



Meet Our Seniors in Service Ambassadors



Congratulations to our inaugural class of Seniors in Service Ambassadors! These 14 amazing new representatives of our organization are passionate volunteers who will act as our eyes and ears in the community and share their love of volunteering with others. The Ambassador program was created to teach people who love our mission how to spread the word, recruit more volunteers, and increase our capacity to serve.

These service-minded volunteers completed a four-week program with hands-on training that ended with a certification ceremony. As our Ambassador program continues to grow, we are looking for enthusiastic, knowledgeable communicators who can serve at two outreach events per month and attend ongoing training. If you love serving in our community and have the desire to help create awareness of our organization's mission and impact, then this would be a great fit for you!

We all have the same size hearts, so Seniors in Service volunteers of any age can become Ambassadors. If you want to introduce people to the social impact and personal fulfillment of volunteering, please reach out to Chris Noble at cnoble@seniorsinservice.org to learn more!

Volunteers Show Up for One Another

Marsha Hypolite has served as a Classroom Grandparent for over a decade. She loves helping children develop a love of learning. Imagine the disappointment Ms. Marsha felt when her mother's failing health meant she was needed as a full-time live-in caretaker and could no longer tutor children in their classroom every day.

At Seniors in Service, our priority is to help volunteers do what they love, so we wanted to help Ms. Marsha get back to tutoring. Thankfully, we have hundreds of volunteers with diverse skills and passions. We reached out to Ms. Theresa, a Senior Companion volunteer who was eager to help. She visits with Ms. Marsha's mother while Ms. Marsha is at school.



They play games, enjoy conversation, read, and listen to music. We love seeing how one volunteer is helping another volunteer get back to doing what she loves. Ms. Marsha has peace of mind, knowing her mother is well-cared for while she continues tutoring children who need her help. Now both volunteers are feeling purposeful, doing what they love most.

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CEO Corner

Trying new things can be scary. We know this from experience. At Seniors in Service, we started 2023 with three new initiatives that we've never tried before; Geared Up Gatherings, Volunteer Rush, and our Ambassador Program. You'll read about the success of these exciting new initiatives in the coming pages.

Trying something new requires you to step out of your comfort zone, stretch your learning muscles, and build new relationships. It may not be easy, but it's worth the effort. Is volunteering the scary new thing you are thinking about trying? If it is, let me encourage you to jump in with both feet.

Every day, we hear stories from people who want to find a new purpose in life after retirement or another new stage in life. Volunteering is the best place to start. You can try out many new options while building new skills until you find the volunteer opportunity that's right for you. You can improve a child's reading skills, offer companionship to a lonely senior, serve meals to those experiencing hunger or homelessness, provide support to a struggling Veteran, and much more!

When you volunteer, it isn't just good for the community. You'll benefit too. Research shows that giving back through volunteering can boost your physical and mental well-being, increase social connectedness, and boost your life satisfaction. Volunteering makes us happier.

Go ahead, try something new. We're here to help you fall in love with volunteering!

-Robin Ingles, CEO

Pinellas Community Foundation Steps Up to Support Seniors

Loneliness, especially among seniors, is a public health epidemic that can't be ignored. Thanks to a \$20,000 grant from the Pinellas Community Foundation (PCF) and a \$5,000 grant from PCF's Senior Citizen Services donor-advised fund, we are strengthening our Senior Support Services in Pinellas County, mobilizing more volunteers to provide more vulnerable seniors with the support they need to thrive.



Geared Up and Grateful! Honoring the Contributions of Our Volunteers.



Volunteers deserve ongoing appreciation and recognition for the hard work and selfless time they dedicate to serving individuals in our community. Our brand new Geared Up Gatherings celebrate the impact our volunteers make to help others. These events hosted throughout Pasco, Pinellas, and Hillsborough honored Seniors in Service volunteers as well as those from our community partners, who enjoyed good food, music, awards, laughter, and raffle prizes.

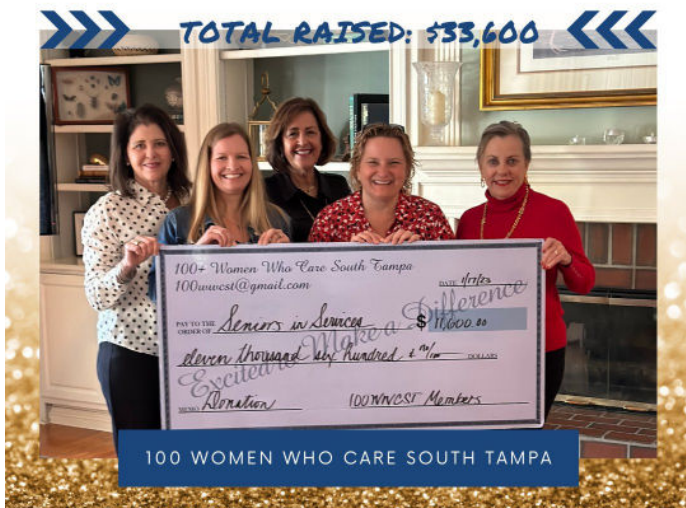
Geared Up Gatherings help volunteers feel valued and also foster a sense of camaraderie. By bringing together volunteers from different organizations and backgrounds, volunteers have the opportunity to connect, share experiences, and build relationships with others who share a common purpose.

