

SENIOR COMPANIONS

"Sharing Friendship At Home"

Highlights

Spring 2021 • Issue 89

Circulation 3,100

Senior Companions to Restart Services



Senior Companions of South Dakota plans to restart with limited services on April 5th. It's been a long year that has challenged us all. Community is an important part of maintaining health and wellness. We are better when we are together. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reduced our ability to make connections with other people. Our Companions have been staying connected to the clients they serve through phone calls. While helpful, it's just not the same as visiting someone in person. We are extremely grateful for access to vaccinations. Most of our volunteers have received their shots, which provides another level of safety.

We have a three-phase restart plan. The first phase, starting April 5th, allows our Senior Companions to visit their clients in person, with safety precautions in place. We will distribute disposable face masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes to our volunteers. They will be allowed to run errands and shop for groceries for their clients. Essential transportation for medical appointments only will be allowed.

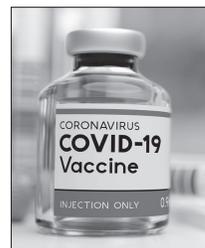
We will keep a close eye on the number of positive COVID-19 numbers and ensure that they continue a downward trend. The second phase may start as soon as a month after the start of the first phase. This phase would allow our Companions to provide transportation. When possible, their client will sit in the back seat to allow for social distancing.

The third phase will allow our Companions to restart respite care to give caregivers a much-needed break. These visits are typically longer and more precaution is necessary.

We are excited to get back to some sense of normalcy for our Program. Please call our offices if you have any questions. Sioux Falls at 605-361-1133 and Rapid City at 605-721-8884.

ONE OF THE MOST FAQS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

WHAT TYPES OF COVID-19 VACCINES ARE AVAILABLE?



The U.S. FDA has granted authorization to three different COVID-19 vaccines.

Pfizer-BioNtech: requires two doses — three weeks apart

Moderna: Requires two doses four weeks apart.

Both Pfizer-BioNtech and Moderna use Messenger RNA (mRNA) to teach our body how to make the harmless protein pieces found in COVID-19 and protect us from the viruses that contain them. This doesn't interact with our DNA, it just helps our bodies create antibodies.

Johnson & Johnson: requires a single dose

This vaccine uses viral vector technology. This type of vaccine uses a harmless cold virus to "carry" the blueprint for the spiky protein on the coronavirus to the body's cells. A similar technique was used to make their Ebola vaccine.

Senior Companions Lives during the Pandemic

Sharon

Keeping an Eye Out for her Clients

Providing regular services this past year during the COVID-19 pandemic has proved difficult for both the Senior Companions and their clients. But one Companion, Sharon, did her best by staying in touch with her clients.

Each week she would call all of her clients to check on them and make sure they had everything they needed. She would provide conversation and friendship, discuss the weather (a favorite topic for everyone), listen to stories of distant children and grandchildren, and of course, the aches and pains of advancing age. At least once a month, whether there was a holiday in that month or not, she would send an appropriate card in the mail with comments of encouragement or wishes for a happy holiday.

One of her clients, Charlotte, needed someone outside her family to help keep an eye on how she spent her money. Charlotte was known to fall for scams. It didn't matter if it was by phone or mail. If the scammer promised quick and easy riches, Charlotte would go to the bank, then the grocery store (for a money order) and finally the post office confident that she would be rewarded in the very near future. Upon the approval of Charlotte's nephew (who had taken control of her finances), Sharon kept an ear out for any new "stories" and an eye out for suspicious behavior by Charlotte. Sharon called Charlotte frequently and if Charlotte was particularly depressed, she would call Sharon. By being a friend Sharon was able to help Charlotte keep her finances in the black.

Additionally Sharon kept in touch with Raymond. They would talk about pre-COVID days when they would go to the truck stop for fries and a piece of pie. Sharon did some grocery shopping for Raymond, once purchasing some steak knives "because he didn't have a sharp knife in the kitchen". He was another client who missed human connections and Sharon was the voice of assurance that "normal" was around the corner.

When "commodity boxes" were ready, in addition to picking up hers, Sharon delivered boxes to two of her clients, ensuring they had extra nourishment for the month. All of her clients have appreciated all that Sharon has done during this past year.

Pat, Gloria and a Cat

Pat, Gloria & a Cat named Toby

One of Pat's clients, Gloria, lost her cat Toby a while back. During the pandemic, Gloria took the loss especially hard and was sad most of the time. This loss was taking a toll on her health and it showed.

Her Senior Companion Pat has a brother who was spending the winter in Minnesota. It was up to Pat to take care of her brother's cat Blackie. Pat would go over to her brother's house to feed and water the cat, then let it out for the day. Later in the

afternoon, she would return to let him back in and spend some time "loving on him." After a few weeks, Pat called her brother and asked if he would mind giving Blackie away. He didn't.

