

Senior Corps Volunteer Programs of Michigan

Foster Grandparent Program

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

Senior Companion Program



Statewide Highlight Book

2019-2020

The Senior Corps Volunteer Programs of Michigan

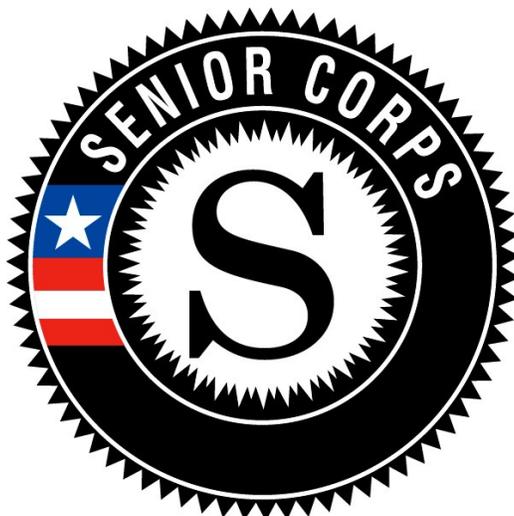
Since the early 1970's both Congress and state legislatures across the country have recognized the value and importance of one of our nation's most valuable resources...our senior volunteers.

In 1973 Congress formalized their appreciation of older adults engaged in volunteer service through passage of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, which authorized funding for the programs of the National Senior Service Corps: the Foster Grandparent Program, Retired & Senior Volunteer Program, and Senior Companion Program.

Michigan is home to 20 Retired & Senior Volunteer Programs, 19 Foster Grandparent Programs and 13 Senior Companion Programs. Together, we serve 73 of Michigan's 83 counties and provide high quality, life enhancing volunteer opportunities for older adults, while assisting nonprofit, health care, and government organizations in achieving their missions and expanding services.

The Senior Corps Volunteer Programs of Michigan celebrate success due to federal, state, and local funding partnerships. They are not entitlement programs, but rather programs where productive adults who wish to have a stake in Michigan's future, contribute to the well-being of our children, families, seniors and communities.

This highlight report will demonstrate how the Senior Corps Volunteer Programs serve as a safety net for vulnerable citizens, resources, and communities and how each of the senior volunteer programs positively impacts the values Michigan residents hold dear.





Foster Grandparent Program

(FGP)

Foster Grandparents are low-income older adults, who provide sustained one-to-one attention and assistance to vulnerable children, with the purpose of improving self-esteem and supporting the child's ability to learn. Foster Grandparents commit an average of 15—20 hours per week to provide a stable, caring relationship for children who often come from chaotic and unpredictable environments. In exchange for their service, Foster Grandparents receive a small, non-taxable stipend of \$3.00 per hour.

During 2016, 1,664 Foster Grandparents contributed nearly 969,000 hours toward mentoring more than 5,500 Michigan children who are academically delayed, lacking self-esteem or motivation, experiencing behavior or social problems, and who are at-risk of dropping out of school. The volunteers served at more than 750 sites, including in Early Childhood Centers, Elementary and Faith Based Schools.



Foster Grandparents
Share Today. Shape Tomorrow.



Glenna Scofield has been with our program since June 2018. She volunteers in a kindergarten classroom and participates in the program-sponsored summer reading program. In addition to her Foster Grandparent duties, Glenna also serves on the EightCAP, Inc. Governing Board. Her input is greatly appreciated by board members and staff.

Glenna thoroughly enjoys working with students. She relates well with them and always brings her smile to the classroom. She interacts well with staff and accepts assignments and tasks with a positive attitude. Her teacher especially appreciates her punctuality and reliability.

During our summer program, Glenna enjoyed helping her students in their reading skills. All four students gained strides in reading fluency and moved to a higher level of reading; their delighted voices exclaiming, “I did it! I read faster than yesterday with no mistakes!” Glenna always had a word of encouragement for them. Her kind words made an impact on each one and a positive, nurturing bond was created.

These children need someone who will motivate them, listen to them, and have a caring nonjudgmental attitude. Glenna shares all of this and more with those around her.

Glenna is truly a gem and has gifts that are invaluable. Her smile is contagious and leaves a picture in your mind of peace and happiness.

First, Sharon Roland walks from one end of the building to another to reach the craft room on a regular basis. All the students want to work with Grandma, and say, “Pick me, pick me.” It makes Grandma Sharon so happy to see their faces daily.

