



The Senior Connection

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NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS

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- Featured in the upcoming 2011 - 2012 edition of the [Catalogue for Philanthropy](#)

CATALOGUE FOR PHILANTHROPY ISSUES SEAL OF APPROVAL TO THE SENIOR CONNECTION

What an honor it is to be featured in the Catalogue for Philanthropy as one of the best small nonprofits in the DC area. When you consider how many nonprofits are in the area and how many apply for this prestigious recognition, to be selected for the second time in five years is remarkable.



The 2011 - 2012 edition of the Catalogue will be released on November 7th. The Harmon Foundation generously agreed to mail a copy of the catalogue to our top 100 contributors, so watch your mail in case you are one of them. If you do not receive one by mail, you may order one at www.catalogueforphilanthropy-dc.org.

Co-president Joanne Balkovich, Community Development Director, Marcia Custer and Executive Director, Sue Dollins will attend the evening celebration at Harmon Hall on the catalogue's release date.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - SUSAN (Sue) DOLLINS



Autumn colors are beginning to pop all around us. While I am looking forward to Thanksgiving and the busy holiday season, I am also reflecting on the events that took place throughout September. During the many tributes and commemorations of the tenth year anniversary of September 11, 2001, much of the emphasis was placed on the heroes in the police, fire and rescue services and, of course, the military who answered their call to duty. We are so grateful for their service. Some survived and too many did

not. My deceased husband was a volunteer member of the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad for more than 30 years, so he was my live-in hero. I was never more proud than seeing him with a big grin on his face as he drove off in the big rescue squad truck. While he never had to respond to anything nearly as tragic as the 9/11 attack, he did his part as a volunteer and loved doing it.

Volunteer heroes are critical to how the community functions. If all the products and services provided by volunteers had to be paid for in dollars, the economic impact would be astounding. The more than 200 volunteers working with The Senior Connection are some of my current heroes. They spend two – three hours a week (a few hearty heroes spend more) helping seniors in Montgomery County get to the medical appointments they need to stay healthy; or to the grocery store to have their refrigerators stocked; or to engage in the socialization needed to stay connected to the community. While I am extremely grateful to have that many volunteers, we still need more heroes to step up to meet the need. We now find that by the beginning of the month, the requests for medical transportation have filled up the calendar for the entire month. I need to buy a bigger calendar! But, without the volunteers to call on to fill the need, a bigger calendar is not enough. The overload has also placed a burden on our capacity to fulfill the need. Your two – three hour time commitment will make a **big** difference in our ability to meet the demand for our services.

Opportunities and honors abound and just to name a few...The Senior Connection will be featured for the second time as one of the DC area's best small nonprofits in the Harmon Foundation's 2011 – 2012 edition of the Catalogue for Philanthropy www.catalogueforphilanthropy-dc.org. As you will see in another article in this newsletter, we have added bill

paying services to our list of volunteer opportunities as a result of a three-way partnership with AARP and the American Association of Daily Money Managers. We have secured the Montgomery County contract to continue the Grocery Shoppers Program for another year. We were selected by participants from Senior Leadership Montgomery to work on a group project to strengthen our volunteer recruitment and retention efforts, in addition to varied help from individual participants. Lastly, with the help of Board Member, Amanda Butts, we have completed the Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report. Copies are available upon request.

While the honors and the opportunities abound, our donation stream does not. As with most nonprofit agencies, the economic environment has caused our donations to drop dramatically from previous years. Since we do not charge for services, grants, contract reimbursements and donations are vital to our sustainability. We have been blessed with wonderful support from a number of foundations, and without the support of Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Aging and Disability, our doors would have been closed long ago. We know that giving at this time is difficult for many, but for those of you who are still blessed with a spare \$20 every now and then, please consider helping us out. No donation is too small or too large. Look for the cutout insert and send in your donation by check or by credit card. You may also visit our website: www.seniorconnectionmc.org and click on Make a Donation. You will be directed to either PayPal or Network for Good.

