

A History:
LifePath's
Years of Service to Elders and their families
Updated July 2024
(Formerly Franklin County Home Care Corporation)

In 1974, Governor Francis L. Sargent set up the Department of Elder Affairs as a cabinet position within the state government of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Secretary of Elder Affairs, Jack Leff, visited the Franklin County Commissioners in the winter of 1974 and explained that there would be money available to serve elders across the state. The Franklin County Commissioners lost no time in exploring this possibility. The County Human Services Coordinator, Ted Harrison, was assigned the task of making arrangements for a new organization.

The Franklin County Health Care, Inc. (also known as Senior Services) of Greenfield served meals at sites in Athol, Orange, Deerfield, Erving, Northfield, Shelburne Falls, Turners Falls, and Greenfield. On April 18, 1974, The Franklin County Home Health Care, Inc. made application for a Project Grant for the proposed Franklin County Home Care Corporation for the project year 5/1/74 to 4/30/75 for the amount of \$82,000 (\$20,500 of which was an in-kind contribution). The grant provided for the hiring of an Executive Director, Community Coordinator, Fiscal Manager, Intake Supervisor, Case Worker, Secretary and office equipment.

The County Commissioners selected a Board of Directors for the new corporation:

Elizabeth Adams, (Farley)
Elaine Barkin (Leverett)
Lois Buell (Shelburne Falls)
Stephen Clark (Warwick)
Walter Fields (Orange)
John Bond (Rowe)
R. Thomas Cahill (Greenfield)
Anne Dahowski (Deerfield)
Mrs. Joseph Hartjen (Wendell)
Thomas Herlihy (Deerfield—County Commissioner)
Tom Lesser (Conway)
Julian Martindale (Orange)
Thomas Merrigan (Greenfield—County Commissioner)
Georgann Morin (Greenfield)
Helen Severance (Greenfield)
Wyman Stone (Athol)

Wendell Streeter (Bernardston—County Commissioner)

Gregory Watts (Athol)

Winslow Wentworth (Turners Falls)

Helen Severance chose not to serve on the Board as she was on the Board of the Franklin County Home Health Care, Inc., and she was replaced by Ray Keyes of Deerfield. Harry Purrington of Charlemont was later elected to the Board bringing the membership to 24. The first meeting of the Board was held on May 14, 1974. The agenda was to incorporate, appoint a nominating committee and advertise for staff. Wendell Streeter was acting Chairman with 20 Directors present. Fritz Crumb of the Home Care unit of the Massachusetts Department of Elder Affairs explained the duties and objectives of the proposed corporation and indicated that \$500,000 would be available. He explained that the Home Care Corporation would be the “coordinator and keeper of funds for all programs for the elderly in the area.” He also explained that the Directors would serve “without compensation”.

It was voted that the Acting Chairman appoint a Nominating Committee. They were William Bable, Chairman; Lois Buell, Anne Dahowski, Thomas Merrigan, and Wyman Stone. It was agreed that the officers of the Corporation would be President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary/Clerk.

It was planned to seek a maximum of 200 incorporators for the new Corporation.

The second meeting was held on May 28, 1974 at the Franklin County Court House. Commissioner Streeter opened the meeting. The Nominating Committee presented a slate of officers which were elected:

President, Winslow Wentworth

Vice President, Gregory Watts

Treasurer, Ray Keyes

Secretary/Clerk Georgann Morin

Elva Hutchinson, Walter Fields, Elizabeth Adams, William Babel and Lois Buell were elected Directors at Large. The By-Laws, which called for 23 Directors of whom three would be County Commissioners were presented, discussed and adopted. Ted Harrison stated that he hoped to have two incorporators from each town plus a few additional from the larger towns for a total of approximately 70 for the future election of Directors.

It was voted to incorporate under Chapter 180—as a non-profit corporation. The purposes for which the Corporation was formed were: to operate exclusively for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes, including but not limited to providing home care programs for the area known as Franklin County, plus the four Worcester County towns of Athol, Petersham, Phillipston and Royalston, for persons over 60 years of age unless otherwise restricted by conditions of grants or contracts. The Corporation was authorized to apply for grants, enter into contracts, receive funds from public and private sources, hire staff and administer programs designed to support and maintain

persons in the communities. The Corporation was also authorized to assist older persons with hot meals, nutrition, medical services, legal services, nursing services, homemaking, social services, or any service which will prolong the life and well-being of older persons. The Corporation also had the power to purchase, sell, lease, rent or mortgage real estate or personal property in order to carry out the purposes of the Corporation.

The Charter was signed on September 19, 1974 and the date of Incorporation was July 22, 1974.

A Personnel Committee was formed, consisting of the four Officers and Deborah Hayes, Lois Buell, and Elaine Barkin. It was voted that appointments recommended by the Personnel Committee would be submitted to the full Board of Directors for approval.

Ted Harrison, Wendell Streeter, and Winslow Wentworth volunteered to investigate possible sites to house the new Corporation. The Town of Montague offered the Central Street School on Central Street in Turners Falls. It consisted of four classrooms, a principal's office and a basement. One of the upstairs classrooms was being used by the Junior Womens Club and the other by the American Legion. The new Corporation could lease the rest of the building from the Town. The other available site, the second floor of Harvey's Garage on Newell Court in Greenfield, was felt to be inadequate as the area had been used for storage of batteries, tires, etc. and had no windows. The Central Street building was leased from the Town of Montague for \$1 per year. The Corporation would be responsible for utility and repair costs.

A Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) was formed consisting of vendors, directors of other agencies, and professional people to advise the Directors on matters that would most certainly face the new Corporation. This proved to be a wise decision and the PAC eventually became the Area Agency Advisory Council.

The Corporation was now ready to proceed with other matters. The original Board of Directors felt that "it was a strange and awesome experience...no one knew what was ahead. It was the beginning of becoming familiar with acronyms, entitlements, strange designations and account numbers and also having to deal with two budgetary years—the Commonwealth and the Federal fiscal years."

Ronald LaDoux of South Barre, Coordinator for the North Quabbin Health Plan was selected as Executive Director and began his duties on August 5, 1974. Jonathan Stevens of Sunderland was hired as Community Service Coordinator; Donald Smith of Bernardston was hired as Fiscal Manager; Barbara Fahey of Amherst was appointed Intake Supervisor; Pamela Rand of Orange as Case Manager; and Jeanne Sullivan of Millers Falls as Secretary. Ray Keyes of the Board was made Treasurer. Donald Smith died on November 17, 1974 and Jeanne Sullivan assumed the duties of Fiscal Manager.

In the spring of 1975, Ronald LaDoux resigned and went to work for the State Department of Welfare. Jonathan Stevens was appointed Acting

Executive Director. Within two weeks he resigned to become the Assistant Director of Cooperative Health Information for the State of Vermont. Louis Doyle of the Vermont Office on Aging was selected as Executive Director and began his duties in May of 1975. On October 1, 1975, Margaret O'Rourke Keane, MSW of Montague Center became the Community Service Coordinator. Antoinette Bragdon was chosen to replace Barbara Fahey who had resigned as Intake Supervisor.

When Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) were first proposed they were to be another separately administered organization. The proposed aims and purposes of AAA's seemed to "dovetail" with those of the Home Care Corporations. Franklin County Home Care was outspoken in its feelings that the AAA would become a part of the Corporation. The Professional Advisory Committee studied the Older Americans Act which would establish the AAA's and decided that Home Care could in fact also be the Area Agency on Aging. A letter was sent on June 3, 1975 to Secretary Rose Claffery of the Department of Elder Affairs requesting that the Franklin County Home Care Corporation be designated the AAA. On October 1, 1975, the Corporation was designated the first Home Care Corporation in the Commonwealth as an Area Agency on Aging. On November 18, 1975, the Directors voted to set up an Area Agency Advisory Council to consist of 15 members, 5 from the Board of Directors, 5 from the PAC and 5 members at-large to be appointed by the Executive Director and the President. On December 23, 1975, the Executive Committee approved the membership of the AAA Advisory Council. Micheline Asselin was elected Chairperson, Elaine Barkin, Vice Chairperson and Henry Bartlett, Secretary. The PAC was disbanded in June of 1976.

In June 1976, Louis Doyle resigned and on June 16, 1976, Margaret Keane was promoted to Executive Director. In August, Saralou Garland, MSW, was selected to fill the position of Community Service Coordinator. Jeffrey Pringle of Springfield was hired as Fiscal Manager at the end of August 1976. On August 27, 1976 three members of Home Care's Executive Committee met with three members of the Senior Services Executive Committee. Home Care expressed an interest in administering the meals program. It was proposed that Home Care could save money in administrative costs for the program and expand the program with the savings. The Greenfield Recorder of September 1, 1976 reported that "More than 100 senior citizens watched Tuesday afternoon while the Franklin County Home Care Corp., the umbrella agency for the elderly services in the county, performed a bloodless coup." The Home Care Board assumed responsibility for the administration of the meals program under a three month trial contract under which it could monitor the program carefully. The Senior Services Corporation dissolved on September 30, 1976. Home Care began to administer the meals program and staff. The transition was smooth and there was no disruption in services. A secretary, bookkeeper, assistant director, 8 meal site managers and two drivers became employees of FCHCC. Home Care also

assumed responsibility for all equipment, including two vans.

A Nutrition Council was set up to work with the Nutrition Program Director. This later became the Nutrition Project Council with representatives from each of the mealsites. Mealsites in Shutesbury, Leverett, Bernardston and Charlemont were added within the next few years.

