

Our Similarities Bring Us Together

Early last month at an SCA Board of Directors retreat, the facilitator opened with an ice breaker in which small groups had to identify things they all had in common but were not observable and then identify something unique to one member. Some of the things groups found they have in common include owning pets, enjoying the outdoors, and desiring fitness. And some of the unique things include being a pilot, working in a circus, and being born in another country. This exercise helped us get to know each other better and bond over some of our similarities while appreciating the unique experiences of others.

A few days later in a different setting and conversation, the other person said to me, "It's funny how Shepherd's Centers always say they are different from one another, but they really aren't so different." Immediately, I wanted to say that we take pride in the uniqueness of each center because each is developed based on the needs of the community and interests of older adults. But before I could blurt this out, the person continued, "They have the same mission, operate under the same values, struggle with the same issues, and have impact in their communities."

She was right. We do have many similarities, both observable and unobservable.

I wonder, do we overemphasize our differences instead of the things that connect us as a network? Center sizes vary greatly: budgets of \$10,000 and budgets of \$500,000+; 250 people attending AIL and 1,400 people attending AIL; 660 one-way rides provided and 15,000+ one-way rides provided. And center services vary: friendly visiting, handy helpers, tech buddies, food delivery, Medicare counseling, tax-aide, intergenerational programs, education and referral. But these differences don't define a center's success.

If you put Shepherd's Center folks in a room, even a virtual Zoom room, it doesn't take long for the similarities to come out—a desire to connect older adults to things that matter in life, passion for service, impact in the community, the inclusion of all people and all faiths, recognizing the contributions older adults continuously make, empowerment, and most especially, relationships with others.

Engaging in this work to create meaningful social connections to community for healthier, happy living is what brings us together. It's our inherent interconnectivity to our shared mission. Maybe, focusing on what we have in common and not emphasizing our differences would strengthen our network and individual centers so we all achieve greater success.

The next time you are with a Shepherd's Center group of diverse individuals, see if you can make a list of all of the things you have in common. It likely won't take long to realize that you have many more similarities than differences.

Sarah Cheney

Remembering One of Our Own

Rhiannon Duck, the Executive Director of *The Shepherd's*



Center of Fairfax-Burke (VA), passed away on February 28, 2023. Rhiannon's infectious personality made her a master at bringing people together. She was an avid reader and loved to learn new things.

Rhiannon's humor and boundless generosity will be deeply missed by all who knew her. Her family hosted a Celebration of Life service on Sunday, March 5th at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Alexandria, Virginia. Donations in her honor can be made to **The Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke**.

[Link to Obituary](#)



The Spirit of Shepherd's Centers

The Shepherd's Center of Greenbrier Valley (WV) has presented the Rupert Public Library with a check in memory of Jane Spicer, one of its board members who passed away two years ago. The Shepherd's Center created an award in Spicer's memory and selects an annual recipient who supports its programs and is a great ambassador. The 2022 Spirit of Shepherd's Center awardee was Juanita Keeney, who helped set up programs and services in the Meadow River Valley and has been a longtime ambassador.

This award is a wonderful tribute to volunteer ambassadors for the Shepherd's Center, but also supports other good work in the community.

[Read More](#)

Why Prepare an Annual Report

Even though nonprofit organizations aren't required by law to publish annual reports, most nonprofit leaders recognize the value reports can provide. A well-written annual report typically includes visuals that bring data, stories, and milestones to life to



Shepherd's Center of Fort Scott (KS), our newest Shepherd's Center, is hosting its second Adventures in Learning on March 10th. The event includes a free lunch.

Mid-North Shepherd's Center (IN) has hired **Sara Ann Case** as the executive director. Join us in welcoming Sara to the network!

Betsy Solomon, executive director with **Shepherd's Center of Webster-Kirkwood (MO)** for sharing that she is planning to include the new SCA Network Benefits flyer in a board packet so all of her board members are aware of the many benefits of affiliation.

help you demonstrate your accomplishments to current and future donors, cultivate new partnerships, and recognize important people.

LifeQuest of Arkansas released its 2022 annual report, and we thought it was a great example to share. Their report showcases data and highlights their impact in the community. As the largest AIL program in the network, LifeQuest of Arkansas is making a significant difference in the lives of many individuals.

Annual Report



3/13: Daylight Savings Time Begins. Time to spring forward! What can your supporters do with all their extra sunlight?

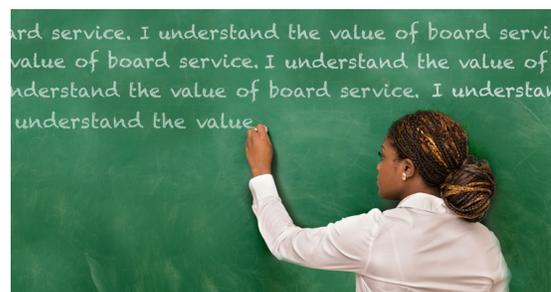
3/17: St. Patrick's Day. Think luck of the Irish, green, leprechauns, and shamrocks.

3/19: Let's Laugh Day. Share a meme that relates to your work or a funny video.

3/20: First Day of Spring. Use warmer weather, flowers blossoming, snow melting away, grass turning green, fresh beginnings as inspiration. Any fun event popping up for your center coming up?

Creating a Strong Board

A majority of representatives with nonprofits cite board strength as critical for their operations. Developing active, dedicated boards that meet regularly and help with program tasks is an ongoing effort. But how do you build cohesive boards?



One strategy that **Shepherd's Center of Hamilton County (IN)** uses is a "board commitments and responsibilities form" that members sign annually. This document clearly describes the expectations of board members. Executive Director Lauren Guynn believes this commitment from board members is invaluable to their Shepherd's Center.

[Download the Form](#)

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