art of caring
“My mother took care of my father through a long and difficult battle with dementia. One day when I called her, she told me that my father had been up for many hours the night before because he thought there were people trying to break into the house. My heart sank when I thought about how exhausted she must be by yet another sleepless night, how frustrated and maybe even a bit scared. But that wasn’t what she was thinking about. Do you know what she said to me? ‘Sally—he was so brave. He really thought there were people breaking into the house and he was going from room to room yelling at them to get out. He was so brave.’ Well, he may have been brave, but in my mind, my mother was truly the brave one, she and all the caregivers who face incredibly difficult situations with grace, determination and compassion. All of the caregivers that have the courage to say ‘I need help’ and who give us the honor of serving them in some small way."

Sally S. White
Executive Director

As this Annual Report went to press, Iona learned of the passing of Paralee Thomas, who is featured on the cover and inside this publication. Our thoughts go out to board member Mary Frances McGuiness and other family members who cared for Paralee in the past few years. She recently celebrated her 96th birthday.
From the President and Executive Director

The theme of this year’s Annual Report, “The Art of Caring,” may have a familiar ring to it. That is because it is also the name of our annual luncheon, now in its third year. But beyond the name, “the art of caring” is at the heart of the work we do. The profiles on pages 4-11 represent the many faces of Iona caregiving.

The past year has been both challenging—as the economy continues to recover—and exciting, as we continue to raise the profile of the work we do creating best practices, advocating on behalf of the older residents of our area and developing new partnerships with both local and national organizations including LeadingAge and AARP. More families are benefitting from our Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Adult Day Health, Wellness and Arts Center than ever before. We now have a waiting list for our subsidized care management services, reflecting the growing need in the community. And we continue to identify the best and most efficient ways we can serve the community and to look for opportunities to increase revenue through fee-based services which allow us to support our subsidized services.

Every day at Iona, seeing the men and women in the Adult Day Health Center, caregivers arriving to participate in our support groups, advocates gathered in our meeting rooms and our dedicated staff at work, we are reminded that here at Iona we get as much as we give.

As we look back on our 35th year and ahead to our 36th, we are grateful to the entire Iona family—our staff and volunteers, board members and member congregations, and especially to the thousands of donors listed on pages 12-15. To you we offer our heartfelt appreciation.

Sincerely,

Sally S. White, Executive Director
Richard Lake, President
Highlights of 2010

Art of Caring Luncheon
Richard and Lois England surprised guests at the 2010 Art of Caring luncheon by announcing a $250,000 donation to Iona. The Englands’ commitment to Iona goes back many years to when Dick served as chair of the capital campaign and was instrumental in the funding and development of the Breckenridge building. Several generations of the England family have been involved in Iona over many decades. Most recently, Dick and his granddaughter, Sara Lange, helped prepare and deliver meals for homebound seniors on Christmas Day.

Sibley Partnership
Iona’s newest partnership is with Sibley Hospital. As part of its longstanding commitment to serve the community, last fall Iona began offering space on the second floor of the Breckenridge building to two internists from the Sibley Physician Group. Dr. Mark Strong and Dr. Matty Mathivanann accept Medicare, Medicaid and all insurances accepted by Sibley.

Pioneering Approach
Vulnerable older adults suffer from a variety of issues from social isolation to depression, dementia to homelessness. Compounded by an inability to pay for support services, these issues become critical, even tragic. Iona was selected years ago as the site to formulate, test and evaluate a ground-breaking concept in geriatric care management. The result is a holistic approach that balances respect for self-determination with protection of our community’s most vulnerable older adults. This approach permeates Iona’s programs, is central to care management provided by Iona and is the focus of training for new social workers. Last fall, Iona hosted Dr. Barbara Soniat, who developed this pioneering approach, and her colleague Monica Micklos at a book signing to celebrate the publication of the book, *Empowering Social Workers for Practice with Vulnerable Older Adults*.

Growth at St. Alban’s
Iona’s Active Wellness program at St. Alban’s Episcopal Church continues to grow and set the standard for best practices in the Washington area. Far more than lunch, the year-round program is helping to build a community. In addition to a healthy meal every day, the program provides a gleaning table with fresh produce donated by local farmers’ markets, and exercise and wellness classes. Participants have the opportunity to learn basic computer skills and how to skype with their children, grandchildren and friends. Those who master these skills are encouraged to take a free computer home, thanks to a partnership with Project Reboot, a local nonprofit that rebuilds and donates old computers.
Comprehensive Services
Iona’s core programs are built around the needs of those who are facing difficult times, transitions or health issues. Through the Consultation, Care Management and Counseling programs, compassionate and highly trained social workers provide intensive, one-on-one support to seniors and families, helping them navigate challenges associated with aging. In addition, Iona offers mental health counseling and support groups to help people deal with grief, loss, depression, chronic illness such as Parkinson’s, low vision or other disabilities, and major life transitions. Last fiscal year, Iona provided direct care and assistance to 1,200 seniors and their families.