In 1978 the agency conducted its first Area Agency Needs Assessment Survey. Out of this survey came the expressed need for Home Care to provide technical assistance, subgrant funding and support to the development of local Councils on Aging and all-purpose senior centers throughout the service area.

1979 saw Home Care's continued commitment to local COA's in the form of the development of two additional senior centers. The Deerfield Senior Center in the old Conway Street School in South Deerfield and the Orange Senior Center in the Armory building both began operation. Home Care also supported the Town of Greenfield's Small Cities Application which included funding for renovations to the Weldon Hotel building for elderly housing and a new Senior Center. *The Good Life* was brought "in house" having been contracted out prior to 1979. The Friendly Visitors volunteers visited more than 100 elders during the year. Home Care's staff had grown to 46 and its budget was \$1.4 million.

In 1980, Margaret O'Rourke resigned as Executive Director in June. In effect the entire management/supervisory team changed during the year. The new leadership saw Albert Norman hired as the Executive Director; Jaye Bonsignor as Assistant Director; James Matteau as the Planner; Patricia Kerrins as the Fiscal Manager; Charlotte McLaughlin as the Nutrition Program Manager; and Barbara Carulli as the Casework Supervisor. The agency underwent a restructuring, as well, into three units: Program Operations, Fiscal Operations and Planning/Evaluations/Grants Management. The first 3-year Area Agency Area Plan was developed with public hearings in Orange and Greenfield, and public forums in Shelburne, Deerfield and Greenfield for the dual purpose of getting input for the Area Plan and for the second White House Conference on Aging. 28,000 Home Delivered Meals were delivered and 478 clients were served through the State Home Care program. Home Care provided support for the development of the Elder Day Center in Greenfield and the Nursing Home Support program, both operated by the Franklin County Mental Health Center. A transportation study was undertaken with the Franklin County Commissioners in an effort to expand elder transportation throughout the area. The Board of Directors voted that the agency staff should have a Pension Plan as a part of the agency's benefit package. The agency budget grew slightly to \$1.5 million and the staff increased to 54 part and full-time employees.

1981 saw several significant changes in the State Home Care Program. The Department of Elder Affairs field tested a 40-page client assessment tool, finally implementing a shorter version. This was the first statewide, uniform tool for the Case Managers to perform comprehensive problem-oriented client assessments. DEA also instituted procedures for Quality Assurance of services and a draft of Case Management standards of performance. Support Services at the agency were consolidated under a Coordinator for the first time. These services included the Senior Aides employment program for older workers, a widow-to-widow support group, the Friendly Visitor Program and a new program, the Elder Service Corp Companions. Home Care shared in the development of the Greenfield Senior Center which opened in the renovated Weldon Hotel during the year.

Highlights of 1982 included the development of the SeniorGram 60-second radio spots and *The Good Life* radio Show, which was aired monthly on local stations. The SilverLine Elder Information and Referral service was launched and co-located with the Franklin Community Action Corporation's Social Service Help I&R program in Greenfield. Home Care also supported the development of elderly housing and a senior center in the old Pequog Building in Athol. Due to federal budget cuts and the uncertainty of funding for elder nutrition programs, the first Meals on Wheels Fund Drive was held with Ann Trumble of Greenfield as Chairperson. A little over \$5,000 was raised that first year.

In 1983 there were more changes made to the State Home Care program. Home Care became designated as the mandated protective services agency for elders who were abused and neglected. Due to a perceived need for many elders to supplement their retirement income and the lack of employment opportunities for individuals age 55 and older, Project Older Worker was developed in conjunction with the state Division of Employment Security and the Franklin/Hampshire Private Industry Council. The Senior Aide Program expanded from 14 to 43 slots under a new contract with the National Council of Senior Citizens in Washington, DC. A \$32,000 grant to start up a Foster Care program for elders was received from the Department of Elder Affairs. *The Good Life* expanded from 8 to 12 pages. 48,774 Home Delivered meals were delivered during the year. 894 elders were served by the State Home Care program. The agency budget topped \$2 million.

1984, Home Care's 10th year, was a busy one. The Adult Family Care Program began accepting its first clients, placing them in the homes of "host families." The SilverLine I & R program moved "in-house" as a part of the State Home Care unit. Protective Services was mandated to be a 24 hour/7 day a week emergency response program. Two new purchased services were added to the package of services available to clients: personal care homemaker and social day care. The Nursing Home

Ombudsman Program began to serve residents of area nursing and rest homes under the auspices of Home Care and the Western Mass Legal Services, Inc. A greater emphasis was beginning to be placed on services that assisted and supported families caring for elders in the community. The Senior Aide Program expanded to 55 slots. Project Older Worker expanded to the Athol area in response to high unemployment in that area and effectively became the “employment service” in cooperation with the Greenfield DET office. The state Division of Employment and Training eventually located a satellite office in Athol. Project Older Worker staff worked with laid-off Union Butterfield workers, 40% of whom were age 55 or older, through the Workers Assistance Center. The agency’s budget reached \$2.5 million and the staff, including Senior Aides, was nearly 100.

In 1985, the Nutrition Program added two new one-day mealsites in Royalston and Warwick. “Frozen” weekend meals were offered to Home Delivered Meals recipients for the first time. The Food for Elders Program provided surplus food distribution to low-income elders through the mealsites and senior centers. Home Care assisted in the upgrading of the Erving, Deerfield and Shelburne senior centers. In conjunction with the Franklin Regional Transit Authority, development of Council on Aging-based transportation began with the purchase of vans and radio equipment. For the first time, elders had an effective elder advocacy organization with the founding of the Franklin Senior Action Council, a chapter of the Mass Senior Action Council. SeniorGram radio spots were aired outside of Massachusetts for the first time on stations in Louisiana, Indiana, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. The state awarded Home Care and both the Greenfield and Franklin County Regional Housing Authorities grants for the development of two congregate housing facilities with 31 units. Funding was provided for the development of a new senior center for the Town of Montague. Respite Care was added as a Home Care service. 957 elders were served in the State Home Care program. Project Older Worker expanded with a full-time Employment Specialist to work with area employers to expand job opportunities for older workers. Project Older Worker also received funds from the Franklin/Hampshire Private Industry Council for the first time to provide skills training to older workers. An Alzheimer’s Support program started during the year. The budget reached \$3 million and more than 125 staff carried out the agency’s programs.

In 1986 Al Norman resigned as Executive Director to become the Director of the statewide Mass Home Care/Area Agency on Aging Association. Janice Gibeau, RN, PhD was hired to succeed him in July. Her background in health care seemed to position the agency for changes in health care that were beginning to take place in the state and nationally. Pat Kerrins moved from the Fiscal Manager’s position to become the Director of Community Services. The agency

reorganized itself into three units: Client Services, Community Services and Fiscal/Administrative Services. Winslow Wentworth resigned as President of the Board, having served twelve years in that capacity since the incorporation of the agency. He remained on the Board, but was succeeded as Board President by Linda Wilcox, Manager of the Greenfield Social Security Office. Elder transportation expanded to include a van for services to New Salem/Warwick. Recuperative Care services were offered under the Adult Family Care program. *The Good Life* became “computerized” with a donated computer from Digital Corp. Client needs for the Home Care program were no longer assessed for “priority categories” based on an elder’s needs, but by “functional impairment levels” based on an elder’s ability to perform certain activities of daily living. Along with the institution of DRGs in Massachusetts hospitals, the Home Care program began to see a shift in emphasis to serving an increasingly “frailer” elder population. In the fall, a waiting list was instituted for FIL 4&5 categories. Despite these factors, 962 elders were served by the State Home Care program. For the first time, more Home Delivered Meals (73,000) were provided than Congregate Meals (69,000). The Brown Bag program was initiated in conjunction with the Western Mass Food Bank. Project Older Worker was awarded a JTPA 3% Mature Worker Grant through the F/H Private Industry Council and hired its first Training Counselor to work with older workers in need of skills training. A part-time Elder Advocate was hired to keep area elder groups informed about the latest developments in legislation, benefits, regulations and elder issues through funding from the Mass Association of Older Americans and the Villers Foundation. Home Care assisted the Greenfield COA in establishing an out-of-county medical ride service called MedRide. The agency’s budget reached \$3.5 million.

1987 saw additional personnel changes at the agency. Jaye Bonsignor resigned as Director of Client Services and was replaced by Julia Daley. Phil Edwards was hired as the Director of Fiscal/Administrative Services. The year was highlighted by the addition of skilled Home Health Services to the State Home Care program to provide elders with physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy and skilled nursing services in the home. Only 790 elders were served by the State Home Care program. Deficits were projected in the State Home Care program for the coming year. Home Delivered Meals increased by 22% over 1986 with nearly 80,000 meals delivered to 748 elders. Project Older Worker received increased funds through the JTPA 3% Mature Worker Grant to provide specific skills training to older workers as well as, for the first time, On-The-Job Training (OJT) with area employers. Home Care provided funding support to nine (9) COAs (Bernardston, Erving, Leverett, Montague, Northfield Shutesbury, Orange, Buckland and Shelburne) to purchase equipment and for renovations to their senior centers. Two additional vans were purchased through the FRTA to further enhance the COA-based transportation network. The ADMIRE program started through a grant from the Alzheimer’s disease and Related Disorders of Western Massachusetts. ADMIRE provided volunteer respite care for people caring for

family members who have Alzheimer's Disease or a related disorder. FCHCC co-sponsored a Bread Winners, caregivers, and Employers: New Alliances in an Aging America conference at Smith College. This conference provided employers with information about services available to them to expand workplace supports for employees providing elder care to family members. Due to a transfer in her assignment, Linda Wilcox resigned from the Board in November. Paul Douglas was elected the new President of the Board at the Annual Meeting. The agency's budget surpassed \$4 million for the first time.

