



FOLKS AT HOME

141 University Avenue • Sewanee, TN 37375 • (931) 598-0303 • folksathome.org

SPRING 2024

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LETTER FROM THE

BOARD PRESIDENT

As I begin my term as president of Folks at Home, I am faced with the challenge of following the example of my predecessor, Karen Kuers, who has agreed to serve as vice-president for the coming year. Her organizational skills helped the Board navigate a course through a number of difficult issues while maintaining its focus on the individual needs of our members. Steve Blount and Woody Deutsch have agreed to continue to provide their well-organized services as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Our longest-service member of the Board, Craig Stubblebine, ensures that its actions continue to follow the guiding principles of Folks at Home's founders. We welcome our newest members, Amy Lamborn and Melissa Webb, who will provide fresh ideas on how Folks at Home can better serve the community.

The membership and activities of Folks at Home have continued to show considerable growth. Our membership has grown significantly, totalling 97 members. Our transportation services provide assistance to members for medical appointments as far away as Nashville. Recently Folks at Home had its first request for medical transport to Huntsville. Volunteers and Folks at Home staff also provide transportation to grocery stores, pharmacies and other businesses for members who can no longer drive themselves. Compared to 2022 the requests for transportation services have more than doubled. It is hard to imagine how this major increase in services

could have been possible without the well-organized and efficient management by our executive director Wall Wofford and our services coordinator, Mercedes Ingles.

In its Mission Statement, Folks at Home states that it "coordinates services to empower individuals to live and thrive in their homes as they remain in the community they love". Note that the term is *thrive*, not merely *survive*. In addition to transportation and other services, Folks at Home also offers programs to help its members remain healthy and active, both physically and mentally. Last year we offered programs such as chair aerobics, fall reduction, dementia prevention and a flu/Covid vaccine clinic. Folks at Home has introduced a new program that has attracted significant interest: SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life). The emphasis is on balance, but also includes cardio, strength training and stretching.

In short, Folks at Home is busier than ever. Our services and programs continue to grow. However, our ability to help our members to *thrive* and not just *survive* depends on your financial support. Please consider a gift to Folks at Home; any size helps. Our treasurer has pointed out that we have always been good stewards of your donations.

Please feel free to contact me or any member of the Board if you have questions or suggestions on how Folks at Home provides its services.

—DR. FRANK HART



“My 70s were interesting and fairly serene. But my 80s are passionate.”

Florida Scott Maxwell, psychoanalyst and playwright

In February of this year, I had the opportunity to present to Dr. Deborah McGrath’s class on Environmental Public Health. I spoke of Folks at Home and its mission. I described the larger “Village to Village Movement,” of which Folks at Home is a part. I framed the Village to Village movement as a promising grassroots response to the unprecedented demographic shift we are currently living into. This shift, though global, is largely propelled in the US by the last of us Baby Boomers predicted to cross the 65 yard line by 2030. I also spoke at length about “Ageism,” a form of often unconscious prejudice that is underpinned by negative age stereotypes unwittingly absorbed by us all through our cultural diets. Such stereotypes in relation to older persons include: frail, dependent, cognitively and functionally declining, a burden, no longer productive, etc. All this, in the words of the late Maggie Kuhn, “make aging something to be feared and avoided for as long as possible”. The World Health Organization has called Ageism “the most widespread, unrecognized, and socially accepted prejudice to-

day.” Negative age stereotypes permeate our culture, and we unconsciously internalize them, much to our detriment. Dr. Becca Levy and her team at Yale’s School of Public Health found negative age stereotypes in children as young as three years old. They also found that the US has become (comparing data going back to 1850) one of the most age segregated countries in the world.

In preparing for Dr. McGrath’s class, I read two very influential books, and I scanned many articles and websites, but the standout inspiration was Dr. Becca Levy’s 2023 publication *Breaking the Age Code: How Your Beliefs About Aging Determine How Long and How Well You Live*.

