



aging care connections

Your Source For Senior Care

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45th Anniversary for Aging Care Connections

Milestones. We all have them – whether they’re birthdays, anniversaries, or life goals that we’ve set and achieved. For most of us, these defining moments encourage us to stop and reflect. To look back and see where we’ve been, to see where we are, and to assess where we’re going.

Aging Care Connections has a history of achieving major milestones and we’ve just reached another – 2016 marks our 45th anniversary. That is 45 years of assuring that every older adult and every caregiver in our service area can access Aging Care Connections as their “one call” for senior services.

We also want to take this opportunity to look at where we’ve been, where we are, and where we’re going. This milestone, this chance to reflect, couldn’t come at a more opportune time – our agency, the one you support, is currently facing one of the greatest challenges in our 45 year history.

But before we get to the present and the future, let’s reflect on where we’ve been. The year was 1971 and a small group of dedicated businessmen and women came together to address a growing problem. During a community needs assessment, it was determined that there were many older people living in the community with special needs not being met by existing resources in the community. This small group took the information from the assessment and established something special that we celebrate today: The Southwest Suburban Center on Aging, which would become Aging Care Connections.

The first few decades were a time of growth and expansion for Aging Care Connections. From the 1970s and 1980s, the agency took bold steps to secure its position and its mission. The agency was designated as a provider of Community Care Program services for the Illinois Department on Aging. Our Chore Housekeeping program began through Title III-B of the Older Americans Act. Our Case Managers began in-home assessments for the State of Illinois Community Care Program and we started our mental health services. Soon after, our agency was designated as an Elder Abuse Provider agency. Since the very beginning, our agency hit the ground running!

In the 1990s and 2000s, more programs and services were added to our menu of options. The Friday Morning Regulars men’s group was established, as well as a support group for grandparents raising grandchildren.

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LET'S HEAR IT FOR TUESDAY!

On Tuesday, December 1, 2015, charities, families, businesses, community centers, and students around the world came together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give. At Aging Care Connections we are so thankful for everyone's support on

#GivingTuesday. With the help of our partner agency, The Retirement Research Foundation's \$5,000 matching challenge, Aging Care Connections raised more than \$21,000 to support our programs and services. Thank you for your wonderful generosity!

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

Legacy Gifts

Aging Care Connections has been the grateful recipient of gifts made through the wills of individuals who were touched by the care they or a loved one received through our programs and services.

Should you choose to remember Aging Care Connections in your estate plan, we encourage you to let us know so we can thank you and keep you up to date on activities related to our programs and services. All plans will be kept anonymous unless you specify otherwise.

To determine the type of estate plan you wish to make you should work with your attorney or financial planner. Standard language for a bequest is: "I devise, will and bequeath to Aging Care Connections, an Illinois not-for-profit organization, the sum of \$ (or equivalent, i.e., number of shares of XYZ Corporation, percentage of, or residual of my estate) to be used by said corporation for its general purposes."

For more information, please call 708-354-1323, ext. 243.

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Director of Social Services Retiring in January 2016



After thirty-six years of bringing innovation and growth to Aging Care Connections, Louise Starmann, Director of Social Services since 1999, will retire at the end of January 2016. “I’ve loved my job. I’ve loved working at Aging Care Connections,” said Starmann. “I’ll miss being involved in issues that matter and being able to make some small contribution to moving aging services along.”

But despite the great advancements Starmann has made since she started as an Outreach Worker in 1980, Starmann will miss working with the staff most of all. “I will miss being able to talk about issues and being around talented professionals. I’ve had the opportunity and privilege of being able to be surrounded by talented, smart people exchanging ideas and to watch them make a difference in the lives of thousands of older adults.”

Debra Vershelde, Executive Director, credits her colleague with being the driving force behind Aging Care Connections’ extensive growth in programs and services over the past three decades. “While out working in the field, she saw huge gaps in aging services,” Vershelde said. “She developed community programs to meet those needs. Our agency wouldn’t be where we are without Louise.”