In 1988, Emergency Shelter Funds were set aside in the State Home Care program budget to meet the needs of increasing numbers of homeless elders. The Home Delivered Meals program increased dramatically once again, with nearly 800 elders receiving 89,650 meals. The Meals on Wheels Fund Drive topped \$20,000 for the first time in response to this increased need. Farmer's Market Coupons were made available to elders in the area for the first time—elders were able to “purchase” fresh food and vegetables at the Greenfield Farmer's Market on Saturdays during the summer months. Home Care participated in a 5-part caregiver educational series with the West County COA Consortium and with the Northfield/Bernardston COAs. An area-wide needs assessment survey of sensory impaired and physically handicapped elders was carried out in conjunction with COAs. The SeniorGram radio spots were heard on 86 radio stations in 26 states. Project Older Worker held a 5th Birthday Party with US Congressman Silvio O. Conte as the Keynote Speaker. Project Older Worker received two JTPA 3% Grants—a Mature Worker Grant to provide skills training and On-the-Job-Trainings to older workers and an Employer Challenge Grant designed to work with area employers to increase employment opportunities for older workers. Two Employer Roundtables were held—co-sponsored by Erving Paper and the Channing L. Bete Co.—with more than 40 area employers attending. Employment Services became a full division of the agency to compliment Client Services, Community Services, and Fiscal/Administrative Services. The agency budget exceeded \$4.5 million for the first time.

In early 1989, Janice Gibeau resigned as Executive Director. Pat Kerrins was hired as the new Executive Director in March. Donna Liebl was named the Director of Client Services. 1989 saw severe cutbacks in the State Home Care program. Services to clients were cut by an average of 18%. Due to budget constraints at the state level, Home Cares across the state were being asked to serve increasingly frailer client populations with fewer funds. Services were suspended to “less frail” elders for part of the year. Home Care provided funding to the Peer Counseling Program of the Franklin County Mental Health Center to support family members of individuals in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease. A Volunteer Home Repair Program was started in conjunction with several COAs to assist elders

with repairs to their homes that they either couldn't afford or had difficulty finding someone to do the actual repairs. Home Care provided meals to homeless elders through a grant to the Community Meals programs. Ann Trumble continued to head the Meals on Wheels Fund Drive which raised more than \$25,000 for the first time. Home Care provided technical assistance and support to the Town of Leyden in the development of a Council on Aging in that town. Leyden became the 27th COA in the FCHCC 30 town service area. The position of Alzheimer's Specialist for the Greater Franklin County Partnership came "in house" at Home Care during the year. Project Older Worker sponsored an "Unretirement Party" at Greenfield Community College with keynote addresses by US Congressman Conte and state Rep. Carmen Buell. Rep. Buell announced the formation of a statewide Older Worker's Task Force under the Massachusetts Jobs Council. Both Rep. Buell and Home Care's Director of Employment Services, Jim Ewen, were appointed to the Task Force. Following this, a Job Fair was held with some 28 employers discussing job opportunities with the more than 200 older workers in attendance. The Senior Aide Program increased to 63 community service job positions. Project Older Worker provided classroom skills training in basic computer workshops, keyboarding, word processing, secretarial skills and Lotus 1, 2, 3 spreadsheets. The agency budget reached \$4.7 million.

In August of 1990, Roseann Martoccia was hired to replace Julia Daley as the Director of Client Services. Jim Ewen was named the Assistant Executive Director at that time. In 1990, due to the state budget situation—for the first time in its history, the agency was forced to cut clients from its roles. 72 "less frail" clients were removed from the case load due to a lack of funding from the state. Franklin County Home Care was awarded a contract from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs for an Elder At Risk program providing specialized case management service to elders who put themselves at risk. The SilverLine responded to more than 1,000 calls for information about services to elders and their families. The Nutrition Programs received \$45,000 in funding from small cities grants from Greenfield, Athol, Orange, Erving, Warwick and New Salem. The Meals on Wheels Fund Drive took a quantum leap forward raising \$34,000 or almost \$10,000 more than the previous year. Assistance was provided to three COAs in South County (Deerfield, Sunderland and Whately) in the form of a needs assessment to inform their future planning for services for elders. Two new vans were awarded to FCHCC from the Executive Office of Transportation to expand the COA-based transportation network even further. Rowe became the 28th town in the FCHCC service area to establish a COA. Project Older Worker held its 2nd Annual Employer Breakfast and presented its Older Worker of the Year Award to Robert Remillard of Rule Industries, South Deerfield. Project Older Worker received a small cities grant of \$18,000 from the Town of Athol to provide employment and training services to

low and moderate-income older workers in that town. Several courses for older workers, along with a Job Search Workshop, were held during “January at the College” during the Greenfield Community College’s (GCC) intersession break. Other training courses were held throughout the year at GCC and the Franklin County Tech School. An Alzheimer’s Support Group was formed for caregivers of persons with Alzheimer’s and other dementias to offer support to each other. The agency budget was \$4.4 million.

In June of 1991, Home Care moved from its home of 16 years, the old Central Street School in Turners Falls, to a new home in the old Farren Hospital building at the Farren Care Center. The mission of the agency officially expanded by vote of the Board of Directors to include providing services to other populations, in addition to elders. Home Care took over the Coordination of Care program and was now responsible for screening all individuals for Medicaid eligibility for nursing home and adult day health services. FCHCC also became the first Home Care in the state to be approved to provide Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Services. The PCA program allowed Home Care to expand the range of services offered to its clients to include this self-managed care option. 864 elders were served through the State Home Care Program. Congregate housing facilities were opened in Greenfield (the Morgan Allen House) and in Turners Falls (the Winslow Wentworth House) in conjunction with the Greenfield Housing Authority and the Franklin County Regional Housing Authority respectively. Congregate Housing offered for the first time an interdependent living arrangement—a private room coupled with common rooms, a daily meal, activities and a part-time Coordinator—providing a supportive living situation. Private Pay Care Management services were offered by the agency for the first time. This program was designed to allow elders and their families, especially families living at a distance, to know that appropriate services and levels of service are provided through assessment, care planning, and ongoing monitoring. Home Care co-sponsored an Elder Housing Forum with the Greenfield and Franklin County Regional Housing Authorities in April. In October, FCHCC sponsored a Health Care Forum with Sen. Edward Kennedy. The first SeniorVisions, half-hour, monthly cable TV program was produced by FCHCC staff. The topic was “Alzheimer’s: Why Did I Come Into the Kitchen?” The agency budget was \$4.6 million and the staff reached 130 employees.

1992 was the 10th Anniversary of two important programs at Home Care—the SilverLine Information & Referral Program and Project Older Worker. The year was highlighted by the most significant challenge in the agency’s history—“Consolidation”. The state proposed to reduce the number of Home Cares from 27 to 20. FCHCC was “targeted” for “consolidation”. Fortunately, due to a remarkable statewide advocacy effort by seniors and many others, this

proposal was resoundingly defeated. The State Home Care program took on the Managed Care in Housing Initiative during the year. Managed Care in Housing provided enhanced services to frail clients in need of personal care in the morning and evening, clustering, and some form of 24-hour personal emergency response. These enhanced service packages were made available to a small number of non-Medicaid clients who lived in housing complexes or in “neighborhoods”. The State Home Care Program served 866 elders through its program during the year. The Nutrition Program served 1,150 elders some 55,000 meals at the congregate mealsites. Another 751 elders received more than 89,000 meals delivered to them at home. The Homesharing Program came to Franklin County in collaboration with local COAs. Homesharing matched people who need low or no-cost housing with seniors, in exchange for help around the house or companionship. The Volunteer Center of Franklin County was established and based at Home Care. The Volunteer Center would match volunteers with agencies in need of volunteer help. Home Care was joined in this effort by the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Franklin County Arts Council, United Way of Franklin County, Greenfield Community College, Cooperative Extension Service and others. Project Older Worker offered Entrepreneurial Training to older workers interested in starting their own business in conjunction with the Franklin County Community Development Corporation. Project Older Worker also held its 4th Annual Employer Breakfast with US Congressman John W. Olver as the keynote speaker. The Older Worker of the Year Award was presented to William Powers of Sweeney Ford in Greenfield. Home Care also hosted several Health Care Forums with Congressman Olver throughout the service area. The agency budget was \$4.1 million.

1993 was a busy and productive year for the agency. Home Care participated in a statewide needs assessment survey in conjunction with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Results of this survey provided important planning data for both the State and for the FCHCC service area. Home Care was one of 16 sites chosen nationwide to participate in a study on “hunger and food insecurity among the elderly”. This nationwide study was undertaken by the Urban Institute in Washington DC. A Blind Support Group was established in the area with Assistance from Home Care staff. Health Education programs were initiated through Home Care’s participation in the Western Mass Women’s Breast Cancer Coalition, a grant from the Mass Dept. of Public Health. The agency participated in the Advisory Council for HealthLinks, a health screening and referral clinic for individuals who had no insurance or limited coverage under the auspices of the Franklin Medical Center. During the year, FCHCC’s first president, Winslow Wentworth passed away. The agency dedicated the Annual Report in his memory and established the Wentworth Board Member of the Year Award in his memory.