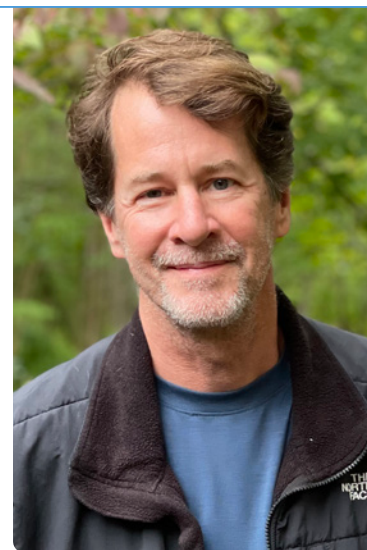
Dr. Levy’s research at Yale has resulted in some stunning data about the positive emotional and physical benefits of reframing aging in positive ways.

These benefits include reduced depression and anxiety, improved mental and cardiopulmonary function, a decreased time in healing from injury and

disease, improved endurance, balance, gait, and strength, and a greater sense of self-efficacy. Perhaps the most stunning of her findings is a 7.5-year addition to our health span. Equally stunning, Dr. Levy and her team calculated (conservatively) a \$63 billion cost per year in the US alone attributable to the health consequences of our negative views of aging. This book is so inspiring that we will be adding several copies to our newly created lending library. Please check it out!

I learned more than I taught that day in Dr. McGrath’s class. I found myself asking: “What is Folks at Home doing to help reframe aging by fostering more positive views, including the tremendous value of elders to the fundamental fabric of our society? How are we helping to counter the negative stereotypes that have seeped into our youth-obsessed culture? These stereotypes, according to Dr. Levy, profoundly affect our emotional and mental health. The well documented “Happiness Curve” shows that people in their 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s experience greater life satisfaction than other age cohorts, so why has it become this thing to be feared, embarrassed by, disguised, and avoided?

Dr. Levy’s book also prompted considerable self-reflection. As a Baby Boomer who recently turned 60, what are my views about my own aging? How am I complicit? How are my images of aging affecting my own health and well being? This self reflection remains a work in progress—a pilgrimage along my own path to elderhood.



There are some real heroes working in this field. Dr. Becca Levy, Dr. Bill Thomas (founder of the Greenhouse movement and a self-proclaimed Ambassador of Aging), the late Maggie Kuhn who founded The Gray Panthers (an intergenerational advocacy group combating Ageism), Ron Pevney, founder of the Center for Conscious Elderling in Colorado, Ashton Applewhite, and many others are challenging us to rethink and to reevaluate our views of aging.

In my own work with Folks at Home, I have met some of the most delightful, thoughtful, witty, wise, kind, generous, courageous, forgiving, creative, and just plain quality people I have ever encountered... in any age cohort.

I hope this missive prompts us further along the path that experts like Dr. Levy and Dr. Thomas are blazing. We have so much to gain. To quote Dr. Bill Thomas, “We are, all of us, elders in the making.” In other words, these chickens come home to roost. So, let’s “embrace a better story, one with the power to change our hearts and minds (and health) and to enliven our imaginations” (Richard Rohr, OFM).

Thank you, all! It continues to be an honor. —WALL



CALL DATA 

152

Medical
Transports

65

Vendor
Referrals

69

Home Task
Assistance

460

Information



56

Glass
Recycling

299

Pro bono
Calls

125

Non-Medical
Transports

91

Durable Medical
Equipment Checkouts

29

Technology
Support

108

Home/Office
Visits

70

Flu/Covid
Shots70%
INCREASE!

77

Member
Errands

271

Phone/Email
Check-Ins

22

Caregiver
Coordination

52

Pet
Walking

114

Meal
Delivery

1,761

Total
Services

PROGRAMS

8

Social
Gatherings

7

Educational
Lectures

4

Preventative
Health Classes

18

Spring/Fall
Yards Clean-upsLETTER FROM THE
TREASURER

As treasurer, my job is clear in the By-laws. Among a few other duties: "The treasurer shall, subject to the direction and control of the board of directors, have general charge of the financial affairs of the corporation and shall keep full and accurate books of account." Well, not too exciting but necessary. So in doing this there are two things to pay attention to: 1) no funny business in the expenditure department, and 2) all incoming finances go to the proper place, such as a checking account or investment accounts. So as treasurer, I bear witness firsthand to these comings and goings. As a board member and Folks at Home member, I cannot help but to come up with my own observations.

This is what I see, and it's

quite simple and amazing. There has been a tremendous amount of generosity from our giving friends, and this generosity is the gasoline that makes this organization go. Sometimes the monetary gifts add up to more than the amount it takes to keep us afloat and merely scrape by, and oftentimes the gifts are intentionally given to allow us to expand our mission. I can say with certainty that the purpose of Folks at Home is not to accumulate a lot of money. I've been impressed by how the organization has put the funding into such great use. One generous gift allowed us to pay off the mortgage, which allowed us to invest in building maintenance and convert its bathroom to be ADA compliant. Gifts help us to offer more programs, and to increase the strength of our staff.

Another gift allowed us to purchase a vehicle, which increased transportation services by 75% the following year. Each year we are blessed with gifts beyond our expectations. At the end of the year, we are always back down to a few months worth of cash.

When we do the budget, with which I am involved, we cannot take for granted that the

gifts will come in as before and must be very careful to construct a very tight, conservative budget. We have it in our minds that hopefully we can keep the lights on and fulfill our mission. Anything above that, you can be assured that it will be invested within the organization to improve what we are already doing.

—WOODY



SAIL: Stay Active and Independent for Life class.



SERVICES

Medical & Non-Medical
Transportation
Doctor Visits, Errands, Shopping,
Pharmacy Pickups, etc.

Home Care Coordination
Vendor Recommendations
Yard Work and Home Repairs

Durable Medical
Equipment Checkout

Technology Support

Home Visits
By request

Phone Check-ins
By request

Monthly Glass Recycling Pickup

General Assistance
Most Tasks or Challenges

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIPS

*Join Folks at Home
before you need us!*

Sustaining Memberships are a way of joining Folks at Home before you need our services. Sustaining Memberships support Folks at Home while we support our Service Members. You receive access to any of our programs and it's a great way of making sure we are still around if and when you do need our services. Transitioning to becoming a service member is as easy as a phone call. For more information, contact us!

MISSION STATEMENT

Empowering folks to live and thrive in their homes as they remain in the community they love.

Folks at Home

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Sewanee, TN 37375

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folksathome.org

LETTER FROM THE AMERICORPS PARTNER



Hello! I'm Nobue Shinn and from March until August, I will be working with Folks at Home as an AmeriCorps member. I will be assisting with transports, as well as running two art workshops. I graduated from Tennessee Tech in 2022 with a BFA in fiber arts. I am a jack-of-all-trades when it comes to skills in the fiber studio and can do everything from weaving to papermaking to using natural dyes. My specialities are weaving and quilting with an emphasis on color, texture, and

shapes. I'm excited about my two weaving workshops, where we will learn some basic tapestry skills and then experiment with different yarns to create a unique collection of work that will be shown in a small week-long show. Later in the summer, there will be another show of samples and photos from the workshops at Stirling's Coffee House in August. The first workshop will be Wednesdays, March 20–April 10 from 2-3:00 p.m. at the Sevanee Senior Center. I'm so excited to be working with Folks at Home and with all of you!



Nobue Shinn, AmeriCorps Partner
and artist in residence.



Transportation services continue to grow.

Joining the SAIL class has been the most worthwhile action my body has undertaken in a long time! Now in my 90s, I was inclined to walk or be otherwise active only as needed. But in 2024, I decided to MOVE deliberately and regularly. Wall and Vickie have given us do-able exercises and have been patient with us, as we learn the routines and gain strength and agility. Thanks to F@H, I am feeling so much better, both physically and mentally.

—F@H Member

We had a lively discussion following your presentation (to my class). I really appreciate you laying the issue out so clearly! Thank you, Wall! Mission completely accomplished!

—Dr. Deborah McGrath, Professor of
Environmental Public Health, University of the South

Thank you for the compassion and the competence that helps us folks at home stay where we want and need to be. Warm regards.

—F@H Member

BIG THANKS

Victoria Davis and Chris
Asmussen for leading our
Exercise Groups each week.

Matt Costello for managing
our Facebook page.

St. Mark & St. Paul Parish for
letting us use their space.

F@H Volunteer Drivers

Sewanee Community Center

Bonnors and Canale Students
for pet-walking, glass recycling.

ADT Sorority and SAS Stu-
dents for yard clean-ups.

Our Members and Donors who
support our work year after year!

FOLKS AT HOME SPONSORS

Thanks to these organizations!



SEWANEE

The University
of the South

Office of
Civic Engagement