

December 2021



TOP 10 THOUGHTS ABOUT SHEPHERD'S CENTERS IN 2021

As we approach the end of another year, we see a variety of top 10 lists for just about everything. There is even a top 10 of the top 10 lists.

These types of lists are a way to define what matters to us and what we expect of our culture. Equally important, these types of lists are

nostalgic and futuristic. They provide helpful summaries of what's happened throughout the year and give us a reason to look ahead. One "listologist" (yes, there is such a thing) calls top 10 lists "predictions of memories that will last."

So, in this vein, I offer my top 10 list of what we may want to remember about Shepherd's Centers from 2021. In no particular order:

10. Technology—we continue to overcome the hurdle of technology by teaching older adults how to use tablets, computers, software, and apps to better connect them to a myriad of online opportunities, such as accessing services to socialization to lifelong learning classes. Technology also is being used to improve efficiency with Center operations.

9. Intergenerational services—With 100-year lives, five generations at work at the same time, and more older people than younger ones, we know that our future will be more multigenerational. While not a new concept to Shepherd's Centers, we are utilizing younger adults as volunteers in more ways to the delight of older adults. Linking the generations is another way to create a better future for us all.

8. Mental Well-being—COVID-19 and social isolation have been called twin pandemics. A bright spot of the pandemic might be that it put a spotlight on social isolation. We all have stories from participants about how Shepherd's Center programs "saved their life," and now we have data to support these claims. The DSSI is a validated tool for measuring social isolation and well-being and early reports show promising results. With data to document our outcomes, we are better positioned to engage more funders and more volunteers.

7. Network—Charitable nonprofits embody the best of America but over the past 20 months, we've experienced constant change and uncertainty. And instead of being pulled apart by one crisis after another, we pulled together to seek and share solutions. Our network is our village. Working together, we support one another and all Centers to operate at the highest level.

6. Ageism—much of our society continues to adhere to outdated stereotypes about older people, which fuels isolation and marginalization in a lot of communities. By coming up with meaningful ways to involve older people in the community through service and social events, we not only help them maintain a sense of identity and self-esteem but also tap into the wealth of knowledge and experience they have to offer.

5. Religion—we are rooted in the philosophy of what all religions have in common, and that's a mandate to do good work. Religious practices have many benefits to individuals and communities and are linked to greater generosity in charitable giving and greater compassion to help one's neighbors. It's been suggested that we recommit to our religious roots, not to proselytize but to bring people together for our common purpose of connecting older adults.

4. Mobility—The number one support service provided by our network is volunteer driver services. We know that losing the ability to drive is often one of the hardest losses an older adult experiences. With our caring volunteers, older adults who no longer drive can still take part in activities they enjoy and access critical medical care and other life-maintaining activities to continue living independently and connected to the community. The new Volunteer Driver Program TurnKey Kit is one way we are helping more older adults in more communities get to where they want to go.

3. Volunteers—one of our most valuable resources, our volunteers contribute an estimated 660,000 hours of service. At the current national rate of volunteer time, this equates to more than \$18.8 million in services contributed to communities at no cost to individuals, government agencies, or health care institutions.

2. DEI—we have long-held values of inclusion of all individuals, yet we do not look like diverse organizations. We offered an 8-week training on DEI to better understand our bias and gain knowledge and tools to equip us for this journey to create more inclusive cultures with our Centers and network.

1. You—the dedicated leaders of Shepherd's Centers are superheroes. You bring your heart and energy every day to advance our shared mission. And while you act locally, you think nationally by sharing your experience to motivate and inspire network colleagues so that we all succeed. Thank you for all you do!

Looking forward to an exciting 2022 with you! Happiest of Holidays!

Sarah Cheney

NUMBER ONE WISH

On our wish list this holiday, we're asking all affiliates to please add SCA to your distribution list to receive your newsletters and announcements. We want to stay apprised of the many exciting things you are doing and read about your accomplishments and events. You might even find your Center spotlighted in this monthly network newsletter. If we can be so bold, please put three of us on your list: [Aisha Safir](#) (welcome to our new part-time office coordinator), [Teresa Davis](#), and [Sarah Cheney](#). This is one of the best ways for us to learn about the good work you are doing.



TIP TOP

The nation's 2,650 YMCAs serve 11 million people in 10,000 communities and are spread across all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Approximately 4.1 million shelter animals are adopted annually. In 2020, Goodwill Industries placed 126,938 individuals in jobs.



What did the Shepherd's Centers Network accomplish? This is the question we are asking each affiliate. You have valuable data to share with your community, and we want to take it one step further to share the collective impact of our network. We know we are stronger together and data demonstrates this point effectively to all stakeholders.