Also during 1993, Project Older Worker received nearly \$100,000 in small cities funding from the towns of Athol, Orange, Greenfield, Montague and a 9-town west county consortium headed by Shelburne. These grants allowed for expansion of skills training to older workers with low and moderate incomes from these towns. In March, Project Older Worker opened a 16 station state-of-the-art computer center at the Franklin County Tech School in Turners Falls. The Computer Learning Center was designed to provide greater access to affordable training in various computer software programs to older workers and other non-traditional students. The Nutrition Programs also received approximately \$100,000 in small cities funding from Athol, Orange, Greenfield, Montague and the 9-town west county consortium. These funds allowed the nutrition program to operate despite projected deficits. In particular, these funds and the \$32,000 raised by the Meals on Wheels Fund Drive ensured that there would not be waiting lists for home delivered meals in the FCHCC service area through 1993. 1,366 elders participated in congregate meals at Home Care's 14 mealsites during the year. 773 elders received 92,000 home delivered meals as well. Several mealsites celebrated their 20th anniversaries during the year: Athol, Orange, Greenfield, Shelburne, Deerfield, Montague, and Northfield. The State Home Care Program served 874 elders with its various program during the year. The Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) instituted uniform intake for the statewide Home Care system to ensure that elders throughout the state with the same levels of frailty would receive services. This meant that FCHCC, which had previously been able to serve some "less frail" elders would no longer be able to add these clients to its caseload. At the same time, EOEA instituted over two year one uniform rate for all Home Care. The combination of these two fundamental changes in the Home Care System, meant that FCHCC faced the prospect of seeing its caseload drop by 20% over two years and its funding for case management and operations drastically reduced as well. The Enhanced Community Options Program (ECOP) was a new service option. ECOP enabled persons who were medically eligible to enter a nursing home but who wanted to remain at home, an enhanced service package allowing them to do so. The goal of this program was to keep a person who is on the edge of nursing home placement in the community. The agency budget was \$4.3 million in 1993.

1994 was another year of change. In March, Pat Kerrins, after nearly fourteen years of service to the agency, the last five as Executive Director, resigned. Jim Ewen, Assistant Executive Director, was named Acting Director. After a search process, Jim Ewen was hired as the agency's seventh Executive Director by the Board of Directors on May 23. Roseann Martoccia was appointed Assistant Executive Director. The Home Delivered Meals program surpassed 100,000 meals delivered for the first time, serving almost 850 elders. The 20th Annual Senior Picnic was held in July and attracted more than 1,000 area seniors to a day of good food, music and dancing. A Health Education Department was developed with multi-year grants from the

Department of Public Health for the Senior Tobacco Education Program (STEP) smoking cessation program for older smokers and the Health of Older Women (HOW) education, screening, detection and treatment of breast and cervical cancer in older women. As a part of STEP, a survey of seniors' attitudes toward smoking was undertaken. Home Care also assisted the Franklin Senior Action Council in a survey of the dental needs of seniors throughout our service area. FCHCC continued to participate in the HealthLinks Advisory Council and also participated with a group interested in developing a Community Health Center in the area. With the support of Western Mass Electric Company, Shawmut Bank, Fleet Bank, Greenfield Savings Bank and United Savings Bank, a Money Management Program was developed to assist elders in managing their finances. Co-sponsored by AARP, Mass Home Care and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, volunteer money managers were trained and then matched with an elder in need of the program. The volunteers help with bill paying, check writing, budgeting, etc. The SilverLine handled more than 2,000 requests for information about or referral to services for elders and their families. The third edition of the SilverLine Directory was published and distributed. The SilverLine was selected as one of six elder Information and Referral programs nationally to receive a technical assistance grant from AARP for computerization of its Information & Referral functions. Project Older Worker received a JTPA Mature Worker Grant for the ninth year in a row and was cited for having a "model program" for the state. The Computer Learning Center moved its location to the old Riverside School building in Gill during the summer. In its first year, the Computer Learning Center provided computer-related training to more than 150 persons.

1994 was the second year of the state's institution of uniform intake and a uniform rate for the State Home Care Program. The caseload continued to drop due to this policy. In addition, the state also went to a uniform rate for purchased services. FCHCC arranged "home visits" for state legislators to home care clients in conjunction with Mass Home Care's Valentine's Day "Home is Where the Heart Is" campaign to help legislators understand these changes to the home care program. FCHCC's rate for July 1993 was \$265 per client per month. The uniform rate for July 1994 was \$189 per client per month. Cuts in services to clients had to be made in the fall of 1994 in order to stay within this new "cap" on services. The State Home Care program served 811 elders during the year. Under the Adult Family Care Program, FCHCC received approval from the Division of Medical Assistance to become a Community Assisted Living (CAL) provider. CAL provides comprehensive medical and psychosocial support to persons residing in housing complexes. The Legislative Committee of the Board of Directors hosted a "Legislator's Breakfast" in early November to keep local legislators updated on the important elder issues requiring attention at the Statehouse. A mini-White House Conference on Aging was held in November with US Congressman John Olver as the Keynote Speaker. Sponsored by the Area Agency Advisory Council, some 50 elders expressed their views on a variety of issues

including health care, nutrition, transportation, access to services in rural area, financial security, older worker employment and training. The first Walk for Meals on Wheels was held at the Tuners Falls High School track and raised nearly \$3,000 for the annual Meals on Wheels Fund Drive. The agency budget was \$4.5 million and staff numbered nearly 110 as the agency marked its 20th anniversary.

1995 was a year of change and challenge when state funding constraints forced cuts in services to many clients. At the same time, due to the third year of the state's uniform intake policy—the dilemma was having less money available to pay for services to meet the needs of increasingly larger numbers of frail clients in need of more services. This year saw the computerization and centralization of the agency's Intake and Information & Referral services. FCHCC was selected as a site for the MicroMax SSI and Food Stamp Benefit Access Pilot Project through the Families USA Foundation. Through the use of a laptop computer, an older person could be screened for more than 70 federal and state benefits in their home or at a senior center or other community site. The Health Education Department received a grant from the state Department of Public Health for a HOME Prostate Awareness outreach program for older men. FCHCC was selected to represent Mass Home Care as part of the staffing for a three-year federal grant to look at the possibility of the development of a Coordinated Aging Rehab and Disability Services (CARDS) system for Massachusetts. Nancy Baker, Disability Specialist for the agency's Personal Care Assistance Program, served in this capacity over the three-year period. Project Older Worker received JTPA training funds for a tenth consecutive year, the program expanded to provide employment and training services to six additional towns in Worcester County. An Older Worker Specialist was placed in the Gardner DET office.

In 1995, FCHCC also worked cooperatively with several organizations concerning access to health care. The HealthLinks program of the Franklin Medical Center continued to provide health care "clinics" two nights a week, one night in Greenfield and another night in Buckland, for individuals with health problems who were uninsured or underinsured. The state Department of Public Health formed Community Health Network Areas (CHNAs) across the state. Each CHNA was responsible to involve as many agencies, providers and individuals from across their area to choose and work on a particular health status indicator project. The Franklin County/North Quabbin CHNA chose "Immunization" as its initial project. Phyllis O'Hara, Director of Health Education, served as co-chair of the Adult Immunization Committee. The Community Health Center Planning Group was provided space within FCHCC's office and received a Medicaid Access Grant to help determine the need and the feasibility of establishing a Community Health Center in Franklin County.

The agency's Protective Services program also participated in the TRIAD program as a member of the TRIAD Steering Committee. TRIAD is a collaborative effort

of older adults, law enforcement and community providers to increase safety in the home and community through empowerment of elders, education and crime prevention. FCHCC Director Jim Ewen and several family members of home care clients provided testimony at a “Congressional Hearing on Medicare Cuts” sponsored by Congressman John Olver at Greenfield Community College in October. The Board held its annual Legislator’s Breakfast in November to discuss the need for expanded services to meet the needs of the frailer clients in the home care program and the cost effectiveness of “shifting the care” from nursing homes to the community. Facilitated by a Springfield College social work intern, the residents of Winslow Wentworth Congregate House produced “Life Stories: The Wentworth History Book”, which contained stories of each resident’s life along with an old and current photo. The Parents Support Group began to meet, facilitated by a Protective Services Worker, to provide a safe place for parents experiencing problems coping with the behavior of their adult children to share, to give and to receive support. The 21st Annual Meeting was held in December with John Butler-West, President of Mass Home Care and state representative Steve Kulik as the Keynote Speakers. The agency budget remained at just over \$4.5 million.

In 1996, FCHCC completed a two-year “marketing study” to assist the agency to better market itself and its forty-three programs. One result of this study was the formation of an Outreach/Marketing Work Group that met on a regular basis to identify and coordinate outreach and marketing opportunities and projects. Also, this year, the Board of Directors took the first step in the development of a comprehensive Fund Development Program for the agency with the hiring of a part-time, 15 hours per week, Fund Development Coordinator. Cynthia Martowski was hired to fill this position and would have responsibility over the annual Meals on Wheels Fund Drive and the development of other ways for individuals, corporations and foundations to give to FCHCC. In collaboration with our statewide association, Mass Home Care, FCHCC began the process of implementing a Long-Term Care Partnership which would enable FCHCC and partner agencies across the state to serve a large geographic area through a single contract with managed care networks, while still maintaining individual independence.

