President’s Message

Our Annual Meeting was a grand opportunity to celebrate our volunteers and thank donors who enable us to continue to lend a helping hand to our neighbors. It provides us an opportunity to take a look at what we have accomplished and challenges us to keep it going.

As an organization, we are always looking forward. Sustainability is an important goal for us. To achieve that, we have recently hired our first ever Executive Director, Sandy Milliken, and we are eagerly anticipating that she will be with us starting June 1st.

There will be some changes on the Staying Connected Board of Directors this year as well. We welcome Bill Teeter as an addition. Bill has already been active and involved helping with a number of our projects. After leading the search for our Executive Director, Bob Hooper is taking a break from his leadership of marketing so Hugh Armstrong has agreed to add that responsibility to his list. Each year may bring change and challenges but our mission remains unchanged because “it’s the neighborly thing to do!”

With sincere thanks,

Holly Field, President, Staying Connected

Welcome: Our New Executive Director

We are so pleased to introduce Sandy Milliken as the Executive Director of Staying Connected. Sandy comes most recently from Summerville, SC. She has a Masters of Social Work and a depth of experience in non-profit organizations. Sandy had a private practice as a Care Manager working with older adults and their families to guide them to establish a quality lifestyle. She worked in Charleston as Executive Director of Operation Home, an organization who provided home repairs for low-income homeowners.

Earlier in Sandy’s career she served as Executive Director of a Big Brothers Big Sisters Services program. She has a strong background in both fiscal and operational management.

No wonder we chose her over 90 other applicants to be our first ever Executive Director. She has a son and his family living in the Savannah area and brings with her two dogs and a cat. And we can’t wait for her to learn more about us and vice versa. We appreciate her support of our mission and look toward moving forward under her guidance.
2019 Annual Meeting Highlights

Our Staying Connected Annual Meeting and Reception was held on March 25 at Magnolia Hall where we celebrated the outstanding accomplishments of our amazing volunteers in 2018 to make a positive impact on the lives of their Sun City neighbors. It also provided an opportunity to recognize our corporate donors and the many chartered clubs and groups in Sun City who support us throughout the year with fundraising events, most notably; The Buckeye Group, the Sun City Car Club, the Sun City Pickle Ball Club, and the Women’s Nine Hole Group.

Of course, an event such as this would not be possible without the generous support of our 2019 Meeting Sponsors, especially The Bedminster Group. Other substantial donors included Sprenger Health Services, Bloom Senior Living, Canterfield of Bluffton, Hargray Communications and ReMax Island Realty.

Holly Field, our President, opened the meeting and welcomed our guests, volunteers, members and representatives from sponsors and supporters. Bob Hooper offered special mentions of our Sponsoring Partners, Hilton Head Hospital and Coastal Carolina Hospital and our Platinum Sponsors, the Buckeye Club and the Women’s 9-Hole Golf group. He also expressed our appreciation to our Gold Sponsors, which are highlighted on our Web site. Steven Weber, CEO of the Bedminster Group and Dave Lash from the Buckeye Club offered comments to the group reinforcing their ongoing commitment to Staying Connected.

Vice President, Hugh Armstrong presented some remarkable statistics which demonstrate the commitment by our volunteers to serve our members. Volunteers drove 2.6 times around the world and contributed more than 17,000 hours in 2018. We completed 255 requests for Home Maintenance, 984 Home Visits, 2,675 Transports for Medical or Grocery, and the Hub made 4,986 Reassuring Calls. You should be proud of those numbers and what they mean to your neighbors! Werner Rotach, our Treasurer shared information about our Members and Volunteers.

At year-end, we had 353 member households with 491 individual members served by 358 “active” Volunteers. 365 Volunteers posted time in 2018, an increase of 7% over 2017. Our Training group trained 109 new Volunteers throughout the year.

In 2018, we expanded our management team with the promotion of Mary O’Brien to Director of Services. Jill Kookien assumed the role of Transportation Coordinator and Cathy Brookman has assumed the role of Intake Coordinator. We continue to focus on the creation of long-term sustainability. In addition, the relocation of the Resource Hub to the Yemassee Craft Center was quite an undertaking, but has resulted in a better environment for helping all Sun City residents, and a pleasant workplace for our Hub volunteers.
Celebrating our Volunteers

As always, the highpoint of the Annual Meeting was the presentation of awards by Phylis Giglinto, Board Secretary and Ginny Couch, Volunteer Development Director. The Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Heide Miller, who also received the Resource Hub Volunteer award. Service Volunteers of the Year were David Carlin for Transportation, John Zakrewski for Home Visits, James Delmore and John Cunningham for Maintenance, and Ruth Moroknek for Member Intakes.