Gloria was all too willing to adopt Blackie. She excitedly waited in the house while Pat dropped off Blackie in a carrier to Gloria's front porch, along with cat food and all of Blackie's toys. Pat witnessed Gloria coming out of the house, open the

carrier, and start crying with joy as Blackie scampered into her arms and snuggled under her chin.

Later Pat called Gloria and she could hear tears of joy in her voice as she said "thank you, thank you" over and over again. Now Gloria sits in her living room with a warm, black cat in her lap purring away. There's a lot of love in Gloria's house again, thanks to Pat and her generous brother.

Lynn's Kitchen and Bakery

Lynn spends time making her community a little homier with her meals and baked goods. Because of COVID-19 restrictions this past year, Lynn, a Senior Companion in Oelrichs, can't visit her clients in person, so she calls them regularly to see how they are doing. One thing she observed was that the clients weren't getting the nourishment they had been because they were not going to the restaurant in town or the bakery out of town. So, she got out her pots and pans and started cooking.

It started with a pot of soup made with vegetables from her garden. She delivered the soup in disposable containers for lunch or dinner. Then she began making homemade bread to go with the soup. Lynn prepared a variety of soups and breads for her clients, including bean soup with biscuits and onion soup with crunchy bread. When one of her clients caught a cold, Lynn brought her chicken noodle soup. Later when Lynn called to check on her, the client asked, "Do I have to be sick to get more chicken soup?" Out came the pot and another batch of

chicken soup was soon delivered. Whole dinners were also brought to clients. There were casseroles, meat pies, and pot roasts. On New Year's Eve Lynn delivered a Prime Rib dinner to a couple of clients who did not have family.

She extended her goodwill at Christmas by putting together little brown bags filled with Hungarian nut rolls, homemade peanut brittle, cookies, and fruit to hand out at the Christmas Tree lighting in town. It makes you want to be a neighbor of Lynn's in Oelrichs, South Dakota.

Senior Companions NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS...

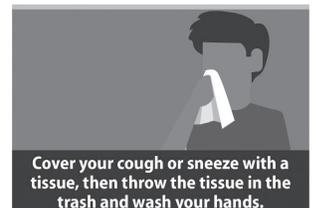
Senior Companions of South Dakota is kicking off their new grant year beginning on April 1st with an addition to the program. In partnership with AmeriCorps Seniors, the program offers older adults the opportunity to serve their community. They serve as a friend and companion to other seniors who may be isolated or homebound. Senior Companions of South Dakota has been helping seniors for 40+ years across South Dakota, by enlisting volunteers who meet certain income guidelines. Beginning in April, the Program will accept volunteers who do not meet the income guidelines and they will be able to serve without receiving the hourly stipend. This addition will allow those previously denied the opportunity to volunteer, to now serve as Senior Companions.

"We are excited about the ways this will impact our efforts to recruit volunteers," Shonda Mobley, Volunteer Recruiter for Senior Companions of South Dakota. "In the past we have had ready and willing applicants who did not meet the income guidelines and we had to turn them away. Now with the changes, we can accept them."

Stop the Spread of Germs

Accessible version: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/community-schools-child-care/symptom-screening.html>

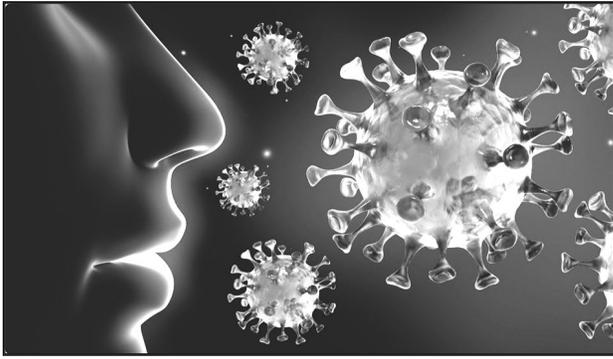
Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.



cdc.gov/coronavirus

19075-4 October 1, 2020/1978

OUR SENIOR COMPANIONS SHARE THEIR CHALLENGES



To say that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world would be an understatement. It has changed how we work, learn, and interact. Social distancing guidelines have led to a change in the day-to-day lives of billions of people and the world has had to adapt to those changes.

In one way or another, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted everyone's lives. Recently, we asked our Senior Companions to share stories of how their lives changed during the pandemic.

