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VOLUNTEER
IMPACT REPORT



2023 Impact

Through our programs administered statewide, we have been able to help:

80,602 people receive free, non-biased counseling to help navigate their Medicare health insurance benefits.

64,103 people participate in a variety of social, recreational and fitness programs at their local senior center.

34,292 people receive a free, nutritious meal delivered to their home or served at a local congregate meal site.

1,874 people benefit from a ride to essential appointments in their local community.

Our regional partners have expanded the ability to provide programs and service through special projects in their areas by helping:

3,880 people reduce their risk of falls through an evidence-based strength, balance, and fitness program.

2,009 people in long-term care and assisted living facilities receive handwritten letters and cards that lifted spirits and brought smiles to faces.

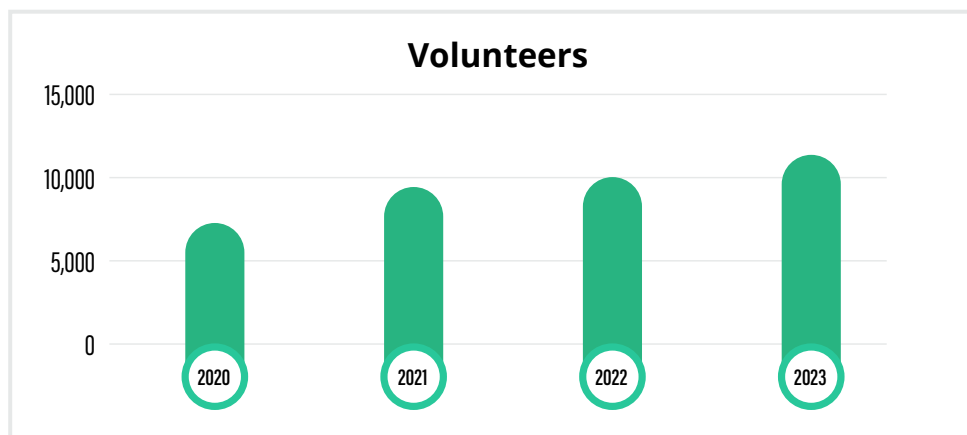
1,617 people unwrap a gift around the holidays to help combat loneliness and isolation.

Volunteers are the key to our success!

Volunteers are the driving force behind our programs. Without the commitment and devotion of our volunteers to their local communities, we would not be able to serve nearly as many people. We are extremely blessed and grateful that every year new volunteers join our programs to continue to make a positive impact in the lives of older adults across Tennessee.

- “When I started class, I was using a walker and could hardly walk. Now, I walk much better and can participate in all exercises!” – Senior Center participant

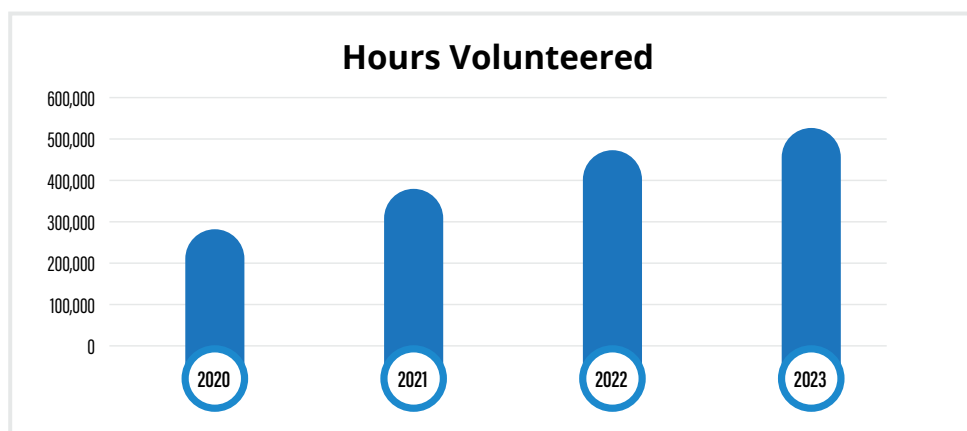
- “The people that bring those meals, they are just wonderful! When they ask me how I am doing, it makes my whole day, and they have smiles. It means so much. I know God sends these people to me. Thank you!” – Nutrition participant