As always, I am blessed to be part of the Senior Services Network in Montgomery County and to lead this wonderful agency and its cadre of heroes.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP MONTGOMERY SELECTED A GROUP PROJECT FOR THE SENIOR CONNECTION

We are truly blessed with the opportunity to work with one of this season's Senior Leadership Montgomery Teams. Nine volunteers selected The Senior Connection as the organization that they wanted to work with.

The enthusiasm and expertise that this team brings to our organization

is invaluable. They will be working primarily with Marcia to evaluate and enhance volunteer recruitment, engagement and retention efforts. What a gift to us and to the community we serve.

Learn more about Senior Leadership Montgomery at <http://www.leadershipmontgomerymd.org/20th-anniversary-video.html>

Senior  Leadership Montgomery

GEARING UP TO HELP LOW INCOME SENIORS WITH DAILY MONEY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Senior Connection is pleased to announce a three-way partnership between AARP, the American Association of Daily Money Managers and The Senior Connection. The partnership will help fill a gap which currently exists in one's need to have help with the tasks associated with paying bills, filing documents and tracking expenditures and his/her ability to pay for services typically provided by Professional Daily Money Managers. Through this partnership volunteers will help low-income seniors maintain a good credit standing as a result of their ability to pay their bills on time and be less susceptible to fraud and identity theft due to careful monitoring of transactions. They will gain a sense of confidence, participation, and autonomy in handling their personal financial affairs enabling better decision making. Family members will feel more secure about their senior loved one's ability to handle his or her own finances.

This partnership is the result of the exploration from a few members of the American Association of Daily Money Managers who approached The Senior Connection with the idea of applying for the Bill Payer Program model available from AARP. These professional Daily Money Managers will volunteer to serve low-income residents of Montgomery County with the same quality service provided to individuals who can generally afford to pay for their service. They are also willing to help recruit other volunteers from their professional organization to help. The Board from The Senior Connection approved the partnership at its September meeting and the agreement with AARP was signed on September 21. Grant applications for funding the coordination efforts are pending, and the goal is to begin services in early 2012. Applicants for the program must show proof of low-income and be at least 62 years of age. If you are interested in helping with this

new program, please contact Sue, Greg or Marcia at (301) 962-0820 or E-mail: Marcia.Custer@seniorconnectionmc.org. Training will be provided so no experience is needed, only your willingness to learn.

SEPTEMBER'S VOLUNTEER TRAINING SPONSORED BY SUNRISE AT FOX HILL



Volunteers listen intently to the information being shared at the training session at Fox Hill.

Senior Connection Volunteer Training - September 23, 2011

The Senior Connection held its annual volunteer training program at Sunrise at Fox Hill in Bethesda on September 23, 2011. Approximately 60 volunteers attended the session and received valuable information intended to strengthen their confidence and skill level as they go about providing the services. George Simms, Assistant State's Attorney for Montgomery County, presented information about how to recognize the signs of fraud and abuse. The handouts, which outlined the PowerPoint presentation, provided practical suggestions on how to empower seniors to avoid the pitfalls of fraud, abuse and neglect. Teja Safai, Vice President of Operations for Para-Med, presented safe driving tips and demonstrated safe transfer assistance to people who are frail and might need some assistance getting into a vehicle. In addition to Teja's wonderful and engaging demonstrations, he offered to provide one free ParaMed Medical Transport ride per week (52 Rides), to supplement our volunteer effort. This gift is "golden" on so many levels. While it will allow us to provide rides that we may otherwise need to turn down, it validates the value we place on our volunteer

efforts. Teja received a round of applause as he announced this generous gift.

During the delicious lunch hosted by the staff at Sunrise at Fox Hill, volunteers participated in a lively discussion and storytelling about situations they have encountered. The lessons shared have a great deal of value and are as much a part of the training as the guest speakers. Shelley Harris, Director of Sales and Marketing for Sunrise at Fox Hill, was the hostess with the mostest and stayed with us for the entire day. We are so grateful to Fox Hill's generous support for the second year in a row. Sunrise at Fox Hill is the ultimate in comfort, good food and gracious surroundings. A big THANK YOU to all the staff who worked so hard to make this event so special.