Starmann’s accomplishments at Aging Care Connections extend to every one of the agency’s social services and programs. One of her more significant accomplishments was the establishment of the Aging Resource Center which houses the now nationally-replicated Bridge Transitional Care Program. This program has helped hundreds of older adults transition safely out of the hospital or skilled nursing facility and back into their home. Starmann was also integral in developing key partnerships with hospitals, home health care agencies, foundations, and nonprofits. During her tenure at the agency, Starmann held the positions of Outreach Worker, Case Manager, Elder Abuse Case Worker, Assistant Director of Social Services, and Director of Social Services.

Although she was extensively involved with the agency for over thirty years, Starmann is confident her retirement will not hinder Aging Care’s ability to provide high quality services to older adults and their caregivers. “The staff has a commitment to quality and a reputation for being more innovative. They’re not an assembly line, churning out assessments. They are committed to maintaining integrity.”

However, Starmann knows the road ahead will not be easy for Aging Care staff. “The state is in the process of dismantling the aging network and positioning the services for the most vulnerable into the hands of insurance companies. All the benefits of having ACC in the community are being dismantled by Health and Human Services. It’s moving aging services into the hands of insurance companies. There is nothing that is client centered about that.”

(continued on page 6)

45th Anniversary *(...continued from page 1)*

We added caregiver support services to our list of programs, and our inaugural gala, Sports Ball, would become an annual fundraiser for the organization still celebrated today. The Aging Resource Center was established at Adventist La Grange Memorial Hospital. In 2009, the agency would change its name to Aging Care Connections and one year later would incorporate the Aging Well Partnership to enhance our relationship with the community.

In 2012, Aging Care Connections embarked upon its first ever capital campaign. While fundraising occurred for many years, a campaign focused on improving the physical layout of our offices was a major undertaking. The goal for the campaign was \$1M dollars. Friends and community members more than endorsed our mission by helping us break that goal with a final total of \$1.2M.

And now, in 2016, Aging Care Connections' service area includes 38 communities in Leyden, Lyons, Norwood Park, Proviso, and Riverside Townships. We have a congregate meal site in Hodgkins that serves fresh, nutritious meals to dozens of older adults five days a week. And our staff members are in several area hospitals helping to educate both patients and staff about resources available to older adults transitioning out of the hospital. Since 1971, we have hardly stopped refining our programs in order to improve the lives of older adults and their families.

But the future isn't as clear. Even after successfully serving tens of thousands of older adults

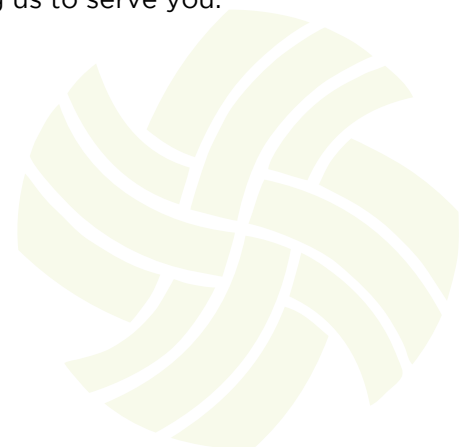
and their families for the past four decades, even after a highly successful capital campaign, our agency isn't impervious to outside influences. In this case, it's the current budget impasse in Springfield. Like so many other agencies in the State of Illinois, we hoped for a quick resolution but have been preparing for the stalemate to continue well into 2016. What this means in dollars and cents is that our agency is not receiving roughly \$100,000 per month from the State of Illinois to run programs and services. That represents a loss of \$700,000 in state payments from July 2015 through January 2016.

That being said, Aging Care Connections does not plan to cut programs or services. We will continue to serve older adults and their families. We will stay true to our mission, just as we have for our first 45 years. But our activities in the near future will also

include much more information about advocacy and fundraising.

