



Senior Services of Alexandria Announces its \$230,000 “Caring Connection” Campaign
This new program will serve Alexandria’s most vulnerable seniors.

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Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA), just off the heels of celebrating its 50th Golden Anniversary, is launching a bold new initiative called “Caring Connection” taking its Meals on Wheels program to the next step and providing a safety net to Alexandria’s most vulnerable seniors.

The City of Alexandria’s senior population has grown to over 22,000 individuals - and more than 5,000 of these seniors live alone! Working in partnership with the Division of Aging and Adult Services, SSA is delivering more than 48,000 meals to our community’s homebound seniors annually, providing this critical service 365 days a year.

Stories from SSA’s Meals on Wheels volunteers regularly detail arriving at a client’s home to find them ill, injured or in need of urgent medical attention. It is fortunate that these volunteers can be the “eyes and ears” of the community coming to the senior’s aid, but when this happens all involved are left to ask what more could have been done to prevent them from being whisked off in an ambulance, not knowing if they will be able to return to their own home.

What is needed is a proactive system for seniors who live alone with chronic medical conditions or those who have been recently discharged from the hospital and are at risk of being re-admitted because of medication issues, a fall, or inadequate nutrition. This is what “Caring Connection” is all about.

This exciting new program offers daily meal delivery beyond the standard Meals on Wheels program to provide personalized health and safety checks. It will be managed by dedicated staff as an additional service for the senior community. Through this exciting expansion, SSA expects to double the number of clients it serves in the first year alone.

SSA is fortunate to have two strong community leaders heading the charge in raising the funds to get the program off the ground! Gerry Cooper, SSA’s current Board Chair and Former Mayor and Community Activist Kerry Donley, are serving as Caring Connection Campaign Co-Chairs. SSA has raised \$200,000, more than 88% of its \$230,000 campaign goal, and SSA is asking for

the community's support to raise the remaining \$30,000 needed to end the campaign successfully and launch the first phase of implementation.

With the support of the community, the "Caring Connection will add the essential element of daily health monitoring for seniors who may be home recovering in the immediate days and weeks after undergoing a recent hospital procedure when they are at their most vulnerable. Nothing we could undertake as the public caretakers of Alexandria's seniors could be more worthwhile than this daily Caring Connection," said Gerry Cooper, Campaign Co-Chair.

"I am happy to support the Caring Connection campaign sponsored by Senior Services of Alexandria. This effort is directed at vulnerable senior citizens who were recently hospitalized and will provide health assessments in addition to nutrition as part of their home recovery. Our goal is to assist them in their recovery and to avoid re-hospitalization and to do so through compassionate and effective services," said Kerry Donley, Campaign Co-Chair.

SSA aims to fully develop, pilot, and implement the new Caring Connection program in three phases over the next two years. By the end of 2019, all three phases will be fully implemented and the City of Alexandria will have the critical Caring Connection for its at-risk seniors. Once Caring Connection is fully operational, it will be sustained by ongoing financial commitments from partner healthcare organizations.

To make a donation to the Caring Connection campaign, please call (703) 836-4414 or visit: www.seniorservicesalex.org/caring-connection. If you have any questions about the campaign, call or email Executive Director Mary Lee Anderson at 703-836-4414, ext. 111 or executivedirector@seniorservicesalex.org. Senior Services of Alexandria thanks you in advance for your support of this new initiative to keep the City's seniors healthy and safe as they age in place.

Named by the Catalogue for Philanthropy as "one of the best small charities in the Greater Washington region," Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) was founded in 1968 with the mission to foster independence and self-sufficiency in seniors, enabling them to age within the City of Alexandria with dignity. SSA is the only private, non-profit agency that provides programs and services for all older residents of Alexandria.

SSA is a 2017 Winner of a "Best Practices Award" by the Commonwealth Council on Aging and is a GuideStar Platinum participant.