Here are a few excerpts from their stories:

“Since March 2020, my routine has definitely changed with my five Senior Companion clients from personally visiting them and taking them out for their errands to only talking with them over the telephone. But I am thankful that the Senior Companion Program allowed our friendship to continue with some financial reimbursement. Reaching out to them by phone allowed deeper conversations and the chance to show them that I cared for them still. I also sent them cards and booklets to encourage them.”

“Obviously, by not being able to see my clients/friends, it leaves a large hole in my schedule. No matter how many times a day you call them, it's not the same as seeing their faces and their smiles when you talk with them face to face. I am thankful that I can keep calling my clients. I can hear it in their voices that they are so happy for the interaction. I miss seeing them because it was always a bright spot in my day.”

“I have been quarantined briefly to a friend exposure. Though I

seldom go out, it is not easy to think you can't. I spent time in March and April canceling or hearing cancellations of activities like my coffee group, church services, bus trips, meals with friends, shows, and movies. This is not to mention reducing family visits and hugs (extra hard not hugging the little ones). I have listened to confusing reports on masks, hard surface infection, temperature, symptoms, and more. When you live alone like I do, leaving the house seems like a scary adventure.”

“My daily routine has been interrupted over the past nine months. I am a creature of habit and appreciate having a daily routine, especially as I get older. This affords me less stress in my life when I can follow a normal day-to-day routine. I enjoy my freedom of going when and where I need to. I remain independent, but the virus has modified my comings and goings.”

“Since I live in a retirement facility at times we were completely restricted from going out to of apartments-

groceries delivered, activities and services stopped, a limited number of visitors, constant sanitizing, etc. Then as spring came were encouraged to walk outside with masks and social distancing. Speaking of walks, during the pandemic, I would walk the interior floors of all the buildings and put sticky notes on the doors of people I knew to let them know I was thinking of them. I also make sure those same people are remembered at every holiday since last March 2020.”

The group's consensus is that it has been challenging, but they feel it has made them stronger. “As we know it, life looks different, but perhaps people will be more cautious and mindful of others.” They have learned to experience one day at a time, be thankful for their health and well-being, but most of all, to be grateful for the many we have neglected to thank before.

FRAUD ALERTS

Scammers are now using text messages to steal your identity, order products and even drain your bank account. It's critical that you recognize the danger of clicking on a link in a text from people you don't know. Most of these scams use bogus offerings to hook you into providing your username, password or credit card number.

Complicating the issue is that many legitimate companies and government agencies use texting. However, they ask for your permission to do so.

How do you stay safe?

- Don't share your phone number on Facebook or other social media.
- Look for red flags if you receive a text from a number you don't recognize. Spacing issues and misspellings are clues that something isn't right.
- Offers that are too good to be true, usually are.
- If you receive a message from your bank, verify it by calling your bank. Do not call phone numbers in text messages.

If you think you've given out information from a bogus text, tell your bank that there's an increased risk of fraud and put a credit freeze on your credit report.

Another note...

Fraud theft through the use of gift cards continues to soar. The average amount lost by those who were scammed was \$840. Gift cards most often requested are eBay, Google Play, Target and iTunes.

In addition to specifying the kind of gift cards, they also tell people where to purchase them. Walmart, Target, Walgreens and CVS are high on their list.

Once the scammers have the card number and PIN, the funds are drained without a trace.

And from the South Dakota's Attorney General's Division of Consumer Protection...

Reports of callers claiming to be with Medicare have been on the increase. These callers will ask the individual to verify their current Medicare number on the premise that a new card and new number will be issued to the consumer.

This is a scam. Medicare will never contact you by phone, nor ask for your personal identifying information.

Please contact the South Dakota Attorney General's Division of Consumer Protection for assistance with any scam or fraud at 1-800-300-1986.

In Gratitude for Generosity...

2020 GIVING CLUB MEMBERS

SPONSORSHIP CLUB

(Contributions of \$500 or more per year)

Anonymous

Jack Dugan

In Memory of Mary Jane Dugan

Bryce and Pamela Fitch

*In Honor of Donna VanHouten and
in Memory of Catherine Geisler*

Hy-Vee

Helpful Smile Week

Messer Family Foundation

In Memory of Lois R. Barrett

Scheels

The Walter C. Schulz Foundation

Michael Trykoski

Dawn Warwick

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

(Contributions of \$125–\$499 per year)