One student, Aneah (not real name) struggled daily. When Grandma Sharon began working with her, Aneah did not know the alphabet, sounds or vowels...she was struggling. At first when Aneah did something correctly, she would say, “Are you proud of me, Granny?”, as she was sweet and eager to learn. Grandma Sharon told her that she was very proud of her. Aneah continued to struggle as Grandma Sharon tirelessly worked with her on the alphabet, vowels and sounds. Aneah kept asking Grandma if she was *proud* of her, and Grandma Sharon would say yes, because Aneah was slowly improving every day that Grandma worked with her. Aneah was going to tell her teacher that Grandma was *proud* of her, as it made her feel so good about what she had accomplished. Grandma Sharon always gave Aneah lots of praise and encouragement. At the end of the 2 months Grandma worked with Aneah, she was able to identify sounds and knew her ABC's. including some vowel sounds. Aneah was so happy that she was able to learn all this from Grandma and was much happier and confident at the end of school. Grandma Sharon was excited that Aneah had progressed so much by the end of the school year.





Grandpa Rick with his first book club.

Rick Fockler is an outstanding Foster Grandparent who goes above and beyond to support students' learning. With the urging of his supervising teacher, Rachel, Grandpa Rick started a book club where he meets with 3rd and 4th grade students from his assigned classroom twice a week during recess. The students and Rick share their thoughts and discuss a book that they are all reading on their own. Rick shares his time and passion of reading with the students. Rachel reports "Grandpa Rick's Book club is getting students more excited about reading!"

In fact the book club has been so successful that Rick and Rachel are planning to expand it this coming school year. Grandpa Rick will continue to host the book club and it will be offered to students in other classrooms as well.

Rick builds strong relationships with students listening to them and sharing stories and interest with them. Every single student in the class just adores Grandpa Rick. It is important to Rick that he work as a team with Rachel and have good communication with her in order to benefit the children.

Grandpa Rick is a positive role model making a difference in children's' lives.

Heide McNichols: Foster Grandparent Volunteer

Heide gives 15 hours a week in a Head Start classroom serving at-risk children of each week. She is a consistent role model and mentor for the children. Heide was a public nurse and has a special touch with children which she applies to volunteering. She is helping with one-on-one reading, increasing of motor skills, literacy, along with number counting and self-esteem. She is giving children a mentor they can count on each and every week, helping these children to achieve success. She helps the teachers at the Head Start by spending one on one time with children who might need some extra encouragement or support. Heide has said "You never know what difference we make in people's lives, it is important to always be kind." She shares that kindness with all of those she serves through the Foster Grandparent program.

"She has a way of bringing out the best and most creative part of each child she helps them feel comfortable, safe and excited about being with her. Her true gift is her selfless focus on what is best for each child, giving them individual attention. Her willingness to help those in our community is inspirational."

"She has a way of bringing out the best and most creative part of each child and she helps them feel comfortable, safe and excited about being with her. Her true gift is her selfless focus on what is best for each child and giving them individual attention. We are so fortunate to be able to have her as a volunteer with us!"



Kalamazoo Foster Grandparents-

One of our volunteers worked with a 10-year-old student who was very introverted. She didn't talk, socialize, or have any friends. It took her a long time to even say hello to our volunteer, Rickey. After several weeks, she broke out of her shell and spoke to him. She told him that she had no friends at school or outside of school and that her mother would not allow her to go outside and play with the other kids in the neighborhood. One of the next few days, Rickey noticed that she was sitting alone in the classroom. He asked her if there were any students in the classroom that she would like to be friends with. She pointed out three other girls. Rickey approached the group of girls and they knew that the lonely student wanted to be friends with them. In return, he would reward them. The group of girls approached her as she was sitting all alone and were able to brighten her spirit. They all became good friends over the next few weeks, and as a reward, Rickey gave them all a pizza party.

The student who had been all alone went to camp in March and ended up winning awards for leadership. She went from being shy and soft-spoken, to being a leader because of something as simple as having friends. Rickey said it best, "Everyone needs a friend to grow."



"I felt like the kids were going to fall through the cracks, as if they weren't already on top of them ready to fall."

Donna heard about our program after working as a part of the court system with the current principal of the Alternative Learning Program. Given her background as a Family Interventionist and a Probation Officer, the principal felt that she would be a great fit for their literacy program.

