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

Generations Serving Together for Social Change

What happens when you bring people of multiple generations together to serve their community? You unleash a multigenerational force for good. We are proud to announce that we are an Encore.org Generations Serving Together grantee! This $25,000 grant allows us to harness each generation's unique talents to address community concerns.

In the coming year, we will launch, strengthen, and study initiatives that bring AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Senior volunteers together in service to their communities. According to the Pew Research Center, 79% of Americans see major differences between younger and older adults. What if older and younger volunteers had more chances to work together to solve problems and bridge divides?

Encore.org commissioned a study through the University of Chicago to find out what Americans think about generations serving together. The study showed that older people want to share what they've learned from life, and younger people are eager to incorporate their insights. There are almost equal numbers of people alive today at every age, from birth to age 70 and beyond. It has never been a better time to bring varying age-groups together to resolve local challenges. We must seize this moment!

At Seniors in Service, we've always had intergenerational programs where senior volunteers tutor young students and volunteers support their elders as Senior Companions. This is different. Instead of one generation SERVING another generation, people of all ages will SERVE TOGETHER to co-create a better future for us all.

"We're thrilled to be working with Seniors in Service to show that national service, which has traditionally been age-segregated, can play a critical role in bringing older and younger corps members and volunteers together to create real change," says Eunice Lin Nichols, co-CEO at Encore.org.

Our first initiative is to collaboratively fight food insecurity by partnering with USF School of Aging Studies, Feeding Tampa Bay's Trinity Cafe, and Our Lady of Guadalupe Food Pantry. Seniors in Service is excited to see this social change in action by working together across differences in age, culture, and identity.

Join our first cogenerational volunteer team! Contact Chris Noble (813) 492-8916 **cnoble@seniorsinservice.org**

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CEO Corner

We are known as the “Senior Volunteer People” which will never change. We are also embracing this moment to bring people of all generations together to serve. It’s an opportunity to celebrate and learn from the unique life experiences, talents, and perspectives each person brings.

Honoring what makes a volunteer unique is our specialty. It’s the driving influence that makes us successful at placing volunteers into the service opportunities of their dreams. When we consider the cultures, backgrounds, skills, and personalities of our volunteers and help them find a service opportunity where they can be their authentic selves, they serve in those positions for 5, 10, even 20 years because it feels like home.

Why stop there? We are digging deeper to intentionally train our team to implement services that are more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. In July, our staff trained on knowing ourselves better to enable us to listen and empathize better to understand the communities we serve.

We’re also honored to be selected for the inaugural 2022 cohort of the Tampa Bay Equity Incubator through the Pinellas Community Foundation and Inclusivity, LLC. Our participation will move us from talking to doing as we evaluate policies and procedures, learn through workshops and collaboration with others, and engage in focus groups with volunteers, staff, and board members.

What is equity you ask? How is it different from equality? Take our Operation: Veteran Connect for example. Veterans have a distinct lived experience with its own vocabulary, knowledge base and tone. And, unfortunately, Veterans account for 11% of adults experiencing homelessness in the US. To serve Veterans effectively, our staff and volunteers must speak that language, know that history, and listen with a compassionate ear to provide assistance. That’s equity.

The more we listen and learn, the more we can effectively mobilize highly-trained, culturally-conscious volunteers to combat inequities. Imagine a world where everyone thrives due to embracing one another’s unique differences. If we all stay curious about what we don’t know and what we can learn about one another, we can stay true to our values, and keep growing. Thank you for being on this journey with us.

-Robin Ingles, CEO

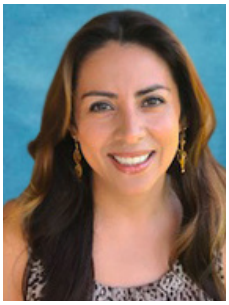
PINELLAS Community Foundation
Giving Humanity a Hand Since 1969

TAMPA BAY EQUITY INCUBATOR

Our Amazing Staff are Ready to Serve!

Seniors in Service staff GEARED UP for a training on diversity, equity, and inclusion to continue providing volunteers and clients services with care and compassion.

Welcome to Our Newest Staff Members



Patricia Lombeyda

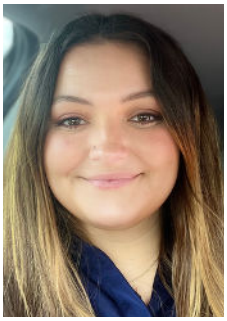
Readers in Motion Program Coordinator

"I am eager for my new position because it has given me the ability to blend my passion of serving others into my work. Part of my role is being a bridge that brings together two generations to derive positive results."

Ashley Lord

Outreach and Communications Coordinator

"Our volunteers have incredible life stories to tell. I am honored to help curate these tales to recruit more folks to support this mission-driven service agency.



Lindsey May

Foster Grandparent Program Administrative Assistant

"I'm thrilled to be a part of a team who cares so deeply for its volunteers and to be surrounded by seniors with a passion for serving others!"