Our advocacy work with our federal and state legislators resulted in several key pieces of legislation becoming reality. First, on the federal level, proposed cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Older Americans Act programs were thwarted. At the state level, the Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs) bill was finally passed. This bill established the home care corporations across the state as ASAPs to provide for one-stop shopping for older consumers in need of state-funded long-term care services. The Health Care Access bill passed in July provided health care coverage to more than 125,000 children in Massachusetts, as well as established a prescription drug benefit targeted to some 60,000 low and moderate income elders across the state. The so-called CORI bill was also passed that required Criminal Offenders Record Investigations

(CORI) for workers providing services in the homes of Massachusetts elders.

Despite these legislative successes, funding for the state home care program was level-funded for a sixth consecutive year. This meant that the home care caseload continued to include a larger number of frail elders needing more services, whose needs could not be adequately met. The Home Delivered Meals program served more than 100,000 meals for the first time to 918 elders. The Meals on Wheels Fund Drive surpassed \$40,000 for the first time and the 1st end-of-the-year Annual Appeal brought in over \$5,000. For the first time, FCHCC provided ElderCare Services to a local employer with a contract for the Channing L. Bete Company of South Deerfield. The 29th Council on Aging in FCHCC's service area was established in the town of Phillipston during the year. The 22nd Annual Meeting highlighted state Senator Stan Rosenberg, Chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. The agency budget reached \$4.75 million.

1997 was another year of growth for the agency. In February, FCHCC began to help elders in need of assistance with paying for their prescription drugs through the application process for the state's new Senior Pharmacy Program. In March, Congressman John Olver helped to celebrate National "Older Worker's Week" by recognizing older workers and area employers with Project Older Worker. In July, FCHCC was designated, without conditions, as an Aging Services Access Point (ASAP)—one of twenty across the state. As an ASAP, the agency became the "single entry point" for all individuals in need of home health care, community-based, and long-term care services. Also in July, FCHCC was designated as the lead agency for the SHINE health insurance counseling program in Franklin and Hampshire counties. In conjunction with local Councils on Aging, the agency recruited and trained new SHINE volunteers to meet the need to provide health insurance information to elders in both counties. During the year, FCHCC took part in a second statewide needs assessment survey with the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. The agency also involved the local Councils on Aging in the development of the four-year Area Plan that would carry forward to the year 2002. The COAs co-sponsored two Town Meeting Forums in Greenfield and Athol that attracted more than 100 older persons to provide input for the Area Plan.

Also during the year, two new volunteer luncheon clubs were formed in the towns of New Salem and Phillipston. Three more area employers developed Corporate ElderCare programs with the agency providing enhanced Information & Referral services to their employees. The 4th edition of the SilverLine I & R Resource Directory was published and more than 5,000 copies were distributed throughout the community. FCHCC became the first ASAP/AAA in the state to have its own website on the Internet. Elders, persons with disabilities, families and caregivers were able to access information about the agency, its programs and the SilverLine Directory at the FCHCC Internet address www.fchcc.org

Through ongoing work with the legislative delegation, after seven years of level-

funding, the home care program received a \$10 million increase. In addition, through the efforts of Senate Ways and Means (chaired by Sen. Stan Rosenberg, D-Amherst), another \$7.7 million was included in the budget for four initiatives designated to “shift the care” from nursing home to home care. The Home Health Substitution program and expanded Medicaid and non-Medicaid Enhanced Community Options Program initiatives all provided enhanced service packages designed to allow nursing home eligible elders to remain at home or in the community. The Nursing Facility Discharge initiative provided enhanced services to assist short-term nursing home residents to move back into a community setting. The four-year effort to establish a Community Health Center in Franklin County became a reality late in the year. The Community Health Center of Franklin County received federal funding as a “satellite” site of the Holyoke Community Health Center and moved into its new quarters at the other end of the building that housed FCHCC at the Farren Care Center. The Keynote Speaker at the 23rd Annual Meeting was Congressman John Olver. The first annual Cevasco-Manwell-Quinn Elder Advocacy Award was presented to Anne McGarrah for her advocacy on behalf of individuals with Williams Syndrome. The award was named in memory of elder advocates Bea Cevasco, Frank Manwell and Joe Quinn. The agency budget reached \$4.950 million.

At the Annual Meeting in 1998, Paul Douglas stepped down as president of the Board of Directors after 10 years. He agreed to remain on the Board of Directors. Frank Metivier of Orange was elected just the fourth president of the FCHCC Board of Directors. Keynote Speakers at the Annual Meeting were Sec. Lillian Glickman, state Executive Office of Elder Affairs and state Sen. Stephen Brewer (D-Barre). After two years of development, FCHCC joined its other partners within the aging network across the state to form ACCESS: Community Care. The formation of ACCESS provided for the development of the capacity of the ASAP/AAA network to contract with managed care entities on a local, statewide or regional basis. FCHCC also joined with the other four ASAPs in Western Massachusetts (Elder Services of Berkshire, Greater Springfield Senior Services, Highland Valley Elder Services, and WestMass Elder Care) to form the Western Mass ASAP Collaborative. This collaboration allowed for the sharing among the agencies of experience, program development, best practices, and resources to improve services to elders and their families in the 105 cities and towns in Western Mass.

For the second year in a row, the state budget included increased funding for home care. Despite this increase, the rate for purchased services remained just below \$200 per client per month. This was still a long way from the \$265 cost per client per month in FY '94 and the caseload continued to include more frail elders in need of more services with each passing year. The State Home Care Program served 890 clients. Seven of the state legislators who serve towns in the FCHCC service area participated in a “home visit” to a home care client in their district in February. Due to cuts in Medicare

Home Health services, which put more of a burden on the limited dollars for home care in the state, an “Ease the Squeeze” rally was held at the Statehouse in March. As a result, for the third year in a row, the FY '99 state budget that was released in July contained increases for home care. For the first time in the agency's history, more than 2,000 elders were served by the Nutrition Program. More than 114,000 Home Delivered meals were served to 1,006 elders. Another 1,036 clients were served nearly 52,000 meals at the agency's nine dining centers and eight volunteer, one-day a week luncheon clubs. The I & R service responded to more than 3,000 calls for assistance for the first time. The Annual Fund Drive raised more than \$50,000 for the first time. Some \$43,000 was raised for Meals on Wheels and nearly \$8,000 was raised through the Annual Appeal. In addition, the Wentworth Endowment Fund had reached \$50,000. The agency embarked on a feasibility study for a possible major capital fund drive in conjunction with FCHCC's 25th Anniversary celebration in 1999-2000. The agency budget topped \$5 million for the first time.

In July of 1999, FCHCC turned 25 years “young”. In February, area legislators once again participated in “home visits” to clients who resided in their districts. These visits once again highlighted the need for increased funding for the State Home Care Program. This was especially true in response to the cuts in Medicare home health and nursing services to nearly 100,000 elders across the state during 1998 and 1999. In March, FCHCC's Executive Director, Jim Ewen, was one of the Keynote Speakers at the National Council on Senior Citizens annual Senior Aides Program Conference in Boston. FCHCC's Project Older Worker program was recognized with the presentation of an “Outstanding Achievement Award” at the conference. In April, Congressman John Olver held a Health Care Forum in Greenfield concerning proposed Medicare reform and the so-called HMO Patient's Bill of Rights. Also that month, a new luncheon club was opened in the Town of Heath. Nine dining centers and nine luncheon clubs now served meals to seniors in the FCHCC service area. In May, the 7th Annual Walk for Meals on Wheels raised nearly \$10,000. The 5th edition of The SilverLine I & R Resource Directory was published in June. Also in June, after a two year “hiatus”, the agency began to again produce the monthly SeniorVisions program for distribution on local cable access television in conjunction with Greenfield TV6. The 25th Annual Senior Picnic drew nearly 800 seniors from across the area on July 22nd, coincidentally the exact date of the agency's incorporation in 1974. In October, Elizabeth Foster, Director of Fiscal and Administrative Support Services, was made the fifth member of the agency's Senior Management Team.

In mid-spring, two HMOs who had been providing Medicare Plans to elders in the area announced plans to leave the area or to drop their Medicare coverage. This, along with a protracted state budget process that was not finalized until November, almost five months after the start of the new fiscal year, left many seniors in “limbo” concerning their health care. Held in the balance of the budget debate was further

expansion of the state's Senior Pharmacy Program. Increased benefits and eligibility levels for the program needed to be known in order to help many elders to make their choices. The SHINE program was inundated with calls from July through November. In all, more than 2,500 calls were handled during the year. The delay in the state budget did contain a silver lining. For a fourth consecutive year the state budget contained increases for the home care program, including a new enhanced service package for some 1,300 seniors statewide who had seen their Medicare home health services reduced or cut altogether. Also included in the state budget language were two important pieces of legislation: the Community Care Ombudsman Program and the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit to help seniors with their property taxes. In late November, Congressman John Olver held another Health Care Forum in Greenfield. This time more than 75 seniors turned out to express their concern about the spiraling cost of prescription drugs.

Most of the agency's forty-five programs continued to grow at a record breaking pace. The home care program served 954 clients. Nearly 170,000 congregate and home delivered meals were served. The Personal Care Assistance program reached more than 100 clients for the first time. The Computer Learning Center served more than 400 participants during the year. The agency celebrated its 25th Anniversary in November with Steve Protulis, Executive Director of the National Council of Senior Citizens and Congressman John Olver as the Keynote Speakers. The agency budget had grown to \$5.25 million and the staff to nearly 120.

In the year 2000, over 5000 hours of instruction was provided by the Computer Learning Center. Congregate and Home Delivered Meals provided 168,000 meals in the 30 town area. FCHCC helped over 330 persons to get information and enroll in the Statewide Pharmacy Program.