With guidance from an advisory council of Center leaders, we have now standardized metrics. For example, we have a consistent demographic profile for all involved, we have a uniform way to talk about classes and rides, as well as a meaningful value of volunteer time. At the end of the year, we will be asking each center to complete a paper or electronic survey with information on their programs.

This data will help us collectively and individually attract more funding, prove our impact, tell our stories, make decisions, and improve our effectiveness. We are [sharing the survey](#) with you now and encouraging you to schedule time to report back your information by January 31, 2022. If you have questions about this form, please reach out to [Sarah](#).

TOP COMMITMENT

We are excited to announce the launch of the **Volunteer Driver Program TurnKey Kit**, a comprehensive, online resource developed through decades of experience.



With more than 1 in 5 older Americans 65+ not driving, the need for services is critical to ensure access to medical care, grocery shopping, and life-enriching social opportunities. The Shepherd's Centers of America network is committed to providing volunteer driver services to support older adults living in their own homes and communities. That's why, with leadership from Dr. Helen Kerschner, we are honored to offer a revised and expanded Volunteer Driver Program TurnKey Kit to enhance capacity of existing programs and launch new programs in unserved communities. This TurnKey Kit offers informational and technical materials related to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of volunteer driver programs. Included are new and revised fact sheets and exercises, educational materials, survey instruments, workbooks, publications, and risk management resources.

This is a free resource for Shepherd's Centers that can be accessed through the TurnKey Kit portal at the bottom of our [home page](#).

TOP OF THE CLASS

In December, **Shepherd's Center of Greensboro (NC)** is offering seven special classes through their Zoom interactive classroom. These **classes are free and open to anyone** as a way to keep participants' minds active and spirit lively during this short time between their regular fall and winter 6-week sessions.



Check out the calendar of classes [here](#). In addition to a few favorite presenters, they are featuring several new speakers and instructors through their partnership with **Shepherd's Center of St. Andrews (SC)**. The Center encourages its folks to share this invitation with others as an opportunity to experience Adventures in Learning and check out classes for free.

The partnership between Greensboro and St. Andrews is of special interest. They are in different states, 3 hours apart. During the pandemic, they connected and now share instructors for greater variety in their offerings.

You also may want to check out the class offerings of **LifeQuest (AR)** for their winter 2022 session. They have the largest Adventures in Learning program in the network and plan to offer in-person, virtual, and hybrid classes for the upcoming session. Learn all about their winter session [here](#).

FROM THE TOP

Raising awareness of the Shepherd's Center name and network was a highly ranked desire in the recent survey for SCA's strategic planning. While there is no strategy that will bring overnight success, we do have a few no-cost suggestions each affiliate might consider as a way to elevate awareness of our collective and individual efforts. We've created a [checklist](#) of simple things each affiliate can do to raise awareness of our mission.



TOP PRIORITY

A 2,826-person AARP survey showed that the number of older adults choosing to age in place has stayed consistent at about 77% over more than a decade, with the COVID-19 pandemic apparently having no effect on it. "It's really important that we understand what people's housing preferences are, what they want, what they need, and how well their options are meeting their needs," said AARP vice president Rodney Harrell.



With an overwhelming majority of older adults wanting to age in community, the need for services provided by our Shepherd's Center network continues to grow. Read more about the latest survey [here](#).

TOP PICKS

On Giving Tuesday (November 30 this year) generosity lit up the world. What started in 2012 as a simple idea—a day that encouraged people to do good—has grown into a worldwide phenomenon inspiring millions of people to give back and reach out in kindness each year.



Giving Tuesday reports that people contributed \$2.7 billion to U.S. nonprofits and community organizations in 24 hours on #GivingTuesday 2021—a 9% increase from 2020. Volunteering on the day increased by 11% and gifts of goods (clothes, food, supplies, etc.) saw an 8% increase compared to 2020.

A number of Shepherd's Centers rolled out different strategies and campaigns. Here are three of our favorites:

- **Shepherd's Center of Charlotte (NC)** included data about their services but best of all they included a [video testimonial](#) from a board member.
- **Shepherd's Center of Hamilton County (IN)** included a [video spotlighting a family's story](#) of how Shepherd's Center "opened up a whole new world."
- **Shepherd's Center of Webster-Kirkwood (MO)** used [testimonials from participants](#) to highlight the good work and value others find in being involved with the Center.
- **Kinship Center (LA)** outlined the [need for support](#) and shared one member's story of feeling anxious and isolated before finding the Center and now actively involved in meaning programming.