Following the training sessions, Executive Director, Sue Dollins invited The Senior Connection staff to join her for a question and answer session. She talked about the new initiative for bill paying and reviewed the Grocery Shoppers Program. The entire staff took turns addressing questions from the audience.

This half-day training program is offered each fall, and allows volunteers access to valuable information to supplement the initial orientation provided prior to receiving their volunteer assignments.



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR HOSPITALITY!

<http://foxhillclub.com>

WHY VOLUNTEER FOR THE SENIOR CONNECTION
WRITTEN BY MARGARET McMILLAN, VOLUNTEER FROM THE SENIOR CONNECTION

**Why Volunteer?
Here is your answer.**

**AWARD-WINNING VOLUNTEERS FIND
VOLUNTEERING A REWARDING EXPERIENCE**

"You will be rewarded in ways you couldn't imagine," are Christine Donovan's words of encouragement to potential volunteers for The

Senior Connection. She is reflecting on the three years that she's transported seniors to medical appointments, but this spring a different kind of reward came her way.

In April, Christine and Chris Keenan, another volunteer, were named Volunteers of the Year and were presented their awards by Executive Director Sue Dollins at TSC's annual luncheon. "Every year we honor all our volunteers with a luncheon," says Sue. "My staff and I value the time and caring that each and every one contributes. Choosing just one or two for a special honor each year is a hard choice with so many worthy candidates." The Senior Connection has 217 volunteers, many of whom attended the luncheon at The Golden Bull Grand Café in Gaithersburg.

A 29-year resident of Olney, Maryland, Christine and her husband Tom have three children, ages 24, 21, and 17. She recalls leaving her medical career and staying home with them "the best decision I have ever made in my life." But as the children grew older, her hobbies—gardening, reading novels and inspirational books, and exercising at a fitness center—weren't sufficient to fill her extra hours.

That's when Christine spotted a TSC notice in the *Gazette* and answered the call for volunteers. She'd worked with seniors in her job, and this volunteer option seemed a natural fit. In particular she was inspired by a friendship with a 95-year-old care receiver, who was "so isolated, lonely, and unable to drive himself to medical appointments."

Christine now drives seniors to medical appointments two days a week, and this has changed her life. "I am able to love my friends and family in a more open and understanding way. " With her parents in their 80's and facing challenges of aging, Christine is finding insights she gains from her TSC work helpful. She has seen how older people must cope with living alone, finding transportation, and endeavoring to stay independent.

But practical experience with the elderly is only one of the benefits she finds in volunteering. “Every time I go out with my ladies I feel they reward me with so many kind words and thanks for my time,” she says. Perhaps her best time ever was helping a woman find a new residence. “We spent the day looking at apartments throughout the city. We got lost a few times, walked ‘til our feet were screaming and had so many laughs during the day. She was so appreciative and we have become very good friends.”

Her fellow award winner, Chris Keenan, also knows that volunteering can create new friendships. Chris, who grew up in Germany, moved to the U.S. in 1963 and settled in Bethesda 19 years later. She gave TSC a call in 2008, the year that she retired from a Department of Health and Human Services career that included a stint at the Office of the Secretary.

Though she enjoys hiking, walking her dog, reading, and kayaking, Chris says she “felt a need to find a more meaningful way to spend my free time.” As a volunteer, she transports seniors to medical appointments and visits with relatives. Occasionally she shops for them or with them. Whatever she’s doing benefits her as well, she finds. “Sharing a little of one’s life with some wonderful people is gratifying and uplifting,” she says.

And Chris’ dedication also has a personal connection. Her youngest brother, who had a neurological disorder, spent many years in a wheelchair, then was confined to his bed. “After the death of our mother,” Chris says, “his friends and neighbors became his main support and their visits and attention to his needs helped make his life as pleasant as possible. I will be forever grateful to them. Even a small gesture of support can make a great difference in a person’s quality of life.”

Though all her interactions as a volunteer have been rewarding, Chris says one relationship stands out. She’s formed a friendship with a lady

who recently celebrated her 102nd birthday. “I drove her twice a week to see her sister in a nursing home. I always looked forward to our little outings and was a little sad when her sister died last year at the age of 108. We still talk on the phone occasionally and I recently had tea at her home and showed her photos of my European vacation. She is my ‘poster child’ for what old age should be.”

At the award presentation, Sue Dollins lauded Chris and Christine for “the most hours, greatest attitudes, and most consistent willingness to answer the call to serve.” She might say that each is a ‘poster child’ for what a volunteer should be.

**DON'T LET THE WEATHER KEEP YOU FROM GETTING GROCERIES
CALL THE SENIOR CONNECTION'S GROCERY SHOPPERS PROGRAM**

It has been one year since The Senior Connection took over the Shopper’s Program from the American Red Cross (ARC) and we are very excited and pleased with the transition of the program to The Senior Connection. For the first few months, thanks to the help of volunteer extraordinaire Nettie Glassman, time was spent calling the volunteers and care receivers who transitioned from the ARC program in order to welcome them to our program and to reassure the folks being served by the volunteers that services would continue without disruption. To our delight we discovered devoted volunteers who have served for many years and are more than willing to continue to serve their special friends. It is an honor to pick up and carry on the program that ARC created and managed so brilliantly for so many years.

The volunteers, both transitioned and newly recruited, were invited to participate in the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon and the Fall Volunteer Training event. It is a pleasure to greet and chat with the volunteers at these events, and we hope to have many more join us next year.

The Senior Connection staff is actively promoting the Shopper’s Program throughout Montgomery County and will welcome the opportunity to present this program at any group gathering. An interview featuring Community Development Director, Marcia Custer, and Shoppers Program Volunteer, Frank Cavalier, was recently aired on the local county cable program “[Make a Difference](#)”, so take 15 minutes to click on the link and to get a better

overview of our program. Watch the schedule for a repeat if you prefer to watch it on the TV screen.

The following article appeared in last fall's newsletter, but it is worth repeating the information for the upcoming winter season.

Except when snow, ice or power outages threaten, most people take for granted their ability to go to the local grocery store when they need food and supplies. Sometimes, however, grocery shopping is difficult no matter what the weather due to illness, surgery, an injury or chronic health problems like arthritis or stroke. These and other circumstances can make walking up and down the supermarket aisles feel like a marathon. Even with a motorized cart, lifting and toting the bags of groceries can be overwhelming. Luckily, a variety of community resources are available.

First, check your local supermarket. Some stores deliver to homes in the surrounding community. Residents in most parts of Montgomery County can also grocery shop online (with home delivery) through local internet services and through companies like Schwann's and other online specialty stores (food only). Home health agencies and homemaker/chore services provide aides to help with almost any aspect of shopping and cooking – preparing the order, going to the store or just providing an escort, putting the groceries away and meal preparation. Also, a growing number of personal shoppers will go to the grocery store and do other errands.

Montgomery County also has a handful of not-for-profit organizations that help seniors shop for the food and other items they need to stay healthy and independent. Each has its own eligibility criteria. Some have modest fees while others are free.

The Senior Connection is one of the nonprofits providing volunteers to shop for seniors living in Montgomery County. The volunteer match is based on finding a volunteer living near the senior's home; therefore, the request you make may be matched right away, or you may be added to a waiting list. In addition to its regular volunteer services, The Senior Connection has the Montgomery County "Shoppers Program". To be eligible for this program a senior must be 60 + years of age, must meet the low income requirement, and have no one in the home available to do the shopping.

For Shoppers Program information call 301 942-1049 or e-mail greg.muncill@seniorconnectionmc.org. If you do not qualify as low income, call The Senior Connection at (301) 962-0820 or e-mail: juanita.jarrett@seniorconnectionmc.org

Top Banana Home Delivered Groceries is a nonprofit organization which was established 29 years ago. The fully stocked storehouse carries a variety of name brand products, frozen goods, fresh meats, produce, dairy as well as home, personal and pet supplies. The program's main focus is serving seniors but anyone, regardless of age or income, can get assistance. Orders are placed by telephone and are delivered to the customer's kitchen. Drivers will even unpack the bags and loosen stubborn jar lids when needed. Groceries are competitively priced and a low service fee is based on ability to pay (\$15 down to \$5 per delivery). For a Storehouse Product Guide or information call (301) 372-FOOD (3663) or visit www.topbananagroceries.org.

