

Coming of Age

Winter 2009



SENIOR CITIZEN SERVICES AND NORTHSIDE SHEPHERD'S CENTER JOIN FORCES

Senior Citizen Services (SCS) and Northside Shepherd's Center (NSC) officially merged their operations in January. This consolidation fulfills one of the SCS's five-year Strategic Goals of eliminating duplication while maximizing resources within Atlanta's resources for seniors.

Northside Shepherd's Center began in 1976 as part of the Shepherd Centers of America. It started as an arts and crafts class in a church community center. Eventually, it grew into a senior center at Tenth Street United Methodist Church serving individuals from the Home Park neighborhood near Georgia Tech and south of Atlantic Steel. As the senior population in the area decreased, NSC was approached by



the Fulton County Office of Aging and the center was designated as a nutrition site for seniors. This collaboration led to daily lunches for seniors and transportation to NSC provided by the county.

NSC currently serves 20-25 seniors each day who live in rent-subsidized high rises including an additional 21 seniors who receive meals on wheels home delivery.

Seniors age 55 or older are invited to participate. The

median age is 75 and the oldest senior is 102 years old. The seniors participate in fitness activities such as walking and toning. They take trips for bowling, personal needs shopping, or cultural events. Guest speakers give advice on health and nutrition. Birthday celebrations, holiday parties, music therapy, and lunch are also on the schedule.

"Probably the most important service that NSC provides to seniors is socialization," states Bob Wiesman, former Director. "The opportunity to be with other seniors provides the incentive for a senior to get up, get out, and get active.

Being active with other peers is of significant health value in combating depression."

The merger process began nearly two years ago when both Executive Directors

began dialog about the benefits of NSC merging into SCS. "This is a win-win situation," says Jeff Smythe, Executive Director of SCS. "We are pleased to eliminate duplication and ensure greater sustainability for the Senior Center that was operating in our own building." SCS' broad experience running Senior Centers in a manner that has been regionally and nationally recognized complements NSC's decades of experience engaging the faith-based community in service toward seniors. As a result of the merger, three NSC Board members became members of the SCS Board of Trustees: Yvonne Conway, John Peifer, and Andy Smith—each bringing a wealth of knowledge to the mission of the organization.

SCS' other neighborhood senior centers are Auburn, Bethlehem, Cosby Spear, Dogwood, New Horizon, Southeast, and St. Paul. SCS has remained on the cutting edge of senior services for nearly 44 years.

Volunteers are needed at NSC and the other **Neighborhood Senior Centers** to assist with shopping, office work, arts and crafts, sewing, quilting, computer training, literacy advocacy, and personal grooming (licensed manicurist, pedicurist, cosmetologist).

To participate or support call 404-351-3889 or email volunteers@scsatl.org.



Christie Kennedy and Bob Wiesman, staff of Northside Shepherd's Center.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR — JEFFREY M. SMYTHE

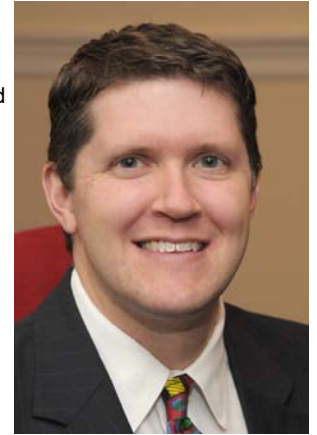
Confidence in Difficult Times

The current economic downturn has indeed had a devastating effect on nonprofit organizations. Attending a strategy session recently with leaders from dozens of nonprofits hosted by The United Way, Georgia Center for Nonprofits, and the Community Foundation, gave me a keen sense that though giving may be down and demand for services may be up, our most difficult challenges are yet to come.

I am more confident than ever, however, that **Senior Citizen Services** will be the strong and senior-focused organization it has always been even during these difficult times. Why?

1. **We have a 44-year track record.** You can be sure that we will continue to be Atlanta's safety net for seniors as long as we are needed. Our organization has stretched each dollar and volunteer hour donated since our inception in 1965. In difficult times we have often been able to programmatically find creative means to meet needs like our "Urgent Meals" program that prioritizes **Meals On Wheels Atlanta** seniors who need immediate and short-term nutrition.
2. **We are mission-driven.** Since we are mission-driven, we have a single focus: seniors. While other organizations change their mission statements to follow funding, our organization is committed to direct services that contribute to seniors' quality of life and independence...and we've done so from the beginning.
3. **We have diversified funding.** Thanks to strategic planning by our Board of Trustees and decades of strong leadership, we receive funding not only from private donors and corporations, but also from foundations, governmental entities, fees for some services, and even rent from use of our building. This ensures that our organization weathers even the worst of economic

storms. Our recent \$1 million award from the Federal Home Loan Bank to be used for home repair is an indication of our solid management strength. In addition, SCS has a small endowment foundation that was created in 1988 to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization. Though SCS has not needed significant assistance in recent years, it is reassuring to know that services will not be dramatically cut even in the worst of economies. Finally, we have created a planned giving program to enable donors to provide long-term gifts through their estates.