A Heartfelt Goodbye for Glarisol

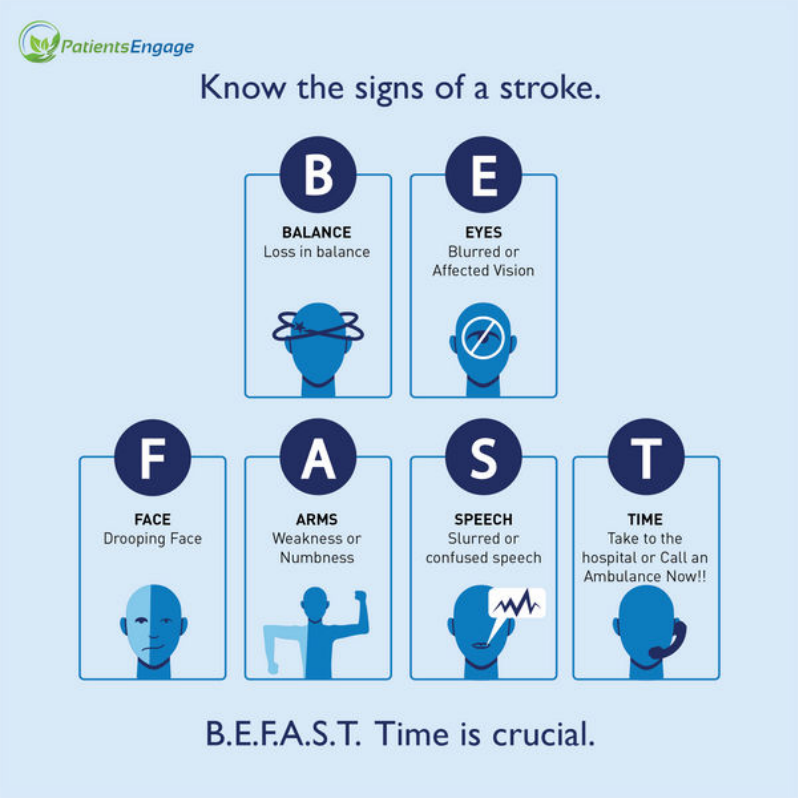
For the past twelve years, Glarisol Traspalacios has been a dedicated, encouraging, and faithful part of the Seniors in Service team. She moved on to new adventurous pursuits in August and will be missed. Thank you for serving with your whole heart!

Learn to Thrive with Purpose

If your loved one was having a stroke would you recognize the signs? Nearly 92 million Americans are living with some form of cardiovascular disease or the effects of stroke. Our very own Sun City Center Coordinator, Michelle Mason, suffered a stroke in 2014 that put her in a coma for an entire year. When she woke up the doctors gave her little hope for a full recovery. Today, through hard work and determination, she is thriving!

80% of all strokes are preventable and 87% of all strokes can be treated if hospital care is provided in time. Michelle spent a total of 2.5 years living in a Skilled Nursing Facility, 1.5 years in an Independent Living Facility, and then an additional 2 years with a private aide. In August 2021, she moved to the Tampa area on her own. It wasn't an easy journey but today she is able to live independently and has made it her purpose to help others.

She shared her powerful story of healing during Brunch Buddies and provided information about the lifestyle changes it takes to prevent, treat, and beat this prevalent disease. Michelle asserted "whatever it took was kind of my attitude, so no matter the pain or the surgeries . . . I did it! I don't want to just survive, I want to thrive. I want to control my destiny. I want to do everything I can to be the best me." Scan the QR code to watch a recording of Michelle's presentation, learn to B.E.F.A.S.T., and see how she made it her mission not just to survive but to thrive.



Then

Now

Scan here to hear Michelle tell her triumphant tale!

Bonding Through Literacy with Becky & Barbara

Scan here to hear the story in their own words.

Our volunteers can't wait to share their love of volunteering with others. That's what makes them our best recruiters! This was definitely the case with Foster Grandmas Becky and Barbara. Barbara Burnett has been a volunteer with the Foster Grandparents Program (FGP) since 2017. She is 80 years young and loves to stay active by volunteering with many different organizations and is passionate about student literacy. She knows that it is critical for students to learn to read fluently by third grade because it is a strong predictor of high school graduation.

Rebecca "Becky" Bray met Barbara at Johnson Branch Library in St. Pete where they quickly hit it off and Barbara was able to introduce her to some other volunteer opportunities like FGP. When they were both tutoring for FGP at Perkins Elementary, they met a shy student who didn't like to communicate with her classmates and couldn't read. Becky made it her mission to work with the student every day for six weeks. By the end of the summer program, this student signed up for the school's spelling bee competition and SHE WON!

Becky expressed her extreme gratitude to Barbara for introducing her to FGP and we couldn't agree more. We're so lucky and proud to have Becky and Barbara back in action this school year serving as Foster Grandmas! Scan the QR code to hear Barbara and Becky tell their story in their own words.

