



## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

# *Friendship Matters: Spreading Joy and Ending Isolation!*



**CENTER 50+** "Creating a community where seniors can live and thrive for life."





**John Hughes**

Advisory Commission Chair

*At Center 50+, we hold a profound belief: every name tells a unique story, and every story deserves to be heard. By fostering connections within our community, we cultivate relationships that empower us to support one another today, tomorrow, and for generations to come. This is the essence of being age-friendly—embracing the vibrant potential of our future selves while breaking down misconceptions about aging and ageism.*

*In a world where 1 in 4 seniors report feeling isolated, we are dedicated to combating senior loneliness and fostering a sense of belonging. Our commitment to this mission is reflected in every aspect of our service delivery and operations. Together, we are not just addressing the challenges of aging; we are celebrating the rich tapestry of experiences that each individual brings to our community. Join us as we work to create a brighter, more connected future for all.*

*This year's report reflects how this mission is re-enforced in every area of service delivery and operations.*

*John Hughes*



## Mission

To provide life-enriching opportunities for adults aged 50-plus and their families through activities, services, and community involvement.

## Values

Salem Center 50+ is a recognized leader in the community that nurtures a positive, active image to enhance awareness of senior programs, services, and resources accessible to the community.

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by donating: [www.cityofsalem.net/Center50](http://www.cityofsalem.net/Center50)

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# VOLUNTEERS

## Senior Leadership - More Than Envelope Stuffers!

Our 438-plus volunteer workforce supports nearly 200 different programs, activities, and services at Center 50+, throughout the City of Salem, and across Marion and Polk Counties. Each area inside and outside Center 50+ relies on volunteers. They are the backbone of all our operations. They also are the workforce for many community non-profits and organizations. Center 50+ plays a significant role in ensuring that this group remains healthy and engaged in fulfilling their roles and leadership in our community.

*Volunteering can decrease dementia risk, improve mental health, and increase longevity.*

*When older adults play an active role in their communities, they can stay healthy mentally and physically.*

*(National Institute on Aging, 2023)*

### OUR WHY - Health & Community Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering is not just about giving back; it's a powerful boost for health and well-being, especially for older adults. Research from the Mayo Clinic reveals that volunteering can lead to a healthier, happier life. Volunteerism and a sense of purpose are essential tools in combating loneliness and isolation, fostering resilience within individuals and communities. By engaging in volunteer work, individuals create opportunities for social connections, meeting new people and building relationships based on shared goals. This sense of community engagement nurtures belonging, significantly reducing feelings of isolation.

#### Feel-Good Factor

The act of volunteering releases dopamine, the "feel-good" hormone, enhancing positive feelings and reducing stress. This contributes to lowering risks of heart disease, stroke, and depression, aligning with our mission to promote health within the community.

#### Life Satisfaction

Engaging in meaningful work where the community is in need leads to a remarkable increase in life satisfaction and self-esteem. Our volunteers often report a profound sense of purpose, enriching their lives while addressing the needs of others.

#### Social Connections

Volunteering boosts social interaction, creating a vibrant support system based on shared interests. This is crucial in combating loneliness and isolation, which are prevalent issues among older adults.

### Conclusion

In summary, the data from Center 50+ illustrates the profound impact of volunteerism on both individual well-being and community health. Our volunteers are not just "envelope stuffers"; they are vital contributors to a healthier, more resilient, and connected community.

By continuing to foster a culture of volunteerism, we can address loneliness and isolation, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for our 50+ community and their caregivers.

#### Impact-Overview

At Center 50+, our incredible volunteers are making a significant difference every day.

## Volunteers Cont.

► **465**

Dedicated volunteers

► **105,000 Hours**

Total hours of volunteer time donated by Center 50+ volunteers this year.

► **\$3.34 Million**

*(According to the Points of Light Foundation, the national value of a volunteer hour is \$31.80)*

This underscores the priceless contributions of our volunteers.



## Addressing 2024

### We said we would, and we did.

- **Grant Acquisition:** We've secured grant funding for a Volunteer Coordinator position, ensuring our programs thrive and grow!
- **Program Expansion:** We proudly launched a bilingual Spanish-English volunteer program, celebrated during the vibrant Dia de los Abuelos event. This initiative has introduced exciting Spanish-only programs, including SilverSneakers en Español, English language classes, and Spanish Respite services, marking a significant milestone in our outreach efforts to serve our diverse community.
- **Volunteer Placement:** Our volunteer force continues to grow, and we are thrilled to announce new placement opportunities, enhancing support for seniors at Center 50+.

