

## Statewide Vaccine Campaign

In April, we learned that the federal Administration for Community Living had allotted \$250,000 to Vermont for marketing aimed at closing the gap in vaccinations. The five Area Agencies on Aging serving Vermont pooled the money and hired a marketing firm to produce written, graphic, and video materials to help encourage older Vermonters to continue to get vaccinated. Ads produced by this firm ran in local newspapers, on the radio, and on local TV stations. In August, they chose to come to southeastern Vermont to film testimonials from older Vermonters in our region. The three people featured in the final video are from our Home Visitor Programs: Senior Companion Elizabeth Cole, Friendly Visitor Melissa MacKenzie, and Vet to Vet volunteer Jack Greene. Hopefully, their endorsements about the importance of inoculation will help motivate more people to get vaccinated. Please check our website for the link to watch the Covid-19 Vaccine promotion video.



### Our Mission

To promote the well-being and dignity of older adults.

### Our Vision

Every person will age in the place of their choice, with the support they need and the opportunity for meaningful relationships and active engagement in their community.

Last spring, in a letter to all the friends of Senior Solutions, I described the optimism among the staff. I'm happy to report that this optimism continues to motivate our staff to do great things. We are finding new ways to reach out to older Vermonters, such as locating staff within senior centers to assist participants to enroll in state and federal benefits programs. We are also engaging in creative outreach, such as the *Putney100% 3SquaresVT* campaign, which informed every resident of Putney about food and fuel benefits programs.

Our volunteers touch the lives of many older Vermonters daily, through friendly visits, respite, and Vet-to-Vet companionship. With community partners, we continue to support meal sites across our service area, which produce thousands of home-delivered meals every year.

Recently, an older gentleman seeking food at the Chester-Andover Food Shelf revealed that he had an outstanding electric bill of over \$500 and had been notified that his electricity would be shut off just before Christmas. After a brief discussion with a Senior Solutions staff member on site, he left and returned with his electric bill in hand. On the spot, the Chester-Andover Center processed his application to cover his past due bills in full, and the Senior Solutions staff member processed his application for a 25% discount on electricity charges moving forward through the Green Mountain Power Program.

That's just one story, among many, of our staff assisting someone who badly needed help to live independently. These are not easy times for older Vermonters, and we are deeply grateful for the donations as well as the work of our staff and volunteers that make it possible for them—your family, friends, and neighbors—to get the support and friendship they need when they need it most.

Warm regards,



Mark Boutwell,  
Executive Director



## We welcome new staff in 2020-2021

**Lori Lintner** is our new Operations Director. Before coming to Senior Solutions, she worked for New Hampshire's Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services as a supervisor for Adult Protective Services in the Claremont, N.H. District Office. Her 27 years of experience in adult and child protective services, education, and developmental services, as well as her knowledge of Vermont's social services delivery systems, have prepared her for her role as a management team member. Lori is a certified Person Centered Thinking trainer and will direct Senior Solutions' Options Counseling services.



Lori oversees many programs and services, including the HelpLine, Case Management, OneCare ACO, the Eldercare contract with HCRS, and the Moderate Needs Group Medicaid applications and waiting list. She also works to ensure compliance with the agency's policies and on outreach to our many community partners.

**Thomas Simmons** joined Senior Solutions as a Nutrition and Wellness Outreach Specialist. His prior experience working on the census for



the U.S. Department of Commerce in Windham and Windsor Counties gave him strong contacts with many local organizations that have helped him connect seniors in southeastern Vermont with fuel assistance and food resources. Thom enjoys creating marketing campaigns that inform older Vermonters they are eligible for assistance. To overcome the stigma many seniors associate with receiving help, he collaborates with community organizations, such as libraries and churches that local residents trust, to help convey information about food and fuel resources.

**Sue Dana** is Director of Finance. She previously taught business and financial services classes at River Valley Technical Center. Sue collaborates with the agency's Executive Director on the organization's operations and strategic direction. She also works closely with the management team to develop budgets and ensure that the agency complies with reporting requirements for federal, state, and other grants. In addition, Sue oversees accounting and financial management, information technology, including telecommunications, payroll and human resources, data and analytics, and facilities management.



**Mark Nolan** serves as Senior Solutions' part-time Technology Specialist. Prior to joining our staff, he taught technology to K-6 students at the Deerfield Valley Elementary School in Wilmington, Vt. Mark provides technology support and training to Senior Solutions' staff. He also manages the telephone system, handles basic IT system maintenance, and collaborates with the agency's technology management consultants.