Food and Friends provide meals, groceries and nutrition counseling to people who have a qualifying primary illness, compromised nutritional status and a limited ability to prepare meals. There are no requirements for income or insurance coverage. Food and service is entirely free. Groceries are delivered weekly or every other week to people outside the freshly-prepared meals delivery area and to those healthy enough to prepare their own meals. Recipients get two bags of non-perishable groceries, frozen soups, entrees and liquid nutritional supplements. Meals, including 11 special diets, are delivered to clients' homes and include food for breakfast, lunch and dinner along with liquid nutritional supplements. Call (202) 269-2277 or visit www.foodandfriends.org.

Jewish Social Service Agency's (JSSA) Shoppers Program is another volunteer shopping service. On a regular basis, usually weekly, volunteers shop for groceries and other household items for frail elders. Some shoppers take their older friends to the store; others pick up a list and money and return with groceries and change. To receive service, call the JSSA intake line at (301) 816-2633 to set up a social work assessment. The service is free, but there is a sliding scale fee for the assessment.

For people who want prepared meals, most parts of Montgomery County are also served by a local home-delivered meals program (Meals-on-Wheels). Monday through Friday, program volunteers bring at least two cooked meals, one hot and one cold, to each recipient. Fees and eligibility vary from program to program. For a complete list and contact information for the meals-on-wheels programs, call Montgomery County's Senior Nutrition Program at (240)777-3810 or email melanie.polk@montgomerycountymd.gov.

*Written by: Phyllis Courlander,
Top Banana Home Delivered Groceries*

Watch our website calendar for upcoming events: www.seniorconnectionmc.org

Charitable Giving Program

It's all in the planning. Planned gift strategies offer a powerful tool to help your favorite charities, and provide for yourself and your heirs.

These are just some of the ways you can minimize tax liabilities, make a substantial yet affordable gift to a charity - all the while providing for your heirs and your own future. You should always seek the guidance of professional advisors to help you make the decision that is right for you.

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Announcing JSSA's "*brand new*" monthly Family Member Hoarding Support Group

[For family members of people that hoard]

4th Tuesday of the month

6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

First meeting: November 22nd

6123 Montrose Road

Facilitator: Beth Shapiro, LCSW

bshapiro@jss.org

(301) 816-2665

Please help us distribute this information widely.

Thank you!

Contact Us

The Senior Connection of Montgomery County, Inc.
3950 Ferrara Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20906

(T) 301 962-0820

(F) 301 962-0892

Visit our website:

www.seniorconnectionmc.org

Staff Directory:

Sue Dollins, Executive Director, Ext. 10

E-mail: sue.dollins@seniorconnectionmc.org

Wanda Campbell, Administrative Director, Ext. 13

E-mail: wanda.campbell@seniorconnectionmc.org

Marcia Custer, Community Development Director, Ext. 14

E-mail: marcia.custer@seniorconnectionmc.org

Juanita Jarrett: Program Director, Ext. 12

E-mail: juanita.jarrett@seniorconnectionmc.org

Greg Muncill: Shoppers Program Manager, 301 942-1049

E-mail: greg.muncill@seniorconnectionmc.org

An Nguyen: Vietnamese Outreach Coordinator, Ext. 11

E-mail: an.nguyen@seniorconnectionmc.org

Board Members:

Joanne Balkovich, Co-President, Retired Holy Cross Hospital Senior Source

Phyllis Courlander, Assistant Director, Top Banana Home Delivered Groceries

Nancy Evans, Retired Montgomery County Public Schools

Roberta Gosier, Director, Help Unlimited Daily Money Manager

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Sam Lish, CEO, Advanced Home Support and ElderClean Pros, LLC & TeamClean Pros, LLC

Ruth Manchester, RN, St. Luke Lutheran Church

Marilyn Scheiner, Marilyn Scheiner, CPA

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