## 2025

### Future Goals for Senior Leadership & Volunteerism

- **Sponsorship Development:** We are on the hunt for sponsorships to expand our volunteer programs, reach more potential volunteers, and organize larger community events that create a bigger impact!
- **Monthly Training Sessions:** We will provide dynamic monthly training sessions for our volunteers, covering essential topics like technology, leadership, team building, they are well-equipped to make a difference.
- **ACT (Awesome Community Team) Expansion:** Our focus will be on integrating the ACT Now team into local nonprofits, amplifying community engagement and support, and fostering a spirit of collaboration.



# Respite and Caregiver Support Program

As we reflect on the year 2024, we celebrate the profound impact of the Respite and Caregiver Support Program on our community. This program not only provides essential support to caregivers but also enriches the lives of those they care for. Together, we have created a nurturing environment that fosters connection, understanding, and respite. Being a caregiver can further your sense of loneliness and isolation. The same is true for someone experiencing dementia- as our disease progresses we tend to isolate and others tend to withdraw. We want to fix that.

## Program Highlights

### Participation and Engagement

In 2024, our program welcomed a total of 1,906 participants, comprising 1,374 individuals in the “Among Friends” program and 532 in “Time with Friends.” This reflects a strong commitment to providing meaningful experiences for both caregivers and their loved ones.

### Average Daily Attendance:

- ▶ Among Friends: 8
- ▶ Time with Friends: 12

### Volunteer Contributions

Our dedicated volunteers logged an impressive 3,141 hours this year, demonstrating their commitment to supporting our mission. Their selfless contributions are invaluable and play a crucial role in the success of our programs.

### Caregiver Education

In addition to respite services, we offered educational opportunities for caregivers. The average class size was 19 caregivers, with our largest class reaching 33 participants in February. We are committed to continuous improvement and innovation, ensuring that our topics and resources remain relevant and beneficial.

### Community Impact

The stress that care-giving can impose on families is tremendous. Our program not only alleviates this burden but also strengthens community ties. The feedback we receive underscores the importance of our services and the positive difference we make in the lives of caregivers and their loved ones.

▶ 1,906

Respite and Caregiver Support Participants

▶ 3,141

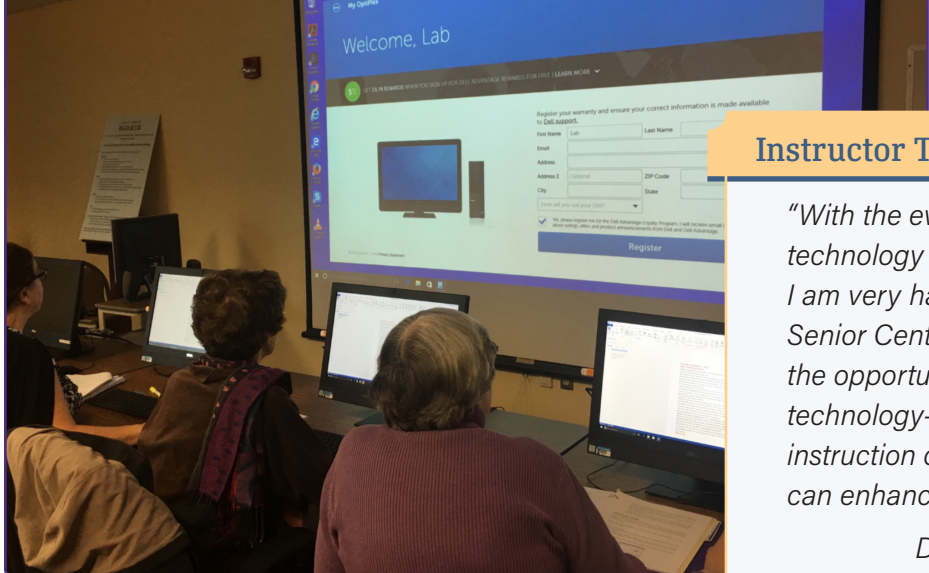
Hours of Respite and Caregiver Volunteer Help



