

SAGE Eldercare is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. The Caring Connection is a publication for SAGE's friends and supporters.

Join Us October 10th



Canoe Brook Country Club

6 PM Cocktail Reception
7 PM Dinner & Program
908-598-5504

ssharma@sageeldercare.org

Honoring

Summit Area Public Foundation

Community Partner Honoree

Celgene

Corporate Partner Honoree

Al Kessler

Volunteer Honoree

Guest Speaker

Susan Haig

Emcee

Mort O'Shea

Open for a Special Message
from Executive Director Angela Sullivan
about SAGE's Giving Challenge

Why I Give...

"I believe in helping older adults because they're not always in a place they would have envisioned for themselves," says Kitty Hartman, SAGE board member.

Kitty went on her first Meals on Wheels run with her neighbor in January 2000. She has volunteered with Meals on Wheels once a week ever since that first trip! In 2008, Kitty joined SAGE's Board of Trustees, serving as president in 2015 and 2016. She remains an active volunteer, trustee and advocate.

"Beyond Meals on Wheels, the entire package SAGE offers is so unique, and it's important to keep it going," Kitty says. "I give because there are a lot of older adults who cannot afford SAGE's services, and I want to help them enjoy the benefits we offer."



Dear Friends,
You may notice that something is slightly different with this edition of *The Caring Connection*. I have taken the space on the cover for my letter to you rather than my usual place inside the newsletter. I do so with two purposes in mind. First, I want to recognize the contributions of time, treasure and talent from our community as SAGE approaches our 65th year of service, as well as share the efforts we are making to address the very real challenges facing SAGE today.

SAGE would not be here today if it were not for a strong community of people like you who believe in caring for our neighbors. From the pioneers who envisioned the need for an eldercare organization, to our volunteers, donors, educators and staff, SAGE has become a critical resource for the well-being of our community. On behalf of the older adults, families and caregivers who have become part of SAGE's family, thank you for your belief in our mission and your support throughout the years.

Now, SAGE is at a crossroads, and we must rely on the loyalty and generosity of our most passionate supporters. This is the second reason my message to you is front and center. SAGE's future is at risk. The realities we face at SAGE are similar to those you see and hear in the news—rising health care costs, uncertainty of

government funding, and a booming population of older adults who are living longer, their needs becoming greater.

SAGE continues to care for our community despite these growing challenges because for many, SAGE is the only place they can turn. As the community's needs expand, so do our care efforts, resulting in a budgetary gap of about \$150,000 above and beyond what our revenues and current philanthropic support cover. With a generous \$50,000 gift from a loyal supporter who answered our call this year to help us close the gap, and a few more donors increasing their support, we are making progress, but still have significantly more to raise to meet this year's needs. As increasing demand is placed upon SAGE for resources, we can only meet these needs with the partnership of the most caring and capable in our community. We hope this will inspire you to make your first gift or increase your gift because, simply put, **SAGE needs more help to give more help.**

I ask that as you turn the page to read stories about individuals and families who benefit from SAGE's programs, you consider making a first-time gift or increasing your support. Only with your help can SAGE continue to serve the community and the many who rely on our services for another 65 years.

With gratitude,

Angela Sullivan

Executive Director
SAGE Eldercare

How SAGE Is Making a Difference

Answering The Call For Help

Patty was already dealing with a lot when she got a call from the police about her aunt. She was in the process of caring for her 91-year-old mother and a husband who had cancer, and she was working a full time job. Lately her aunt, Gloria, had been telephoning Patty late at night and showing up at her work unannounced. The police had received a call from Gloria's neighbor that she was crying out for help from her apartment window.

Gloria has poor hearing, age-related macular degeneration and mild dementia. She has a fear of hospitals and is easily confused. It took Patty, who is Gloria's only family member, a few days to find her at a local hospital and have her released. "I knew she couldn't be alone full-time anymore," said Patty. She was also worried that if she hadn't been there to help, Gloria might still be in the hospital. "What happens when you have no one to speak on your behalf?" she asked.

Patty contacted SAGE and met with our HomeCare team to find an aide to spend five hours a day with Gloria. April began soon after and assisted with meals, light cleaning and anything related to keeping Gloria safe and comfortable.

"When I found SAGE, it was like something fell from heaven," said Patty. "I had peace of mind knowing my aunt was well cared for. I could focus on the other things I had to do without worrying about her." April worked with Gloria for two years, until recently when it was decided that Gloria would move to a full time nursing facility. April still visits her there regularly.



Each year SAGE has roughly 300 volunteers supporting our programs. A favorite for participants of Spend-A-Day are the students from Mount St. Mary Academy.