Other award winners included Barbara Rotach for her Versatility, and Fran DiTommaso, Pat Hart, Randy Hoff, Nancy Jerrin, and Sharon Symonds for their contributions behind the scenes. Other volunteers were recognized for reaching service milestones during the year. All the winners can be found in the Annual Meeting presentation on the homepage of our web site.

A festive reception followed the meeting and was enjoyed by volunteers, members, donors and guests.

Some unsolicited feedback from a donor who attended the meeting - “I am so glad I came to the meeting. You all do amazing work, and we are proud to support your efforts, which are so needed. We are going to step up our program to support you in 2019, you can count on us!”

We encourage you to see the entire Annual Meeting Presentation by going to our web site homepage at www.stayingconnectedschh.org.
**You Are Our Best Ambassadors**

Your enthusiasm for Staying Connected, your experiences in providing services, your pleasure in meeting members and helping make their lives better, is simply CONTAGIOUS. Your friends and neighbors hear you, admire what you do, and hopefully may want to learn more. Your volunteering piques their curiosity.

So, if your friends or neighbors express any interest, encourage them to submit a volunteer application so they can attend an Orientation and learn more about us. Perhaps you would like to come with them. As you know, there are no obligations, just an opportunity to learn and ask questions. And who knows, your friend or neighbor may become our next terrific volunteer!

Speak to your Neighborhood Rep or Club President and arrange for a Staying Connected speaker at their next meeting. This is a good way to multiply your recruiting efforts and spread your enthusiasm to others.

**Volunteer Development News**

Shari Mohr has been a volunteer with Staying Connected since October of 2014. She devised an excel program to keep track of volunteer records. When we were able to move all of those records to Volgistics, she entered the information and has been innovative with using that system. Last year she created and implemented a procedure to encourage volunteers to become and stay active. She and her husband Ken are moving to the Oconee area of Georgia to start a new adventure. It is with great excitement and appreciation that we say goodbye to this outstanding volunteer.

One new position is being filled by Julie Donelson as Volunteer Data Manager. We are excited to have her working with the Volunteer Development Team.

**Orientation** for new Volunteers is being offered on May 2 at 10:00 a.m. and on June 6 at 1:00 p.m. in Pinckney Hall.

**Transportation Training** is offered on May 16 at 9:30 a.m. at the Lakehouse and on June 20 at 1:00 p.m. at Pinckney Hall.

**Home Visit / Caregiver Relief Training** is offered on May 16 at 11:00 a.m. at the Lakehouse and on June 20 at 2:30 p.m. at Pinckney Hall.

**Home Maintenance Training** will be scheduled for June.

**The Resource Hub Training** will be offered in the fall.

Please watch your e-mail for further announcements.

**Member Services News**

For those of you who were unable to come to our Annual Meeting let me say you were missed, and you are so appreciated for the many hours and kindnesses you have given through 2018!

The best part of Staying Connected is the Volunteers! In 2018, many of you contributed to the miles that would circle the globe more than two and one half times. We provided over 2,600 rides to grocery stores and various medical appointments. It has been a pleasure volunteering with all of you!
Home Maintenance volunteers provided so many services to those who can no longer handle these small tasks themselves. We have not counted the number of “Beeping” smoke alarms you have quieted throughout last year.

Home Visit and Caregiver Relief volunteers have the largest hearts of all. Giving a Caregiver a break to run an errand, go to the store, or out to lunch with a friend is a true gift. Home visits give a person who is isolated someone to talk to, a friendly person and interact with. You have all done such a wonderful job and hopefully you know how much our neighbors appreciate all of you.

**Operations Update**

We’re off to a strong year! Through 3 months of 2019, Home Maintenance requests are up 29%, Home Visits are down 17% and Transportation requests are up 9%. Total requests through March are 952, up 3.5%. Our Resource Hub had 519 visitors, and made 1,385 Reassuring Calls during the first quarter. They processed 821 requests for service and received 980 phone requests. Keep up the great work; our Members appreciate all you do for them! You are awesome!!