Join Becky, Barbara and the entire team of Foster Grandparents who love tutoring young students in the classroom.
Contact us today! FGP@seniorsinservice.org

SMITH & ASSOCIATES REAL ESTATE FOUNDATION

Social Emotional Learning Support for Students

We're honored to be among the first recipients of funding from the newly formed Smith & Associates Real Estate Foundation. Smith & Associates has been involved in the Tampa Bay Community for over 50 years. In 2022, they deepened that involvement by creating a Foundation and awarded 28 local nonprofits grants to positively impact the people of Tampa Bay. The grant we received will support Social Emotional Learning training for our classroom tutors and mentors. They will be equipped with the skills to encourage resiliency and positive well-being for the students they serve. We want to give a special shout out to Smith & Associates Realtor Janet Yardley Mendez, who sponsored our application. She is a dedicated volunteer in the community and learned the value of volunteering from her father, a Seniors in Service Lifetime Achievement Award Winner, and proud of it!

Seniors Who Serve Together Stay Together

Nobody wants to feel alone and thanks to Senior Companions, no one has to. This couldn't be truer for Shirley Hosey and Asleen Griffin. According to a report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine more than one-third of adults aged 45 and older feel lonely, and nearly one-fourth of adults aged 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated. Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk of chronic illness, hearing loss, heart disease, hospitalization, and stroke. Social isolation is associated with a nearly 50% percent increased risk of dementia. Asleen and Shirley are beating these odds as best friends who met through volunteerism.

Both retired from food industry jobs, Shirley and Asleen were referred to Seniors in Service through friends and became volunteers for the Senior Companions Program (SCP). Senior Companions are compassionate, trained volunteers who are matched with isolated seniors to provide the essential social connection and assistance they need to remain healthy and independent at home. They met during SCPs monthly in-service trainings and started to sit next to each other. Asleen learned that it was hard for Shirley to drive the distance to their monthly meetings, so they became carpool buddies. Shirley served as a Senior Companion for 8 years, and Asleen is going strong with over 10 years of service. Through the years, they both helped many different clients but when Shirley was no longer able to volunteer a Seniors in Service Program Coordinator suggested that Asleen become her companion.

Now, at 80 and 81, Asleen and Shirley spend time together 4 days a week. They keep their minds active with their favorite pastimes, word searches and BINGO! As Shirley likes to tell it, Asleen always wins the bingo games held twice a week at Shirley's senior apartment complex. With a friendly lean and a nudge, Asleen reminds her that they share their meager bingo earnings and try to save up for something special. Recent winnings are being collected on Shirley's kitchen table so that soon Asleen can buy them Steak n' Shake milkshakes on her drive to the apartment. With a huge smile, Shirley reminds Asleen that they better be strawberry milkshakes because those are the best.

As these best friends chuckle together about milkshakes, they are reminded that things haven't always been fun and easy. Not too long ago, Shirley had to be hospitalized, and Asleen didn't get to see her for 2 months, and over parts of the pandemic shutdown they could only talk on the phone. Asleen remembers how sad she was when she couldn't see her friend and talk about the old times. It also wasn't easy getting Shirley's cat to accept Asleen as he would bolt into hiding whenever she arrived. Now, he greets her at the door and sits on her feet at the kitchen table while they do word searches. These two ladies aren't just companions, they aren't just friends, they are family.

Did this story warm your heart? You can fill a critical need for Senior Companions in Sun City Center as well as other areas of need like Carrollwood, New Tampa, Plant City, Town 'n' Country, Wesley Chapel, and throughout Pinellas. As a volunteer you can set your own schedule, and you will receive ongoing support and training from Seniors in Service. If you are age 55+ and ready to step into the best years of your life as a volunteer, contact us today!

Contact: **Hillsborough** Gabby Lugo **glugo@seniorsinservice.org** (813) 358-2699
Pinellas Rasheera Rivas **rrivas@seniorsinservice.org** (727) 382-7121

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Bringing the Sunshine with Womenade

Affectionately known as “Mr. Sunshine,” this Veteran usually shares his beaming personality with the world. Raincloud began to move in after weeks of walking in the sweltering Florida heat to his James A. Haley VA job due to a lack of transportation. Most of the time, Mr. Sunshine’s favorite sound is music from the 70s, but thanks to Womenade of Tampa it became the humming sound of his fire engine red 1999 Mustang.

In the last year, Mr. Sunshine has finished his education, moved out of a temporary Veteran’s housing facility, and established himself by holding down a job and living in his newly well-appointed apartment. When Operation: Veteran Connect heard finances to replace his car battery were causing him hardship, Womenade was approached with the request for assistance.

The response from this charitable organization was fast and efficient. Operation: Veteran Connect Members were able to hand deliver a battery. Mr. Sunshine grabbed a few tools and, in a snap, his mustang was back in working order. His smile was radiant and his appreciation for Womenade’s generosity was undeniable. Thank you, Womenade of Tampa.