



THE POWER OF AGING

"Getting old is like climbing a mountain; you get a little out of breath, but the view is much better"
– Ingrid Bergman



April 2024

Dear Friends -

What does it mean to age in place, comfortably and safely, in Rappahannock? How do you plan for the next phase of your own life and that of your loved ones? What do you and they need now and maybe later?

These are questions asked by older adults that Rapp at Home tackles every day. Our capacity to provide answers has only increased since our founding in 2015, as we have expanded our original programs and initiated new ones. Our membership has burgeoned; we now have over 650 Friends participating in our activities, receiving our services, volunteering, and supporting us with donations and grants. Most are enjoying an associated benefit - making new friends.

Details of our achievements with our key services such as driving, caregiving, and visiting are highlighted in this report, so please read on. We want to mention a few of our newest programs now.

- Our new *Ready or Not* program is helping many of us to think about and plan for contingencies in our life as we age in place. Almost 100 Friends are participating in this important program. Even those who thought they had already planned well have said they've benefited from these group discussions.
- Rappahannock's older adults need better access to healthcare. Through our *Health Initiative*, we've assessed our community needs and gathered regional partners who are collaborating to establish a Rappahannock Rural Health Network. We are developing a plan for collaborating, using telemedicine, and exploring other options to improve access to primary healthcare for older adults.
- We recently initiated the *Friendly Visitor Program* in which volunteers meet with a Friend for regular visits or make phone calls to help address the effects of loneliness or isolation.

Our impact on individuals and our community is achieved only through collaboration with other organizations. We rely on the Regional Transportation Collaborative to manage our transportation services, and with other partners to supplement our volunteer drivers. The annual community Art of Aging Expo would not be possible without the leadership of Aging Together. To address other specific individual needs, we work with partners such as the Department of Social Services and the Benevolent Fund. We coordinate with the Lion's Club for Loan Closet equipment and for hearing tests. We wish there was room to list all of our valuable partners.

Thank you to everyone involved with Rapp at Home, especially our staff, board, volunteers, donors, and partners – all our Friends. We're looking forward to continued success.

Joyce Wenger, Board President

Victoria Laing, Executive Director

Rapp at Home

Rapp at Home's mission is to sustain and enrich Rappahannock County seniors to age in the community comfortably, safely, independently, and with peace of mind by fostering the community support and services needed to do so.

Rapp at Home was formed in 2015 based on the Village model of neighbor helping neighbor. We are one of the few non-fee, rural-based Villages. Instead of relying on dues, we are funded through grants and donations to cover our annual budget of \$250,000.

After nine years in operation, we have grown from 50 Friends (members) to 650 Friends, which is 30% of the senior population in Rappahannock County.



Our Programs



Transportation. The need for transportation in our rural community continues to grow, and last year we expanded our service to meet this challenge. In 2023 our volunteer drivers provided over 600 rides, including nearly 150 in our wheelchair accessible vans, and served over 200 individuals. We provided rides to medical appointments and social events, and picked up prescriptions and groceries for Friends. We have a larger mini-bus that is used to take groups of Friends on outings.

Caregiver Program. We connect Certified Nursing Assistants and other skilled and vetted caregivers with community members needing in-home care and help with activities of daily living, such as light housekeeping, meal preparation, monitoring vital signs, bathing, and ambulation. We have served over 40 clients since we started this service four years ago.

Rapp at the Door. This program was established during the COVID pandemic to engage with older adults most at risk of feeling isolated. Rapp at Home volunteers deliver Kindness Gifts of soup, games, or other small gifts and spend time visiting with each Friend. Because of the popularity and importance of this program, we continue the program and have expanded the frequency of visits.

Safety Support. Rapp at Home purchases and installs—free of charge—highly reflective house number signs for county residents. Since early 2021, we have installed 180 of these signs. In the past year we installed 30 Guardian Alerts—those “I’ve Fallen, and I Can’t Get Up” devices that alert 911 responders to a personal emergency—bringing our total installations to 90. We provide the devices and installation at no charge.

Accessibility. Ease of accessibility for older adults is critical. Partnering with the Businesses of Rappahannock, we are working with individual businesses to improve their accessibility for people using wheelchairs, walkers, or canes, and those with impaired hearing or sight.

Community Engagement



Social activities are essential for maintaining and improving the quality of life for seniors. They provide much more than just a way to pass the time: they contribute to a healthier, happier, and more fulfilling life. Every interaction is also an opportunity to form connections, deepen bonds, and establish long-term friendships.

We provide a dozen social, educational, and health activities monthly. Rapp at Home held nearly 200 activities in 2023 and 1,800 Friends attended these events. Our regular monthly activities include, for example, a grieving support group, a writer’s group, a walking group, and a Spanish conversation group. Our additional activities have included educational talks on geology,

acupuncture, and news reporting; demonstrations such as how to fall and how to use one's electronic devices; and fun activities such as pickleball and happy hours.

Volunteers Are the Heart of Our Team



We could not operate without volunteers. They provide important services and, in turn, receive intangible benefits themselves. Current studies have shown that volunteering keeps a person engaged and gives them a sense of purpose.

Over 80 trained and vetted volunteers supply critical help, like transportation to medical appointments, picking up groceries and prescriptions, delivering Kindness Gifts, making Friendly Visits, or fixing a loose railing or installing a smoke detector.

In 2023 our volunteers drove over 33,000 miles and gave over 3,000 hours of their time.

Our volunteers have made a real difference in the lives of our Friends, for instance:

- A Friend who had multiple health issues but had not seen a doctor for several years was able to make numerous appointments and solve several health problems because of our volunteer drivers and wheelchair accessible vans.
- Rapp at Home facilitated the swift acquisition of a walker to restore mobility to a Friend who fell.
- A volunteer installed a Guardian Alert and made sure a Friend had a walker so she could be released from the hospital.

2023 at a Glance

- 650 Friends engaged in activities, services, volunteering, and donating
- 80 volunteers provided services
- Provided 600 Rides, with 150 using our wheelchair-accessible vans
- Provided 1,000 other services
- Offered 200 activities attended by over 1,800 Friends
- Made nearly 300 Rapp at the Door visits
- Volunteers provided nearly 3,000 hours of their time
- Volunteers drove over 33,000 miles

Board Members

President - Joyce Wenger
Vice President - Ralph Bates
Secretary - Madlyn Bynum
Treasurer - Dennis Barry

Director - Sallie Morgan
Director - Ken Reid
Director - Jean Goodine
Director - Ruth Welch
Director - Harold Beebout

Advisory Committee - Lillian Aylor, Aline Johnson