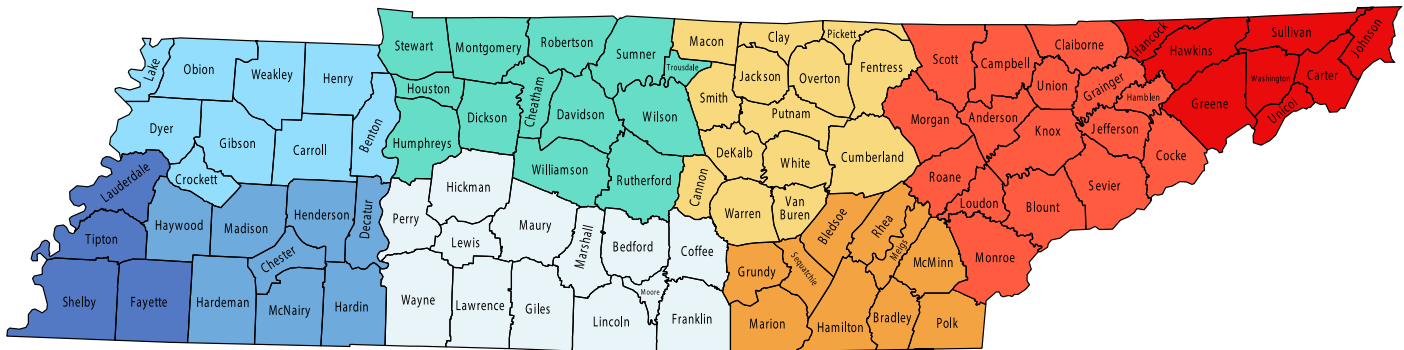


On average, a volunteer with our programs provides approximately 3.5 hours each month to service. It is wonderful that volunteers have chosen to dedicate their valuable time, talent, and resources for the betterment of the older adults in their community.

- “I like knowing I’m serving the community. I love delivering meals to my people and visiting with them. I think sometimes we’re the only person they see that day. It brings me great joy.” – Nutrition volunteer

- “I feel that I receive much more from the residents than the time that I give. It is an honor to be their advocate.” – Ombudsman volunteer





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Dear Volunteer,

In the pages of this report, you will see facts and figures that tell the story that we already know. Community is a powerful thing.

Volunteers in every community across our state give countless hours of their time and resources to help their neighbors. Because of that strong sense of service, Tennessee's volunteer network is one of the strongest in the nation.

In 2023, nearly 12 thousand volunteers contributed more than 530 thousand service hours. Whether making phone calls to help with Medicare, serving nutritious meals, providing rides to appointments, or keeping people engaged in their community, you let someone know that they are loved and valued.

Throughout our lives, we fall into one of two categories. Either we are able to help people, or we find ourselves needing help from others. As a volunteer, you have found yourself in a position to help your community and you are not only answering the call but serving beyond expectation.

You are making "The Volunteer State" a great place to live for people of all walks of life and every generation. I am thankful for you and proud to walk alongside you and serve. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brad Turner
Executive Director

Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN) Volunteer Impact

Program Background

Changing lives one ride at a time. The Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN) is a network of volunteer assisted transportation programs across Tennessee. These programs provide safe, reliable, affordable, door-through-door transportation for older adults to essential appointments. Programs are membership based and there is a minimal fee per ride. Prices vary by region.

Program Successes

While a handful of programs have stopped service due to funding this year, the programs that have continued providing this vital service have continued to thrive. The rides provided by staff and well-screened, trusted volunteers give a sense of freedom and dignity to people who are over 60 and cannot drive. Strong relationships are built between riders and drivers to the extent volunteers will go above and beyond to help riders with needs outside of providing transportation. The volunteer driver may be the only person the rider sees or has communication with, and they are a great source of social connectedness. This program provides more than just a ride to the doctor, grocery store, salon, or pharmacy, it is a lifeline to keep older adults independent and active in their community.

