



SENIORS **in SERVICE**
GEARED UP TO SERVE

GEARED UP News

Seniors in Service presents the
News You Need to Know About
Community Service in Tampa Bay



A Message from our CEO



May this Great Pause of 2020 usher in a season of love, peace and joy for all of us. The benefit of everyone pausing at the same time is that we're all doing this together. We're told the pandemic presents a once-in-a-lifetime chance to stop and reconsider our priorities.

Kindness is essential, especially now. At Seniors in Service, our priority is to make life better for people in need. For 36 years, our Seniors in Service volunteers have spread kindness. We provide services for seniors; for families; for children, for veterans and military families...and also for our volunteers, seniors themselves with so much to give.

Now, throughout Tampa Bay, we are facing a crisis like never before. We all hear the stories of tremendous, unimaginable hardships brought on by the pandemic. Even more isolated seniors and lonely veterans are struggling to feel connected. Even more children are facing adversity, suddenly thrust into e-learning, missing their friends and teachers. Even more families are living on the edge, making difficult choices between buying food or paying bills.

6-Foot apart but still in our hearts. Our once-active senior-aged volunteers, whose service is needed more than ever, are now homebound and isolated themselves. With your help, our volunteers can serve others while staying healthy and safe. Our volunteers need PPE for 2021. And you can help provide it. A 1-month supply of hand sanitizer, masks, gloves and face shields is only \$25 – to get our volunteers serving again.

The beginning of a New Year is a time to give thanks and spread kindness. If you are in a position to do so, please make a donation to Seniors in Service. Whatever you can give, you will be helping provide essential protection to our volunteers so they can serve people who live right here in our own neighborhoods and community and who desperately need our support.

Help spread kindness like confetti. Caring, dedicated volunteers will tutor and mentor young children, helping them build both literacy and resilience needed to succeed in school and in life. Others will provide ongoing companionship to elders and offer respite for their overwhelmed caregivers. Some will serve at food pantries, delivering nourishment and love to hungry families. Those who are veterans themselves will offer understanding and friendship to others who served our nation.

Visit <https://seniorsinservice.org/events/ppe-2021> to make your donation today. If you would like to discuss your donation or want more information, please contact me at ringles@seniorsinservice.org or 813-492-8914.

-Robin Ingles, CEO

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Our GEARED UP Team

Welcoming New Staff



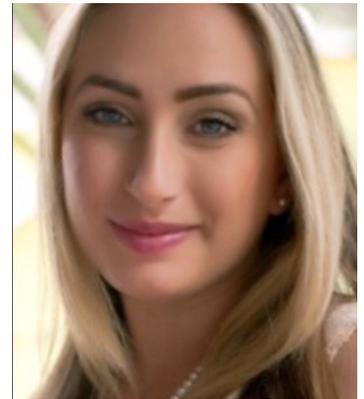
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Service Moments

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)



Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) continues to connect people aged 55+ to the volunteer opportunities of their dreams. RSVP is now offering peer-to-peer education opportunities which allow volunteers to share topics that interest them while connecting with their peers. Volunteers are welcome to participate in-person or virtually, giving all a chance to engage in whichever way they are most comfortable. It's a win-win: presenters share their experience, viewers learn something new, and everyone enjoys the company.

In Pasco County, RSVP is teaming up with CARES to bring peer-to-peer education to life. RSVP recently worked with Healthy Bones Tampa Bay to present a series of webinars about eating for bone health. Healthy Bones provided the tools and training for a volunteer to give the presentation, while CARES provided the technology and location. Screened live at CARES locations in Elfers and Hudson, participants were able to join in-person and virtually to learn about how nutrition affects their bones. Volunteers learned about the importance of salt-intake, vitamin D, and how to prevent bone fractures.

RSVP is looking for more volunteers to become presenters. Training on how to become a presenter is short, accessible, and fun. Learn while teaching others by becoming a peer-to-peer presenter!

Senior Companion volunteers help isolated homebound elders or veterans live independently, with dignity, in their own homes. One such elder, Angelina, has missed her companion terribly since the onset of COVID-19. Angelina is 83-years-old, frail and blind. Her Senior Companion volunteer is her only connection to the outside world. For the past 4 years Angelina's Senior Companion has visited her regularly at home, sharing friendly conversation and memories, serving her meals, taking walks, and reading her mail to her. But for months now, Angelina hasn't had friendly visits from her Senior Companion. Both are lonely and fearful about the pandemic. Imagine being elderly, blind and alone - cut off from the world during these difficult times. There's nobody to check up on her to make sure she's eating. There's nobody to help her get outside in the fresh air. There's nobody to tell her there's someone who cares. Without the routine, simple ability to read her mail, she may not be able to continue to live independently.