Older Americans Act was reauthorized in 2001 adding the National Family Caregivers Initiative and funding. Planning began to tailor services to caregivers.

Elder advocates rally at State House called for "Equal Choice Now" for those who are nursing home eligible. Their hard work will pay off shortly (see below).

The State Report on Long Term Care called for a "unified long term care system" to expand community care and honor the preference of elders to stay at home with care.

The Community Choices Statewide Demonstration began in 2002. Persons who were nursing home eligible and Mass Health members could be supported with home and community support up to 50% of the median cost of nursing home care.

Programming for caregivers began—flexible "grants" to caregivers met their

needs, support groups began, community based respite became available

The ElderCare Advice Program started. Caregivers were able to access resources, information and individualized support designed to help them navigate eldercare systems and assist with their caregiving needs.

The Personal Care Assistance (PCA) contract was renewed for FCHCC. Many more Aging Services Access Points began to offer PCA services.

In 2003 the Community Choices Program was fully implemented!

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs was reorganized to include all aspects of home and community based care. An Office of Long Term Care was created. Elder Affairs and Medicaid were put “under one roof.”

The Men’s Health Program expanded into Berkshire County in a collaborative partnership with Berkshire Health based from Fairview Hospital

Seven communities marked 30 years of continuous operation of the congregate and Meals on Wheels program.

Consumer Directed Care began to be offered as an option for elders in the Home Care Program.

In 2004, Prescription Advantage Program coordinated benefits with the Medicare Discount Card.

A nursing home screening program was retooled to facilitate an elder’s return to home after hospitalization or rehab stay.

Elder at Risk language was added to the state’s Protective Statute and additional resources passed in the supplemental budget to assist the most vulnerable elders.

The 1st oil donation from Country Oil on behalf of Meals on Wheels was received in 2005.

The Fire Safety Education program began. FCHCC collaborated with area fire departments to provide elders with smoke detectors and fire safety education to keep them safe in the place they call home.

A random sample survey of area elders was performed to assess unmet needs of elders.

In 2006 there were 71 people on staff at FCHCC. A Diversity Committee was formed to keep awareness of diversity in our service area top of mind. The LGBT Aging Project from Boston collaborated with FCHCC to create and grow the committee and its work. A breakfast for LGBT Elders was hosted by FCHCC in June. It was well attended and people were grateful to begin a dialogue.

In an effort to improve efficiency, the Orange Senior Center Rethermalization kitchen was remodeled.

The Walk for Meals on Wheels had 85 walkers and raised \$16,000 to help address the growing needs of home delivered meals in our communities. In 2006, 1075 people received home delivered meals.

The Nursing Facility Initiative began as collaboration between home care agencies and nursing homes. It was a way for clients to understand all their options for long term care and in home care.

Senior Information Management System (SIMS), an electronic medical record, was introduced. It will make evaluation and retrieval of client information easier.

The Good Life news for people age 55+ also became available electronically moving in step with the changing times and people's increased use of technology.

Elder advocates worked and Equal Choice passed. The Equal Choice bill is an important civil right providing elders the option to stay at home as long as possible in their own community.

A new four-year plan for area seniors began.

Community businesses and organizations came out to help FCHCC expand its outreach: China Gourmet provided a summer cookout to Frontier Seniors; NMH students performed a concert and donated funds raised to Meals on Wheels. The Rice Family Foundation made a generous gift to the Wentworth Endowment; Genworth Financial sponsored the Walk for Meals on Wheels; The Cherewatti Family Foundation provided funds to update coolers used to deliver Meals on Wheels to homebound elders; Country Oil provided home heating oil as the top prize in the Raffle to Benefit Meals on Wheels.

Efforts to grow the Walk for Meals on Wheels began in 2007. Pam Kelly, Fund Development Director, hit the ground running and helped encourage 120 walkers to raise \$27,000 at the Walk for Meals on Wheels. Special thanks went to community organizations like the Athol Orange Rotary Club who were big walk supporters this year. 179,762 meals were served in the prior FY.

FCHCC found collaboration as a key to providing for area seniors. FCHCC's collaboration with the new Hospice of Franklin County resulted in a photo exhibit called "Hospice is Hope"

A Supportive Housing component was unveiled at Elm Terrace in Greenfield. Jen Glover, Manager, can educate seniors about the programs and services that might best meet their needs.

A series of workshops for caregivers was offered in three locations to reach people in our total service area. Jeanne Martin presented techniques for caregivers to take better care of themselves while providing care for a friend or loved one.

In keeping with greater use of technology FCHCC revamped its website. More visually appealing and easier to access pages were made to be updated weekly. Users can get up to the minute information as it becomes available.

Based on a need found by the town of Orange, an Elder Outreach Worker was

hired to help elders and caregivers in that town access the programs and services that best support them. Tracy Gaudet, an Orange native with much experience and knowledge of the North Quabbin area was chosen to be the elder advocate.

The Pioneer Valley Aging and Disability Consortium was initiated.

In 2008, FCHCC rang in the New Year by hosting a Franklin County Chamber of Commerce Breakfast. FCHCC staff outlined the projected growth in numbers of seniors in our communities in the coming years and how that might impact communities and businesses. Our programs and services were highlighted as a way to support elders, caregivers, and persons with disabilities as well as our communities. Later in the year The Recorder newspaper did a five-part series on retirement and FCHCC was prominently featured in it.

Two of our long-time volunteers were honored by the Commonwealth as “Unsung Heroines”: Eleanor Duncan of the Leverett mealsite and Kirsten Liander of SHINE. Our volunteer crew continues to grow and expand our outreach to elders, caregivers and persons with disabilities in need.

Energy needs of elders were a key concern this year. FCHCC participated in the West County Energy Summit and compiled a list of energy resources that were disseminated to area town clerks for distribution to elders in need.

The Good Life partnered with The Greenfield Recorder in an effort to redistribute funds to the growing Meals on Wheels program. The collaboration increased *The Good Life's* circulation to 24,000 and offered another way for people interested in receiving *The Good Life* via email to get it. As requests for Meals on Wheels grow locally and nationally FCHCC thought outside the box to make sure “everyone eats”. As other programs cap the number of meals they serve or close all together, FCHCC was still able to feed all who request MOW. 178,738 meals were provided this year.

Cultural Competency training by Cambios Associates from Springfield, MA was provided for staff as a way to keep diversity awareness top of mind.

In 2009 FCHCC celebrated 35 continuous years of service to Franklin County and four Worcester County towns in the North Quabbin area. Over 450 volunteers helped our programs continue as the economy contracted and funding was affected.

Staff member Kate Martini was honored by the State Dept. of Developmental Services for her collaboration with The United ARC to serve a family in need. More community funds trusted FCHCC to distribute those funds.

FCHCC offered more programming on local cable access television and local radio stations than ever before.

Internally, staff initiated an effort to conserve resources. Everything from recycling paper, plastic and glass to taking online workshops to save on travel expenses

and gas.

A new home repair guide was created thanks to funding from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. It helps elders, caregivers and person with disabilities learn how to find a handyman, enter into a contract and then find funds to pay for repairs so they might stay in the place they call home for as long as possible.

Athol Daily News (ADN) and FCHCC partnered to bring more news relevant to people age 55 and older to those in the North Quabbin area. ADN added a weekly “Good Life” column to its regular offerings.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) in June was embraced by our service communities. More than 30 coffee houses and restaurants allowed FCHCC to put table tents in their establishments reminding people that everyone has a right to be safe.

The Fund Development team was bolstered by the additions of Robin Panagakos and Jack Tannenbaum who helped with the Walk for Meals on Wheels.

The budget topped \$11 million. 82 staff provided timely, professional services to those in need.

2010 saw budget cuts that placed elders on a wait list for state home care services. Protective Services saw budget cuts as well at a time when situations for individuals and families are becoming more and more complex.

FCHCC worked to help elders manage financial challenges. Foundation and grant funding was secured to train volunteers to provide benefits counseling and application assistance to elders. Many volunteers from COAs, Town Energy Committees, Faith Communities and more stepped up to help.

The core of our daily work continues to be information and referral. More and more we see people accessing our assistance via email and through our website. People also ask to be added to the email version of *The GoodLife*.

We continue to work closely with discharge planning at local hospitals, nursing homes, as well as with agencies like hospice and vendors to coordinate care for elders and persons with disabilities. One interesting collaboration this year was with a Hoarding Task Force that began a Hoarders/Clutterers Self Help Group.

Challenges force creative solutions. We have expanded our online home repair guide for seniors and are working towards an evidence based model to promote healthy aging. We continue to educate through community television and local media. We also signed on to the Google Grants program that should help us come up closer to the top of online searches for home care and caregiver help. Finally we’re soliciting inbound links from similar services to help us come up closer to the top on internet searches.

To celebrate our 35 years of service to the community we held a quilt exhibit on the theme “Celebrate Elders”. Twenty-one quilts were in the display, four locations allowed us to display the pieces and over 300 people saw the quilts increasing our awareness to our service communities.

Staff members Janet Calcari (AFC) and Linda Puzan (PS) were honored for their outreach efforts in the community.

We participated in WEAAD and were honored by US Administration on Aging's National Center for Elder Abuse for our innovative outreach. One innovative idea was bookmarks. We made and distributed 5,000 bookmarks within our service area with PS info and elder abuse hotline numbers on them.