How to Volunteer

Our volunteer drivers do more than just drive: they are a listening ear, a hand to hold, a smile when someone is down, and a friendly face. Volunteers are literally the driving force behind SVTN. Without our volunteers, we would not have been able to assist as many older adults. Volunteers are screened, background checked, and trained prior to taking their first trip. Requirements include:

- must have a working vehicle
- must be at least 21 years old (some programs allow 18+)
- must be able to pass a background check
- must have a valid driver license and insurance

For more information, please visit www.tn.gov/aging.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

1,894

Number of trips provided

35,576

Number of miles driven

543,001

Number of programs reporting

18

Number of volunteers

627

Number of volunteer hours

45,242

Volunteer Ombudsman Representative Program Impact

Program Background

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman program provides Tennesseans an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of people living in over 700 long-term care facilities statewide. Volunteer Ombudsman Representatives (VORs) are an essential part of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman team, working closely with district ombudsman staff to advocate for long-term care residents' rights. One of the primary ways VORs serve residents is by establishing a regular ombudsman presence in their homes, getting to know them and their individual preferences, and modeling good person-centered practices. They also support district ombudsman staff by resolving resident complaints and helping residents to expect excellence in their care.

Program Successes

Long-term care ombudsmen know that having a regular facility presence means residents have better access to desperately needed advocacy services, and VORs play a large role in increasing the number of visits made and lives touched. As the program rebounds from the significant challenges faced over the last few years by long-term care residents, dedicated VORs maintain their passion for advocacy:

"When ombudsmen volunteers explain who we are and what we do, invariably we get a heartfelt 'Thank You!' from residents."

"I enjoy going to my assigned nursing home and visiting with the residents each month."

"There are no minor concerns to a resident. Some concerns may be easier to resolve than others, but they are all important. "

"I feel that I receive much more from the residents of long-term care and assisted living facilities than the time that I give. It is an honor to be their advocate."

How to Volunteer

We encourage those interested to read the VOR job description that is available for review on the TCAD website at www.tn.gov/aging. Initial VOR certification training is 36 hours and includes a mix of classroom, self-study, and field training. Trainings are conducted on an as-needed basis at the district level. All prospective volunteers are subject to a background check and screening for conflicts of interest.

To learn more about and start the process of becoming a VOR, please contact the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman at ombudsman.notification@tn.gov.

Program Statistics

Number of volunteers

63

Number of volunteer hours

1,661

Number of facility
visits by volunteers

1,020

Nutrition Program Volunteer Impact

Program Background

The TCAD Aging Nutrition program provides meals, socialization, nutrition education, and nutrition counseling to Tennesseans aged 60 and over. The intent of the senior nutrition program is to reduce food insecurity, hunger, and malnutrition; enhance socialization; and promote the health and well-being of older Tennesseans. These services are provided in over 200 congregate settings (such as senior centers or senior housing), as well as to homebound older adults in all 95 Tennessee counties. Good nutrition is critical to supporting independent and healthy aging. Many barriers can keep older adults from maintaining good nutrition, including lack of financial resources, poor transportation options, limited mobility, declining physical and mental health, and social isolation.

Program Successes

The TCAD Aging Nutrition Program continues to serve over 3 million meals yearly. This is largely due to the amazing network of volunteers and their continued support of the program and the older adults in their communities. Without the support of community volunteers, programs like this one would not have the impact that it does on older Tennesseans.

How to Volunteer

Many volunteer opportunities are available to work with both our congregate meal sites and our home delivered meal programs in every county statewide.

For more information, please visit www.tn.gov/aging.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

34,292

Number of meals served

3.4M

Number of volunteers

5,222

Number of volunteer hours

261,697

Tennessee Public Guardianship for the Elderly Volunteer Impact

Program Background

The Tennessee Public Guardianship for the Elderly Program ensures the health and welfare of some of the state's most vulnerable residents by serving as the court-appointed guardian for individuals age 60 and over who, due to physical or mental limitations, are unable to make personal decisions regarding their health and financial resources.