The Gallery at Iona
Now in its third year, Iona’s artist-in-residence program includes exhibitions and workshops which have developed a following in the Washington area. Recent exhibitions featured sculpture by working artists who just happen to be nonagenarians: Kathleen Williams, 97, and Marilee Shapiro, 98, and an octogenarian: Hermann Bürger, 88.

Advocacy
Once again, the DC Senior Advisory Coalition, with leadership from Iona and Emmaus Services for the Aging, brought together representatives from 30 non-profit organizations to advocate for and with older adults in the District of Columbia. In the past year, the Coalition sponsored the only mayoral candidates’ forum focused on issues of older District residents, educated DC City Council members on aging and service delivery issues, testified at oversight and budget hearings and worked with the DC Office on Aging to improve service delivery. The DC Coalition on Long Term Care is focused on the improvement of the wages, health benefits, training, supervision and opportunities for advancement of the necessary long term care workforce. This year, the Coalition brought together consumers and health care providers to develop a comprehensive program for the DC Board of Nursing to train entry level nursing assistive personnel. In turn, the Coalition was invited to assist in writing regulations for nursing assistive personnel in the city.
Caregiving HAS MANY FACES

Iona “goes above and beyond the call of duty,” adds Mildred Howard.

Sisters Mildred Howard and Jessie Mae Fulwood
Caring for a Friend
Paralee Thomas and Mary Frances McGuiness are sharing a moment—like two girlfriends spending the afternoon together. Only the moment is Paralee’s 96th birthday celebration and their relationship is so much more than friends. Paralee was Mary Frances’ childhood nanny and, before that, worked in her grandmother’s house as both maid and nanny, caring for Mary Frances’ mother and uncle.

“Paralee (pronounced ‘Pearlie’) raised us,” says Mary Frances, a member of Iona’s Board of Directors who lost track of her nanny until the two reconnected at a family funeral. By then, Mary Frances, who is from New York, had relocated to the Washington area to work in wireless telecom. Paralee moved here to continue working as a housekeeper, ultimately retiring in her mid-80s. “It’s difficult to age, no matter what the circumstances, but even harder if you lack a formal education, financial stability and the support of family,” says Mary Frances, who is helping Paralee address the many challenges of growing older.

For instance, Mary Frances, along with her husband and uncle, helped their friend navigate the complex Medicaid system, which ultimately allowed her to move from a subsidized apartment in a challenging neighborhood to a senior community at Thomas Circle. “I can understand how people die in their homes while trying to figure out how federal assistance programs work,” Mary Frances says. “You feel like a rat in a maze that has no exit. I see why people give up.”

Caring for an older loved one “can be exhausting, even depressing,” she adds. “However, there is a silver lining. I have met many people—starting with the staff of Iona—who are silent heroes of our community. Iona provides one-stop shopping, they know the city and offer personalized service. If I have to go through this experience again with a family member—or should I say when I go through this again—I will know what to expect and where to turn, thanks to Iona.”

Caring for a Sibling
Mildred Howard has always worried about older sister Jessie Fulwood, who lost her sight as a child. Those worries increased when Mildred, who every day drove across town on her way to work to check on her sibling, discovered Jessie was being neglected by her caregivers. That is when Mildred invited Jessie to move in with her and husband Curtis Howard.

“Paralee Thomas, Mary Frances McGuiness and niece Lucy.

“I have met many people—starting with the staff of Iona—who are silent heroes of our community. Iona provides one-stop shopping, they know the city and offer personalized service.” —Mary Frances McGuiness
Soon after, Mildred enrolled her 76-year-old sister in Iona’s Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Adult Day Health, Wellness and Arts Center, which serves seniors with dementia, other chronic conditions and disabilities. Medicaid and support from Iona’s generous donors cover the cost of Jessie’s participation.

“Jessie Mae needs to be in a program rather than sitting at home all day with nothing to do,” says Mildred. “The people are real nice, she participates in activities such as art therapy and exercise which she wouldn’t have access to otherwise and two nurses monitor her blood pressure.”

“The Center is good for both of us,” adds Mildred, 61. “It gives me the flexibility and independence to live my life and it’s a good fit for Jessie Mae.” How does she know? “Because she’s a chatterbox,” laughs the younger sister. “Every night at dinner, she tells us about the other participants, the staff and nurses. