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## Volunteer Update – March 2022

### You are changing lives.....

Thank you for being a Staying Connected volunteer. Together, we are improving the overall quality of life for so many Sun City residents who need a little support to allow them to remain in their homes with dignity as long as it is safe to do so. Whether they need a reassuring call to check on their welfare, a ride to a medical appointment or grocery store, a little help with light home maintenance, a break for a spouse who is caregiving for a family member, or a compassionate visit or telephone call to combat the negative effects of social isolation, Staying Connected is there for them because of you. Below are comments by members that reflect the impact you have on their lives.

*“SC has helped me so much the past 6 months with home maintenance. I couldn’t have done it myself.”*

– Kathleen B.

*“I had transport to rehab for two months. Everyone that I met with Staying Connected was so kind to me.”* - Carol G.

*“Your organization has been so wonderful to me. I don’t think you can improve. It is great I don’t have to wonder if I can keep an appointment. Your volunteers are so kind and helpful.”* Barbara J.

*“Staying Connected’s support services have allowed me to stay in my home and live independently. Thank you.”* – Evelyn B.

*“Transportation to and from Savannah to have radiation treatments eased my worry during this time. Thank you.”* – Kate

*“A special thank you for the pleasant telephone calls during this trying and often lonely time. You lift my spirit each day.”* - Susan

### Our Responses to Covid-19

Like the rest of the world, the pandemic has had profound impacts on the lives of our members. When the U.S. shut down in 2020, we were forced to cease services where volunteers and members were in close proximity. Our Resource Hub remained open, under strict safety protocols to be there for our

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members. We continued to make daily reassuring calls to our most frail members and in addition, compassionate volunteers reached out to every member household weekly to let them know that they were not alone during a very stressful time. No one was left behind! Within 6 weeks, we developed Covid protocols and resumed limited transportation services to allow us to help residents access in-person healthcare services including life-saving cancer treatments. We helped members find alternative methods for getting groceries, and under strict safety protocols, provided urgent basic home maintenance to ensure they were safe. Home visits, normally done in person were pivoted to social telephone visits to combat the emotional stress of isolation.

When Covid-19 vaccines became available in 2021, Staying Connected collaborated with the community to create a call center for residents who had difficulty registering with the CDC's VAM system to find vaccination locations and schedule appointments. Volunteers scheduled appointments for residents to receive technical assistance provided by Sun City's Computer Club. Through our relationship with Coastal Carolina Hospital in Hardeeville, we also helped more than 70 volunteers and members get vaccinations through several of the hospital's vaccination events.

The bottom line is that with your help, no one who asked for help was left behind! You may not hear from our members directly but know that with your help, their lives are being changed!

### **2021 by the Numbers.....**

Sometimes numbers are just numbers, but these numbers tell a story of service and compassion. 456 households were members at some time during 2021, of which 249 received services. Overall, 1,867 direct services were provided during the year: 1,245 Transports (71%); 255 Home Visits/Caregiver Relief / Social Telephone Calls (14%), and 281 Home Maintenance help (15%). In addition, our Resource Hub made nearly 6,400 Reassuring Calls to members and handled nearly 3,000 inbound telephone calls.

189 volunteers contributed time to support our Sun City neighbors and in particular, our members. Beyond providing direct services, volunteers served behind the scenes in administrative operations, marketing, fundraising, volunteer recruitment and training, member relations, and IT support for hardware, software, data administration and our website. Without you, none of this can happen.

### **Our Priorities for 2022 –**

Numerous studies confirm that:

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- Access to transportation contributes to the general health of seniors by enabling regular health checks, allows access to healthcare providers earlier in an illness to prevent a treatable illness from turning into a trip to the emergency room, and improves overall medical outcomes by access to physical therapy and follow-up visits.
- Access to transportation to grocery stores facilitates the ability to access healthier foods, a healthier diet and ultimately a healthier senior.
- Social interaction, whether in person or by telephone reduces emotional stress, and potential depression of seniors who are isolated

Our commitment to continue to provide this life-enhancing support is unwavering and a priority!

Beyond shepherding the daily operations of Staying Connected, long-term sustainability remains a primary focus of your Board. Sustainability for us is defined as a sound financial footing, a robust volunteer recruitment, training and retention program, and building lasting relationships with our donors as well as local agencies / service providers who provide assistance to Sun City residents.

Consistent with our strategic plan, we have established 2022 goals focused on enhancing our ability to be there for Sun City neighbors who need help. Action plans have been identified to: ensure we have key positions fully staffed and trained; expand our volunteer recruitment, retention and training programs; and increase internal and external communications to ensure everyone knows how their involvement with Staying Connected is changing the lives of Sun City residents.

### **Some Final Thoughts....**

Each and every day, your heart should be warmed by the knowledge that you are enhancing the lives of so many through your support as a volunteer. Without your help, none of what Staying Connected does for our neighbors can happen. Together, we are doing something very special.

We encourage you to visit our website at [www:stayingconnectedschh.org](http://www.stayingconnectedschh.org) to learn more about how your support is making a difference.

On behalf of your Board, our Members, and Sun City residents as a whole, we are profoundly grateful.

Hugh Armstrong, President