

Year in Review

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Agency on Aging

OF SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT
Your Advocate for Independence®

Dear Friends and Colleagues

As we look back at this year, I reflect on how our agency continues to not only manage the challenges we face on a daily basis, but thrive, adding new programs and changing the delivery of services to ensure that we can fulfill our mission to empower adults to remain independent and engaged through advocacy, information, & services.

In this report, you will see how we impact the lives of nearly 15,000 older adults and individuals with disabilities every day. Our care management and transition programs continued to help individuals remain in the home of their choice, which also provides critical support to their caregivers. We continued to provide information and assistance to callers regarding benefit programs, health insurance and community resources. Although our volunteer programs were impacted, our amazing volunteers remained committed and are ready to get back into their places of service.

The pandemic brought new opportunities. We added a virtual support group to our existing services for caregivers. We started a program to provide grocery delivery when vulnerable individuals had to stay at home and, knowing the critical need, are continuing this service even now that vaccinations are available. When vaccinations became available, we stepped up and ensured that all individuals had transportation to their vaccine appointment – and volunteers to help them with all the details! Our Experience Corps volunteers tutored students online throughout the last year and now the program is back to full strength, providing reading support both virtually and on site.

Our two major events pivoted to virtual platforms. The online Art of Aging showcased artwork by 75 older adults. We hope to return to our in-person exhibition, but using a virtual format allows us to share the talents of these artists to an even wider audience. Our TEARS™ conference, which provides professionals with education regarding elder abuse and fraud, drew 700 participants from our area and around the country.

We also completed our Area Plan, which contains our planned activities under the Older Americans Act for the next three years. The pandemic gave us the opportunity to see the needs and strengths of our community from a different perspective, and these lessons learned shaped the goals contained in this plan.

I am so thankful for the work of all those who have made what we do possible. Our incredible and resilient staff, our dedicated Board and Advisory Council, our donors and our partners. There are so many who we rely on to ensure that individuals in our community have the support they need.

I am looking forward to an even better year ahead and all of the ways that we are working together to shape this new environment.

Sincerely,

Melissa Lang, DrPH, MPH, MPA, MA
President & CEO

Board of Directors

Joanne McGloin, Chair
Renee Drell, Vice-Chair
Kathy Pontin, Secretary
Thomas Penna, Treasurer
Pamela Feinberg, Esq.
Denise Haynes-Rock*
Linda Langlais
Edward Mapp
Thomasine Shaw
Sandra Stein
Richard Sviridoff
Kathleen Tynan McKiernan
Dal Ugrin

*resigned during the year

CEO: Melissa Lang, DrPH

Advisory Council

Erika Austin, Chair
Peggy Britt
Jennifer Cavallaro*
Jane Ferrall
Phillip Giuliano
Dawnmarie Hunter
Telia Lanci*
Rick Liegl
Joyce Martinelli
Suzanne Reilly
Patty Scafariello*
David Schneider

*resigned during the year



Overview of Accomplishments

Support to Live at Home

- 3,492 older adults and individuals with disabilities were able to remain at home through care management or self-directed services.
- 8,848 callers received information about community resources and benefit programs.
- 147,220 people received education to support their independence in the community, in person or through written material.
- We provided food to 2,850 seniors during last year's pandemic.


Caring for Loved Ones

- 2,800 family caregivers were assisted with information about community resources and benefits, provided with respite care, or received training.
- 372 family caregivers attended a national conference sponsored by AOASCC.

Staying Active & Healthy

- 151 works by 75 artists were displayed at the annual Art of Aging Exhibition.
- 229 volunteers committed to serving older adults and children in the greater New Haven area. 46 volunteers helped 150 individuals schedule vaccinations.

Support for Professionals

- 728 individuals were provided education regarding elder abuse and fraud through the annual conference TEARS™.
- Over 30 organizations received education and networking opportunities through the Interagency Council on Aging of South Central Connecticut, convened by AOASCC. 

Embracing New Ways to Deliver Services

This past year, our staff showed ingenuity and dedication as they embraced the challenges of delivering services within the limitations imposed by the pandemic. Even as we return to traditional ways of providing assistance, what we have learned will allow us to do even more in the future. Here are just a few highlights:



Tutoring via Zoom – Through Experience Corps, older adults help struggling young students become great readers. In the fall of 2020, our tutors learned how to provide reading support over Zoom and were able to successfully support a small


group of students. Now going into the new school year, we will be able to return to full capacity, providing both in-school and online tutoring.

Online Training – Our Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent programs were put on hold this past year, but our volunteers have stayed committed and are eager to return. Training was adapted to online, and all our volunteers welcomed this technology, wanting to be ready to go when the green light is given. This has provided an added benefit. Initially, some of our volunteers relied on the assistance of family members to get connected to meetings, but now they have discovered new confidence and enjoyment when navigating the online world.