One of SAGE's invaluable corporate partners, Dun & Bradstreet, visited SAGE over the summer as part of the company's "Do Good Week" program. Volunteers helped deliver Meals on Wheels and visited SAGE's Spend-A-Day program.

The Need To Be Social

Carmela worked as a hair dresser for years. She also liked to be active and tend to her garden. The change in her behavior worried her children, especially when she began having trouble remembering their names. As her memory worsened, she became withdrawn and less active. With her children at work all day, Carmela was often left alone watching television and drawing.

Her son signed her up to receive Meals on Wheels from SAGE, and this was when he and his sister, Tina, learned about SAGE's Spend-A-Day Adult Day Medical Health Center. Spend-A-Day provides older adults with structured social, physical and cognitive activities, meals planned by a registered dietician, and support for participants and families from a geriatric social worker. A full-time nurse is on staff to medically supervise participants.

Carmela has been a Spend-A-Day client for three years. According to Tina, on the days Carmela attends the program, she wakes up extra early eager to go. When she gets home, she is talkative and happy. "She loves Spend-A-Day. They treat her like a queen, and she's active both mentally and physically," said Tina. "I don't know what we would do without SAGE. Everyone is so loving and caring and treat her like they would their own grandparent."

"We could not be happier with my brother's aide, Jeanne. I know when she is with him, he is eating healthy meals, is being taken care of and has companionship. Because of SAGE, my brother is able to continue living independently in his home." - K.M.

"I have peace of mind on the days my husband is at Spend-A-Day, knowing he is safe and happy. As a caregiver, I have time to get things done that would be difficult otherwise." - J.W.



Marguerite Stewart receiving the Bob Abelson Carry the Torch Award for exceptional work as a volunteer.

No Place Like Home

When Robert was preparing to leave rehabilitation after weeks in the hospital to deal with a heart issue, he assumed he was being sent back to the hospital. Going home in such poor health was not an option, he thought. A resident of Summit, Robert has no family in the area and few friends.

The rehab center contacted Guidance, Planning and Support (GPS) at SAGE. Kathy Bassiacos, GPS nurse navigator, went to Robert's home to assess his needs. "At first Robert was adamant that he didn't need help. He wanted to be independent," explained Kathy. "But he couldn't drive or care for himself." Working with Kathy, Robert, who is 84 and a former steel worker, soon realized what SAGE could do for him.

Through the GPS program, SAGE coordinated for Robert a chair lift, a medical alert and a doctor who would make house calls. He was put in touch with Meals on Wheels and arranged for SAGE's grocery shopping service to pick up the extras he needed. The shopping volunteer also worked with CVS pharmacy to have Robert's prescriptions mailed rather than picked up.

"They've taken care of everything," said Robert. "And Kathy calls all the time to check on me." He said he wants to remain at home for as long as possible, and SAGE has helped make that happen. "I can't do half the things I used to do, but I can look out the window and see people and birds. I'm in my house, and that's where I want to be."

Volunteer Spirit

SAGE Eldercare celebrated our volunteers at the annual luncheon held on July 17th. More than 300 volunteers help SAGE each year with everything from assisting in Spend-A-Day, delivering Meals on Wheels and grocery shopping to volunteering in the Furniture Restoration Workshop and SAGE's Resale Shop.

"Volunteers are instrumental to SAGE's work as a community resource. Our volunteers come to us with various skills and experience. Their contribution and dedication must be applauded. We could not do what we do without them," said SAGE Executive Director, Angela Sullivan.

"All of our volunteers are bettering the lives of our older neighbors," said Marianne Kranz, SAGE Director of Volunteers. "One example is our Meals on Wheels program, which is not just a food delivery service; it cures loneliness and gives people hope. It saves lives."

The Furniture Restoration Workshop, which is staffed by artisan volunteers, restores antiques and family heirlooms. All proceeds go to supporting SAGE programs. Spend-A-Day volunteers are a support for program participants and their families during vulnerable times. "These small or sometimes very large acts of kindness are the most important thing we can share with the community and donors to ensure they understand the importance of our mission, which is to make sure the older adults we serve remain as safe, happy and healthy as possible," said Kranz.



Each year SAGE picks two volunteers to be named "Sweethearts of the Year." This year's sweethearts are Meals on Wheels volunteers Carl and Lorelei Lohmann of Summit. The couple, who were in search of a "meaningful retirement," deliver meals to home bound older adults twice a week in the Springfield area. According to Carl, the work they do is as much about the social aspect as the nutritional one. "These people are just so lovable, they've become our friends," he said. Lorelei agreed, adding, "We've learned so much from the grace of these fragile people. We know they are dealing with so much."