Jeff Smythe, Executive Director

Are we experiencing some of the same challenges other nonprofits are experiencing? Absolutely yes. We do have waiting lists for **Meals On Wheels Atlanta** and Home Repair Services and we are doing all in our power to ensure seniors are helped as quickly as possible. But you can be confident that your donations and volunteer support contribute to a solid nonprofit organization with deep roots in Atlanta.

Perhaps the 4th and greatest reason that we have to promote sustainability is this: **We have you.** Without the support and generosity of thousands of compassionate Atlantans we would not be able to fulfill our mission to Atlanta's frail elderly. Thank you for your 44 years of support and your generosity in this time of need.

TAI CHI COMING TO A NEIGHBORHOOD SENIOR CENTER SOON

Center Managers from the eight **Neighborhood Senior Centers** were trained in Tai Chi in December. The training was sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation and was led by a trainer from Atlanta Technical College. The managers participated in two days of training and are required to lead 30 hours of tai chi classes for the center participants before they receive their final certification.

Tai chi is a low impact, slow and deliberate, form of fitness and can be done standing or sitting down. It is an excellent form of movement for people who are wheelchair-bound. The benefits of tai chi include improvement in concentration, stress reduction, breathing improvement, and recovery of muscle control.



Tai chi will be added to the variety of health and wellness programs that are currently offered at each neighborhood senior center.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT SENIOR CENTERS SEE RESULTS

An innovative health and wellness collaborative has reshaped the way that seniors manage their health and chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, depression, hypertension). SCS and a team of collaborative agencies have been able to provide six-week workshops through an evidence-based chronic disease self-management program developed by Stanford University to participants of the neighborhood senior centers.

In the workshop, participants learn how to communicate better with health care providers, manage health information, set goals and deal with anger, frustration, tense muscles, anxiety, and fatigue. The workshop assists participants in making action plans, treatment decisions, and using their mind to manage symptoms.

Virginia A., age 78, participated in the workshop at Northside Shepherd Center. "As a result of the classes, I quit eating so many sweets and I walk more. I feel better because of what I learned in the workshop."

The workshop will eventually be offered at every neighborhood senior center that SCS oversees.

SCS RECEIVES \$1 MILLION GRANT FROM FHLBANK ATLANTA

Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta (FHLBank Atlanta) announced that it will award Senior Citizen Services \$1,000,000 for home repairs for seniors in need. FHLBank Atlanta has awarded the funds as part of its 2008 Affordable Housing Program (AHP) offering.

"Now more than ever, the private investment capital provided by our Community Investment Programs stimulates much needed growth in communities by revitalizing neighborhoods, creating jobs, and supporting economic development," President and Chief Executive Officer of FHLBank Atlanta Richard Dorfman said.



Repairs are slated for low- and very low-income Fulton County seniors (age 60 or older). Senior Citizen Services' FHLBank program will complete 90 homes within 24 months. Repairs will typically cost between \$8,000—\$12,000, ensuring significant long-term improvements to a home.

This funding supplements other home repair services provided by Senior Citizen Services across Fulton County, which assisted more than 450 seniors in 2008 in partnership with the Fulton County Board of Commissioners/Fulton County Human Services and hundreds of private donors and volunteers.

"More than 80% of Fulton County seniors are homeowners—they are the backbone of our communities. The current economic crisis is forcing seniors out of their homes prematurely, however. This investment by FHLBank will allow seniors to remain in their homes and communities for years to come," Senior Citizen Services' Executive Director Jeffrey Smythe said.



To learn more about this program's qualifications, contact Donna Tyler at Senior Citizen Services: 404-351-3889.

Save the Date!!

geneRACtion

5K Run/Walk

May 16 at Grant Park

Benefiting Senior Citizen Services and Rainbows Georgia

THANK YOU TO THE SPONSORS OF A MEAL TO REMEMBER, RAISING MORE THAN \$367,000 FOR MEALS ON WHEELS ATLANTA

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SCS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Federal Tax ID 58-0960309. 100% of your donation is tax-deductible.



Thanks for helping me stay independent!

Please visit www.scsatl.org for other giving options.


Senior Citizen Services
Empowering Independence

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www.scsatl.org

Our mission: To enable seniors to enjoy a high quality of life, maintaining their independence and dignity.

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Brad Catherman (SCS) and Cathy Berger (Atlanta Regional Commission) present Stephanie Kackloudis from A Legendary Event with the Metropolitan Partnership in Aging Award.



Todd Tautfest, Monica Dioda Hagedorn, Mo Akbar, Charlene Crusoe Ingram, and Jack Sawyer pose before A Meal to Remember held last November.



Helen A. dances for joy at the Dogwood Neighborhood Senior Center during the inauguration of President Barack Obama.



Volunteers pick up holiday gifts to go with meal delivery to clients on Christmas Eve.



Atlanta Falcon's Jonathan Babineaux delivers a meal to a Meals On Wheels Atlanta client.

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Send your email address for SCS's monthly e-newsletter to shargrove@scsatl.org.