

2023 Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon

Circles of Care Hood River

A Case Study in Standing Up a Reciprocal Volunteer Program With a Senior Center or Community-Based Organization

Amy Mallett, Executive Director, Hood River Valley Adult Center

Rita Rathkey & Scott McKay, Community Liaisons, AGE+

Thank you to our partners:



CIRCLES OF CARE

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Circles of Care is a mutual aid volunteer program currently operating in Hood River and The Dalles. It supports older adults with a “little help” to remain independent and engaged in their communities.

Volunteers use their best attributes to assist others, and, in turn, older adults return the favor with their talents, creating a Circle.



CIRCLES OF CARE

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

- Successful aging in community
- Matching older adults with trained volunteers
- Assistance with everyday tasks
- Isolation and loneliness prevention
- Values contributions of everyone in the Circle
- Complements existing volunteer efforts in the community



CIRCLES OF CARE

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES THAT INFORM THE RECIPROCAL MODEL

- **Peer-to-Peer Support Model** (BMC Geriatrics 2019, Home Health Care Services Quarterly, Dec 2020 and, Geriatrics June 2021)
 - Helps maintain independence
 - Improves quality of life
 - Highly valuable in surmounting daily challenges of aging in place
 - Scalable model
- **Volunteer Medical Visit Companions** (BMC Geriatrics, April 2021)
 - Support for older adults benefits everyone

CIRCLES OF CARE SERVICES



- Grocery and prescription pickup



- Light chores, yard work, minor home repairs



- Rides



- Caregiver respite



- Making a meal

ISOLATION & LONELINESS INTERVENTIONS



- Zoom support



- Friendly check-ins



- Intergenerational engagement

WHY DO WE DO THIS WORK?

Within this decade, older adults will outnumber children under 18 for the first time ever.

The number of Oregonians 65+ will double by 2030. This permanent shift in our population affects individuals, families and communities, especially in rural areas where this shift is already underway.

While the challenges ahead are great, so is the potential—but we need to act now.

Rural Oregon communities are aging the fastest.

IN OREGON...

**TODAY'S
75+
POPULATION
WILL GROW**



**87%
BY THE
YEAR 2030**

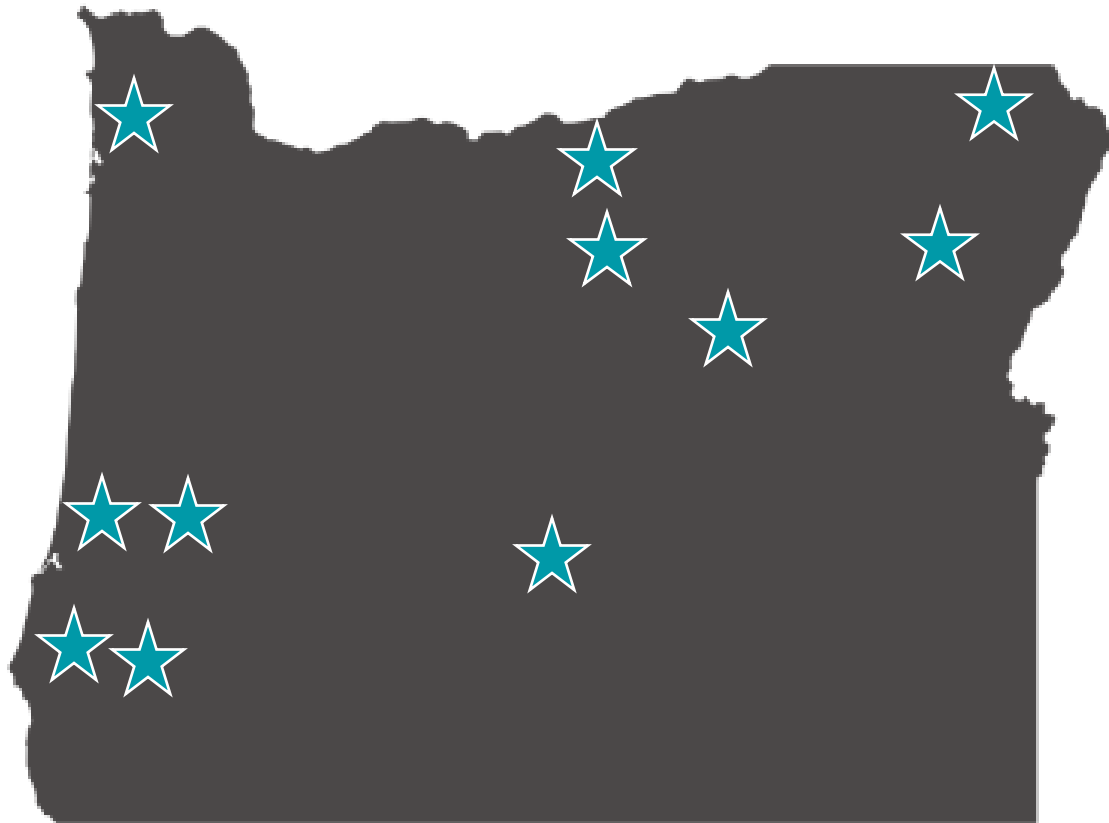
1 IN 4 PEOPLE WILL BE 65+ BY 2035



RURAL OREGON IS SHIFTING QUICKLY

COUNTIES WITH 25% OF RESIDENTS AGE 65+

Coos
Josephine
Douglas
Curry
Lake
Wheeler
Tillamook
Clatsop
Grant
Gilliam
Baker
Wallowa



ISOLATION & LONELINESS

29%

of rural adults experienced depression and anxiety

20%

increase in “frequent mental distress” for Oregon seniors over the past three years

39%

of low-income adults report depression and anxiety

24%

Did not get needed mental health care



OLDER OREGONIANS ARE DISTANCE BURDENED

RURAL COUNTIES WERE NOT PLANNED (OR INTENDED) AS HOME FOR ISOLATED, NON-DRIVING CITIZENS.

57%

of older Oregonians live in rural settings

36%

of 75+ households are without computers or cellphones

40%

of rural women 75+ live alone



OLDER OREGONIANS ARE DISTANCE BURDENED

TRANSPORTATION IS THE #1 REQUESTED SERVICE IN CURRENT CIRCLES

This service:

- Enables mobility and access to better wellness and quality of life for patients with reduced capacity
- Offers personalized door-through-door assistance with roundtrip support getting safely to and from appointments
- Can drive feelings of helplessness, overwhelm, or loneliness away from a person's journey
- Allows us to connect with people and their stories. Serving them is our greatest reward!

More than 50 older adult participants have been helped by this service since the program began in Hood River in October 2022!



VOLUNTEER TRAINING

- Online and paper training modules for each service provided
- Volunteer background checks
- Utilizes Better Impact volunteer management software
- Contact us to get involved!



CIRCLES OF CARE TEAM

THIS PROGRAM IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN AGE+ & HOOD RIVER VALLEY ADULT CENTER



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Hood River Valley Adult Center



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Thank you!

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