Program Successes

After nearly two years, the Public Guardianship Program was able to successfully resume in-person visits as of January 2021. In-person visitation is important for many of our public guardian clients who have no family or friends to visit them. Without visitation they are at risk for the following:

- In 2023, volunteers completed 299 more visits than they did in 2022. This represents an increase of an increase of 71.7% in the number of in-person visitations completed by program volunteers
- 2023 had 24 more program volunteers than 2022. This represents an increase of 35.8% of the number of program volunteers.
- The number of volunteer hours increased by 57% in 2023.

How to Volunteer

A volunteer with the Public Guardian Program must be 18 years or older, have a valid driver license, pass a background screening, and demonstrate honesty, integrity, compassion, and caring for the elderly.

For more information, please visit our website www.tn.gov/aging.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

575

Number of visits conducted

766

Number of volunteers

91

Number of volunteer hours

1225.5

Tennessee State Health Insurance Assistance Program (TN SHIP) Volunteer Impact

Program Background

The Tennessee State Health Insurance Assistance Program (TN SHIP) is a federally funded program that provides free and unbiased counseling and assistance to Tennessee's Medicare-eligible individuals, their families, and caregivers. TN SHIP does not promote any insurance agency, and it maintains confidentiality with all clients. Whether you are new to Medicare or a seasoned beneficiary, trained SHIP counselors can assist you with any and all of your Medicare needs.

Program Successes

This year, TN SHIP volunteers provided our services to Medicare beneficiaries in Tennessee through virtual and in-person counseling, application assistance, and at outreach events across the state. Even though our program lost volunteers this year, our program saw an increase of 9.47% in total volunteer hours and an increase of 11.39% in the number of applications submitted for Medicare beneficiaries to receive assistance with the costs associated with their health care.

How to Volunteer

To become a TN SHIP volunteer, you must:

- (1)** Complete the TN SHIP volunteer application.
- (2)** Attend training with your regional SHIP staff.
- (3)** Contribute a minimum of 8 hours monthly to the program.

*For more information, please email tn.ship@tn.gov, call **877-801-0044**, or visit www.tn.gov/aging.*

Program Statistics

Number of Medicare beneficiaries served

80,602

Number of Medicare low income assistance applications submitted:

5,327

Number of Medicare beneficiaries assisted with enrollment into health insurance coverage

78,559

Amount saved for Medicare beneficiaries*

\$5.1 million

Number of volunteers

416

Number of volunteer hours

31,385

**This data represents cost savings in 2021, which is the most recent data reported by the federal agency.*

Senior Center Volunteer Impact

Program Background

Senior centers are a focal point for local communities, providing information, social opportunities, and vital community services that can help older adults stay healthy and independent. There is at least one center in every county of Tennessee with a variety of games, recreation, exercise, and activities to keep you active and engaged.

Program Successes

Your local senior center is the place to connect with older adults in your community. Many centers are also nutrition sites, so you can enjoy a meal and the company of the many friends you will make. Staff and volunteers work extremely hard to make the center a welcoming place for everyone and assist with unmet needs as best they can. Come enjoy the countless offerings and sense of community at the senior center in your area!

How to Volunteer

There are many ways senior centers can utilize volunteers, ranging from helping at the front desk, becoming a board member, leading classes/activities, assisting with fundraising and special events, to meal preparation and much more. With at least one location in all 95 counties, you would not have to travel far to give back to your community and serve older adults.

Each center has unique volunteer needs. We encourage you to reach out to the senior center in your area. For more information on finding your local senior center, visit our website at:

www.tn.gov/aging.

Program Statistics

Number of older adult participants at senior centers

64,103

Number of older adults who participated in health screening

2,925

Number of older adults who attended educational events

11,270

Number of older adults who participated in evidence-based exercise programs

3,802

Number of older adults who participated in recreation activities

23,761

Number of older adults who were reached through telephone reassurance and visits

4,682

Number of older adults reached through physical fitness and exercise

5,608

Number of volunteers

2,696

Number of volunteer hours

174,176



Special Projects

GNRC Letter Writing Campaign Impact

Program Background

The GNRC Letter Writing Campaign started in April 2020 to increase social connectedness to older adults in the Middle Tennessee area. Since the program's inception, 88,268 letters have been sent to older adults and disabled individuals in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Countless messages have been received about how this small token has made someone's day and the kindness shown has put smiles on everyone's faces.