Celebrating Artists – Every year, we highlight the talents of older adults in our communities through an art exhibition. For the second year, we held this event online. From the artists who cannot even remember when they first picked up a paintbrush to those who discovered their love of art in the midst of the pandemic, this year's submissions were as inspiring as previous years. We are looking forward to having the actual walls covered with art again but are thrilled we can also continue to share these works through a virtual gallery.



Fishing Boats
Elsie Benjamin -age 94

Providing Education – Every year, we provide education on elder abuse, fraud and exploitation through our TEARS™ conference. Social isolation is one of the greatest risk factors for elder abuse, and the global pandemic meant that older adults were at an even higher risk than ever before. Although an in-person gathering was not possible, we knew that the 2020 conference would provide an ideal opportunity to identify and address risk factors specific to COVID-19. So, we pivoted to an online conference, allowing professionals to gather from across the state and even further afield. 

A Step Toward Normalcy

We are constantly on the lookout for service gaps and barriers that keep individuals from being able to remain safely at home and fully engaged in their community. One opportunity that presented itself during the pandemic was when Covid-19 vaccines became available. We realized that older adults were facing barriers in getting their vaccine, so we looked for a way to help. Partnering with Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, we developed a Vaccine Buddy Project.

Here is one volunteer's story.

Christian was volunteering with Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers when he learned that the Vaccine Buddy Project was looking for volunteers. Christian had already seen the frustration of his own family members when they were trying to sign up for a vaccine appointment and didn't want technological limitations to prevent anyone from a move toward "more normalcy." He speaks of the enthusiasm of the individuals he called and how, in just a few phone calls, he made meaningful connections. The older adults he spoke with expressed their fear that things would not go back to normal. They just wanted to be able to see their grandkids or simply get back out in the community. Christian said that it was heartwarming to hear their thankfulness and that volunteering in this program was so meaningful, he wouldn't trade it for anything else.

Championing Caregivers

Being a family caregiver is rewarding, but caregiving also comes with significant stress and challenges. Many caregivers do not know how to ask for help. Some feel it is a "bother" to ask children when it is their father or mother needing the care. Some are afraid of being judged, that they will be seen as not doing a good enough job. For many reasons, caregivers often wait until they are in crisis before reaching out for help.

Staff member Patricia spoke of these challenges, from both her role working with caregivers and as a former caregiver herself. One of the most rewarding parts of her position is leading caregiver support groups. People come to these groups looking for answers from other caregivers. How do they handle certain challenges? How do they cope with the tremendous stress of balancing caregiving with the other roles in their lives? One caregiver wrote, "I am always on the lookout for anything that will help me with caring for my husband. Support groups have the potential of learning local information."

Before the pandemic, Patricia helped lead a caregiving support group through her church. While a few support groups were able to move online, many, like hers, could not. She was thrilled when the opportunity came to start an online support group through the agency. The sessions are designed to give the participants time to support each other, as well as to receive tips and ideas through local speakers. The monthly group is finding that this time together is invaluable. In the words of one of the caregivers, these meetings "are my pep rally and my coach's pre-game locker room speech — helping me be the best caregiver I can be!"



My Home, My Choice

The Connecticut Home Care Program (CHCP) is designed to provide in-home services for individuals who, without these services, would need to move to a skilled nursing care facility. David, one of our care managers, explains that it is typical for individuals to only apply months, or even years, after services are needed to ensure their overall health and safety. Only when there is acute illness or injury do they ask for help. It is hard for anyone to admit to needing assistance, and many rely on a family member to provide the care they need. It is an often-overlooked fact that a tremendous benefit of this program is for the caregiver, as the level of support their loved one needs is overwhelming.

When we think of "homecare," we usually think of the practical things, such as homemakers, home health aides, or visiting nurses. While these are vital to living safely at home, the pandemic highlighted the other side of homecare — the need for social and emotional support. One of the most frustrating things for our staff has been the months when they were only able to support their clients through a phone call. In determining the level of care needed, there is no comparison between getting information verbally and actually being in the home with the individual.



The CHCP program recognizes the need for social and emotional support. David speaks of one gentleman who he works with who is able to attend a local adult day center through the program. While giving his family member a break from caregiving responsibilities, this also provides him with crucial interaction with his peers. With the shutting down of the centers during the pandemic, there was a very noticeable impact of this isolation in this man's life.