The middle schoolers she would be working with read at 1st and 2nd grade levels. They didn't struggle with reading or sounding out words but comprehending them. She felt that "there was no way to be successful if they couldn't understand what they were reading."



The program graduates students back to public schools every 12 weeks if they're doing well. Donna has been able to catch up with students when she sees them out and about and it has warmed her heart. Students have told her, "If we hadn't been a part of your literacy program, we would fail the English class we have now. We would be too embarrassed to admit to our teachers that we can't understand what the assignment is asking for and wouldn't be able to do our work correctly."

The teacher she worked with this year said that, "Mrs. White is a favorite of all the students and is able to get all the kids to put forth honest effort. She is an asset to our program, and I have a ton of respect for her personally and professionally."

Hazel Sanders

Hazel has been in our program for 11 years. She serves at Ford Early Learning Center in Ypsilanti.

“Grandma takes her work very seriously. She completely immerses herself into the children and their goals. She patiently and relentlessly helps these children practice. She works one on one and in small groups with them. She shows them firm and consistent love. They truly respect her as anyone would their biological grandparent.

She has folders for each child with their work and goals organized. She joins them during large group time modeling behavior and calmly redirecting them as needed. These are “her” children and she supports them completely. When they go to their specials classes she is constantly busy cleaning, sharpening pencils, etc. She sets up our bulletin board, files papers, organizes areas needing it, and is always asking “What do you have for me to do?” She reads with the students and shows all of them love and patience with high expectations.

She focuses on her struggling sweeties, but can always be seen helping any child that asks her, in our room or even just walking down the hall. She keeps all of our beautiful plants and flowers healthy. She offers to help the other grandparents and teachers whenever they need it. Grandma Hazel is essential to our class. She is the matriarch of Ford Early Learning Center and we all love and respect her immensely.”

-Ms. Tomaszewski, First Grade



Edward Ruffin

Grandpa Edward has been in our program for 9 years. He serves at Erickson Elementary in Ypsilanti.

This is what his teacher shared:

Grandpa Edward is an important member of the Erickson staff and our class. The students love sharing stories with Grandpa and reading with him. Grandpa’s smile is enough to brighten the entire school.

Lamar eats breakfast with grandpa every morning. Grandpa often helps him with his morning work. Lamar shared that grandpa has the best hugs that make him feel comfortable. Callie loves that grandpa is always happy and ready to help students in our class. Mariah likes to read stories with grandpa because he is nice and very funny. Kyndall loves to read lion king to him because he listens and is so sweet.

“As for me, I love the fact that Grandpa will share in our class discussions. One day, I was teaching about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Grandpa started sharing stories about growing up in the south and going to Dr. King's funeral. These stories help the students understand that these events and people are real and happened in Grandpa's lifetime. “

-Ms. Valerio, Second Grade

Sanaa and Shawkey Ghobrial:

The Ghobrials are our only husband and wife Foster Grandparent team. Together, they have 32 years of service. Both Sanaa and Shawkey value education and are determined to help each child learn.

Sanaa Ghobrial:

“Grandma Ghobrial is a kind and generous person. She has high expectations for me and for students. She is a treasure to have in class. Some of the best moments have been when she's worked hard to help students understand and practice a math skill they thought was hard and then they get it. Seeing the joy on students' faces and on Grandma's face when that hard work paid off is priceless.”

-Mrs. Swanson, Fifth Grade

“When we make mistakes Grandma helps us fix our math problems. If we are close she tells us we're close and helps. If we're not close she spends time helping us learn and practice what we don't know. She celebrates when we do well.”

- Alan, Fifth Grade Student

Shawkey Ghobrial:

“Everyone at YIES knows that they can count on Grandpa Ghobrial to help them if they need a job done. My favorite story about Grandpa Ghobrial is after he visited Egypt he came back to school and shared his trip with the fifth grade students. He shared his culture by showing them postcards of where he went and sharing Egypt coins with them. Grandpa is a true champion and we are fortunate to have him at Ypsilanti International Elementary School.”

-Ms. Sartorius, Kindergarten



Shawkey Ghobrial



Sanaa Ghobrial

Jan Marcum:

Janice Marcum has been in our program for 2 years. She has served at a couple sites with younger children, but she really blossomed when I placed her at a site with babies! Her story illustrates the impact of volunteer service on the health of the seniors who volunteer, and confirms the results of the longitudinal study conducted by CNCS, especially since her physical and emotional health improvements were noted by her physician!

“I enjoy the babies that I am taking care of - it's just a treat to be with them! I joined because I needed a purpose to get out of the house. My doctor told me this is the best medicine he has seen me on and he has said I found my real purpose.”

-Jan Marcum, Foster Grandparent





One of the best things about being part of the Foster Grandparents is the outpouring of love and support those in the group give to each other. This past year we lost several of our senior volunteers. The compassion and caring shared with each other and family was absolutely amazing.

Our schools support the Foster Grandparents with love and caring too. At Sherwood Elementary – a school that lost an active grandparent – the faculty and staff installed a “Buddy Bench” in honor of Grandma Rita Williams. This bench is much more than a brightly painted place to sit. The children are told that when they are feeling alone, they should sit on the bench. Other children that notice them there know that the child needs some friendship and will go to them, talk, and ask them to play. What a wonderful way to celebrate a life lived in service.

The Thumb Area Foster Grandparent Program has been enriching the lives of the students in Huron, Sanilac and Tuscola Counties for 41 years. During the 2018-2019 school year, 39 Foster Grandparents enriched the lives of over 160 students across 16 schools. The Foster Grandparents are beginning the 2019-2020 school year with enthusiasm and eagerness to be back in the classroom ready to help the students.

A note from a parent:

A parent from Sanilac County shared a heartwarming story of a Thumb Area Foster Grandparent making the first day at school for a Kindergarten student no so scary. The parent explained that ~~on the first day of Kindergarten~~ her daughter was really scared and crying when her mother tried to leave, and her daughter was inconsolable. That is when Grandma approached her daughter, introduced herself and began talking with her. Within a short period of time the student became calm and willingly walked into the classroom with Grandma. The students’ mother expressed how amazing the Grandma was with her daughter and how helpful Foster Grandparents are in the classroom.

The Best Part About Being a Foster Grandparent...

“I have been in the program for 6 years and love it. I feel honored that I can help teach kids. I’m not just in it for the money, I love my teachers and school.”

-Grandma Elaine, Thumb Area Foster Grandparent Program
Millington Elementary School

“I just love having a purpose in life and with FGP I have that. Love being able to help the little ones. I was very depressed and lonely until I started the program. I love the program.”

-Grandma Sharon, Thumb Area Foster Grandparent Program
Sandusky Elementary School



Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), one of the nation's largest volunteer efforts, invites adults age 55 and over to utilize their skills, talents, and life experience to make a difference in their community, through direct service and collaboration with established non-profit, government, health care, faith-based, and public organizations. RSVP Volunteers serve their communities by tutoring and mentoring children; providing companionship, support, and medical transportation for older adults; protecting the safety of their peers through partnerships with law enforcement and supporting the health of our state's lands and waters.



Last year, 8,000 RSVP Volunteers contributed in excess of 680,000 hours of service to nearly 1,900 organizations, projects, and communities across the State of Michigan. Participating in special projects or committing time on a weekly basis, RSVP Volunteers contribute when and where their interests lie. We have chosen to highlight some of our special projects and partnerships in an effort to provide a genuine understanding of who we are, what we do, and our joint impact on life in Michigan.

RSVP

Lead With Experience

In Michigan 517,000 caregivers provide care to a loved one with a related-dementia (Alzheimer's Association, 2019). On average they provide 34 hours of care per week, handling daily activities such as bathing, or managing medications (Wolff, 2018). Research shows that caregivers are at risk for higher levels of depression, stress and poor self-care (Family Caregiver Alliance, 2019). When placing a loved one, caregivers look at the care offered and the rental costs. To avoid costs, many opt-in for home health care, do care on their own or choose adult day. In Washtenaw County, the cost of care in senior living is significantly more than 50% of what people are earning in some cases, which makes volunteer support programs for caregivers an increased preference (Wolff, 2018).

RSVP Washtenaw, sponsored by Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County (CSSW) is composed of 310 retirees and seniors. The program matches and places interested community volunteers age 55 and up to 50 existing nonprofit partnerships. RSVP focuses on efforts being made to support caregivers, seniors with disabilities, victims of elder abuse, those affected by the opioid epidemic, and other community priorities. Each volunteer that comes through RSVP has a unique story; Jerry is no exception. He first came to RSVP as a socially isolated and lonely individual. He wanted to become part of the community again in some way. As it turns out, from the volunteer match meeting he was an experienced piano player for many years. RSVP Washtenaw placed him at three adult day centers, CSSW the Oaks, PACE all-inclusive elderly program, and University of Michigan Medicine Silver Club where he could share the joy of music.

Jerry's first day in Fall 2018 went as such:

"Folks are starting to get to know me now and we had quite a party yesterday. Someone started singing along with a song I was playing, then others joined in and clapped a bit. Then someone got up to dance and was joined by another. So, next week I'm going to type up some lyric sheets and we'll have a brief singalong after lunch. Seems to be working out fine!"

One year later Fall 2019:

"I love the Oaks adult day. The participants really enjoy having me there. It's still a party. PACE is great! I'm only out there once a month, but the people are very nice and like the music. At Silver Club we feel like family now."



In a year span, 46 clients were served at the Oaks adult day by 6 RSVP Volunteers. A recent survey (2019) reported that 100% of caregivers felt less burnt out and felt an increase in social support (CSSW Data, 2019). A total of 170 clients were served by PACE last year. From a recent survey, 100% of caregivers reported they were less stressed by having a volunteer visit their loved and were happy that the volunteer helped increase their loved one's social interaction (PACE, 2019). Silver Club had an estimate of 40 clients that were served in the past year. From a recent 2018 FY survey all caregivers felt their stress level reduced knowing volunteers are visiting with their loved one (Silver Club, 2019). RSVP Washtenaw volunteers come from diverse backgrounds. They want to give back to others in a meaningful way which is irreplaceable. This is what RSVP is all about.





Keeping Independent Seniors Safe (KISS)
Sponsored by Valley Area Agency on Aging
Serving Genesee, Lapeer & Shiawassee Counties

Keeping Independent Seniors Safe (KISS) is a program that provides a daily telephonic wellness call to seniors (and frail couples) living alone in their home. The program is wonderful for seniors who do not have family in the area and wish to remain independent in their home. It is comforting for seniors to know that someone will call daily M-F to check on their health and well-being. Seniors must provide a contact person in the event of an emergency for VAAA staff. Our most recent survey results (2018) states that 100% of participants enjoy the socialization that the KISS caller provides; 92% of KISS clients report that the program provides a sense of safety and security due to living alone; and 100% of seniors on the KISS program report that the program is very important to them. Due to the impact of the KISS program, 92% of participants reported that KISS is helping them to remain independent longer.

So often, when asked about impacts in the community, we share how the program impacted the clients or the “receiver”. In the case of the KISS program, most all of the clients do report monumental positive impacts on their ability to remain independent. The KISS program uses 5 RSVP volunteers on a weekly basis. Each one of the volunteers, in a focus group meeting, reported that the KISS program has actually helped them in many ways. Having someone who needs them was high on the list of importance. Two of our volunteers are in their mid-seventies and say that if they didn’t have this program, they would not feel important. One of the volunteers, Carolyn, said that many times on her volunteer day, she gets up and thinks: Why am I doing this? I am retired! She reports that after her shift, she knows exactly why she volunteers. Carolyn says: “It is the best feeling in the world to know you are brightening someone’s day with just a phone call. I also find that on my volunteer days I am more energetic and seem to get more things accomplished after I get home!”





Senior Companions Make Independence a Reality

Senior Companions are low-income older adults who play an important role in supporting frail seniors and disabled adults in their quest to live independently. Senior Companion volunteers add richness to the lives of their clients, while providing access to the community, including grocery shopping, transportation to medical appointments, and opportunities for socialization. In addition to improving the lives of their clients, Senior Companions find their lives enriched through service to others.

Similar to Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions commit an average of 15—20 hours of service per week, and receive a non-taxable stipend of \$3.00 per hour for their service. **During 2016, 735 Senior Companions contributed more than 495,000 hours to support in-home, long-term care services for 3,000 Michigan residents at risk of institutionalization.**



Senior Companion Program
(SCP)

Funny, friendly, caring, and always willing to lend a hand....perfect words to describe Grand Traverse Senior Companion Volunteer, Frank!