**Gary Schall** was hired as a consultant to lay the foundation for an AmeriCorps grant that Senior Solutions expects to receive this year. He spearheaded the establishment of Veterans Advisory Councils (VAC) in Windham and Windsor Counties, which now meet regularly at the American Legions in Brattleboro and Hartland. Gary also did outreach to potential community partners to determine their interest in hosting AmeriCorps volunteers trained to provide respite to their clients.



**Kevin Golden** has joined the agency as Front Office Coordinator. He was previously a Donor Relations Officer at Dartmouth College. Kevin oversees Senior Solutions' front office and supports the Executive Director and staff members. He also manages the agency's mailings, event planning, and logistics. In addition to applying for grants and funding from towns in Windham and Windsor counties, Kevin helps manage the Moderate Needs Group process.



**Suzanne Burge** joined the agency last summer as the organization's part-time Receptionist. She was previously an Administrative Assistant for The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice. In addition to answering phone calls, Suzanne assists with calls to the HelpLine. She also handles other administrative duties and helps clients with 3Squares applications for food and fuel assistance benefits.



**Mike Wiese** joined the agency as a Case Manager. A 30-year veteran in social services, he previously served as a Family Support Coordinator at the developmental services agency, Pathways, in Claremont, N.H. Mike works primarily with people on the Choices for Care or Long-Term Medicaid Program. In addition to assisting them with the application process, he helps people arrange for their care once they are approved. He also makes monthly home visits and refers his clients as necessary to professionals ranging from nutritionists to mental health counselors.



# Volunteer Programs

## Susan Triplett

was hired in December as the Vet to Vet Program Coordinator. The Air Force veteran will work part-time to promote the Veterans Advisory Councils (VACs) and the Vet to Vet Program in Windsor and Windham Counties. Susan will lead the growth of VACs at the American Legions in Hartland and Brattleboro.



Susan has volunteered at the Veterans Administration Hospital in White River Junction, Vt., where she completed an internship at the Woman's Care Center. She also served as the Vice President of the non-profit organization, Women Veterans of New England.

## Senior Companion

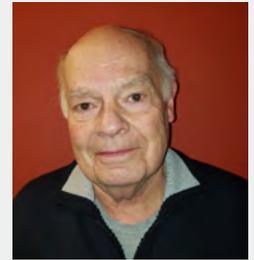
Four years ago, shortly after her husband died, Elizabeth Cole, of Wilmington, wanted to get involved in a volunteer activity that would get her out of the house and give her a sense of purpose. So she became a Senior Companion. Now, matched with adults who rely on her, Elizabeth helps them navigate everyday life. She takes her new friends grocery shopping, to medical appointments, out to lunch, and on scenic drives. Sometimes they bake together and play cards or dominoes. A few do Bone Builders exercises with her. Others are happy just sitting and talking. "It's fulfilling to me, as well as to the people I'm visiting," Elizabeth says.



Elizabeth Cole

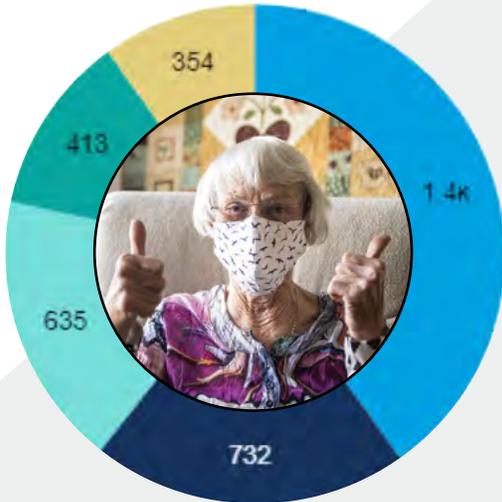
## Vet to Vet Volunteer

Gordon Best, an Army veteran from Windsor, got involved in Senior Solutions three years ago because he lives alone and wanted to do something that would help people. Through our Vet to Vet Program, Gordon met fellow Army veteran Frances Raymond, also of Windsor. He's taken Fran to medical appointments at the Veterans Administration in White River Junction and New London Hospital in New London, N.H. Over the past two years, they've become close friends. Recently, Gordon helped make improvements at Fran's home through a project sponsored by Habitat for Humanity and spearheaded by Senior Solutions' AmeriCorps Planning Grant Consultant Gary Schall.



