

## A Bridge to the Community

**G**eorge is a 65-year-old senior who had been living on the west side of Grand Rapids for many years and, like many seniors who connect with our specially-trained social workers, had found himself in a crisis. The home he was living in, which he could hardly afford anymore on his limited budget, had been sold to a new owner and the rent was going to increase well out of his budget. He had no one to turn to for help until he found Senior Neighbors.

**95%**  
STABILIZED OR  
IMPROVED THE SAFETY  
AND LIVABILITY OF  
THEIR HOUSING



After assessing the situation, his caseworker John was able to connect him with the community resources he needed to find a stable housing situation. John helped him apply for subsidized senior housing, including collecting all the documentation that was needed. George is now happily living in safe, stable, affordable housing

and most importantly, knows he has Senior Neighbors in times of need.

In this all too common example from our Housing Coordination program, Senior Neighbors acts as the bridge for at-risk seniors to the community, to resources, and a much-needed support system. In fact, the overall concept of support and connections to community resources and acting as a “bridge,” is the common thread which brings together all of the many different services at Senior Neighbors. We all need bridges to connect us to our community, and for thousands of seniors in Kent County, Senior Neighbors fills that crucial role.

At times, the connections seniors need are to resources available in the community, as with our story of George, but often the connection involves bringing seniors together. In Loraine’s case, she needed reliable transportation and a friend.



**99%** LINKED  
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO  
MAINTAINING INDEPENDENCE  
THROUGH ENHANCED  
FITNESS CLASSES

**L**orraine had been attending exercise classes at a Senior Neighbors location near her home for some time: she truly enjoyed participating and the benefits that come with regular exercise. Unfortunately, she was forced to sell her home and found herself living in a new area of town. She felt lonely, isolated, and depressed. Worst of all, she no longer attended her EnhanceFitness classes because she did not know anyone at the new location or have a reliable mode of transportation. Fortunately for Loraine, the instructor of her former class was looking out for her and already had ideas.

*Continued on Reverse >>>*

## TWILIGHT SHINES THANK YOU

Thank you to all the sponsors and donors who have contributed to our annual fundraising event, Twilight Shines, to be held Tuesday, November 1st at Watermark Country Club. In particular, we would like to extend a special thank to our Gold Star and Silver Star sponsors. We are truly grateful for your financial support which enables Senior Neighbors to continue enhancing the lives of seniors in Kent County.

**GOLD STAR SPONSORS** **Steelcase\***

DAVID & CAROL VAN ANDEL FAMILY FOUNDATION

*vaf*

**SILVER STAR SPONSORS**

**CAR CITY** Bill and Marilyn Crawford

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ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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Lorraine's instructor, who teaches at several different locations, approached a participant from a class closer to Lorraine's new home and asked if she would befriend Lorraine and help to transport her to the class. She agreed and, after reaching out, a friendship was formed immediately! Not only do the two attend classes together, they also get together for coffee on a weekly basis. Because of this new connection, Lorraine is exercising again, feels she is a part of her new community, and is no longer alone.

At Senior Neighbors our service philosophy is to be a "Yes Agency" where we strive to help seniors no matter the situation they find themselves or their stage in life. We also realize each of our clients is unique and each individual needs something different to lead a happy and fulfilled life. For Joe, who had recently lost his wife, he needed the connection to a new passion and a challenge.



Senior Odyssey participants act out a skit

Senior Odyssey is a competition in which seniors must work together, as a team, creating solutions to scenarios using their own creativity and past life experiences. This unique type of engagement was just what the doctor would have ordered for Joe! After his wife's passing he had been struggling to find his place in the world and those close to him said he seemed "detached and vacant." However, after getting involved with Senior Odyssey, everything changed for Joe.

Joe's children said they were unable to express how much he enjoyed the experience of participating in Senior Odyssey and that it truly meant the world to him. To them, Joe appeared "alive again." Senior Odyssey provided a connection to others that was missing and challenged him mentally. As a result, he is even thinking and talking noticeably clearer and is more alert. In a way, Joe's involvement in the program was just what he needed to reconnect with others and recharge mentally.



For more information about supporting Senior Neighbors, please contact:

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Join us in our mission:  
**Ensure seniors are no longer alone!**

Consider making a donation at [seniorneighbors.org](http://seniorneighbors.org) or sending a check in the mail.



Like us on Facebook and stay up-to-date regarding Senior Neighbors news!



Volunteering is a great way to directly serve seniors and support our programming. We have numerous opportunities.



Leaving Senior Neighbors in your will is a great way to ensure our services are provided for years to come. Estate gifts provide the financial stability we need on an annual basis.



Tell a friend about our great work! We appreciate referrals and recommendations.



**4355**   
SENIORS SERVED

Senior Neighbors is committed to promoting diversity, inclusion and a racism free culture in the workplace and our community.

[www.seniorneighbors.org](http://www.seniorneighbors.org)

\* All figures are from FY15