronic Disease Self-Management Education Program (CDSME, Florida Health Network)
- Elder Abuse Prevention (OAA) Older Americans Act Title VII
- Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Service Program (VD-HCBS)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP, AARP Foundation)

Contracted Budget 2019

$19,767,087 Million Total Funding

- Highlands
  - $9,581,466
- Polk
  - $5,267,359
- Manatee
  - $3,311,632
- Hardee
  - $247,516
- Hillsborough
Health & Wellness – Helping Seniors Get Healthy and Stay Healthy

Senior Connection Center’s Healthcare Initiatives department provides an array of evidence-based classes, including Chronic Disease Self-Management, Healthy Eating Every Day, A Matter of Balance, and Tai Chi. We are able to present these classes in the most convenient and affordable way possible: by training members of the community to become certified volunteer trainers and then partnering with community organizations such as senior centers, churches, clinics, and senior communities to host the classes and help recruit participants. Classes are oftentimes enhanced with cooking demonstrations, support groups, and guest speakers who further motivate participants to succeed in achieving their personal health goals.

In 2019, Senior Connection Center’s Healthcare Initiatives department provided:

- 14 Chronic Disease Self-Management workshops in English and Spanish serving 204 participants
- 5 Healthy Eating Every Day workshops serving 75 participants
- 7 Tai Chi workshops serving 110 participants
- 29 Support Groups serving 347 participants

“Thanks to this class I am checking labels and eating less, and I lost 20 pounds!”

Veterans Directed Home & Community Based Services Program – Enabling Local Disabled Veterans to Safely Reside in Their Homes

Senior Connection Center manages one of the largest Veterans Directed Home & Community Based Services Programs in the country. This program gives disabled veterans of all ages the flexibility to manage their own care budgets, including hiring family caregivers, which allows many disabled veterans to remain living at home with their loved ones. The veterans in our program range in age from 32 to 102 years old.

We are proud to report that in 2019 we enrolled 16 new veterans into this program, allowing us to serve 93 veterans and their families with more than 133,000 hours of service over the course of the year.

“Thanks to this class I am checking labels and eating less, and I lost 20 pounds!”

Thank you to the Humana Foundation for funding our Living Healthy in Your Community program from 2017 through March 2019. Through this community-based health promotion program, we were able to improve the health and well-being of 758 seniors living in the greater East and West Tampa communities.
Over the past few years, Rise & Shine has become a much-anticipated event where hundreds of people gather together to celebrate Older Americans Month by recognizing the accomplishments of some amazing local seniors with our Salt & Pepper Awards. These awards are named for the late Honorable Claude Pepper, who represented Florida and defended the interests of all older Americans in Congress for more than 40 years.

It is also a time to shed light on the fact that many seniors in our community are in need of our help. Proceeds from Rise & Shine are used to support our Crisis Funds and Mini-Grant initiatives. Crisis Funds help vulnerable elders who are facing an unexpected situation that, if left unresolved, might cause serious harm and suffering. Our Mini-Grants are one way we encourage and support local organizations to pursue innovative solutions to issues facing many seniors, such as poor nutrition, isolation and loneliness, or the declining condition of their homes.

Our Rise & Shine audience is made up of professionals who work with seniors, advocates who are committed to serving seniors, family members and caregivers of seniors, and, of course, numerous seniors from throughout our community.

Rise & Shine is also a time to spread the word about the many programs and services we offer – Our Elder Helpline, SHINE, Long Term Care, Health & Wellness Classes, and Elder Abuse Prevention, all of which work together to maintain the health, independence and dignity of local seniors and their caregivers.

Along with proceeds from the Rise & Shine event, Senior Connection Center’s Crisis Funds are supported through grants from the WellMed Foundation and the Jean Griswold Foundation. In 2019, our Crisis Funds helped 31 vulnerable seniors avoid disastrous outcomes from unforeseen problems and circumstances at an average cost of just $685 per senior.

Special Thanks to our Master of Ceremonies, Matthew McClellan of Fox 13 News. Matthew’s personal stories not only revealed his compassion and concern for the seniors in his own life, but also reinforced the premise that caring about the welfare of older adults and persons with disabilities is everybody’s business.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2019 MINI-GRANT RECIPIENTS...

ELDER POINT MINISTRIES OF GREATER LAKELAND
Addressing social isolation and loneliness by providing seniors with transportation services to social events and activities.

NU-HOPE ELDER CARE SERVICES IN HIGHLANDS COUNTY
Improving the entire congregate dining experience of its clients with much-needed renovations to their congregate meal site facility.

VISTE OF POLK COUNTY
Helping to address social isolation along with the nutritional needs of local seniors by delivering hot meals to home bound seniors.

