

YOU NAME IT!

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF COA

DECEMBER 2020



COA EMPLOYEE UPDATES

- Angie Baney - Manager, Hendersonville Thrift Store (promotion)
- Daniel Carey - Director of Development (new hire)
- Edie Weichert - Program Coordinator for Meals on Wheels (new hire)
- Glee Letterman - Hendersonville Thrift Store Associate (temporary new hire)
- Jill Seidenfeden - Hendersonville Thrift Store Associate (new hire)
- Kathleen Walsh - Client Services Coordinator (transition from Meals on Wheels Coordinator)
- Nicola Singer - CARES Act Program Coordinator (new hire, grant-funded)
- Shirley Nazzaro - Program Coordinator for Meals on Wheels (new hire)
- Stephanie Cope - Etowah Thrift Store Associate (new hire)



NOT SHRINKING BACK FROM COVID-19

The pandemic threw us a curveball...but we hit it out of the park. Most organizations would shrink back when faced with the service and financial repercussions of COVID-19, but not COA! Instead of closing ranks, we asserted ourselves. While we cannot predict which area of Henderson County will suddenly blow up with Meals on Wheels referrals—resulting in a long waiting list—we take advantage of opportunities that present themselves.

When the waiting list grows too large in any one area, we adjust by rearranging routes—or even adding routes—to take off the pressure and serve clients in a timely manner. Recently, our waiting list had grown too large along the Spartanburg Highway corridor. We studied the problem and realized that a concentration of existing clients was in three apartment complexes in the area. We combined those apartment complexes into a new route we call the Flat Route (since apartments are also called “flats” in other parts of the world). This opened-up space on existing routes to absorb everyone on the waiting list in that area (and it made us seem very cool and international-sounding!).



FEDERAL GRANTS KEEP COA MOVING AND GROWING KEITH LOGAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When Congress passed the Families First Act in mid-March and the CARES Act at the end of March, it wasn't clear how it would affect operations at the Council on Aging. Both contained increased funding for senior nutrition programs supported under the Older Americans Act (congregate dining and home-delivered meals). After many months, these funds finally cascaded down to the local level. Families First funding filtered down first: COA received \$100,000 to react to the pandemic and serve more clients. Most of this funding was channeled toward the expansion of MOW routes that enabled us to serve an additional 50-60 people.

(continued on next page)



SHARE THE LOVE

The Council on Aging for Henderson County joins Meals on Wheels America and Subaru of America, Inc. in Sharing the Love this Holiday Season. The 13th annual Subaru Share the Love® Event will help deliver nutritious meals and compassion to Henderson County's seniors Hendersonville, COA is proud to announce that it will be participating in the 2020 Subaru Share the Love Event as a member of Meals on Wheels America – one of four national Share the Love charitable partners supported through the campaign. From November 19, 2020, through January 4, 2021, Subaru of America will donate \$250 for every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased to the customer's choice of participating charities.

"For the first time in the event's 13-year history, the Council on Aging is partnering with Hunter Subaru and we could not be more pleased," said Keith Logan, the organization's executive director. "With additional support generated from this event, we expect to be able to expand and deepen our Meals on Wheels reach to overlooked and homebound seniors in remote areas of Henderson County."

Over the last 12 years, Subaru of America and its participating retailers have donated more than \$176 million to its charity partners. This year's Subaru Share the Love Event is on track to bring that total to over \$200 million, proving there's no limit to the amount of love we can all share.

For more information, visit
www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/sharethelove.

FEDERAL GRANTS CONTINUED...

In addition to nutrition support, CARES Act funding also had provisions for caregiver and other supportive services. We received \$9,000 for caregiver support that will mostly be used to provide additional respite to caregivers who are even more stressed taking care of their loved ones during these difficult times. We also received \$15,000 that will be used to provide a pilot with several clients to provide self-directed in-home care. In other words, the client will be able to designate someone that they know to provide in-home services for them and have that person get paid for their support. This is helpful because the demand for in-home services has far outstripped the capacity among local agencies, even before COVID-19.

Finally, we received \$173,000 from the CARES Act for additional nutrition services. The intent of this funding is to identify additional older adults in the community who have been impacted by COVID-19 and have nutrition needs. The options for how to support these individuals is bounded only by our creativity, including delivery of groceries, restaurant vouchers, food shipments, shelf stable deliveries, and frozen meal deliveries. Because this program is seeking new clients and providing new options, we hired a person to oversee this program.