The Walk for Meals on Wheels grew, 286 walkers (up from 171 in 2009), 56 walk teams (up from 20 in 2009). We were able to match a grant from Greenfield Savings Bank for \$10,000. If \$10,000 was brought in by new walk teams, GSB would match it and we made the match!! FRTA donated bus service from the North Quabbin area to make it easier for people from that area to join the walk.

We noticed younger volunteers joining SHINE, COAs and other programs. Instead of coming with pencil and paper they came to meetings and trainings with their laptops.

Our Caregivers Support Group also has seen changes. More and more young caregivers of person with memory disorders are joining.

In 2011 there was a push for healthy aging. A grant from Tufts Health Plan got our healthy Aging program in motion. Between January 2011 and October 2011, 63 peer leaders had been trained to lead free community workshops in chronic disease self-management, healthy eating, walking groups and falls prevention. More than 100 people from the community participated in these groups. Many of the groups kept meeting informally after the workshop ended because people found "strength in numbers".

Needs of LGBT elders came front and center in 2011 with release of Gen Silent a documentary about LBGT aging issues filmed in Massachusetts by Stu Maddox. FCHCC joined with Greenfield Community College to co-sponsor a Pioneer Valley screening of the film. More than 150 people from Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire attended.

We found elders in need of home care presented more complicated cases. Collaboration was a high priority to get these clients served and keep them in the place they call home for as long as possible.

Collaborations allowed programs to expand, too. Like our collaboration with United Way that allowed our Benefits Counseling program to expand from helping elders with issues of just home repair/modification and weatherization to issues of support like applying for fuel assistance, food stamps and more. Our service area still lacks high speed internet throughout and many elders are still not comfortable using computers though agencies are requiring online applications more and more.

Boomers are volunteering in droves which has been a huge help for FCHCC. Our SHINE program makes use of Boomers recently out of the workforce, but still in command of computer skills and able to work hard on behalf of those in need making

decisions about Medicare plans. Our SHINE corps spread to more outside agency locations like Baystate Franklin Medical Center and Cooley Dickinson Hospital.

The Walk for Meals on Wheels grew thanks to community cooperation. Many community groups spread the word and collected funds hand-to-hand in our rural service area. This year 355 people walked the walk!

Our collaboration with Berkshire Elder Protective Services has brought even more skilled professionals into our agency.

In 2012 our healthy aging programs grew through collaboration with the YMCA in Greenfield and area physicians.

Our Adult Family Care and PCA programs grew in Hampshire County and we opened an office there and hired staff.

We collaborated on the STAAR committee at BFMC to help decrease rates of rehospitalization. Care Transitions became front and center for the agency.

We trained staff to present “Powerful Tools for Caregivers” workshops that help caregivers take charge of their lives.

Benefits counseling grew and began helping more people with more and different access to funding—more than home repairs. Benefits Counselors help with fuel assistance, food stamps and more.

SHINE continued to grow with the numbers of Boomers coming into retirement.

FCHCC made a commitment to increasing our use of technology to increase our reach. Facebook was added to our information system.

We offered 4 breakfast socials for LGBTIQA elders and allies in our service area. They were well attended and will continue in 2013.

The Walk for Meals on Wheels was overseen by new coordinator Jackie Belanger. It raised \$92,000. There were 397 walkers and 68 teams. 100 walkers were new. A video on Vimeo done by Hallmark students preserved the day. Many community businesses came out with new ways to raise funds for Meals on Wheels—dress down days, car washes, bake sales, even a quilt made by men was auctioned off.

Money Management celebrated 20 years!

Supportive Home Care aides (aides trained to work with those with dementia) became available to our clients and made a huge difference to clients and caregivers.

In 2013, the focus was on expanding access and reach. As such, the agency began planning for a website redesign project with Anne Campbell Designs.

The SHINE Program began assisting a wider audience of people. The acronym, which formerly stood for “Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders,” transitioned to “Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone,” reflecting the change to providing assistance services to those who are eligible for the new One Care plans (for those who are dual eligible for Medicare and MassHealth).

The Healthy Aging program also experienced a name change. Reflecting the wide population of attendees, the program became “Healthy Living” and also added two new workshops and classes: Diabetes Self-Management and Tai Chi for Healthy Aging.

The 2013 Meals on Wheels Walkathon was attended by over 500 participants, including Massachusetts State Representative Paul Mark, who collectively raised over \$75,000 to benefit the Meals on Wheels program.

A new kitchen for Meals on Wheels opened in Erving, centralizing the home-delivered meal production.

Five Senior Dining Centers reached their 40th anniversaries in 2013, located in Montague, Northfield, Orange, and Shelburne Falls, as well as the South County Senior Center in South Deerfield. A brand new dining center was opened in Greenfield at Elm Terrace Elder Housing.

FCHCC staff coordinated with United Arc and Valuing Our Children to sponsor the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Groups with food drives for each program, with distribution occurring right before week-long school vacations.

Quarterly LGBTIQ Socials continued, with the standout being the first-ever Intergenerational Supper on June 26, a day that also coincided with the Supreme Court’s decision to overrule the Defense of Marriage Act that morning. LGBTIQ individuals young and old celebrated this joyous occasion together.

Valley Gives Day, a regional day of online, charitable giving hosted by the Community Foundation of Western Mass, held its second event in 2013; this was the first year that FCHCC participated, raising \$5,186 from 71 donors and a “golden ticket,” building awareness, and further developing our social media presence. This included creating a Twitter account in 2013 and working with Montague Community Television to create a short video about the agency. Channel 22 News also highlighted FCHCC in a broadcast during Valley Gives Day.

The Benefits Counseling program hosted the second annual “Energy Savings for Seniors” events in the community and also hosted staff trainings at FCHCC.

In 2014, a year that marks the agency’s 40th anniversary, the focus was on reflecting back on the agency’s history and reassessing our place in the community today.

The new agency website launched on July 22, exactly 40 years after the date of incorporation. The new site features a more modern, consumer-focused design that combines easy-to-use navigation with reliable resource information.

The agency also began work on a rebranding project alongside an outside consultant team from a local marketing firm. Additional rebranding efforts included redesigning the agency’s brochure with a consumer-centric design that reflects the organizational structure of the new website.

The Healthy Living program began working more closely with medical practices, offering workshops within local facilities. A poster about the Western Massachusetts

Healthy Aging Coalition that featured the work and reach of FCHCC's Healthy Living program and that of our collaborators was presented at "Healthy Aging in the Commonwealth: Charting the Path Forward" conference hosted by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation.

Participants and sponsors of the 2014 Meals on Wheels Walkathon raised over \$99,000 to benefit the Meals on Wheels program! This included the first-ever platinum sponsorship of \$10,000 from Baystate Health, made on behalf of and in partnership with Baystate Franklin Medical Center.

The Family Caregiver Program continued to host the Essential Skills Series and the Powerful Tools for Caregivers Series and also introduced a new workshop, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association, called "Conversations about Dementia."

FCHCC partnered with Hospice of Franklin County and Farren Care Center to hold a session called, "Understanding MOLST is a Must," teaching attendees about the Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment form, Massachusetts's new tool for making health care choices.

A new accompanied transportation program, Rides for Health, began pilot testing in 2014.

2015 was a broadly successful year for a number of Franklin County Home Care's programs. Early in the year, FCHCC held its first open house for volunteers. The event was a success, particularly for the Benefits Counseling program which enlisted several new volunteers as a result of the event.

The SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) Program had a highly successful year, with 40 volunteer SHINE counselors helping 3,662 clients. Thanks to the dedication of staff and volunteers, LifePath's SHINE program had the highest savings per beneficiary in the state of Massachusetts. A large number of the individuals served were persons with disabilities under 65.

Former FCHCC employee and geriatric social worker, Mo Grossberger, began a popular series of articles for *The Good Life* entitled "Lessons Learned." The series detailed his experience caring for his wife, Jeanne, over the course of eight years after her diagnosis with Alzheimer's disease. Mo's writing reflected a growing need for Alzheimer's support in Franklin County.

2015 was the first year that Franklin County Home Care led the "Love Letters for Meals on Wheels" campaign. The campaign was a partnership with local schools and rest homes to create handmade Valentine's Day cards for Meals on Wheels recipients throughout Franklin County and the North Quabbin region. Thanks to the generosity of donors, over 400 valentines were distributed by Meals on Wheels drivers.

Commercial appliances were purchased for a number of congregate and supportive housing locations, as well as various pieces of kitchen equipment, place settings, small appliances, and other items needed to start meal programs at each residence. In addition to this, new furniture was purchased to improve the community

rooms of multiple supportive housing sites.

2015 also marked the year that Franklin County Home Care began its transition to a new name and brand. After speaking with community members, including clients and their families, volunteers, donors, and staff members, we discovered that many people did not know that the agency serves regions outside of Franklin County, that we work with people of many ages, and that we offer myriad services in addition to home care. The decision to rename Franklin County Home Care was an opportunity to raise awareness about the breadth of our work and reach more people in need of services throughout the region.

2016 was a landmark year for Franklin County Home Care. After thoughtful consideration, communication with community members, and months of hard work, Franklin County Home Care officially changed its name to **LifePath, Inc.** The name “LifePath” speaks to the role of the organization in providing individuals in Franklin County and the North Quabbin region with the support they need to maintain an independent lifestyle. The name change created an opportunity to raise public awareness about the breadth of the agency’s work and reach more people in need of services. The name also reflects the ever-increasing demand for home and community-based supports.