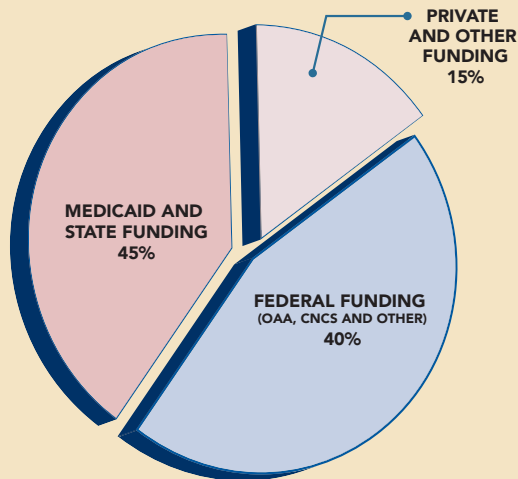
David also speaks of an individual who has a companion visiting through the program. This was another service affected when older adults had to self-isolate. This individual told David how much she missed the visits. While she lives where there are other people around, the quality of having someone solely focused on her for just this bit of time each week makes all the difference in the quality of her life.

David, like the rest of our staff, loves what he is doing because he is helping individuals remain in the community they have chosen. "For these individuals, there is a much better sense of dignity and self-worth when they live in their own home."



Financial Information October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020

TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT



TOTAL REVENUE \$13,491,386

EXPENDITURES

Care Management	5,202,349
Nutrition:	
Congregate Meals	488,793
Home-Delivered Meals	910,954
Community & Respite:	
Funding to Partners	685,090
Respite Care Management	306,204
Aging & Disability Resource Ctr.	1,149,030
Volunteer & Training:	
Senior Companions Program	355,846
Foster Grandparents Program	281,022
RSVP	98,023
Experience Corps	98,625
Others non-grant	46,270
Administration	1,764,506
Total Expenditures	13,374,900

Donors

Assisted Living Services Inc.
 Caregiver Homes
 Catholic Charity League
 Horizon Homemaker
 and Companion
 Juniper HomeCare, LLC
 SYNERGY HomeCare
 East Haven
 VNA Community
 Healthcare & Hospice
 Wallingford Housing
 Authority
 Javier Alvarado
 Barry Aronowsky
 Norma Augenstein
 Wendy Battles
 George Beller
 Marsha Beller
 Barbara Bozeman
 Joseph Cardoso
 Jennifer Cavallaro
 Susan Chabot
 Siva Chandraraj

Holly Chepow
 Sylvia Christakos
 Athena Christakos
 Joanne Chvisuk
 Susan Davidson
 Mariano Degregorio
 Beth Delgrego
 Sivan Doron
 Renee Drell
 Marissa Drell
 Elana Drell Szyfer
 Marjorie Drucker
 Charlotte Dzujna
 Patricia Esposito
 Judith Faherty
 Julia Faraci
 Georgene Fasanella
 Pamela Feinberg
 Jane Ferrall
 Jennifer Fiorillo
 Mary-Christy Fisher
 Deborah Fried
 John Gell
 Cindy Gerber
 Michele Gerstein

Pat Hames
 Margaret Hamilton
 Cheryl Harrigan
 Lee Heckendorf
 Willa Horowitz
 Ami Iskandrian
 Joan Johnson
 Deb Kaszas
 Beverly Kidder
 Valerie Knight-Di Gangi
 Susan Lamphier
 Melissa Lang
 Linda Langlais
 Charlotte Lee
 Laura Lynch
 Beth Lyons
 Barbara Mandell
 Edward Mapp
 Carol Marotti
 Lynne Maser
 Cathleen Mcalinden
 Donna McGinnelly
 Joanne McGloin
 Kathy Mckiernan
 James Mestl

Lorie Miller
 Jason Morrill
 Barbara Munk
 Wendee Nussle
 Thomas Penna
 Kathy Pontin
 Suzanne Reilly
 Emily Rome
 Priscilla Russell
 Marie J. Scarpellino
 Amy Schiess
 Diermalys Sepulveda
 Margaret Sessa
 Isaac Shalev
 Joyce Shavers
 Thomasine Shaw
 Bert Sirkin
 Judy Skolnick
 Jill Snyder
 Deb Soricelli
 Gladys Soto
 Rosalyn Sperling
 David Spett
 Judy Spindel-Brown
 Harold Spitzer

Alinda Stanley
 Sandra Stein
 Cherie Strucaly
 Richard Sviridoff
 Raymond & Kathleen
 Szczepanski
 John Tranquilli
 Alan Tyma
 Dal Ugrin
 Adalena Ugrin
 Stephen Ullman
 Maryanne Ullmann
 Patricia Villers
 Barbara Vosburgh
 Frans Wackers
 Ronald Webb
 Ron Webb
 Jean Webber
 Martin Weber
 Richard Weiss
 Freddie Winstanley
 Carol Withers
 Barry Zaret
 Pamela Zeller
 Andrea Zuta

Event Sponsors

AARP Connecticut • Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield • Assisted Living Services, Inc.
 Companions & Homemakers, Inc. • KeepMeHome Care & Companion LLC



Agency on Aging
 OF SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT