



Hello!

Welcome to our annual newsletter for 2020. As I was looking back at this past year in review, it seems like a decade has passed between the normalcy of the beginning of this year until our world dramatically changed in March. Just think, we held a fundraiser in February 2020 with local organist Karen Beaumont, wearing no masks or knowledge of what the phrase “social distancing” was. Fast forward to mid-year, when we quarantined and tried to figure out a new normal. Today, we all have been reinventing our processes, coming up with new ways to conduct business and our everyday lives. I am amazed at the resilience and creative nature of the human race.

Eastside Senior Services has continued to provide services, evolving as needed. Kelly and I transitioned from working in our St. Mark’s office space to our homes, connecting regularly via Zoom (video conferencing via computer). Rather than holding in-person volunteer inservices, we conducted two Zoom inservices online, one on Ethics and Boundaries, the other on Driver Safety. Many of our client assessments and volunteer orientations have been switched to the phone or computer instead of in-person. Technology has been our best friend!



During quarantine, ride requests were put on hold, but shopping on behalf of individuals dramatically increased. Once quarantine lifted, we continued providing rides with folks sitting in the back seat, masked, and with hands sanitized. We’ve suspended in-person companionship visits, but phone friends and pen pals have greatly increased. We’ve seen a rise in younger volunteers helping us, which allowed some of our older volunteers to take a step back in providing services to help them remain safe. Several times this year, we’ve reached out to those we serve to check in on their wellbeing, to ensure they are able to vote if they desire, and to just to give a friendly hello and listening ear.

We have been so fortunate to sustain our funding in these uncertain times. Our sponsorships remained steady and other donors have been incredibly generous. Our annual flower basket fundraiser was not feasible this year, but we substituted it with a Bayside Floral gift card fundraiser, raising 20% of what we usually raise. We also typically have a large volunteer force gift wrap books and collect donations for Boswell's during the holiday season, but that was suspended. Instead, Boswell's generously shared proceeds for staff gift wrapping efforts, raising more than we would have ordinarily! Saint John's On The Lake awarded us a generous \$3500 grant, as they share with us a similar community vision. Finally, we've expanded our service territory through Shorewood this year with financial support of Shorewood Senior Resource Center. Overall, my heart is completely full with the generous and faithful support to those who believe in what we do. For that - THANK YOU. You have allowed us to continue our services without skipping a beat.

We are optimistically looking toward 2021, with COVID vaccines and some semblance of normalcy on the horizon. Regardless of what happens, we are here for you, and look forward to serving clients and partnering with the community. Thank you for all your support!

Sincerely,

Melissa Meier, Executive Director
Kelly Glostott, Service Coordinator

Eastside Senior Services

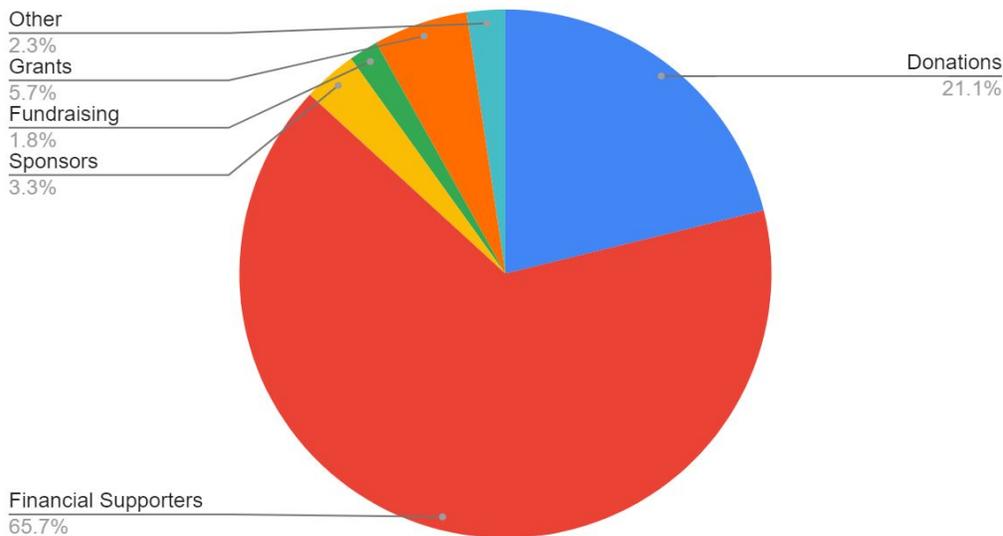
Our mission is to *"help adults aged 60 and older live independently and stay connected to their community on the east side and Shorewood."* With two part-time staff and 73 volunteers, we've served 125 clients in 2020. All services are FREE, but donations are always welcome. We operate on 100% donations, with 12 primary supporters listed at the end of this newsletter. The majority of tasks are provided by our volunteers. Staff help with advocacy, information/referral, and coordination of services. Our loan closet offers gently used medical equipment such as wheelchairs, shower chairs, and walkers for FREE to those who need it, either temporary or permanent. We also are always looking for donated items that you may have around your home that you no longer use.

In 2020, we provided over:

1300 rides to appointments and errands
250 shopping trips
100 light home chores, repairs, and outdoor cleaning
1000 home and telephone visits
Hundreds of information, assistance and advocacy services
200 birthday cards sent to area older adults
Dozens of medical equipment loan closet items

In 2020, we received \$61,022 of income the following ways:

ESS Income



Holiday Happenings

Last year we celebrated the holidays with a client gathering and delivering cards and gifts to all the folks we served in 2019. This year we changed it up a bit to still create some magic despite the pandemic. Thanksgiving did not look the same as previous years for some of us. We called all of the folks we served in 2020 to ask if they would like a hot meal delivered to them for Thanksgiving, and 22 meals were delivered by volunteers.

Rather than our typical gift drive, the community donated \$2680 to put toward Pick n Save gift cards. Volunteers sent holiday cards to those we served in 2020 and each of our 119 clients received a greeting and gift card! Volunteers also called folks to check in, to chat, and to wish each of them holiday greetings. We've received so many thank-you's and touching cards from the clients since. A sincere thank you to all who made these efforts happen, whether you donated your time or your money!

Susan's Story

Susan, a client of Eastside Senior Services, is no stranger to travel and adventure. Born in New Mexico, she moved to Montana to



obtain her Forestry degree. She was stationed in Guatemala, in charge of forestry in the Momostenango province. Later in her life, she travelled to California and Oregon where she worked before landing in Milwaukee.



In 2007, Susan experienced an accident which led to a series of events and procedures. Because of this, Susan is unable to drive. Typically, she would get around by walking, bus, or cab, but since COVID Susan wanted to explore other options. When Susan discovered Eastside Senior Services, she was thrilled. "I don't know how I'd survive without Eastside Senior Services" she explained to me over a phone conversation. Volunteers often drive her to Froedtert, which is a bit far away and is so costly with other services. "All the volunteers are wonderful. Joan (our volunteer ride coordinator) is amazing in managing things, she is very gifted."

Susan participated in a Storytelling project with a UW-Milwaukee student (*see below for more information*). Susan was so tickled on how the student captured her stories in her final product. Not only did she value her weekly conversations with her assigned student, she now has a lifetime keepsake that she can hold close and share with others.

Thank You Sentiments

Throughout the year we get so many beautiful thank you cards and verbal comments that I wish you could all read and hear. One letter we recently received from Mel was just so touching:

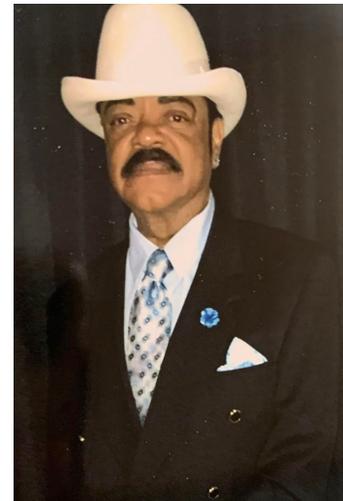
"I would like to give a big shout out to Eastside Senior rides, company, and all the staff.

They all do the most excellent work. The company is run and works very strategically. As a client, I am very grateful for their services being a senior.

The company has a dynamite office staff and drivers. I thank them all for sharing their time with us. Thank you all for your excellent service and your kindness.

May many blessings be upon you. Thank you for the beautiful Christmas cards and gifts.

Sincerely, Mel"



Here are a few other recent comments in cards we've received:

"Thank you for the rides. The drivers have been wonderful."

"Thanks for all your services. Each one is a cherished memory."

"It is very good to know you help. You are a blessing. I have had help getting groceries, dentist rides, food, and bank trips. I am much less worried because you are a blessing, thank you so much!"

"I am so thankful for the services you offer. The rides you are able to give to doctor appointments have been so important to me."



Volunteering Gives Back to the Volunteer

Marian has been helping Eastside Senior Services now for several years. Aside from providing rides and other assistance to folks who need it, she helps one of our clients on a regular basis.



She especially loves to help others who cannot drive anymore. She empathizes, imagining if she were in the same situation, how it would limit her ability to go out and see others or to go to doctor appointments. Marian found it eye-opening how many folks do not have extended family to provide support. Those who never married or had children may have no family around, which limits their ability to socialize or to get help.

In addition to providing rides, she has the privilege of hearing stories folks share. Marian feels that it is a true gift to drive for others - not only is it helping them, but it feeds her soul, giving her such a good feeling as well. Now retired from working full time, it is a way she can give back, "opening her door here and up above."

Marian also has a relationship with one individual she regularly provides companionship or other household support to. She's had some great conversations with her, and while she is there she helps with smaller loving gestures such as taking out the trash to the alley, replacing batteries or lightbulbs, or repotting plants.

Marian values that she can set her own volunteer schedule, allowing flexibility for her life. She feels that Eastside Senior Services is a wonderful organization, fulfilling a great need in our community. She absolutely loves working with Joan, our volunteer ride coordinator who makes it so easy to schedule rides. She is excited to see how more volunteers are getting involved and encourages others to consider "being a bridge in the lives of others," helping maintain independence in their community.

Boswell Books Gives Back to the Community

A few blocks from our office stands a well-known independent bookstore in our community on Downer Avenue called Boswell Books. For a number of years, Eastside Senior Services along with other nonprofits would gift wrap books during the holiday season. While the gift wrapping is free, donations are encouraged and all proceeds go toward the nonprofit who is assisting.



Because of COVID, nonprofits were not able to participate this year. Instead, Boswell Books staff wrapped books for \$1 per book, and \$.95 proceeds went toward Eastside Senior Services. Boswell Books generously raised \$1254 for Eastside Senior Services, exceeding our average annual donation proceeds by over \$200! We were so honored and touched that owner Daniel Goldin thought of us. This program worked so well, Daniel plans on extending similar generosity to other nonprofits in the near future.

Boswell Books is now open for the public to browse, limited to ten customers at one time. Online and phone orders are also accepted. Profits for Boswell's were down for 2020, but they did ok considering the circumstances. Daniel expresses gratefulness for the community support. While in-person book events are suspended, virtual programming is offered with some free and some ticketed events which help offset the cost. One unexpected and positive outcome observed has been seniors and others who have limited mobility are now able to participate in events they otherwise would not have been able to attend.



Remember to support community gems during this crisis. Boswell Books has so much to offer and much heart to give to all of us. If you do not live nearby, it is definitely worth the drive. Check out their virtual events, book clubs, and more at www.boswellbooks.com. Stop by at 2559 N. Downer Avenue to browse their amazing collection, or call in an order at 414-332-1181 for your next read.

UW-Milwaukee Partnerships

Eastside Senior Services is so fortunate to have UW-Milwaukee as a resource right in our neighborhood. For several years, a student group called *Nonprof-IT* has helped us get up to speed with our technology. Students learn how to engage with other nonprofit organizations in executing technical projects while the nonprofit gains new tools to streamline services. In 2020, students helped enhance our website.

The *UW-Milwaukee Center for Community-Based Learning, Leadership, and Research* helps connect student volunteers



to those we serve. Students and staff reached out to clients during quarantine. At least twice a year, we partner with them in Make a Difference Day, during which students help in yard cleanup for those over age 60. They are always looking for ways to partner and are willing to post volunteer opportunities as they arise.

Faculty have also partnered with us this year! Professor Anne Basting connected ten students to reach out to clients for a series of phone conversations which led to a final written storytelling project. Valued relationships were created while the elders shared lovely personal stories with the student, developing into a final lifelong keepsake to be shared with others. Professor Colleen Galambos connected two social work students with clients to learn how to conduct assessments. Lastly, Professor Jeanne Wagner presented a valuable training session to our volunteers on Ethics and Boundaries via Zoom.

We look forward to continuing our partnership and great energy the students and faculty provide!

Resources Suggested By Friends

We love spreading the word on some valuable resources for you to make your life a little easier or more enjoyable. Here are two valuable resources that Eastside Senior Services clients have highlighted to us recently that we wanted to share with you!

- National Do Not Call List: Tired of getting telemarketing calls? Sign up for the National Do Not Call List at <https://www.donotcall.gov/> or call 1-888-382-1222
- Federal Lifeline Assistance Program offers free cell phones and service to those who live in low-income households. This program works with a company called Q Link Wireless. For more information, call 1-855-754-6543 or go to <https://qlinkwireless.com/lifeline/about-lifeline.aspx>

The Eastside Senior Services Board

We are privileged to have an outstanding board, supporting us with their wealth of knowledge and background. Because there is minimal staff office support, we rely on our board to provide assistance with such things as payroll, marketing, and fundraising. Most of our board members represent a supporting congregation, while some are considered members at large. Board members' backgrounds include everything from finance, to legal, to education, to administration and more. All board members volunteer their time - but some of our members even help in the trenches, providing rides and other day to day assistance. Other board members spearhead the primary fundraisers.

We are always looking for individuals who want to invest in ESS by dedicating their time to our board. If you or someone you know would be a good fit, please contact us today. The work is very gratifying, knowing that you are helping provide the community this much needed service.



Board top left to right: Ron Zingler (St. Mark's Episcopal rep); Melissa Meier (ESS Executive Director); Margaret Wittig (Old St. Mary rep); Carol Eschner (Interim President); Connie Goggin (Immanuel Presbyterian rep); Chris Hanks (member at large); Pat Suminski (Treasurer; Three Holy Women/Suminski Funeral Homes rep.). Not pictured: Luci Klebar, (Plymouth UCC rep/St. John's on the Lake); Bob Tittle (Cathedral of St John rep); Dan Ryan (member at large).

Clients Beyond Our Service Area

Eastside Senior Services serves within these boundary areas:

- North to Glendale Avenue
- South to Wisconsin Avenue
- East to Lake Michigan
- West to Holton Street and the Milwaukee River

If you know someone in need beyond these borders - never fear! ERAS is the service provider for the remainder of Milwaukee County outside of our boundaries. Call 414-488-6500.

Of course - we will take volunteers residing anywhere!!

THANK YOU to Financial Supporters

Eastside Senior Services wouldn't be able to do what we do without the incredible support of our partnering supporters. Because we are 100% donation based, every dollar counts. Aside from monetary donations, these partners champion us, help us find volunteers, allow us to represent ESS in ministry events, provide space in church communications, and more. Our office space at St. Mark's Episcopal is generously donated through the church as well. We are so abundantly blessed by community organizations that believe in our mission, and for that we cannot say thank you enough. The following are our primary supporters:

Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Lake Park Lutheran Church
Old St. Mary Catholic Church
Our Lady of Divine Providence Catholic Parish
Plymouth United Church of Christ
Saint John's On The Lake
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
SS Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Shorewood Senior Resource Center
Suminski Family Funeral Homes
Three Holy Women Catholic Parish

Facebook



Like us on Facebook where we provide the latest on agency and area interests for older adults. Also, if you shop on Amazon, consider linking us to Amazon Smile - for every purchase you make, a small donation will be made to ESS!

NOTE: We have a good supply of incontinence underwear. If you could use them, we will deliver them to you:

- ***Small/Medium Men/Women***
- ***XL Men***

Lastly, a Final Request...

If Eastside Senior Services has resonated with you in some way and you would like to be considered a partner with us, please consider offering a donation. No offering is too small. We appreciate all your support!

2021 Upcoming Events

April 17, 2021: Make a Difference Day yard cleanup, organized by UW-Milwaukee (RSVP by April 2)

April 2021: Annual Flower Sale