Program Successes

This campaign has been able to utilize individuals, groups, and corporate teams to continue to expand its impact, and we continue to get appreciative feedback from residents and service coordinators at nursing homes, as well as volunteers who enjoy the experience to do good in a very simple way.

"Words can never express how much hope the letters have provided to our residents during the pandemic. The residents are really inspired when they receive cards from the volunteers. The residents enjoy them! Please continue sending them! Thank you for all you do to make our senior and disabled residents smile!" - Ava

"We all love to get the wonderful notes of kindness and thinking of you. And we really, really do appreciate the effort that was put into providing these cards to our residents!" - Donna

"I enjoy getting to express my creativity through drawing, coloring, and writing letters. I enjoy being able to bring a bit of joy to individuals, while it also benefits me by helping me de-stress. I love that this opportunity brings positivity." - Jaquelin

How to Volunteer

The GNRC Letter Writing Campaign is done year-round, and letters are sent monthly. Individuals, civic groups, schools, and corporates are all welcome to be a part of this impactful regionwide program.

For more information, please email Rebecca Noji at rnofi@gnrc.org, call **615-891-5876**, or visit www.gnrc.org/volunteer.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

2,009

Number of letters sent

23,936

Number of letters sent since the start of the campaign in April 2020

88,268

Number of volunteers

1,831

Number of volunteer hours

9,284

Santas for Seniors Impact

Program Background

For most of us, the holidays are a wonderful time to share the joys of family and friendships. However, this is not the case for many older adults. Many seniors are alone and isolated, especially during the holidays. Several home delivered meal recipients mentioned they had not received or unwrapped a Christmas gift in more than 50 years. In 2016, Santas for Seniors was started as a way to combat the effects of loneliness and isolation.

Program Successes

The initial goal was to collect enough Santa Bags to ensure that each senior on at least one home delivered meal route received a bag. In 2023, 1,617 bags were delivered to meal recipients, as well as other older adults enrolled in the Southeast Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability's Home and Community-Based Service programs. This project has been a great outreach opportunity. Although most "Santas" initially sign up to assist with the giftbags, many of them volunteer in other ways throughout the entire year.

How to Volunteer

To volunteer, please contact the Southeast Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability at **1-866-836-6678** or visit their website at www.setaad.org.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

1,617

Number of Santa Bags donated

1,617

Number of volunteers

1,000

Number of volunteer hours

2,425

Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) Volunteer Impact

Program Background

Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) is an evidence-based fall prevention program that focuses on strength, balance, and fitness with a goal of reducing falls for class participants.

Program Successes

Despite the conclusion of funding, we have continued to see growth in the program due to sustainability measures put in place and to new leadership joining the SAIL team. The University of Tennessee Medical Center has joined the program as the new statewide coordinating agency. Vanderbilt Medical Center has also become a valuable partner for collecting and analyzing program data. These two new partners, combined with the foundation set up through the Knox County Health Department and the East Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability, will allow SAIL to continue its mission to prevent falls in older adults for many years to come.

How to Volunteer

Volunteers in Tennessee must meet three requirements to become a certified SAIL Leader:

- be CPR certified
- have a current fitness certification or equivalent degree
- agree to teach class 2-3 days a week (can be year-round or in 12-week sessions or substitute as needed for an already established SAIL class)

For more information, please contact Debi Tuggle at Dtuggle@utmck.edu or 865-300-3672.

Program Statistics

Number of older adults served

3,880

Number of classes conducted

2,701

Hours of exercise

46,577

Number of volunteers

43

Number of volunteer hours

5,410



Volunteer Impact

Year	Older Adults Served	Volunteers	Volunteer Hours
2023	207,528	11,989	532,505
2022	207,247	10,070	452,899
2021	228,305	9,183	372,733
2020	204,626	7,423	269,435

