



Insider News

Spring 2019

Aging Matters

Imagine for a moment that you could design your ideal community-based system of care and support that aims to maximize the well-being of older adults. What might it look like?

It would probably include support services, such as personalized transportation to medical appointments or the grocery and other errands. It might include a friendly neighbor dropping by for a visit or helping with a few household chores that are sometimes challenging or unsafe for older adults to do alone.



Likely, services would include a variety of life-enriching classes that stimulate learning and connecting with others, such as learning a foreign language or discussing world events or topics of interest. It would include exercise and nutrition classes. It also might include options for local day trips or overnight adventures to exciting destinations. There would be lots of opportunity to volunteer in ways that are meaningful to individuals.

We believe an ideal community-based option would look a lot like Shepherd's Centers. Why? Because our programs and services are designed and driven by and with older adults at the helm. This is different from many other community organizations where decisions are made by the organization. We reject the traditional models by putting older adult decision-making at the heart of all we do.

We call this empowerment. Our model for empowerment puts older adults in leadership roles. The result is that programs and services are meaningful and individuals have abundant opportunities for social connections. Shepherd's Centers aren't perfect, but we believe we come closer to an ideal community-based option. See for yourself... visit our [website](#) to find a Shepherd's Center near you, and if there isn't one, learn how you can help get one started so that more older adults have opportunities to live the ideal life as they age in community!

Matters Around the Shepherd's Centers Network



The Gift of Giving and Receiving

It is a gift to both give and receive help. When David retired as a pastor in rural Mississippi, he connected with the **Shepherd's Center of Greater Tupelo**.

He and his wife enjoyed the monthly educational programs and quickly developed friendships. David volunteered as a driver to escort those who could no longer drive to appointments. As a pastor, he always enjoyed meeting new people and giving back to the community. Volunteer driving with the Shepherd's Center provided these opportunities for him. Ask any of our volunteer drivers...they say they get more out of the experience than they believe they give.

Then, several years ago, David became ill and was no longer able to drive. He found he and his wife, who had stopped driving years before, were on the other end of service—transitioning from helpful driver to grateful passengers. For most, it's hard to ask for help. The reasons are varied, but all understandable...loss of independence, loss of self-worth, fear of further loss, concern or lack of trust of help that is available, for some it also might include financial concerns.

David says, "It's a good feeling to know that I've done this in the past because I realize what it really means to receive." There is deep appreciation for the kindness and care of volunteer drivers who help older adults keep their dignity.



Award-Winning Partnership

A core principle of Shepherd's Centers is community collaboration. This includes diverse faith groups, nonprofit agencies, aging service providers, businesses of all sizes and so many others.

This year, **Shepherd's Center of Spartanburg (SC)** embarked on a new venture with the Spartanburg Housing Authority to provide Adventures in Learning classes on-site at an independent senior housing property. There were very few programs available for the residents, and one of the first options the Shepherd's Center offered was its highly acclaimed health and fitness class. They soon began offering their popular line dancing classes, craft and hobby options, and informational workshops, such as storytelling and money management.

Shepherd's Center members have the option of participating in programs at both sites, opening up more opportunities to connect with others. And residents at the senior housing property have new opportunities to engage in meaningful programs.

Both the Shepherd's Center and Spartanburg Housing Authority report numerous advantages of this partnership. The Shepherd's Center has been motivated with how this partnership helps extend its mission to serve diverse ethnic and socio-economic groups. A representative from the housing authority now serves on the Shepherd's Center's board, thus fostering an even stronger community.

David's experience as a driver and passenger provides a unique perspective on the mission of Shepherd's Centers.

partnership.

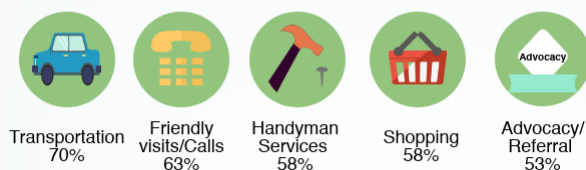
Recently, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Office awarded the Spartanburg Housing Authority a national merit award for this partnership, which will be celebrated at their national conference in Boston this summer. This win-win partnership is what community is all about!

Matter of Perspective

Across the Shepherd's Centers network, we spend a lot of time counting...number of people served, the number of volunteers and the hours they have generously given, the number of participants in lifelong learning classes and so on. These numbers are important because they help us know how we are achieving our goals.

Most Common Caregiving Services

provide by Shepherd's Centers



A few facts about the variety of programs and services offered by the network:

- 92% of centers offer Adventures in Learning, ranging from a minimum of 2 weeks/year to a maximum of 50 weeks/year
- 55% of centers offer fitness classes
- 80% of centers offer caregiving services, which include:
 - 81% transportation
 - 65% friendly visitor/calls
 - 58% home repairs/handyman services
 - 38% chores/light housekeeping (including yard work)
 - 19% Meals on Wheels delivery
 - 9% caregiver support
 - 19% listed other services such as respite care, record keeping, errands, advocacy

But more importantly, **each number represents a person's life that has been changed because of our mission.** You can help us connect more older adults to services that enable individuals to continue living safely and independently in their own homes and communities. Thank you!

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