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| **Aging Matters*****Celebrating Aging for 50 Years*** |

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With age, many individuals lose connections with family, friends, and the community. Loneliness and isolation affect one-third to one-half of older adults. Lack of social connection heightens health risks as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Furthermore, social isolation increases vulnerability to elder abuse. [**Learn more about the facts of social isolation among older adults here.**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001uo_oiOxrns3648_swcP7RbHVNP7vuXFB64_IgcKdSnvTf5ZjHFRRZfyyIV6OZjs0Qwuy--WTzY-cqB74LhqEPe_Qz2wCDCT7d3RA413X2iIeFSBSSPizQVBEwBg8EI_lYYACX5sIs7XsBYwozYwIajrAF0XhYlk030dSvngNC5UW91eoDtImEX1DqpFbQKm5jb2kVdCaE6m6GOPH0qwWk0HHLibFoP3CJVuqNMw8xhg=&c=KjgSkwochYov8sHDX-lbue0naybj7igjD7YLjRzA74FHfZbjkqQdyg==&ch=tad0WLNSfb9bemAlwCe2nCODkIWHXnsjNNCV-JjSzNiCGUtCVKsaVQ==)    Shepherd’s Centers offer various social and educational services that build community connections and allow older adults to age in place with dignity. Experience any one of the in-person or online classes and it’s impossible not to see and feel the incredible enthusiasm for lifelong learning participants share. Subjects cover a range of topics: computer and technology, literature, music and art appreciation, "how-to," historical events and figures, and much more. The outstanding courses and topics, coupled with unforgettable camaraderie, keep attendees coming back year after year.  Additionally, one of the many benefits of volunteering with Shepherd’s Centers is the lasting friendships that develop, the enjoyment of new and different experiences, and the physical and mental health advantages. Volunteering is an energizing way to do something worthwhile for someone else. These opportunities for learning, serving, and connecting with peers and the community are what Shepherd's Centers have been about for 50 years. We work to increase social connectedness by addressing the root causes of social isolation so older adults can continue to experience the joys of friendships. Learn more about the Shepherd's Centers Network at our **website.**  |

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| **Celebrating Volunteerism**  One of the distinguishing aspects of Shepherd's Centers is the depth and length of engagement of its people. While we celebrated the 50th milestone anniversary of **KC Shepherd's Center** in September, it is just as important to recognize the countless individuals dedicated to our mission just as long. Two volunteer leaders were celebrated at the anniversary event for their extraordinary contributions to the KC Shepherd's Center and the Shepherd's Centers movement. Dr. Rusty Ryan worked closely with our founder, Elbert Cole, promoting the vision of a Shepherd's Center in every state. Rusty has been actively involved in the Shepherd's Centers Network for more than 45 years giving health lectures, mentoring new centers, serving on various committees -- inspiring others every day to champion our movement.Kathy Smith, and multiple generations of her family, have been and continue to be involved with Shepherd's Centers for decades. Her father was one of the first volunteers to deliver meals, and Kathy, her daughter, and granddaughter carry on this legacy. KC Shepherd's Centers started their Meals on Wheels program in 1972 with five retired men (one of whom was Kathy's father) delivering hot meals to seven older adults. Today, the center delivers 15,000 hot and frozen meals monthly to 1,200 older adults. *"We knew we had something that was responsive to the real needs of real people...that gives them hope, gives them purpose, gives them meaning." --Dr. Elbert Cole* |

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| **Celebrating the Vision** **﻿**The KC Shepherd's Center was an instant success and it quickly attracted attention with others asking Elbert Cole to help them start a Shepherd's Center in their community. In 1976, CBS produced a documentary about the Shepherd's Center entitled [**"Volunteer to Live"**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001uo_oiOxrns3648_swcP7RbHVNP7vuXFB64_IgcKdSnvTf5ZjHFRRZfyyIV6OZjs0EHdBxoNdxIAaiRy45GHNbsqO3IHpCJQxDmzPTCY5Q80-dmoyCSYd_nnnEfmnux2Qhh2FeCAZ620IS1jeMX1fmdPw8yqfGxQT&c=KjgSkwochYov8sHDX-lbue0naybj7igjD7YLjRzA74FHfZbjkqQdyg==&ch=tad0WLNSfb9bemAlwCe2nCODkIWHXnsjNNCV-JjSzNiCGUtCVKsaVQ==) and a movement was born. This video describes our key values and services, all of which are relevant today, if not more so. Even then much of the work of Shepherd’s Centers was difficult to quantify. But you can definitely see it, hear it, and sense it whenever you encounter any of the thousands of older lives touched every day. The value of services provided by the SCA Network is estimated close to $21.5 million annually, but the impact on the lives of older adults is priceless. Elbert Cole’s vision for aging in America is radically remarkable, particularly in 1972 but also in 2022. That first Shepherd's Center in Kansas City was among the early voices to advocate a new and empowering model for aging. A collaborative, grassroots effort launched a national movement to engage more older adults in more communities.  Today, there are 55 centers in 17 states across America connecting 165,000 older adults and their families annually. More than two-and-a-half million people have experienced happy, healthy aging through Shepherd’s Centers. *"The myths about aging are so rampant in society. I have been a volunteer in this for 30 years, and at times it is discouraging that some of the fables and myths about aging are still around." --Dr. Elbert Cole* |

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**Celebrating our History and our Future**What better way to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Shepherd’s Centers movement than with a book describing the journey. Our revered founder, Dr. Elbert C. Cole, created a legacy of ministry by, for, and with older adults that remain with us today. This book documents the 50-year history and offers a deeper look into the future leadership qualities and models needed to reach older generations for decades to come. ***A Proven Experiment: The Shepherd’s Center Story*** provides evidence of the impact on quality of life for older adults when we meet and exceed their vital personal, social, and spiritual needs. Deep appreciation is expressed to the hundreds of volunteer servant leaders for their work and dedication in developing and implementing 50 years of programs and services while offering their resources and support through the years.  You can order your copy of this inspiring book through Amazon [**here**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001uo_oiOxrns3648_swcP7RbHVNP7vuXFB64_IgcKdSnvTf5ZjHFRRZTJl1TuE1UGCXZ6J1sIkEWRjyxsGL_XCdsLe6fNqM8Eh_GuclOpc-26C_dmPcUVtBOp4-Nu2PzeeM8wtdVOGxQBUEX1UxuZKuURVhzBbti9Gyaxta29vc_gS8gigpK9e-gE0ZcsXTML_UEQNNrDi8zwTBSCW93Kuf-94Lt-mAApQcHjrnlVa0LXrx2atzaHLqZbqMZeYXWZC_ZqOprIo5XCNm2DVQdNVfTbsOvdVBs5B9TpzCBvPVASPxqmslz2yjEHM4NFjdcSSgNa-4G_vKTZjQzH96exFyPonisppm-2bVV_lZcOwXoncHwzpw-TDTflmnnWa41_vtprymEH7EG4XKHhZf0MXCA==&c=KjgSkwochYov8sHDX-lbue0naybj7igjD7YLjRzA74FHfZbjkqQdyg==&ch=tad0WLNSfb9bemAlwCe2nCODkIWHXnsjNNCV-JjSzNiCGUtCVKsaVQ==).  |

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