In light of our 45th anniversary milestone, we're reflecting on our past, present, and future. And although 2016 looks to be full of challenges and uncertainty, Aging Care Connections promises not to waver from its mission. Through our hard work and with the assistance of friends, supporters, and partners, one of our goals for 2016 and beyond is to be less reliant on the state and establish more fiscal independence. Thank you for allowing us to serve you.

"We will stay true to our mission, just as we have for our first 45 years."



The New Face of Social Services at Aging Care Connections

Jessica Grabowski, LCSW



As one era ends, another begins. Aging Care Connections' new Social Services Director, Jessica Grabowski, LCSW, will assume her new position on February 1, 2016. And while she is excited to take the lead that this new opportunity presents, she knows she has some big shoes to fill.

"We have been incredibly fortunate to have Louise as our leader," Grabowski said of Louise Starmann, MSW, LCSW, who will retire from her position of Director of Social Services at the end of January 2016 after more than 16 years in that position. "Her work, her knowledge, and her leadership have been instrumental in our agency's history and growth. She's an institution."

While Grabowski is correct that Starmann has been more than just a senior leader at Aging Care Connections, Grabowski's own professional pedigree is worthy of review. She received her BA from Indiana University and her MSW from the University of Chicago. In her current role as Aging Resource Center Program Manager, Grabowski oversees The Bridge Model of Transitional Care, which is on-site at Adventist La Grange Memorial Hospital and six surrounding skilled nursing facilities.

At ACC, she provides clinical social work services and supervises master level social workers offering older adults and their families the opportunity to explore and secure community resources and services prior to discharge. She is involved in program quality improvement including data collection and evaluation, and readmission reviews with the partner hospital.

On the national stage, Grabowski is a program manager with the Bridge Model National Office. As a program manager, Grabowski is part of a team that has traveled the country presenting on The Bridge Model and training replication sites that include hospitals and Area Agencies on Aging. A recent presentation was made to the American Society on Aging Chicago Roundtable

event on Dec. 4 at Rush University Medical Center.

Locally, Grabowski was one of only 16 emerging leaders accepted to participate in the Community Memorial Foundation's Ladder to Leadership program. This is a 16-month, in-depth capacity building program aimed at building and strengthening emerging leaders within the Foundation's grantee organizations.

In her new role as Social Services Director, Grabowski wants to continue implementing and developing innovative and practical programs, strengthen current partnerships, form new partnerships, and continue developing the reputation for excellence that has become a trademark for Aging Care Connections. Grabowski will have oversight of all federal, state, and private grant funded programs.

"We have an amazing agency team that does incredible work for older adults and their families every day," Grabowski said. "I am honored to be given this opportunity to help strengthen our programs and our work."

Director of Social Services Retiring *(...continued from page 3)*

The lack of state dollars given to support social service programs is another problem Starmann believes Aging Care will continue to face in the coming years. "Funding shortages are a barrier to helping older adults in need. Debbie and the new Director of Social Services will be facing enormous barriers with the state budget and managed care organizations."

When asked if she had any advice for her replacement or the social services staff, Starmann was quick to respond: "Keep your eye on the client. Our mission is to help the clients we serve. We're not fitting clients into programs; we're fitting programs into clients. Always keep your eye on the older adult."

Starmann expects to remain involved at Aging Care Connections during her retirement and will continue to advocate for older adults at the community and state level. She will find new opportunities to contribute to the aging field. She will also continue to mentor aging

professionals and assist the new Director of Social Services as needed. In her retirement, she is looking forward to traveling, being able to manage her own time, and spending more time with her family.

Starmann's career accomplishments outside her work at Aging Care Connections include co-authoring an article published in *Generations*, a print publication of the Journal of the American Society on Aging; serving on the Department on Aging Community Care Advisory Board, the Board of the Coordinated Care Alliance, and the Advisory Board for Molina Healthcare; holding office with the Illinois Council of Case Coordination Units; and receiving the 2012 Health and Medicine Policy Research Group Health Award. She became a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in 2011 and received her Master of Social Work degree from the Jane Addams College of Social Work in 1990.