This funding is available until September 2021 or until it runs out, whichever comes first. If you are aware of older adults who could benefit from this support, please let us know.



From Kat Nevel...

The Sammy Center was closed. And then it reopened. And then it closed again. "Blame it on Rio" or, you guessed it, COVID-19. Difficult though it is to not enjoy a weekly repast in the company of others, we do so in the name of safety and the prevailing protocols issued by the Governor's Office.

When we reopen yet again—and we will—masks are required at all times (except when eating). We look forward to returning to our regularly scheduled programming on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 10am for exercise and lunch between 11-11:30am.

Exercise class will be limited to 10 and lunch limited to 30. Meals may be enjoyed on-site or take away. The center closes immediately following lunch.

Stay tuned, stay healthy, and hope for the best.



Silver and Gold...Silver and Gold...

We're channeling Burl Ives when we sing this song, but mostly we're celebrating receipt of the Silver Seal of Transparency from Guidestar! Because of certain accounting and reporting standards met, the Council on Aging secured Silver Status from this respected national clearinghouse for nonprofits. You might recall we had secured the Bronze Seal in November and were rightly proud of that. But we did not rest on our bronze laurels. We updated information and posted additional financial records. Guidestar reviews our application, and we passed. And we will not be content with silver! We are "going for the gold" and will keep you posted. In all seriousness, these recognitions should give our staff, volunteers, and supporters confidence in COA. We want folks to know their donations to us are responsibly received, used, and tracked. Credibility in the eyes of the community is important to us, and it is something that is earned not given.

COVID-19 Safety Actions

If you have volunteered with us or gone into one of our thrift stores in the last 6 months, you will have noticed the many procedural changes that we have put in place to protect our staff, volunteers, clients, and customers. But there may be some things that you haven't seen. Following state and CDC guidelines, we are doing the best we can to continue to serve our community as safely as possible. Health Checks: We ask all employees and volunteers to sign in each day and confirm that they are not running a fever or experiencing COVID-like symptoms. Plexiglass: We've installed plexiglass barriers at the thrift store cashier areas and the front desk at the main office. Extra cleaning: We've been doing extra cleaning and sanitization in all of our areas. In addition, we are having the restrooms cleaned daily at the main office and the Sammy Williams Center. Masks: Masks are required in the thrift stores and in any public areas in the Sammy Williams Center and the main office. In addition, MOW volunteers are wearing masks whenever packing meals outside, interacting with staff, and delivering to clients. Social distancing: We are trying to maintain at least 6' in all interactions. Contactless delivery: MOW volunteers are asked to avoid contact with clients unless absolutely necessary. Minimizing gathering: All meetings of more than 3-4 people are being held virtually. MOW meal packing is being done outside. HVAC: We are installing UV or ionizing filters in the HVAC systems at all of our locations. Limited Walk-in Clients: We continue to handle all community resource coordination via the phone. Liquid nutrition clients pop in to request their product but then staff brings it out to their vehicles. Only SHIP clients are coming into the building and that is only occurring after an initial phone screen to minimize the face-to-face time. While some people in our community continue to balk at wearing face coverings, studies increasingly support the collective value of doing so (see CDC link, released Nov. 10). We humbly ask for your continued support when acting on behalf of COA and when visiting the stores. For your personal safety, we encourage you to continue to practice the 3 W's: wash your hands often and thoroughly, wait 6 feet apart, and wear a mask.



NORMAL HOURS AT BOTH THRIFT STORES

Two of our best ways of reaching into the community—our Thrift Stores—are back in business and going strong!

COVID-19 put them out of commission for several weeks last spring and summer, but they've roared back of late and are back to normal hours. Isn't normal nice?! So, when you want to "get your shop on" and you're out west... head to the Etowah Thrift Store in the Etowah Center on U.S.64 heading to Brevard.

Or, if you're an urbanite, then stop in the Hendersonville Thrift Store at 802 Spartanburg Highway. Stores are open Tuesday-Friday between 10am-4pm and on Saturday between 10am-1pm.

Donations can be dropped off Tue-Fri: 10am-3pm and Sat: 10am-1pm. If you need something picked up (larger furniture items), contact either store to make an appointment. Proceeds from the Thrift Stores support Meals on Wheels. Huzzah!