Kim and Janine Beck

In Memory of Kay Beck

Paula Boehmer

In Memory of Lucille Aschoff

Mark Briley

Betty DeBerg

Jan Dybvig

In Memory of Delores Nebben

Rev. Bill Gran

Deborah E. Johnson

Fran Kilen

In Memory of Ed Kilen

Jerry Matthiesen

In Memory of Carole

John and Carol McGrath

David and Debby Miles

*In Memory of Millard Hyronemus
and Bernice Miles*

Thomas and Jean Nicholson

In Memory of Elizabeth Peterson

Arthur and Lana Rusch

In Honor of Neva Koepp

Vivian Reich

In Honor of Lenis Pato

Sioux Falls DHS and DSS

Jeans Day Fund

Warren Austin

Mary and Alietha Balo

In Memory of Marj Balo

Julie Beilby

Tim and Brenda Bjorklund

In Memory of Lorraine and Harvey Johnson

George and Sandie Boucher

In Honor of Connie Peters

Greg and Marsha Bullis

In Honor of Norma Law

Lori Bussler

Corey Camp

Kurt and Deb Creegan

Shirley Darnell

*In Honor of Gladyce Perkins and in
Memory of Elenor Ragnos*

Carol and Jerry Denman

Peggy Dohrer

In Memory of Doug Dohrer and Ruth Miller

Virgene Dougal

Helen Droppers

Leon and Michelle Eich

In Honor of Kathy Eich

Michelle Erpenbach

V. Joy Fehrenz

In Memory of Berniece K. Donaldson

Sharon Fockler

In Memory of Glen Fockler

Wayne and Joyce Foss

Carolyn Fray

In Memory of Ruth & Stanley Lauritsen

Don and Deb Fritz

In Memory of Edith Fritz

In Gratitude for Generosity...

Jeff and Lynette Gilmore and Julie Sandio

In Honor of Kim and Nathan Gilmore

Jason M. Guenther

Paula Gunderson

In Memory of Marlys Ambur

Cheryl Hairgrove, PA-C

Wayne and Beverly Hanson

Elizabeth Hindbjorgen

Randy and Linda Huddle

In Memory of Marjorie Krcil

Jerry Kerkhove

In Memory of Frank and Mildred Kerkhove

Andrea Knight

JoAnn Knutson

In Memory of Kenneth Knutson

Neva Koepp

Clarice Konold

In Memory of Ronald Konold

Sharon Kreitzinger

*In Memory of Betty Berry and
Erma Kreitzinger*

Richard Kropp

Bill and Joyce Kubat

Mariannette Kudrie

In Memory of Gloria Metzger

Kim Ladd

Lee and Karen Larsen

In Memory of Pastor Pete

Norma Law

In Memory of Greg Bullis

Delores Lipp

Joyce Looman

Dan and Cathryn Mattison

In Memory of Lucille Aschoff

Royal and Bev McCracken

In Memory of Linda McCracken

Roger Moeller

Sharen Nelson

In Memory of Marty Lockner

Deb Overseth

Lamoyne and Karyn Pederson

Connie Peters

In Memory of Edna Geske

Doug Puetz

In Honor of Lenis Pato

Thomas and Sheila Reding

In Memory of Lucille Aschoff

Lois Rossum

Darlene Schieffer

Bernice Schotten

In Memory of Lucille Aschoff

Stefanie Schmidt

Lisa Scott

In Honor of Theresa Roberts

Hilka Soderberg

In Honor of Connie Peters

Carole Welsh

In Memory of Donald Welsh

Lorraine and Sharron Widrig

In Honor of Edith McKinnon

Donna Williams

Carol Yarrow

In Memory of Alan Yarrow

Thank You

We wish to acknowledge and give a special thank you to our supporters who gave us funding to match our federal grant from the AmeriCorps Seniors.

United Ways of Brookings, Northeastern SD (Aberdeen), Northern Hills, Rapid City, Southern Hills, Watertown, and Yankton.

The City of Aberdeen and the County Governments of Brookings, Codington, Lincoln, and McCook.



4800 W. 57th Street
 PO Box 5038
 Sioux Falls SD 57117-5038

NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT #1553
 SIOUX FALLS, SD

Address Service Requested

Thank you . . .

We wish to thank the physicians who donate wellness exams for our Senior Companions.

It takes many community partners to make our Program successful. We appreciate this in-kind donation from the medical community.

Senior Companions Highlights is published twice a year by the Senior Companion Program. Spring 2021; Issue 89

Senior Companion Program
 4800 W. 57th Street
 PO Box 5038
 Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5038
 Phone: (605) 361-1133
 Toll-free: (888) 239-1210
 E-mail: sdscp@good-sam.com
 Web site: www.good-sam.com/scpsd
www.facebook.com/seniorcompanionsofsd

Rapid City Office
 2040 W. Main St., Suite 213
 Rapid City, SD 57702
 Phone: (605) 721-8884
 E-mail: cmerbach@good-sam.com

Kristin Fox, Executive Director
 Connie Christensen, Program Coordinator
 Jennifer Palmer, Office Manager
 Carol Merbach, Black Hills Program Coordinator
 Shonda Moble, Volunteer Recruiter