Aging Care Connections is sincerely grateful to have received memorial gifts in the name of following individuals since September 1, 2015:

J. Robert Berigan
Bill Brill
Viola & Arthur
Daugherty
Michael DeLaurentis
Eduard Hoepfner
Margery Hussey
Dan Pancake

Walter Parzych
Dorothy Ploegman
Rick Sanders
Anthony Terlap
Angeline Urick
Edward Vician
LaVonne Wallon

To the family and friends of the above, thank you for remembering Aging Care Connections during such a difficult time. Your generosity will help our clients stay safe and independent in their homes.

For information about establishing memorial gifts, please call 708-354-1323, ext. 243.



Income Tax Assistance at Aging Care Connections

AARP-trained tax volunteers will be available at Aging Care Connections by appointment for those aged 60+ who would like assistance preparing their simple income tax returns. To schedule an appointment, which is required, please call 708-354-1323 after January 25. Appointments will be scheduled for Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. beginning Monday, February 8 through Wednesday, April 6. There will be no appointments on Monday, February 15 (Presidents' Day).

The following documents must be brought to the appointment:

- Last year's federal and state tax return
- Picture ID and Social Security or Medicare Card
- Insurance card if NOT covered by Medicare
- All W-2,1099INT, or 1099DIV notices
- If stock or mutual funds were sold, all purchase and sale information
- Pensions, Social Security, retirement annuities, etc. notices
- Property tax bills
- Estimated quarterly payment information
- Check for banking information for direct deposit

Referral to a professional tax consultant may be made if the volunteer determines this is necessary. Income tax preparation must be completed before any BEAM/Circuit Breaker appointments can be made.

For more information, please call 708-354-1323



We can't do it alone!

In the past four months, Aging Care Connections has developed some truly great partnerships. We would like to thank the following organizations for partnering with us to raise awareness and much needed general operations funds:

Back Alley Burger, La Grange
Baird & Warner, La Grange
Whole Foods Market
The La Grange Lions Club
La Grange Highlands Presbyterian Church - Thank Offering Sunday
First Congregational Church of Western Springs - Gifts of Hope

It's only through partnerships with individuals, foundations, as well as nonprofit and for-profit organizations that Aging Care Connections can fulfill its mission to serve older adults and their families. Thank you to all of our generous partners!

THANK YOU

Aging Care Connections would like to thank Cantata Adult Life Services for going above and beyond for their continued support of our home delivered meals program despite the current challenges posed by the budget impasse in Springfield. The staff, leadership, and board of directors of Aging Care Connections sincerely appreciate our long standing partnership with Cantata. Thank you!

Aging Well (in the) Neighborhood

If you or someone you know is suffering from arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure or cholesterol, digestive disorders, anxiety, depression, or other physical and mental health conditions, please take part in the Aging Well Neighborhood Take Charge of Your Health Workshop at Presence Bethlehem Woods Independent Living Retirement Community, La Grange Park.

This is an action-oriented six-week program designed to reduce hospital visits, lessen health related stress, and improve communication with doctors and family!

Six-Week Workshops on Mondays: From January 25 – February 29, 1:30 – 4 PM, Multi-Purpose Room

Free Parking Available. There is no charge for this program.
For more information, call 708-354-1323, ext. 259.



Caregivers, Please Take Care!

On Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2015, more than 50 caregivers were treated to a day of recognition, rest, and relaxation as Aging Care Connections held its annual Caregivers Luncheon at Plymouth Place. The yearly event is an opportunity for those taking part in Aging Care Connections' Caregivers Support Programs to take a break from their daily schedules, come together, and be recognized for their tireless work caring for an older adult.

Often, these caregivers are the primary source of support for someone suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's, or cancer.

If you or someone you know is a caregiver in need of support, please contact our Caregivers Support Program at 708-354-1323. Our Caregiver Support Programs are regularly offered in Norridge, Melrose Park, and at our offices in La Grange.



Board Update – new president, new responsibilities, new members



It has been a busy fall and winter for Aging Care Connections' Board of Directors, with a new president, new responsibilities, and four new members.