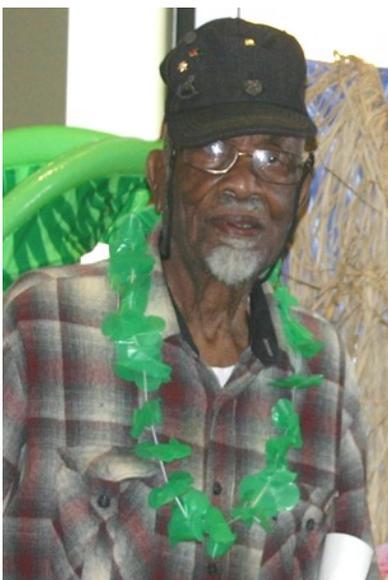
During his career, Frank worked in security. Upon retirement, he wanted to do something different, but still help people. Volunteering with the Senior Companion Program has allowed Frank to meet that retirement goal. Giving back and helping seniors with things they could not accomplish on their own keeps Frank involved in volunteering. “When you put your whole heart and soul into it, you are going to reap the benefits. Seeing a client realize their full potential is something that keeps me going.”

Asked about one of his most memorable moments with the Senior Companion Program, Frank states:

“Being with the clients that are 90+ years old is great. When you spend time with them you get a living history lesson.”



Stories of Senior Companions



Born and raised in Mississippi in 1920, 96 year old Elbert has been a part of the Kent County Senior Companion Program for 29 years. Through his years of service, Elbert has served as a Senior Companion at both residential sites and in private homes, where clients were homebound and Elbert was their only link to the outside world.

While he’s slowed a little bit over the years, and has contemplated retiring, Elbert remains committed to his Senior Companion Service. He spends his days at Delaware Manor in Grand Rapids bringing joy to others with his smile and positive attitude. Through playing checkers and card games or sitting and reminiscing with the residents, Elbert provides companionship to those in need. In return, he is provided with a sense of purpose and meaning because he knows his volunteer service is making a difference.

Kalamazoo Senior Companion Program

Lyn came to the Senior Companion Program September of 2016, shortly after her husband died. She was encouraged to apply for the program by a friend who was a Senior Companion at the time. She found it could be a way to stay busy and productive.

In March of 2018, Lyn was introduced to a new client. At first, her client seemed to be very uptight and every little thing bothered her. She would get worked up over the smallest detail and did not know how to calm herself down.

After a short period of time, Lyn noticed that her client was starting to progress. She began looking forward to Lyn's visits and felt as though she was taking control of her emotions. Lyn has been able to teach her how to relax and how to let things happen instead of trying to control them. Lyn's visits have also given her client the freedom that she lacked before. Lyn takes her to doctor appointments, hair appointments, and grocery shopping.

Lyn's case with this client is a textbook example of why the Senior Companion Program is so valuable. Lyn has not only been able to teach her client how to take control of her feelings and emotions but, has also given her an opportunity to go out and do the things she needs to do in order to stay healthy and productive. Lyn has shown her client the positive effects that can come from having a Senior Companion.



Lola started volunteering with the Senior Companion Program in 2012. She was a former teacher in the Philippines and moved to the Kalamazoo area to be closer to her daughter. She has been volunteering at Medilodge of Portage nursing care facility since she started with the program and has been able to successfully maintain a 40-hour a week volunteer schedule at that location. Since she has been there, she has used her positive influence and encouragement to brighten the lives of every resident she encounters.



Throughout the years, Lola has been constantly recognized for her positive personality. In 2017, her Site Supervisor stated that, "Lola does an amazing job every day and seems to have endless energy. I am very proud of Lola and all that she has accomplished." Lola has made such an impact in the program that she was recognized in 2016 by winning the Volunteer of the Year award, from Medilodge of Portage.

In 2018, Lola successfully obtained her citizenship and became a citizen of the United States. Since then, she has continued to use her positive personality to enrich the lives of the clients that she sees every day. The residents at Medilodge of Portage greatly value Lola's visits as she continues to volunteer with a smile.

Karl Knauf

He serves 20 hours a week visiting and spending time with lonely seniors at a nursing care facility in Bellaire, Michigan. Almost all of the seniors he visits do not have any family visits. He is their family and friend. Helping to combat the isolation and loneliness of living without companionship. Bringing in the news and activities of the outside community keeping the seniors updated with the community happenings.

He has been serving 20 hours every week at the facility. He said: "I really enjoy it here. I love talking to the clients and hearing their stories. They have so much to share. They are my friends. I love doing fishing with them as well!" He is devoted to our programs and his community. Karl shared that "I try to bring happiness into people's lives. Some do not have any visitors. I try to bring joy to them." Also sharing; "I am always working on bringing a smile to their face and bringing them some enjoyment to the day." He truly is serving to help others. He is bringing in positive companionship which can do so much for a person who no longer has their own independence. He is someone who does it all because he cares. We are lucky to call him our volunteer!