In addition to the agency rebranding, LifePath made several other large strides in 2016. The agency received a "Dementia Grant" from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, allowing staff to implement three new initiatives for dementia-related services: Alzheimer’s coaching, music therapy, and the development of a virtual support group.

LifePath also hired its first videographer, Rebecca Rideout of Told Video. Rebecca helped to create several promotional videos telling the stories of LifePath clients, volunteers, and staff. The response to these videos was overwhelmingly positive, and helped to further reinforce the importance of the agency’s name change.

In October, LifePath hosted a job fair in Turners Falls, inviting a number of home healthcare vendors with which the agency contracts. The intention of the job fair was to provide potential home health care workers, including recently retired individuals, part-time workers, and people working in social services, with the opportunity to learn about job opportunities in home healthcare and find out about the wide variety of careers available in the field.

2017 was another year of change. Each year brings growth and innovation in services, as the organization adjusts to serve a growing and changing demographic of elders, persons with disabilities, and caregivers. LifePath now employs more than 100 people, a great leap from its origins in 1974 with a staff of six.

After nearly 26 years at the Farren building in Turners Falls, LifePath moved

from 330 Montague City Road to a new main office located within the Greenfield Corporate Center at 101 Munson Street, Suite 201, in Greenfield, Mass., beginning operations there on Monday, May 15.

In April, LifePath held the 25th annual Meals on Wheels Walkathon, surpassing the \$100,000 fundraising goal for the first time with a total raised of 105,204.12 for the home-delivered meals and wellness check program.

U.S. Congressman Jim McGovern held a field hearing downtown at Greenfield Community College in August, sponsored by our SHINE Program (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone). Community members were invited to speak, and shared stories of how SHINE enabled them to keep their independence and maintain their health.

New programs launched this year included the “Together Forever” companion animal support program. The program, which was established through a grant from the Banfield Foundation, works to help LifePath clients who have unmet needs in unexpected situations preserve the bond they have with their companion animals by offering assistance with emergency planning and veterinary expenses.

Additional support options were created for family caregivers of individuals with dementia, including The Savvy Caregiver Program and an online dementia caregivers support group. The Savvy Caregiver Program is a free, six-session training for family and friends who are active caregivers for those living with Alzheimer’s or related dementias. With a kickoff meeting in September, caregivers are able to access the secure, virtual support group remotely by phone and by video and chat via the internet.

2018 welcomed a new Executive Director to LifePath. After 27 years of service to the agency, Roseann Martoccia moved on to a new opportunity and Barbara Bodzin became the new executive director. Barbara brought a wealth of experience to her new role, having overseen LifePath’s Client Services Department since 2004 and served in various roles in senior services prior to that.

The passage of the 2018 federal omnibus spending bill secured funding for the SHINE, Nutrition, Family Caregiver Support, Ombudsman, and Elder Protective programs. The state legislature expanded funding for the Massachusetts Councils On Aging Mental Health Outreach Teams, enabling LifePath to enhance our response to individuals with behavioral health needs. In addition, our Rides for Health program, under the leadership of Long Term Care Ombudsman and Rides for Health Director Trevor Boeding, received an Achievement Award from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a).

In 2019, LifePath's Adult Family Care (AFC) program, which offers compassionate, individualized care for people with daily care needs in nurturing home environments, received accreditation through the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) in the area of case management

for long-term services and supports (LTSS). The accreditation is a rigorous standard requiring strong quality and documentation processes to be in place. LifePath's AFC program received high marks from NCQA.

2020 started out as any other, a new year with bright new plans. Little did we know that our innovative skills would be put to the test with a global pandemic. March 17th saw the dispersal of our staff to their homes with boxes of supplies for what everyone thought was a brief spell. Since then we have reimagined our workplace, our ways of communication, our service delivery, and, well, the unimaginable! When COVID-19 hit, we began following strict safety guidelines in our Meals on Wheels program by wearing masks and gloves and staying six feet apart; not handling any food directly; and having delivery drivers sanitize their hands and leave the meal on the porch; we didn't miss a day of meals due to the pandemic. We distributed personal protective equipment (PPE), enlisted help from an incredible group of volunteers providing grocery and prescription delivery, established expanded meals programs, distributed boxes of USDA food, and staved off loneliness and isolation through multiple virtual phone companion programs. We transitioned in-person programs to phone and virtual options, including the Healthy Living Workshops and Rainbow Elders meetups.

In the wake of the George Floyd murder, LifePath issued a statement of solidarity: "LifePath lifts its voice in concert with the voices speaking out against institutionalized racism. We strive to be heard in a new way in our own community, joining others across our nation. We cannot remain silent while the evidence and terrible consequences of racism continue to amass." We kicked off an internal DEIB initiative that included mandatory training and the creation of an allies and affinity group to tackle the issue.

Franklin County and the North Quabbin embarked on a collaborative process designed to support the development of an Age- and Dementia-Friendly Action Plan, receiving a grant from the Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging fund for three years to complete the planning process.

In 2021, LifePath's volunteer-based Vaccination Access Program (VAP) offered a pathway to resuming normalcy for older adults in our community. With the help of 30 volunteers, we scheduled appointments for those who do not have internet access, provided transportation to vaccination appointments, and arranged in-home vaccinations for individuals not able to leave their homes. We made over 3,600 calls, helped over 750 people get vaccinated, and contributed to a 99% rate of elders receiving at least one dose of vaccine in our area.

Volunteer efforts gave rise to new COVID related programs and initiatives. Over 200 individuals, looking for opportunities and a sense of purpose with the intent of making a difference, responded to our call to action to fortify our service

offerings. Volunteer seamsters made hundreds of face coverings, packed thousands of pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE), and provided grocery shopping and prescription pick-up and delivery to those unable to leave their homes.

In 2022, we continued to provide our core services and responded to gaps by developing new Home Safety and HomeSharing programs to support ‘aging in place.’

We attended to food insecurity through the expansion of our Meals on Wheels program to include a second daily meal and through our new Farm to Home program, which delivers boxes of locally sourced farm goods to participants’ homes.

We celebrated our 30th annual walkathon and gave thanks to our many sponsors, teams, partner organizations, and staff who joined us to showcase how we work together to serve our community.

In 2023, after the retirement of Barbara Bodzin, LifePath’s Board of Directors appointed Gary Yuhas, MBA as LifePath’s new Executive Director.

Previously, Gary held leadership roles at the Washington University in St. Louis Department of Pediatrics and at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. “Gary’s people-, financial-, and strategic-planning skills will be put to good use here. We expect his expertise to lead LifePath into the future we envision for our consumers, the agency, and our staff,” said Mary Giannetti, President of the LifePath Board.

Sanderson Place, an affordable senior housing complex in Sunderland, located in a beautiful setting, opened near the local library and senior center. This partnership with Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority draws residents from near and far. After years of effort and immense support from a wide variety of entities, Sanderson Place move-ins started in January.

After a three-year planning process, LifePath and Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) launched the new Age- and Dementia-Friendly Action Plan. An Age- and Dementia-Friendly Action Plan is a comprehensive strategy developed by a community to ensure that its infrastructure, services, and policies are designed and implemented in a way that supports and accommodates the needs of people of all ages, particularly older adults. These action plans are specifically focused on creating environments that are accessible, inclusive, and supportive for older adults, aiming to promote their health, well-being, and active participation within the community. They are supported by the World Health Organization and AARP.

Another point of pride for LifePath is becoming the first nonprofit in Western Mass, and the first Aging Services Access Point (ASAP) in Massachusetts, to achieve certification as a Service Enterprise by Points of Light, the world’s largest organization dedicated to volunteer service. LifePath now joins the top 11 percent of nonprofits nationwide recognized for excellence in volunteer management and organizational performance. Certification signifies that we have the capability and management

expertise to collaborate with volunteers to improve LifePath's ability to meet its mission.

Several new programs were launched, including the Hospital-to-Home and Community Transitions Liaison Programs to assist people in returning home after a stay in the hospital or nursing facility.

LifePath continued its DEIB work with a new curriculum inclusive of understanding bias, microaggressions, white supremacy, and white privilege for all staff. LifePath has a long standing commitment to combating systemic racism and fostering multicultural growth, equity, and inclusion. This commitment and work was initiated over 15 years ago, when LifePath established a Rainbow Elders Program in rural Franklin County going public with an overt commitment to support LGBTQ+ populations. LifePath expanded this commitment and investment in 2020 following the murder of George Floyd. LifePath made a public statement and press release, and took concrete action within its own organizational structure to explicitly address racism.

In 2024, LifePath celebrated its 50th anniversary! This past year, we have surpassed 150 employees for the first time. We also added two new programs: a Benefits Enrollment Center to assist older adults with accessing SNAP, Medicaid, and other benefits; and a Community Engagement Center, an in-person program caring for and for people with dementia or other conditions, relieving their primary caregivers and providing meaningful engaging activities for the participants. The CEC became a need after 2022 when all of the adult day health centers in our area closed due to COVID-19.

Also in 2024, LifePath began its Age-Friendly Implementation project, receiving nearly \$700,000 in funding over the next five years to help the community implement changes envisioned in the community-led Action Plan.

This year, LifePath furthered our commitment and work to combat systemic racism and foster multicultural growth, diversity, equity and inclusion among staff, volunteers, the board of directors and those served by our organization. We began to build a racial equity framework and developed goals based on our learnings thus far. LifePath's fourteen person Board of Directors and senior staff are 100% committed to advancing DEIB learnings in ways that translate into day-to-day organizational growth opportunities for all staff and by affiliation LifePath persons served and 250 person volunteer corps.