TOP NOTCH

November is national family caregiver awareness month. Caregiving can be a blessing, a source of connection. But caregiving may also involve sacrifice—having to choose between relationships, jobs, work, a career, and caring for a loved one.



Shepherd's Center of Greater Winston-Salem (NC) honors, supports, and cares for caregivers all year long with a variety of offerings.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week course offered quarterly and designed to help caregivers recognize their own self-care needs. The weekly sessions guide participants in reducing stress, improving self-confidence, managing time, setting goals, and problem-solving. Local resources are shared in each session.

Family Caregiver Support is a program allowing volunteers to provide brief respite for caregivers through social phone calls, companionship visits, and monthly caregiver activity packs. Volunteers providing these services are background checked, trained, and supported. Registration in the program is based on care recipient qualification and volunteer availability.

It's All About You is a collaborative effort among the Shepherd's Center, ComForCare Home Care of Winston-Salem, and Trinity Presbyterian, providing occasional outings for caregivers as well as monthly "My Time" email newsletter for caregivers.

In addition to these resources, the Center is well connected with all of the community agencies serving older adults.

NUMBER CRUNCHER

Being able to explain the impact of your volunteer services can help you more accurately paint a picture of your volunteers' efforts and help you keep key stakeholders apprised of progress and achievements. However, measuring volunteer impact has long been a challenge. There are several strategies for measuring volunteer impact.



One basic way is to equate the economic value of a volunteer's work with hourly wages for similar work in paid jobs. This can offer some valuable information and is a quick and easy way to estimate dollar values. First total all volunteer hours, regardless of the role of the volunteer. Then, look up the estimated value of volunteer time in your state [here](#). Then, plug in the numbers with this formula:

Total volunteer hours x \$volunteer rate = \$value of volunteer effort

A more robust way to measure volunteer impact is to calculate the return on investment (ROI). This approach can have the added benefit of taking into consideration factors beyond volunteer hours. This calculation generates a simple statement of value: for every \$1 spent on volunteer support \$X is returned.

Volunteer engagement expert Tobi Johnson offers a worksheet and detailed example for determining the ROI of your volunteers. [Check it out here](#). It also is available the E-Exchange. Volunteers add so much more than an extra pair of hands to your Shepherd's Center.

FAVORITE NEW PLACE

Shepherd's Center of Kernersville (NC) is settling into their new home, in a building they own. They are one of three Shepherd's Centers that own their building (first was **Shepherd's Center of Winston-Salem** also in NC and **Northland Shepherd's Center** in Kansas City).



This move enables the Shepherd's Center to bring the activities of their Senior Enrichment Center and their main administrative offices all under one roof. They were able to purchase the property due to the generosity of donors during the last twenty years without undertaking a capital campaign. To develop the new facility into an innovative space, they have created a Unity Fund designed to aid in the update and renovation of the building and to furnish the space so it can be a top resource for the community. Congratulations Shepherd's Center of Kernersville!



- **December 14** at 3:30 pm ET/2:30 pm CT/1:30 pm MT/12:30 pm PT
Network Roundtable, an informal time to connect with peers around the network to ask questions and share ideas. No registration required. Join on Zoom here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83551123399pwd=a0YvZHVva3JPZ1M0cUdQZDdnYVRUQT09>

- **January 11, 2022** at 3:30 pm ET/2:30 pm CT/1:30 pm MT/12:30 pm PT
Network Roundtable, an informal time to connect with peers around the network to ask questions and share ideas. No registration required. Join on Zoom here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83551123399pwd=a0YvZHVva3JPZ1M0cUdQZDdnYVRUQT09>

- **January 27, 2022** at 3:00 pm ET/2:00 pm CT/1:00 pm MT/12:30 pm PT
Webinar: *Walking in Balance*. Craig Greening and Bob Pirner have used Native American philosophy to guide nonprofits for decades. Many of the techniques and strategies they use are in their book, *Walking in Balance* (order the book here and be prepared to get the most out of this exceptional presentation). They will be joining us live to show how Navajo and Lakota approaches to leadership will help you be a more effective executive.

- **February 15, 2022** at 3:30 pm ET/2:30 pm CT/1:30 pm MT/12:30 pm PT
Network Roundtable, an informal time to connect with peers around the network to ask questions and share ideas. No registration required. Join on Zoom here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83551123399pwd=a0YvZHVva3JPZ1M0cUdQZDdnYVRUQT09>

- **February 24, 2022** at 3:00 pm ET/2:00 pm CT/1:00 pm MT/12:30 pm PT
DEI Training: Follow-up session with Aimee Bellmore to share ideas, progress, and challenges in creating more inclusive community centers.

We welcome your suggestions for speakers and topics. Contact [Sarah](#) to share your ideas.