Seniors in Service Board Member and CARES CEO Jemith Rosa expressed her gratitude to volunteers in Pasco County: "We appreciate your conviction and dedication to serving our community because you make a difference one person at a time. Remember your purpose, you volunteer because you care."

Thank you to our event sponsors TECO and WellMed and our nonprofit partners who joined the Geared Up Gatherings, including United Way of Pasco County, Area Agency on Aging Pasco-Pinellas, Florida Guardian ad Litem and Seniors vs. Crime. Together, we showed our volunteers how very much they are valued.



100 Women Who Care Help Children Succeed



What happens when one hundred caring women each donate \$100 to the same nonprofit? Their combined contribution makes a profound impact on their local community! Every year the members of 100 Women Who Care South Tampa choose four local nonprofits to support, and we are honored to be one of them. Nominated by 100 Women Who Care member Karla Dorsey, Seniors in Service received support for our Classroom Grandparent program, which places tutors and mentors in high-need Tampa classrooms to help young children learn to love reading.

After CURA Freight generously contributed an additional \$5,000, the donation from 100 Women Who Care South Tampa totaled \$16,800, the highest contribution since their organization started! Suncoast Credit Union then matched the donation as part of our 2022 Match Campaign for a total of \$33,600!

Reading on grade level by 3rd grade is an important predictor of high school graduation, yet only 50% of Hillsborough County 3rd graders are achieving that benchmark. The contributions from 100 Women Who Care, CURA Freight, and Suncoast Credit Union will help recruit, train, and place six Classroom Grandparents into Kindergarten thru 3rd-grade classrooms with one-on-one tutoring and mentoring to help struggling students for the entire school year.



Marco's Pizza Helps Make Weekly Lunchtime Middle School Mentoring a Success

Shoutout to Michael Denunzio, owner of Marco's Pizza on Gunn Hwy in Tampa! When he heard about our group of volunteers, the "JCC Mentors," mentoring a group of 40 Ben Hill Middle School boys each week during their lunch period, he was inspired to make a positive impact too. Michael has donated pizza to help make this mentoring program a success! We can't thank him enough for his generosity and willingness to help our community. After just one semester, 100% of the boys participating in the mentoring sessions got all A's and B's on their progress reports. Student feedback tells us that mentoring makes them feel understood, valued, and eager to learn.



Seniors, Flex Your Kindness Muscles with Volunteer Rush!

Finding a volunteer opportunity that fits your schedule, interests, and skills may feel overwhelming. That's why we partnered with local nonprofits to create Volunteer Rush and take the guesswork out of volunteering. Volunteer Rush is a matchmaking event that brings together people looking for ways to serve and local nonprofits in need of volunteers.

In collaboration with Gulfport Multipurpose Senior Center, we hosted our 1st Volunteer Rush. Every Tuesday in February over 30 seniors joined a two-hour session to listen to local nonprofit leaders share their mission. With our many community partners sharing their biggest volunteer needs, there was an opportunity for everyone to find their passion and sign up to start serving. We're thrilled to see people in our community engaged and working together to find ways to flex their kindness muscles.



Thank You to Our Wonderful Community Partners!



We have a great amount of gratitude for our community partners who continue to show up and share in our mission and efforts to serve others. Their persistence to help volunteers find the opportunity of their dreams is awe-inspiring and something we think deserves to be celebrated every day!

Yellow Ribbons Linking New Friendships



Entering a new phase in life can bring unexpected hardship, like the challenge of making new friends. The Kindred Spirits Club in Sun City Center provides a solution. They bring together independent women who are looking for more social connections. The group was started by women who were tired of feeling intimidated to show up alone to events, activities, and restaurants. Now, the Kindred Spirits have close to 100 women in attendance at each monthly meeting, the means to newfound companionship. Together the women enjoy two field trips a month and have started their own food drive, mahjong club, and 50/50 raffle.

Walk into a Sun City Center event, and you'll see a Kindred Spirit sporting a yellow ribbon to help identify women who are eager to share conversation with one another. It's easy to develop deep friendships and meet women with big hearts. Kindred Spirits provides a safe way to really start living, never having to attend a social event alone while building lasting friendships.

Seniors in Service Board Plans for Strategic Growth

"What is your Why?" This is how we kicked off the Seniors in Service annual Board of Directors Retreat in January. Their responses to why they each serve on our Board were a little different, but there was a common thread. Harnessing the talent and passion of senior-aged volunteers has tremendous value for our entire community. With our "Why" at the forefront of the conversation, we planned how to make 2023 our best year yet for growth and connection to achieve our mission.



Board members participated in a variety of activities related to Strategic Planning for the new year. In addition, Board Members developed a formal, Three-year Strategic Plan to guide the direction and key initiatives of the organization. They also discussed impactful strategies and created actionable plans to increase fundraising efforts over the next year.

Page 2 of this Newsletter identifies the members of our Seniors in Service Board. We're grateful for each Board member who brings a unique perspective and expertise to help Seniors in Service get *Geared Up To Serve!*

Thank you to our funders!





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Bank of America



Volunteers Helped Beautify Our Office!

With the help of Bank of America volunteers, Seniors in Service team members, family, and friends we were able to clean up our landscaping and create a welcoming space for everyone we serve. Thank you to all who worked so hard to make our office look beautiful!