Gordon Best

Gordon is also a member of the Vet to Vet Program's Veterans Advisory Council (VAC), which meets at the American Legions in Brattleboro and Hartland. The VAC's purpose is to recruit veteran volunteers and identify veterans who would benefit from being matched with a buddy. Gordon says he really likes helping veterans who might otherwise be reluctant to ask for assistance.



## Hours of Volunteer Service



## Friendly Visitor

Leona Linney, of West Dover, has enjoyed meeting with Karolina Oleksiw, of Brattleboro, almost every week for over a year and a half. During nice days they sit outside, talking about things they have in common and what's going on in their lives. At Karolina's home, they've planted flowers and shared gardening chores. "Our relationship has worked out really well," Leona says. Another of Leona's friendships, with a woman who lives alone in Bellows Falls, has blossomed over the phone, as the two women chat about old movies, the books they are reading, and their pets. The time "just whizzes by," Leona says.



Leona Linney

For more information about our volunteer programs contact Vicki Mastroianni at 802-376-3388.



Volunteer Mary Sanborn made 1,200 masks for Senior Solutions volunteers and staff members in 2020. She also made six lap quilts for an online auction the Home Visitor Program held to raise money to support its programs.

### Public Access TV Programs

*Keeping Up with Senior Solutions* is our regular television interview program hosted by Joann Erenhouse and Jim Collins. They have featured nutrition and wellness issues, volunteer home visitor programs, and many more topics. A recent program on OKEMO Valley TV explained our HomeMeds and Pill Map programs, which can help prevent health complications resulting from toxic medication interactions. The programs can be accessed through Brattleboro Community TV and on [www.seniorsolutionsvt.org](http://www.seniorsolutionsvt.org).

### The Role of Our Board of Directors and Advisory Council

As a nonprofit organization, Senior Solutions depends on its Board of Directors and Advisory Council for continual, consistent guidance and support. These individuals represent the people and the communities we serve. The experience and connections they bring to the table extend our capability to provide comprehensive social services programs to southeastern Vermont's aging adult population. We extend our gratitude to Teri Heck and Kip Tewksbury, who retired from the board this past year, and we welcome Gloria Cristelli and Beth Spicer as the new co-chairs of the Advisory Council. Throughout the last year, as we navigated changing times and new challenges, our

board members and advisers have overseen a website overhaul, significant transitions in management, and COVID-related fiscal opportunities and adaptations. As our eyes and ears in the community, the board and council connect us with the larger issues that impact aging Vermonters: workforce shortages, transportation challenges, and the need for expanded Medicare coverage, to name a few. We are deeply grateful to these groups for their dedication and support of our services to older Vermonters.

## Ways to Give

Donating your time and/or resources to Senior Solutions is a wonderful way to promote the health and vitality of older Vermonters and caregivers in our region. **To learn more about any of these options, call us at 802-885-2655.**

### Volunteer

By sharing your time and talents, you'll enrich lives, including your own.

### Make a Monetary Donation

Any dollar amount that fits your budget would be an important contribution and a vote of confidence in our work.

### Give to the "Foxy Fund"

Help older Vermonters care for and keep their pets.

### Shop at Amazon

Amazon will donate 0.5% to Senior Solutions from eligible AmazonSmile purchases. Learn more about that program at [seniorsolutionsvt.org/giving](http://seniorsolutionsvt.org/giving).

### Join the Advisory Council

The council, established pursuant to the Older Americans Act, meets monthly to represent the interests of older Vermonters and advise Senior Solutions on the best ways to help people age with dignity in their communities.

### Make a Planned Gift

We're grateful for bequests, which take many forms. For example, you may make a gift of life insurance, naming Senior Solutions as a beneficiary of your IRA or retirement plan, or plan ahead to donate personal property or real estate.

### Senior Solutions Partners with the Vermont Community Foundation

Through this option, your gift is held and managed by the Foundation, whose staff will work with you and handle all administrative and tax reporting details. Possible avenues of giving include annuities and trusts that can provide you with income during your lifetime.