### Caregiver Testimony

One of our caregivers shared a heartfelt testimony that encapsulates the essence of our program:

*“The Respite program saves me! It allows me the time I need to get things done, while my husband is having a wonderful time with a variety of friends and activities. Knowing that Wendy and all the staff are focused on the needs of those attending this program, I can rest assured that Steve is in a safe and secure place. The result is good for both of us—Steve has a great day with his friends, and I have up to ten hours a week to focus on things I need to do to make our lives function in our own home.”*



### Instructor Testimonial

*"With the ever-increasing role that technology plays in everyone's life today, I am very happy to volunteer at the Senior Center. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to help those who have technology-related questions and provide instruction on different ways that technology can enhance everyday life for seniors."*

*Dan Mills - Computer Tech Instructor*

## Lifelong Learning

### ***Lifelong Learning Program Overcomes Common Misconceptions about Aging and fights loneliness.***

Aging is often viewed through a lens of negativity, but it's time to flip the script! Many believe that aging equates to decline, but research shows that older adults can thrive with the right support and opportunities. Embracing your future self means recognizing that every stage of life is filled with potential to grow and learn, joy, and the chance to make meaningful contributions to society. Learning with others combats loneliness.

#### Overview

The Center 50+ Lifelong Learning Program continues to thrive, fostering a vibrant community of older adults eager to learn and grow. Our commitment to providing enriching educational experiences has resulted in significant increases in participation and class offerings over the past year.

### Key Statistics

#### Total Lifelong Learning Classes Held

2023: **611**

2024: **771**

► **26.2% Increase**

#### Total Lifelong Learning Patrons/Students

2023: **739**

2024: **834**

► **12.9% Increase**

## Impact of Lifelong Learning

Research from the National Council on Aging (NCOA) highlights the profound benefits of senior center programs. Older adults engaged in these programs can manage and delay the onset of chronic diseases while experiencing measurable improvements in various aspects of well-being, including:

***Physical Health***

***Spiritual Fulfillment***

***Mental Engagement***

***Social Connections***

***Emotional Stability***

***Economic Well-being***

By fostering connections, enhancing cognitive abilities, and providing a sense of purpose, lifelong learning can play a crucial role in alleviating loneliness and isolation among seniors.



### Instructor Testimonial

*"I keep returning to Center 50+ to teach mainly because of the relationships that I've built with the participants in my programs. I love building connections through art, and I enjoy seeing people connect with each other. The learning process is made easier through mutual encouragement. I've received feedback from some participants that they've built new and rich friendships through attending my watercolor class. I get the unique opportunity to watch individuals try something new, perhaps struggle, but ultimately emerge victorious with a beautiful new artwork in hand! The seniors that participate in my programs at Center 50+ are terrific people, and I am honored to teach and work alongside them."*

*Elisa Mack - Art Instructor*

## Program Highlights

The Center 50+ Lifelong Learning Program offers a diverse range of classes taught by both contracted and volunteer instructors. Our community thrives on the shared joy of learning, fostering connections and appreciation for history and new experiences.

## Conclusion

As we celebrate the achievements of 2024, we are filled with gratitude for our volunteers, caregivers, and community members. Together, we are creating a supportive environment that champions the beauty of aging and the power of connection. Here's to knowing your name, learning your story, and building a brighter future together!

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Let's continue to inspire, uplift, and embrace the joy of living fully at every age!





## Fitness



### ***Center 50+ – Where Fitness Meets Fun!***

At Center 50+, we believe that health and wellness should be as fun as it is beneficial! This past year, we've been on a mission to not only get our members moving but also to create a vibrant community where everyone feels welcome. Let's dive into our achievements and the incredible stories that make our center a special place!



### **Ending Isolation and Loneliness**

At Center 50+, we're not just about fitness; we're about building connections and fostering friendships. Our health and wellness programming is designed to combat isolation and loneliness, creating a supportive environment where everyone can thrive.

Join us in our mission to promote health, happiness, and community spirit! Together, we can make a difference in the lives of our members.

As we look forward to another year of fun, fitness, and friendship, we want to thank each and every one of our members for making Center 50+ a vibrant place to be. Here's to more classes, more connections, and more success stories in the year ahead!

Let's keep moving, laughing, and supporting each other on this incredible journey!

