



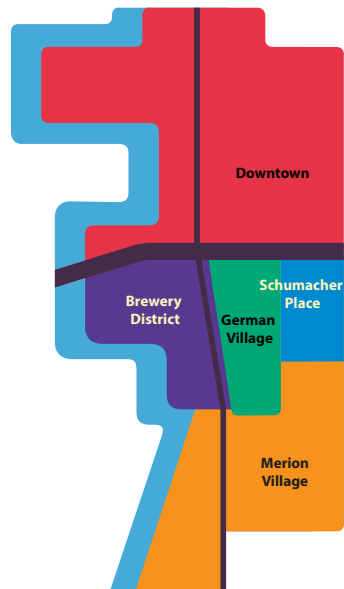
Helping neighbors stay connected, active and independent

IMPACT REPORT 2023



WHO & WHERE WE ARE

Village Connections serves members age 50 and over who want to age and thrive in their historic neighborhoods. It was founded in 2012 by a small group of neighbors in Columbus, Ohio, who invited residents of surrounding communities German Village, Schumacher Place, Merion Village, the Brewery District and bordering sections of Downtown Columbus to participate in the new "Village."



OUR MISSION

Village Connections' mission is to create a supportive community for seniors to age in place by helping them stay connected, active and independent. To accomplish this we must promote the well-being of our membership through a network of local volunteers and activities.

OUR VISION

As an urban, community-based organization, Village Connections empowers and engages its members to lead an active life in their neighborhood and promotes age-inclusive opportunities.



"We have found a friendly and nourishing group at Village Connections."

Ginny & Jeff, Members, Schumacher Place

OUR TEAM

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Neighbors,

The old adage "It takes a village" rang true for Village Connections in 2023. This has been a year of much excitement and tremendous change for the organization. With growth comes change and opportunity. We certainly experienced plenty of both this past year.

Our member services and volunteer opportunities scheduling platform changed to the Helpful Village platform in February 2023. This new system has enabled us to more easily and accurately match members with volunteers and has improved the overall efficiency of coordinating member services. This has allowed Nikki and me to focus more of our time and energy on other part of our mission like fundraising, event organization and checking in on our most vulnerable neighbors.

June found us filling board seats and welcoming five new individuals with diverse backgrounds to join forces with an already dynamic group to help propel the organization forward. The board also elected a new board chair, Kathryn Brod.

Our Member Council reviewed and updated the Policies and Procedures Manual for the organization to ensure that we are providing the best possible services to our members and offering our volunteers rich and meaningful opportunities to make a difference.

Lastly, we relocated our offices to Livingston United Methodist Church. We are very excited about developing deeper ties with the community by being more centrally located within the areas that we serve. Additionally, being housed within the same walls as long-standing community partners like The Charitable Pharmacy and Rosemary's Cupboard has afforded us numerous outreach opportunities.

Sometimes change can be a distraction. However, we have emerged a stronger and more vibrant organization, and we continue to deliver! We have exceeded 2,535 hours of volunteer services, a 27% increase in service hours, increased our membership by 24 new members and added 16 new volunteers. The number of donors increased 6.5%, and donor retention at 60.3% speaks to the community support we have.

It truly takes a village and "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" to make this work.

Your support makes us smile!

Donald Wiggins, Executive Director



OUR LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathryn Brod, President	Cindy Farson
Betty Garrett, Vice President	Brenda Gischel
James Plunkett, Treasurer	Sarah Lutz
William Curlis, Secretary	William Reynolds
Scott Blake	Frances Schneider
Jenny Brehm	Carolyn Workman
Edward Elberfeld	

COMMITTEES

Events	Marketing	Member Council
Finance	Membership	Friendly Caller
Hospitality	Services	

NIKKI YOUNG

Service & Communications Manager

In 2023, our team of resolute volunteers went above and beyond to ensure our members remain connected, active, and independent. They are truly the lifeline of Village Connections. On top of the more than 2,500 hours of service they dedicated to their neighbors, sixteen new volunteers joined us in our efforts.



Every service lent itself to relationship growth as volunteers and members converse on the way to an appointment, jokes shared while raking leaves, and community built at every event. The value volunteers bring to every service they perform, social event they attend, and interaction with one of our members is unmatched.

We are looking forward to making 2024 another fantastic year for all in Village Connections!

OUR GOVERNANCE

KATHRYN BROD

President

Kim Cowie, longtime Village Connections volunteer and board member, informed the board in June 2023 that she would be resigning from the board and her position as board chair. A career opportunity would require her and her husband, Jim, to move to a different city.

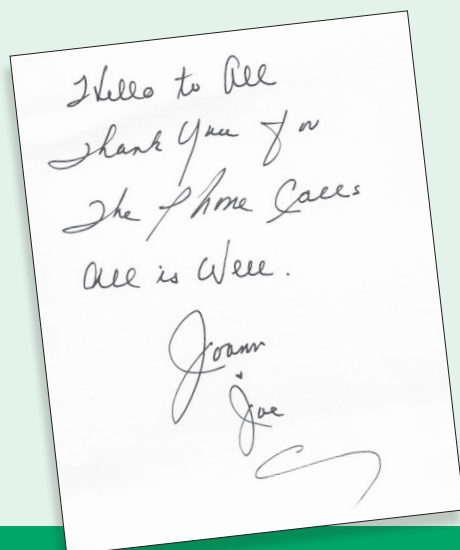


Kim led the organization with a tireless energy and passion to ensure that Village Connections was a positive force in the lives of its members and volunteers. Kim was also always ready to roll up her sleeves and get to work, whether it was fulfilling a last-minute service request, helping out during yard cleanup, or brainstorming with Donald and the board to solve a problem. Under Kim's watch the organization accomplished much, and we are profoundly grateful to her.

When I was approached about joining the board as chair, I knew there were big shoes to fill. But during my career as an advocate for the aging population, and those who care for them, I have seen firsthand the impact that an organization like Village Connections can make. I was honored to be asked, and agreed to try my hardest to continue the trajectory of growth and progress that Kim had helped launch.

In my brief time as board chair, I've been astounded by the commitment of the board members, the staff and the community. We are working to ensure that Village Connections has a plan that establishes a vision and builds a foundation for the future. As our population ages, Village Connections will play an important role in keeping our friends and neighbors—and us—in our homes.

With the expertise of our strong staff, we look forward to growing our commitment to the five neighborhoods we serve—providing even more services, offering more opportunities for social engagement, and building new and deeper relationships with members, volunteers, and community partners. We are so fortunate that each of you understand the importance of the work we do. We love seeing our mission and purpose come alive in serving our neighbors—new and old!



ALWAYS IMPROVING



LEARNING FROM OUR MEMBERS

In 2023, we enlisted the help of one of our wonderful volunteers to develop a member survey. The goal was to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our members, learn what they value most about our organization, and see what ideas they have for improving the organization. During the December meeting, the board heard the results from the survey.

What do you like about Village Connections?

- Service Support
- Friendships and Staying Connected
- Volunteers and Staff
- The Mission

What is your favorite service?

- Transportation
- Social Activities (brunches, lunches, happy hours, holiday events)

In addition to learning what we already do well, members did suggest several ideas for new services or how we might enhance the services we already provide to make them even more valuable. We are discussing how we can incorporate those ideas, such as developing additional affinity groups in 2024.

Member comments from the survey:

"I don't feel alone anymore."

"It's the only way to go, neighbors helping neighbors."

Thank you again for all you
do. Janet and I appreciate all
you do for the neighborhood.
Sed Whitten

DELIVERING VALUE



HELPING SENIORS STAY IN THEIR HOMES

Each day, we all get older, and with each day we get closer to needing more support from our family, friends and neighbors. One of the greatest accomplishments we have as a Village is that we are able to help our more experienced neighbors stay in their homes.

Whether it's shoveling snow, grocery shopping or offering friendly conversation, our organization provides services that keep seniors connected, active and independent.

With the rising cost of living, and many of our members having limited resources, we are able to help them make the most of their dollars through the services we provide. We say it all the time—our volunteers are what make the work we do possible. Village Connections provided nearly 2,535 hours of services in 2023 with a full-time staff of just two individuals.

For a \$500 individual annual membership, our members have access to services that would cost several times that amount. Your support makes all of this possible, whether you provide your time, your dollars, or both.

If you want to learn more about ways to support Village Connections, use this QR code.



"My membership with Village Connections supports me aging in my own community—through facilitating friendships, organizing social activities, and providing volunteers to help with the daily tasks of living."

John, Member, Brewery District

STAY CONNECTED



1,079 TOTAL TRANSPORTATION HOURS

Transportation is our most requested service at Village Connections, accounting for 84% of member requests in 2023. Our volunteers provide rides not only to medical appointments, but also to social and recreational activities, the airport, the grocery store, the gym, and more. Transportation services allow our members to remain active, healthy, and engaged in the community.



403 HOURS OF TRANSPORTATION TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Access to healthcare is a crucial part of healthy living, and transportation can be a large barrier to receiving care. Our members have access to transportation for their medical appointments across central Ohio. If needed and/or desired, volunteers can stay with a member for the duration of the appointment, offering support and a second set of ears.



422 HOURS OF TRANSPORTATION TO VILLAGE CONNECTIONS' EVENTS

For our members, staying connected is obviously very important, as is reflected in the number of hours we have provided transportation to social events. Members and volunteers develop relationships by gathering at these events. Keeping our members connected is a core value of our work.



"Village Connections is an AMAZING thing. I not only get transportation but have a built-in social life as well. I greatly appreciate all the generous volunteers."

Tiny, Member, Merion Village



255 HOURS OF TRANSPORTATION TO PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

Members can maintain their independence in their communities, where they are comfortable and familiar. Through our volunteers, they can rely on transportation to other appointments, physical activities, and more.



131 HOURS OF GROCERY SHOPPING

Grocery shopping is a crucial service that helps our members stay healthy. While some members prefer to give their lists to a volunteer and have volunteers shop for them, other members like getting out in the community and shopping alongside a volunteer.



315 DELIVERIES

Throughout the year, our volunteers find many ways to make our members feel special. Our supper club gives our members a home-cooked meal (that is typically ample for two meals) once a month and has seen a 22% increase in participation in 2023. Members also receive birthday cakes on their special day, holiday gifts, and a Christmas Eve dinner for those who want to participate. These are just a few examples of how we support our more experienced neighbors.



STAY ACTIVE



120 RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL, AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Members tell us they felt connected with each other because of the numerous social offerings we provide. Every week, there is a planned activity. The calendar includes lunches, brunches, coffee meetups, social hours, porch parties, Walking Club, Hooks and Needles, and the new Euchre Club. These opportunities lay the groundwork for members, social members, volunteers, and staff to gather, have great conversations, and build cohesive relationships.



COFFEE MEETUPS, BRUNCHES, AND PORCH PARTIES, OH MY!

Sharing a cup of coffee, glass of wine or a meal is one of the best ways to connect with others. The conversation and shared experience help bring everyone together in the moment. At Village Connections, we not only strive to fulfill physical tasks for our members but also provide them with meaningful, emotional, and social connections as well.



HOOKS AND NEEDLES

We also give our members opportunities to live the “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” value. Our Hooks and Needles group this year crocheted holiday gifts for our members. When they weren’t working on their own scarf or blanket, the group made sets of coasters for our members to let them know that someone was thinking about them during the holidays.



“Village Connections isn’t just about satisfying a need; it’s about creating community.”

Ruth & Bill, Members, German Village



STAY INDEPENDENT



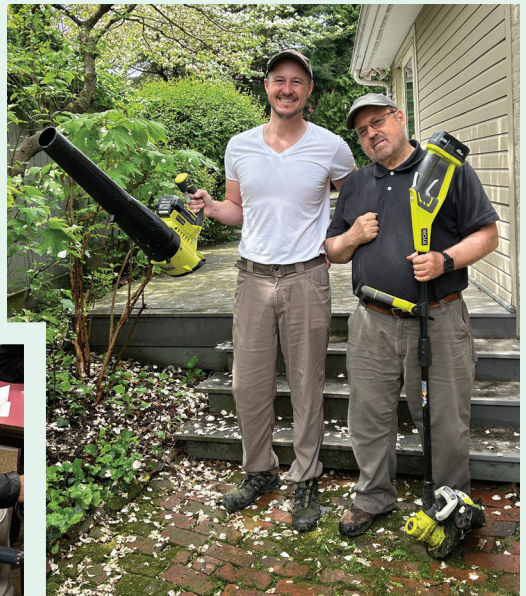
99 HOURS OF HOME REPAIRS AND TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE

Volunteers help our members stay safe at home by replacing light bulbs and batteries in smoke detectors. They also offer technology assistance with computers, TV, internet, and cell phone issues.



434 HOURS OF COMMUNICATION

Ensuring individuals are connected to others and their communities is vital to healthy aging. Members receive monthly newsletters, phone calls from volunteers and other members, friendly visits, and personal notes. We help build community through volunteers and other members as Village Connections lives the Neighbors Helping Neighbors model.





NOT ALL HEROES WEAR CAPES SOME CARRY RAKES AND SNOW SHOVELS



256 BAGS OF LEAVES RAKED

106 HOURS VOLUNTEERED FOR LEAVES RAKED
AND SNOW SHOVELED

Our yard clean ups and snow removal services help keep members and those who care for them safe at home.



"Now more than ever we need people to connect with. I feel like I'm a part of a group that cares for and supports one another because all we have is each other."

Malcolm, Member, Downtown

POWER OF VOLUNTEERS



TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS IN 2023: **2,535**

The current estimated national value of each volunteer hour is **\$31.80**

This makes the value of our total Volunteer Hours: **\$87,000***

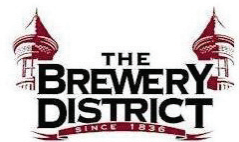
In addition to their time, Village Connections receives more than
\$5,000 of other in-kind gifts from volunteers.

Village Connections,
Thanks so much for all
your perks, I really enjoyed
the Bundt cake for my Birthday!
It's nice to know I can always
call you if I need something.
Your services are so appreciated!
Always,
Karen



*Source: Independent Sector ([IndependentSector.org](https://www.independentsector.org))

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*Denotes Volunteers

Donations reflect January -
December 2023

Financials available upon request

WE'RE CONNECTED!



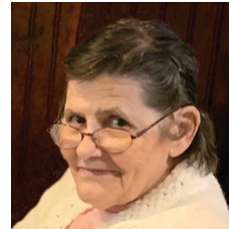
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Liese Kuehn



Pat Webster

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Thank you to all who have given so generously this past year. If you have not yet had an opportunity to support the organization please consider volunteering or making a donation. Thanks for being great neighbors.



Helping neighbors stay connected, active and independent

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