### Board of Directors

President: Geri Kogut,  
Wilmington

Vice President: Teresa Volta,  
Chester

Secretary: Jim Matteau,  
Westminster

Treasurer: Mary McMillen,  
Springfield

Barbara Woods, Brattleboro

Valerie Abrahamsen, Brattleboro

Advisory Council Co-Chair:  
Beth Spicer, Westminster West

Advisory Council Co-Chair:  
Gloria Cristelli, Newfane



## Senior Solutions Recognizes Volunteers' Dedication

In August 2021, the agency hosted a luncheon to express appreciation for its volunteers and the many hours of service they have provided throughout our communities. Lunch was prepared by Volunteer Program Manager Vicki Mastroianni and Community Relations Director Joann Erenhouse. Volunteers enjoyed entertainment provided by Nutrition and Wellness Outreach Specialist Thom Simmons and live music provided by the Ukulaliens. (Herb Swanson photo)

## Senior Solutions Launches Respite Volunteer Program

Aging in place is a way of life for many Vermonters whose care frequently becomes the sole responsibility of family members. In 2020, Senior Solutions received an AmeriCorps Planning Grant funding the development of a new Respite Volunteer Program, which will provide respite to caregivers of older Vermonters with challenging conditions such as dementia, paralysis due to stroke, Parkinson's disease, mental health problems, and mobility issues. The program's volunteers will relieve caregivers from daily responsibilities so they can run errands, carve out time for themselves, or just take a rest. Monthly Memory Café events offer an environment where caregivers and their loved ones can socialize and receive support in a non-judgmental environment.

Our Home Visitor Program ran a training program at the end of last year, focusing on the special role of respite volunteers. Topics included communication and family dynamics, dementia and other cognitive impairments, and safety and fall prevention. The training equipped the 11 volunteers who participated with the skills to support elders experiencing differing disabilities with ease and confidence.

The AmeriCorps Aging in Place Planning Grant laid the foundation for the Respite Volunteer Program, which our Home Visitor Program plans to expand later this year. Senior Solutions has been awarded another AmeriCorps Grant that will make it possible to grow the Respite Volunteer Program and offer volunteers a small stipend for their service. These AmeriCorps volunteers will provide blocks of up to four hours per visit so family caregivers can perform necessary tasks, including grocery shopping and attending medical appointments, without worrying about the care and safety of their loved ones.

## Veterans Advisory Councils Launched in Windham & Windsor Counties

Two Veterans Advisory Councils (VAC) have been established by Senior Solutions as part of the AmeriCorps Aging in Place Planning Grant. One of them is in Windham County and the other is in Windsor County. Each VAC's goal is to strengthen the agency's Vet to Vet Program by identifying veterans interested in being matched with one another. As veterans age they may become disconnected from their community. The Vet to Vet Program reconnects them to society by offering the camaraderie of a volunteer veteran buddy.

The Windham County-based VAC started meeting remotely last spring due to Covid-19. They met for the first time in person in June. Since then, the council has met at the American Legion Brattleboro Post #5 on the third Thursday of each month at 9 A.M. Ten veterans have participated in the meetings, which have focused on growing the Vet to Vet Program, issues raised by attendees, and events such as the Moving Wall, a half-size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial featuring the names of soldiers who never returned home, which was on view in Brattleboro in the fall. The group will continue to meet monthly. The VAC in Windsor met for the first time in October at the American Legion in Hartland. Senior Solutions' Executive Director Mark Boutwell, Hartland American Legion Commander Martin Dole, consultant Gary Schall, and three local veterans attended the meeting. The group plans to meet quarterly in order to grow the Vet to Vet Program and connect with veterans in Windsor County.

## 2021 Program Highlights

### HelpLine

Our HelpLine is the point of intake for our services and an important source of information, referral and assistance to older adults, caregivers, and professionals. HelpLine staff assist people over the phone and in person, providing benefits screening, service referrals, problem-solving, and reassurance.

**4,718**  
HelpLine callers  
received assistance

### Nutrition Programs

Senior Solutions supports and oversees 13 home-delivered meals or Meals on Wheels (MOW) programs and 29 community meal sites provided by local community partners. There has been a substantial increase in MOW deliveries during the past year. These programs rely heavily on community volunteers and local financial and in-kind support for high quality food that is locally prepared in a caring community. Our registered dietitians provide nutrition education to community nutrition sites and home-based nutrition counseling to older adults. Even though congregate meal sites had to close due to the pandemic, many sites changed to a drive-through system so people could still get meals. Those who couldn't take advantage of the drive-through option were switched to MOW. Meals on Wheels sites continue to adjust to the fluctuations of the pandemic, maintaining this critical service to those most in need of a nutritious meal and a friendly visit. Congregate meal sites open when COVID regulations permit but have recently started to close again with the rise of Delta and Omicron variants.