Aging Care Connections is pleased to announce the appointment of Michael D. Doepke, owner of Home Helpers of Hinsdale, as president of its board of directors on Oct. 1, 2015.

The former board vice president and longtime board member will remain as leader of the 15-member board for a term of three years.

As president, Doepke will serve for three years. He will lead regular board meetings and meet weekly with Aging Care Connections Executive

Director, Debra Vershelde, to remain on top of all that is happening with the organization. Doepke also will oversee the executive director position.

"It's the president's responsibility to primarily evaluate the executive director," Vershelde said.

Doepke said he is honored to be nominated and approved by his fellow board members, and he looks forward to supporting the vital role that Aging Care Connections plays in the lives of the community's aging population.

New responsibilities for the board include Ed P. Gervain, Jr. who has assumed the position of Vice President of the Board beginning on Oct. 1, 2015.

Joining the board beginning in 2016 is Mark Ptacek, Market Leader/Senior Vice President at Heartland Bank & Trust Company.

It was during Fiscal Year 2015, that the following new members joined the board:

Dennis Foley, MBA, Vice President and Wealth Management Advisory at Merrill/Lynch, the Foley/Doruff Group.

Helga Noice, PhD, Professor Emerita of Psychology at Elmhurst College.

Kathy Ruffulo, MA, NCC, LPC, is Vice President of Children's Services at Aspire of Illinois.

Aging Care Connections would like to welcome its newest board members and state our ongoing gratitude to all of its board members for their tireless efforts on behalf of our mission.



SPORTS BALL 2015 SPONSORS

Aging Care Connections greatly appreciates our Sports Ball 2015 Sponsors. The event raised nearly \$85,000. Thanks for helping make it a great night!

Platinum

Gold



Making Life Easier®



Silver



Golden Years Retirement Home,
Lyons
Windsor Place Retirement Home,
Lyons



Regular Monthly Events

Alzheimer's and Related Dementia Caregivers Support Group

This is a support group for those who care for someone who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or dementia. This group meets at Aging Care Connections at two different times per month: the first Tuesday of the month from 1:30 p.m.—3:00 p.m. and the third Thursday of the month from 10:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

For information, please contact Kathleen McKenzie, 708-354-1323, extension 260.

Adult Protective Services Cases

For Leyden and Norwood Park Townships, an individual trained in Adult Protective Services by the Illinois Department on Aging will be available for Adult Protective Services cases of suspected physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of adults aged 60+ and disabled individuals aged 18+ at the Seniors Assistance Center, 7774 W. Irving Park Road, Norridge, every Tuesday from 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. To make an appointment, please call 708-354-1323. If you suspect abuse, you can report Adult Protective Services cases to Aging Care Connections five days a week by calling 708-354-1323.

Caregiver Support Group at Gottlieb Memorial Hospital, Melrose Park

This is a support group for anyone caring for an older adult. The group meets the third Tuesday of every month from 2:00 p.m.—3:30 p.m. in the Professional Office Building, Lower Level, Rooms E, Gottlieb Memorial Hospital, 701 W. North Ave., Melrose Park.

For information, please call Jennifer Nagy at 708-354-1323, extension 228.

Caregiver Support Group at Sharp Community Center, Melrose Park

This is a support group for those who care for an older adult. Starting January

2016, it will meet the first Wednesday of each month from 2:00 p.m.—3:30 p.m. at CNN Proviso Township Wellness Center, Sharp Community Center, 1609 N. 36th Avenue, Melrose Park.

For information, please call Mattie Stevenson, 708-354-1323, extension 231.

Caregiver Support Group at the Seniors Assistance Center, Norridge

This group is for anyone caring for an older adult. It meets the second Friday of each month, 1:30 p.m.—3:00 p.m. at the Seniors Assistance Center, 7774 W. Irving Park Road, Norridge.

For information, please contact Jennifer Nagy, 708-354-1323, extension 228.