#### **By the Numbers: Fitness Fun Facts!**



► **10**

**Different Class Offerings:** From Zumba to yoga, we've got something for everyone!

► **16**

**Class Time Offerings Weekly:** Because who doesn't love options?

► **300**

**Students Weekly in the Fitness Center:** Our classes are buzzing with energy!

► **Over 700**

**Gym Members Total:** We're growing, and so is our community spirit!

► **80%**

**Gym Members on Medicare:** We're here to support our members in every way possible!

► **20%**

**Private Pay:** A diverse membership means a diverse community!





## The Cost of Falls: A Serious Matter

Did you know that falls among older adults cost the U.S. around **\$50 billion annually**? That's a staggering amount. That's why we're excited about our new partnership!



## A Partnership for Prevention!

In December 2023, we teamed up with **Highway Physical Therapy** and **Northwest Senior Disability Services (NWSDS)** to provide top-notch physical therapy services focused on **injury and fall prevention**. This partnership is a game-changer!

**Whole Wellness Process:** We're with our members from the moment of injury, through rehabilitation, and into a healthier, more active lifestyle.

**Free Fitness Orientation Class:** All fitness center members get a complimentary session with **Dr. Raj Pusuluri, PT, DPT**, a mobility expert. Learn how to safely use our equipment and kickstart your journey to better health!



## Mary's Inspiring Journey

Meet **Mary Mitch**, a shining example of resilience and determination! After a fall in January 2024, Mary realized she needed to improve her balance. She sought out our center and found a supportive community where she felt at home.

**From 1 Class to 4:** Mary started with one fitness class per week and quickly ramped up to four classes and four days in the fitness center!

**Confidence Restored:** Not only has she improved her balance, but she's also regained her confidence in getting up and down from the floor.

**Weight Loss Success:** Mary has lost an incredible **67 pounds** on her journey to better health!

Mary says, "The fitness classes at Center 50+ have been the best thing to ever happen to me!"

### 2024 Outreach

► **4,380**

Homebound/Care Facility Seniors

► **9,460**

Wellness on Wheels 55 visits

► **51**

Friendly Caller Recipients

► **600**

Friendship Boxes & Holiday Gifts Delivered

► **5,503**

Handmade Cards Delivered





## WOW Van

### *We said we would and we did!* 2024 Goals

Expand pop-up WOW van visits to 40 locations and opportunities this year.

#### ► Results In 2024

We surpassed our goal with 55 WOW Van visits this year, including 12 visits to local low-income senior communities!

#### ► Goals in 2025

The WOW Van is set to visit all 22 mobile and manufactured home parks for those 55 and over as part of our Villages Network initiative!

Build on the success of this year's Generation's Camp.

#### ► Results of 2024

We hosted 6 Generations Over Dinner conversations with the help of students from Willamette University and Western Oregon University. These special events foster meaningful engagement and discussion among new acquaintances, friends, and family.

#### ► Goals in 2025

We're excited to launch the Teen Villages Network internship program! This initiative will empower teens to make a difference in their neighborhoods by building relationships and strengthening bonds between generations. They will learn about age-friendly communities, intentional neighboring, and create service projects that support aging in place.



## Pilot Project Summary (2024) Peer to Peer Volunteer Driver Program

### Start Date: Mid-May 2024

- ▶ Goals: Recruit and train 14 volunteer drivers and 14 riders.

### Current Status:

- ▶ Trained Volunteers: 10

### Enrolled Riders: 9

- ▶ Total Rides Provided: 77

### Key Destinations

- ▶ Medical appointments, grocery stores, and access to Center 50+.

### Impact

- ▶ Participants reported reduced feelings of extreme isolation and loneliness after enrolling in the program.
- ▶ The program boosts mobility, improves access to essential services, fosters social interactions, and encourages active community participation.