**191,970**  
Meals on Wheels  
were provided

**1,584**  
people received  
Meals on Wheels

### Case Management and In-Home Assistance

Home visits have been restricted throughout the year due to the Covid pandemic, but we have ramped up our telephone contact and instituted video conferencing when possible. In this way, case managers; with offices in Brattleboro, Springfield, and Windsor; continue to provide care coordination and support for Medicaid Choices for Care clients, Older American Act clients and home-based services for qualifying veterans in collaboration with the Veterans Administration. Within these restrictions, case managers and outreach specialists also continue to provide person-centered planning, benefits screening, application assistance, and problem-solving over the phone or in settings where universal precautions can be practiced.

**1,321**  
people received  
**10,469**  
hours of case  
management/  
in-home assistance

### Volunteers

New this year is our Caregiver Respite Program for caregivers who need a break from the time-consuming job of caring for a loved one with dementia. The volunteers have received thorough training and will be ready to take referrals starting soon. Through our Friendly Visitor, Vet to Vet, and Senior Companion programs, we match older adults with volunteers who visit and spend time with them, help with chores, or take them out to do errands or for social activities. They may also assist clients with grocery shopping and transportation. The companionship these relationships provide helps connect older Vermonters with their communities, combat isolation and loneliness, and brighten the spirits of program participants.

**71** volunteers  
provided **5,200**  
hours of service

### Self-Neglect

As more and more older Vermonters choose to age in the place of their choice, there is a growing concern for those individuals who are no longer capable of performing essential self-care tasks, due to physical or mental impairment or diminished capacity. Such tasks include obtaining essential food, clothing, shelter, or medical care; obtaining goods and services necessary to maintain physical health, mental health, or general safety; and managing one's own financial affairs. Senior Solutions recently completed a five-year review of the number of referrals the agency received, the number of older Vermonters who were determined to be self-neglecting, and the number of hours spent from the time the referral was made to the time the case was closed by a case manager. While the referral data reflects a slight upward trend, the number of clients meeting the self-neglect criteria and the complexity of each situation (# of hours per year) show significant increases. This presents our case management staff with daily challenges of creatively addressing these complex situations while preserving as much client self-determination and integrity as possible.

**437**  
hours spent  
helping **29**  
clients of self neglect

### Wellness Programs

We offer the Program to Encourage Active Rewarding Lives (PEARLS for Seniors), which provides counseling and support to those experiencing mild depression and helps them set and achieve personal goals. Both programs have remained operational with modifications during the pandemic. We also continue to support tai chi and aquatics programs. All these programs meet federal evidence-based standards. A recent tai chi instructor training brought eight new volunteers on board who will begin teaching classes in February. These instructors came to us as a result of the extensive outreach and new contacts cultivated by our new 3Squares outreach specialist.

## Outreach and Collaboration

Our outreach and collaboration have continued to expand through our website re-design, cooperative state-wide marketing for Covid vaccinations with the other Councils on Aging, a new weekly radio program, and continued use of public access television programs and social media. We provided direct outreach to vulnerable elders to screen for public benefits eligibility, prioritizing Meals on Wheels recipients, and we helped them access needed services. As a result, many individuals received case management services and were enrolled in programs such as Medicare Savings, Medicaid Home and Community-Based Long-Term Care, fuel assistance, and 3SquaresVT. We value our relationships with towns and the business community and participate in many joint initiatives related to health, aging, transportation, food insecurity, wellness, and nutrition.

## HomeMeds Program

This service is designed to prevent falls and hospitalizations caused by medication-related problems that endanger the well-being of many older adults living at home. Severe reactions and interactions, medication errors, and medication duplications occur at an alarming rate among older adults. In the HomeMeds Program, all prescriptions, vitamins, and herbal supplements are inventoried. Any medication errors and adverse drug effects are identified using this evidence-based, technology-enabled intervention program. As a final step, this information is reviewed by a pharmacist. This past year, Senior Solutions added a program called Pill Map to the HomeMeds services. Pill Map is a medication guide/template to assist families and clients to safely manage their medications at home.