Caregiver Support Services

Social worker Mattie Stevenson is available for walk-in appointments regarding questions about caregiving resources, managing difficult behaviors, and finding help, the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m. at the CNN Proviso Township Wellness Center, Sharp Community Center, 1609 N. 36th Avenue, Melrose Park.

Please call 708-354-1323, extension 231, or 708-316-7488.

Friday Morning Regulars

Support group for men who would like to discuss aging issues and current events meeting each Friday from 8:30 a.m.—10:00 a.m. at St. Barbara's Parish Center, 4008 Prairie Avenue (east side of street), Brookfield. New members are always welcome.

For information, please contact 708-354-1323, extension 215.

Congregate Dining

This program provides a daily nutritious lunch and socialization at Salerno's Pizzeria and Sports Bar, 9301 W. 63rd Street, Hodgkins. Seniors aged 60+ may enjoy lunch Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. for the suggested donation of \$2.00. Reservations must be made before noon the preceding business day by

calling 708-354-1323. Cancellations must be made by 1:00 p.m. the previous day. Aging Care Connections has responsibility for the daily operation and administration of the program in cooperation with the Village of Hodgkins.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group (South)

The group meets at the Summit Public Library, 6233 S. Archer Road, Summit, on the last Thursday of the month from 10:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m. For information, please contact Jennifer Nagy, 708-354-1323, extension 228. Special events for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren are held at Sharp Community Center, 1609 N 36th Ave., Melrose Park.

For information, please contact Mattie Stevenson, 708-354-1323 extension 231.

Will and Estate Planning

Attorney Erik Peck is available the third Thursday of the month for consultation on matters pertaining to estate planning. There is no fee for the consultation.

Please call 708-354-1323, extension 215, to make an appointment.

Walk for Health

The La Grange/La Grange Park Aging Well Walk for Health is held the third Wednesday of each month at 10:30 a.m. at the Park District of La Grange indoor walking track, 536 East Avenue, La Grange. Each month, a speaker gives a short presentation on a topic relevant to older adults followed by walking the track. Walk at your own pace. Light refreshments are provided.

Please call Jim Matthews, Walk Leader, (708) 308-4420, if you have questions.

Serving Communities in
Leyden, Lyons, Norwood Park, Proviso
and Riverside Townships

Aging Care Connections' Mission

.....to enrich the quality of life of older adults
and their families through a range of programs
and services that enhance
their well-being and independence

 **Find us on Facebook**



Annual Luncheon Celebrating Our 45th Anniversary

Keep your eyes out for an invitation to our annual luncheon this spring. This luncheon will celebrate our 45th anniversary year. You won't want

to miss it! More information will be posted to our website soon. We hope to see you there.

Mark Your Calendars & Save the Dates for...

The Fourth annual Celebrating Seniors Week set for Monday, May 16-Friday, May 20, 2016. Aging Care Connections will again be coordinating the week-long event which includes FREE programs and activities that are fun, informative, and relevant to aging well! The FREE Senior Resource Guide will be a must have for ALL older adults. The guide contains the calendar for the week and all the resources in the area that help older adults age well. Guides will be available at Aging Care Connections and other locations TBD the beginning of May.

For more information call Aging Care Connections call (708)354-1323, ext 242.

Looking for a Few Good Volunteers!

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Aging Care Connections. Only with a dedicated group of volunteers can we offer a range of programs and services every month to the more than 8,000 individuals and families we serve each year. Our agency currently is seeking to fill the following volunteer positions: office greeter, congregate meal server, Department of Public Aid Prevention of Spousal Impoverishment program benefit assistant (PSI). If you would like to volunteer, or if you would like more information on these opportunities, please stop by Aging Care Connections, or please contact Janelle Floerke at 708-354-1323, ext. 268, or email jfloerke@agingcareconnections.org.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Aging Care Connections does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment or employment in programs or activities in compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; and the U.S. and Illinois Constitutions. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint with the Illinois Department on Aging. For information, call Aging Care Connections at 708-354-1323.