SENIOR IN SERVICE OF TAMPA BAY
Offering a familiar and friendly voice to check in on homebound or otherwise isolated seniors through their Tele-Pals Telephone Reassurance Project.
Business & Entrepreneurship

BARRY FRIEDMAN...

A seasoned newspaper journalist who decided to embark upon a new adventure by launching an online community curation site, LakelandNow.com, which employs a team of freelance journalists to cover local politics and community events.

Community Service & Volunteerism

MIKE KORSCH...

A volunteer at Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee who always goes “the extra mile” by delivering not one, not two, but three different meal routes, four times a week to local homebound seniors.

Heath & Wellness

CAROLYN FUQUAY...

Who, at the age of 91, decided to begin training for her first competitive race. Not only did she finish Tampa’s Gasparilla Classic 5k, but she won First Place in her age category.

Arts & Entertainment

MARGARITA TORRES...

Whose artistic talent really blossomed after retirement, as she went from taking art classes at Town N Country Senior Center to becoming a volunteer instructor, children’s book illustrator and commissioned artist, all in just 4 years.

Philanthropy

LEE LEAVENGGOOD...

Has displayed a lifelong dedication to the education and advancement of women and older adults, from helping to gender-integrate the University of Florida in 1947 to spearheading the creation of the USF Division of Senior Programs to establishing the Lee Leavengood Senior Program Endowed Scholarship to support students pursuing studies in the field of aging.

Senior-Friendly Business of the Year

ALL ABOUT PAWS

This senior-friendly business goes above and beyond the call of duty by making sure their elderly clients can remain connected with their pets throughout their lives. All About Paws not only cares for pets in their owners’ homes, but they bring pets to visit their owners in memory care and nursing facilities, giving seniors and their pets the ongoing gift of love and companionship when they need it the most.
Once again, Senior Connection Center receives Tampa Bay Times’ Top 100 Workplaces and Tampa Bay Business Journal’s Best Places to Work awards for 2019. These recognitions are truly a reflection of our employees’ appreciation for our core values, which guide us in the way we treat clients and each other, every day.

Senior Connection Center’s (SCC), President & CEO, Charlotte McHenry (far left) stands with SCC graduates of our first in-house Aspirational Leadership class: Abbie Walters, Kevin Gilds, Clairedine Senat, Kyrie-Leigh Chambliss, Lauren Cury and Kristina Melling.

SCC’s President & CEO, Charlotte McHenry and Vice President Patty Suarez join Arthur Moseley, co-owner of the local Griswold Home Care in Tampa to accept a $2000 check from the Jean Griswold Foundation to provide groceries for seniors facing food insecurity and hunger.

Charlotte McHenry was selected to join the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce’s “Leadership Tampa Class of 2019,” where she joined other community leaders representing all facets of Tampa’s business community in learning more about Tampa and how to have a more positive influence on the greater Tampa community.

SCC’s Patty Suarez (second from left) welcomes members of next year’s Leadership Tampa class, Rob Kane of Sparxoo, Erin Carlson of ERC Strategies, Kim Christine of Tampa General Hospital, and Scott Knight of Tampa International Airport, who spent their Community Service Day at SCC participating in a senior sensitivity exercises, including one that simulated the visual impairments seniors may face as they age.
Representing Hillsborough County
Mary Ann Davis ................................ Retired
Evelyn Johnson-Taylor, PhD ........ Evelyn J. Taylor Ministries
Hana Osman, PhD ......................... Retired
Elizabeth Provenzano, Vice Chair
................................ James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital
Rosaline Seabrook, Chair ............. New Life Adult Care

Representing Manatee County
Walter Jennings ............................... Retired

Representing Polk County
Izora Bullock ................................. Retired
Marcela Restrepo ............................. Vitas Healthcare
Jane Hammond, Secretary .......... ElderPointe Ministries
Sherry Reeder ............................... Central Florida Healthcare

Representing Highlands / Hardee Counties
Arielle Collier ............................... Nona Home Healthcare
Lynn Paningbatan ......................... Signature Home Now

Some thoughts from our Advisory Council Chair, Rosaline Seabrook

“I see volunteering for SCC’s Advisory Council as a gift that keeps on giving, with a touch of fulfillment in making a difference in the needs of local seniors and disabled adults. It is rewarding to see and experience the hearts of like-minded people in helping to impact the community, and there are personal benefits that reach beyond self and provide purpose.”
WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE
THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR SPONSORS:

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

8928 Brittany Way, Tampa, FL 33619
813-740-3888 | Elder Helpline 1-800-96-ELDER

SeniorConnectionCenter.org