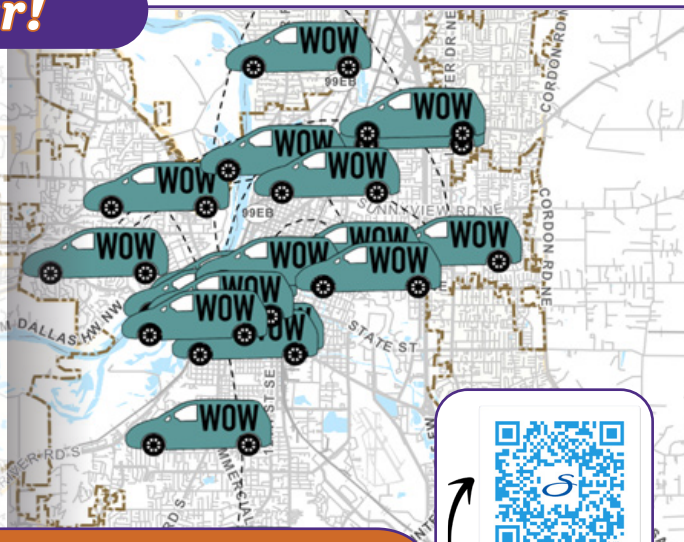
### Technology

- ▶ Most participant-riders reported limited experience with technology and prefer scheduling appointments by phone or in person

### Goals

- ▶ Move from smart scheduling tools to a personalized experience for program participants utilizing volunteers from our Friendly Caller program for dispatch support.
- ▶ Increase our driver pool to enhance availability and responsiveness of the program.
- ▶ Raise awareness of the Volunteer Driver Program among medical and housing providers for individuals needing one-on-one transportation support.

***55 WOW Van visits this year!***



***See an interactive map and read more information about all out WOW Van visits!***

# Why Are We Different?

Center 50+ is recognized as a leading senior center due to several key factors that align with best practices for nationally accredited senior centers.

Here's an overview of what makes Center 50+ stand out:

## 1. Comprehensive Programming

- ▶ **Diverse Activities:** Center 50+ offers a wide range of programs that cater to various interests, including fitness classes, arts and crafts, educational workshops, and social events. This diversity helps meet the varying needs of seniors.
- ▶ **Health and Wellness Focus:** Programs often include health screenings, nutrition education, and fitness activities tailored for older adults, promoting overall well-being.

## 2. Accessibility and Inclusivity

- ▶ **Physical Accessibility:** The center is designed to be accessible to seniors with mobility challenges, ensuring that all community members can participate in activities.
- ▶ **Inclusive Environment:** Center 50+ fosters an inclusive atmosphere where seniors from different backgrounds feel welcome and valued.

## 3. Community Engagement

- ▶ **Partnerships:** Collaborating with local organizations, healthcare providers, and volunteers enhances the services offered and creates a sense of community.
- ▶ **Feedback Mechanisms:** Regularly seeking input from participants helps tailor programs to meet the evolving needs of seniors.

## 4. Professional Staff and Volunteers

- ▶ **Trained Personnel:** Staff members are often trained in gerontology and senior services, ensuring they understand the unique needs of older adults.
- ▶ **Volunteer Opportunities:** Engaging volunteers not only enriches programs but also fosters intergenerational connections.

## How are we different from Recreation Centers?

### We Focus on Seniors

- ▶ Unlike general recreation centers, Center 50+ specifically tailors its programs and services to the needs of older adults, recognizing their unique challenges and interests.

### We Offer a Holistic Approach

- ▶ The center takes a holistic approach to senior care, addressing not just recreational needs but also health, socialization, and lifelong learning.

## Why are these factors important?

### We Can Provide a Better Quality of Life

- ▶ By providing a supportive environment and diverse programming, Center 50+ enhances the quality of life for seniors, promoting physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

### We Are A Trusted Community Resource

- ▶ As a trusted resource, the center plays a vital role in connecting seniors with services, information, and social opportunities, reducing resource and information fatigue. In summary, Center 50+ stands out as a premier senior center by adhering to best practices, focusing on accessibility, community engagement, and professional service delivery. This commitment to excellence not only enhances the lives of seniors but also distinguishes the center from traditional recreation facilities.

## 5. Accreditation and Best Practices

- ▶ **National Accreditation:** Meeting the standards set by national accrediting bodies demonstrates a commitment to quality and excellence in service delivery.
- ▶ **Continuous Improvement:** Regular assessments and adherence to best practices ensure that the center remains responsive to the needs of seniors.

Our final celebration of 2024 was the recognition as the Program of Excellence Award by the National Council on Aging for the work being done through the innovative Wellness on Wheels.

## Conclusion

As we celebrate the achievements of 2024, we are filled with gratitude for our volunteers, caregivers, and community members. Together, we are creating a supportive environment that champions the beauty of aging and the power of connection. Here's to knowing your name, learning your story, and building a brighter future together!

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