## Legal and Mental Health Services

The Eldercare Clinician home-based mental health program, operated in partnership with Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, is fully staffed now with clinicians in Brattleboro, Springfield, and White River Junction. Senior Solutions continues to support and benefit from legal assistance by Leah Burdick at Vermont Legal Aid.

## State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

As the SHIP provider for Windsor and Windham Counties, we offer free, confidential health insurance counseling that provides unbiased information to older adults and people with disabilities who are eligible for Medicare. We offer New to Medicare classes or “Boot Camps” (now via Zoom) for people who are new to Medicare and assistance during the annual Medicare open enrollment period, October 15-December 7. Attendance at our classes has increased since the beginning of the pandemic as more people have the ability to join remotely.

## Partnerships with Health Care Providers

To assure that Vermonters are receiving the best possible health care, case managers from Senior Solutions participate in *Blueprint for Health* interagency care coordination meetings organized by hospitals in Windham and Windsor counties. Senior Solutions also provides financial support to local agencies providing specialized transportation for elders and people with disabilities. In partnership with OneCare, an accountable care organization, the agency collaborates with community partners to ensure that the social determinants that support good health are in place for older Vermonters and that they are receiving value-based care from their providers.

## Supporting Family Caregivers

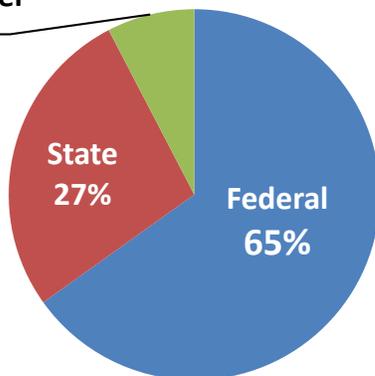
Senior Solutions helps caregivers meet the many challenges of caring for a loved one. We analyze difficult situations and help caregivers find the best solutions. We help find resources and provide counseling on self-care and budget concerns. We also provide support and referrals for in-person and online groups for people caring for older loved ones. In addition, we support grandparents and other older family members who care for children. Our respite grants were highly utilized last year.

**1,756**  
people received  
counseling **20%**  
more than last year

More than **40**  
clients received  
grant assistance

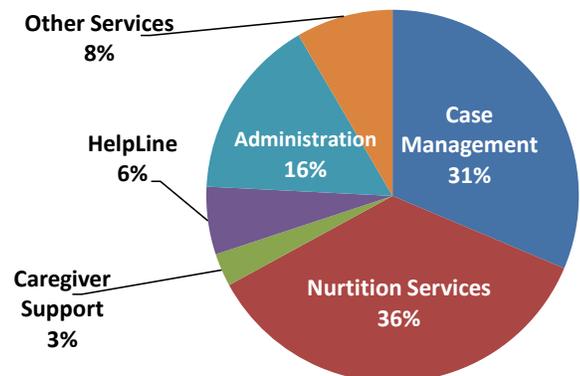
## Revenue Funding by Source

Local and Other  
8%



Total Expenses  
\$4,291,621  
Total Revenue  
\$4,291,201

## Expenditure by Program



Get our monthly news in your email. Visit [seniorsolutionsvt.org](http://seniorsolutionsvt.org) and scroll down to the sign-up link.



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Return Service Requested



Bernadette Burch received food and fuel benefits through a Benefit Enrollment Center grant Senior Solutions received from the National Council on Aging to provide assistance as necessary to people on Medicare. She also received a discount on her Green Mountain Power electric bill.

## Annual Report 2021



Senior Solutions' Wendi Germain (center) sits with community members during one of its "Creative Aging" classes. (Herb Swanson photo)

### Our Values

- We honor and respect the life experience and autonomy of Vermont's older adults.
- We recognize the essential role of families, caregivers and communities in the lives of older adults.
- We foster a work environment where creativity, open-mindedness and resourcefulness are expected; our employees are compassionate, respectful and responsive to the needs and wishes of our clients.
- We are committed to maintaining strong community partnerships to assure our clients' varied needs are met and to collectively strengthen the infrastructure of support for older adults.
- We embrace our role as advocates for older adults, including speaking out about current issues, identifying unmet needs, proposing solutions and believing that our collective voices can bring about change.

### Senior Solutions

**1-802-885-2669 / 1-866-673-8376 (toll-free)**

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