**Updates From The Resource Hub**

The Resource Hub completed mandatory training for Hub volunteers on revisions to three key forms used to communicate requests to our schedulers. The revised forms clarify fields, make it easier for Hub Volunteers to complete, and have already resulted in improved service to our Members. The form revisions are a result of a Task Force which was comprised of Barbara Swan, Barbara Connery, Debora Brandt and Peggy Pope. Thanks to the members of the group for a job well done!

We are in the process of revising our Survivor and Caregiver Packets with updated and expanded information. These packets are available to all residents who may be in need of them as they deal with life’s challenges. The Hub Directory’s annual update has been completed. The Directory includes information about key services, suggested questions to ask when talking with providers, and contact information for providers of Home Care, Home Healthcare, Residential Facilities, Transportation providers, Support Groups and many more. Stop by and pick up any information you may need.

**Staying Connected Joins The Health Network of the Lowcountry**

We’re proud to announce that Staying Connected continues to increase our involvement with the Healthcare Services community that provides services to seniors in our area. HNL members represent every facet of senior service needs, so our membership allows us to discover new resources for our Sun City residents and members. We are beginning work with several providers with a goal of helping to ensure a smooth transition for Sun City residents from hospital or rehabilitation settings to their home. Our goal is to ensure they receive the support they need when they need it.

**2018 Audit Results**

Our independent auditors, Carey & Company, Certified Public Accountants recently completed their audit of our books and records and issued an unqualified opinion on our financial statements for the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017.
**Noteworthy Praise from our Members**

“The Staying Connected Group of volunteers serves a very important role in the well-being of our community. This service is extremely beneficial to those who are in need of it. Helps relieve anxiety and stress. I am most appreciative.”

“In all the years I’ve belonged to Staying Connected, I have never missed a medical appointment. Thank You.”

“I am walking now and don’t need service. You do great work and glad I had people to help especially when I live alone.”

“It is a pleasure to have Staying Connected for Sun City residents. I look forward to getting back to volunteer status.”

“I am very grateful knowing you are there.”

“Your organization provides an essential and valuable service.”

“Don’t know how I would have done without your help for cataract and wrist surgery. Thanks!!”

“I can’t get on a ladder anymore. The guys that came to change my AC filter were great. I call … that’s all. Grateful for Staying Connected.”

“Transportation for medical and grocery has been exceptionally good. Staying Connected is the very best thing that has ever happened in Sun City.”

**NHC Renews Sponsorship Of Our File of Life**

We are excited to announce that two of NHC’s major divisions, NHC Healthcare and The Palmettos have renewed their support for Staying Connected’s File of Life program. A File of Life form and magnetic holder is given to each Staying Connected member. They are encouraged to complete the form with their health care information and contacts and place it on their refrigerator door where it will be readily available for any EMT or other first responder.

The folder contains critical information about each resident of the home including emergency contacts, medical data including special conditions, medications, allergies, information regarding Living Wills, Healthcare Proxies, insurance coverage and the existence of Do Not Resuscitate Orders. EMS responders look for the File of Life packet as soon as they enter the home. It may save your life! File of Life forms and holders are available to all Sun City residents who visit our Resource Hub.

**Shop At Land’s End Business**

If you are interested in looking good in clothing with the Staying Connected logo, you can find anything you want by ordering directly from Lands End Business via an easy-to-use link.
on our Staying Connected website. Simply click on the Volunteer tab and then “Shop Staying Connected.” Click on it and you will taken to our section of Lands End Business. They frequently have sales, offer quality products and allow returns. The entire catalog has been approved.

Thank You To Our 2019 Donors

Thanks to all the sponsors / donors who have supported our mission through their donations early in 2019. A complete list of our donors can be found at our web site. Special thanks to the following sponsoring partners

Gold Sponsors

Colette Beauregard
via the Pulte Referral Program

Gene Dobies
via the Pulte Referral Program

Lowcountry Pickelball Classic Supports Staying Connected

Ed Frederickson (left), 2019 LCPC Director presents a check to Werner Rotach, Staying Connected’s Treasurer from their recent tournament, hosted by the Sun City Pickelball Club.

Amazon Smile Benefits Staying Connected.

Members, volunteers and their families can benefit Staying Connected by entering “smile.Amazon.com” after signing into their Amazon account. Select Staying Connected in Bluffton SC as the recipient under the Smile program. It adds no cost to the purchase, but Amazon donates 0.5% of the sale to Staying Connected. This helps with our expenses.

We have already received some money from Amazon but can increase it significantly if more people designate Staying Connected under the Smile program.