Senior Companions



The impact of a Senior Companion cannot be overstated. These devoted volunteers are saving lives. With proper PPE (personal protective equipment), Senior Companion volunteers can serve their clients while staying healthy and safe. Help them help others like Angelina with just \$25. Or ensure Angelina gets visits EVERY MONTH in 2021 by pledging \$25 per month. Visit <https://bit.ly/3g3tZUm> to make your donation today.

Service Moments

TelePals



TelePals provide ongoing telephone reassurance to keep people connected during this time of social isolation.

While the world has opened back up for

some, many seniors remain as isolated as ever. According to an October report by AARP, 66% of adults report that COVID-19 has caused their anxiety level to increase due to social isolation.

TelePals, like Paul, offer friendly conversation, support, and connection to alleviate that isolation. Paul began volunteering after lockdown halted his usually busy life. "The walls were closing in," Paul explained, "But then I met my TelePal!"



Paul and his TelePal talk weekly, and it has helped Paul see the difference that volunteering can make for all involved. "I've seen that we can be big help to each other, just by showing more love and care. We need each other."



Operation: Veteran Connect

*Welcome home Veterans,
Thank you for your service to our country. It is much appreciated! I am a Veteran as well and understand what it takes to serve.
As you begin this new chapter in your life, you may be concerned about issues like exercise, eating healthy, insomnia, or managing stress. There may be physical, mental, and/or spiritual needs you may want to address. Or maybe not. Maybe you would like to increase or restore your good health in the company of other Veterans. I have come to realize more than ever what a great support we are for each other.
The VA has recently implemented the Whole Health program that puts the emphasis on what is important for Veterans health and well-being. I have actually been involved in this program for over a year and have benefited greatly from all that it has offered me. There are classes or choice to participate in like Yoga, Mind and Body, Nutrition, Pain Management, working with a personal coach, setting personal goals, volunteering, and help with sleep issues. However, the one that benefits me the most is Integrated Tai Chi and Qi Gong which continues to help me in all areas of my life. Attending classes daily via the VA Virtual Connect has been amazing during this COVID pandemic especially. My stress levels (PTSD), my sleep, my nutrition and my pain have all improved greatly. I have also witnessed other Veterans benefiting as well. It has been so amazing!
I would like to invite you to see what Whole Health is All about and see what area(s) would help you take control of what is important to you concerning your health and well-being.
Visit <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/care-of-health/index.asp> to read more about using Whole Health a part of your life as you embark on this new chapter or call the Tampa VA Office at (813) 558-3969.
I wish you all the best for a successful transition into civilian life. Remember you do not have to do it alone.
Sharon*



Operation: Veteran Connect AmeriCorps members are volunteers who serve veterans, active military, and military family members. Recently, they partnered with Blue Star Mothers of America, a nonprofit that supports mothers who have sons or daughters in active service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Members wrote 70 letters that were delivered along with care packages to military members preparing to transition into civilian life.

Their letters included words of appreciation and information about the Whole Health Program – the VA’s radical redesign of healthcare that goes beyond traditional medicine to encompass all aspects of well-being. Members, many who are veterans themselves, gave emotional support and advice to the soon-to-be veterans. One wrote, "I have come to realize more than ever what a great support we are for each other. Remember: you don't have to do it alone. Thank you, and welcome home!"



Service Moments

Readers in Motion



Readers in Motion has expanded our program to a community-based model. Children are now receiving tutoring services at the Children's Board Family Resource Centers of North Tampa and Temple Terrace. Volunteers provide after-school tutoring sessions to 40 students for an hour each week. These tutoring sessions are focused, individual and specific to each child and their needs. On their first day, students complete an online assessment through myON that helps identify their

individual level and needs. Then each child is paired with a volunteer to start their personalized tutoring. Participant slots have filled up quickly and are at the current capacity for each location.

Along with launching the community-based model, Seniors in Service hosted our first backpack drive in October as well. Staff coordinated a socially-distant backpack distribution for the e-learning students of Oak Grove Elementary using the school's car loop after pick-up time. Students rode along with their parents, greeting teachers and staff while selecting their favorite backpack color. Program staff took this time to check Readers in Motion registration forms for all necessary information, and then passed out the student's backpack LOADED with educational materials. It was a great opportunity to meet e-learning students and welcome them to Readers in Motion!

Health Buddies

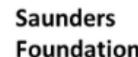
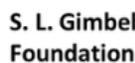


Health Buddies work to reduce preventable hospital readmissions among seniors with chronic health conditions. Hospital readmissions are very expensive, accounting for \$15 billion in annual healthcare spending. Many who return to the emergency room do so because they lack support at home. Health Buddies have partnered with the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay to better support clients and connect them to the most up-to-date resources available.

The Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, otherwise known as 211, operates the "Gateway Contact Center." Callers contact the center for referrals to emotional and financial services. For Health Buddies, this partnership is essential in reducing preventable hospital readmissions – especially while keeping socially distanced.

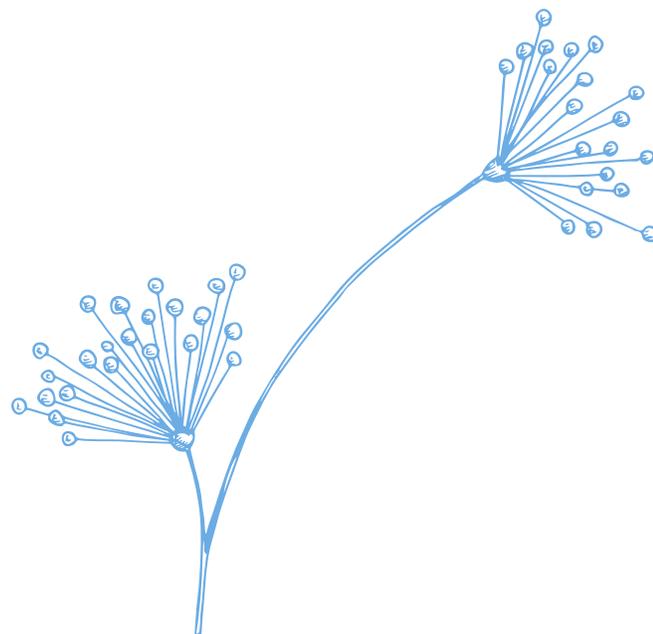
Health Buddies volunteers help recently discharged seniors self-manage their health and live independently through combined in-home and telephone interventions. Volunteers check-in on clients during routine follow-ups, asking questions like "How much do you exercise during the week? What is your diet like? How many meals do you eat in a day?" During a routine telephone follow-up, a client responded that she only ate one meal a day due to her financial situation. A Health Buddies volunteer immediately referred the client to Gateway Contact Center. The client was able to connect to resources she needed while being empowered to seek assistance for herself in the future.

Thank you to our funders!



Because together,
we're better.

Thank you for your
support.



Partner Highlight Volunteer Highlight

Frameworks

The 2020 school year brought unimaginable challenges for children suddenly thrust into digital learning. But it also brought a new partnership with Frameworks of Tampa Bay! Frameworks of Tampa Bay is a nonprofit organization that empowers educators, youth services professionals, and parents and guardians with training, coaching, and research-based resources to equip students with social and emotional skills. When children build these skills, they have a toolbox to pull from when they face challenges big and small. This, in turn, promotes their personal, academic, and one day professional success.

Foster Grandparent volunteers received training from Frameworks along with ongoing consultation with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) experts, peer collaboration & a built-in continuous improvement loop. Volunteers finished the training empowered with expert techniques to help children build resilience and overcome adversity. Thank you, Frameworks, for supporting our tutors and students!



Grandma Manning is a Readers in Motion volunteer who tutored children for 2 years at Oak Grove Elementary. Grandma Manning served 35-40 hours a week and ensured children achieved educational milestones in daily reading activities and challenges. Teacher McKenna Hittel described Grandma Manning's joyful dedication to the classroom and students. "Teaching a young child how to read is a practice in patience and persistence," she explained. "I believe that Grandma Manning's inclination towards these qualities contributed to the success of our students learning to read in Kindergarten."

COVID-19 caused the closure of schools and meant that volunteers could no longer tutor in-person. That didn't stop Grandma Manning! She signed up to learn how to become a virtual tutor with Readers in Motion. Though the technology was a struggle at first, Grandma Manning persevered. She volunteered to take lessons over the summer and is now ready to tutor virtually. Thank you, Grandma Manning, for your unwavering dedication to our community's children!



SENIORS in SERVICE

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In This Issue:

A Message from Our CEO	1
Welcoming New Staff	2
Service Moments	3-5
Thank You to Our Funders!	6
Partner & Volunteer Highlights	7

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Because of you...

87,103 MEALS WERE SERVED. 153 ISOLATED SENIORS WERE CONNECTED. 1,200 CHILDREN CONTINUED TO LEARN. 1,500 VETERANS RECEIVED ASSISTANCE. BECAUSE OF YOU, OUR COMMUNITY CONTINUED TO RECEIVE THE SUPPORT IT NEEDS. THROUGH IT ALL, YOU SHOWED UP, ADAPTED, AND ROSE TO THE CHALLENGE.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOU. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY. WE LOOK FORWARD TO A 2021 OF HELPING, SHARING, AND LOVING ONE ANOTHER.

Together, we're better.