



How to Cultivate a Connected Caring Community

- In your neighborhood
- Through your faith community
- With friends and family

Close-knit communities provide safety and sociability, improving life for all.



PHILADELPHIA CORPORATION FOR AGING

Enriching lives, preserving dignity.™



Why create a Connected Caring Community?

It's important to feel connected to other people, both in good times and bad.

Sharing stories over a cup of tea or taking a walk when the weather's nice provides a vital human connection. And when help is needed, you know you can call on someone who will be there.



These connections are important throughout the lifespan, but as we grow older they become increasingly important. Families are often far away and close friends are growing older.

A Connected Caring Community can help older persons to remain in their own homes; prevent isolation; and also support and enrich the lives of young and old alike. And it's easy to do.



How to Begin

Build the safety net

- Identify the members of your Caring Community. It may include many, or just two – you and a friend, relative or neighbor.
- Get addresses and phone numbers and emergency contacts for each person.
- Get to know one another; meet at a house of worship, library, senior community center, coffee shop or someone's home.
- Talk about what you need.
- Talk about what you could do for each other.
- Find out what kinds of resources are already available in your neighborhood; Block Captains, Senior Centers and Faith Communities may already have similar programs you could be part of.





Phone Connection

Have each person call one or more people to check in and keep one another informed, in case of emergencies such as heat waves, power outages, snowstorms, floods and other disasters. Make sure the chain won't be dropped or broken if one person isn't reached; keep calling until you reach the next person on the list.

Buddy Connection

Create a buddy system, pairing up for safety and sociability:

- Daily check-in with older and disabled persons who live alone if desired.
- Walking buddies or a walking group.
- Lunch or dinner buddies; gather to share a brown bag or potluck meal.
- Share interests and expertise with book groups, quilting circles and political discussions.



Transportation Connection

Create a transportation call list of people who need help, and those who can provide help by taking someone to medical appointments, the library, worship services, or to the grocery store. Find out if they also need someone to go in with them.

This can be done in several ways:

- Identify a point person to help with scheduling.
- Create a list of people available to drive others and distribute it.
- Create a list of needs and ask people to volunteer; these may be occasional needs, or ongoing, such as rides to worship services or to club meetings.





Helping Hand Connection

Start a Helping Hands project, to perform tasks for those who need assistance. If you have a large group, identify someone to be the point person. This could be an older person who is homebound, but can take the phone calls and track requests. This job could also rotate monthly, both spreading the work around and connecting more people to one another. Brainstorm to create a task list; what do people need help with, or have trouble doing? What skills do people have? These tasks can be done on a volunteer basis, or for a fee.

Starter Task List

- Change light bulbs in ceiling fixtures
- Change batteries in smoke detectors
- Put air conditioners in/take them out
- Install/remove screens and storm windows
- Rake lawns
- Shovel snow
- Cook casseroles or other meals
- Go food shopping



Information Connection

It's important to know about all of the programs and services available in the community.



- Philadelphia Corporation for Aging's (PCA) Community Outreach program offers free presentations about resources for older Philadelphians to community groups. For information, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.
- The PCA Helpline can also answer specific questions about services and resources available to older Philadelphians.
- PCA's website, www.pcaCares.org, provides information about these resources in an easy-to-search format, along with a calendar of events.
- PCA's *Milestones* newspaper is available free at more than 900 locations in Philadelphia. To find out if your organization qualifies as a distribution site, call 215-765-9000, ext. 5050.

A Connected Caring Community will enrich the lives of all its members, connecting generations and combating isolation for both young and old.

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA), a private, non-profit Area Agency on Aging, was established in 1973 to coordinate social services for Philadelphians who are older or who have disabilities and to assist them in achieving optimum levels of health, independence, and productivity. One of the region's largest non-profit organizations, PCA is funded in part by the federal Older Americans Act, Medical Assistance, and the Pennsylvania Lottery, all channeled through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

Guided by its Board of Directors and an Advisory Council, PCA employs more than 600 people and contracts with over 100 community organizations and service providers to deliver a variety of services to more than 100,000 older Philadelphians and people with disabilities each year.



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Photos by Kelly Brennan. Thank you to the Philadelphia Senior Center for assistance with the photo shoot.

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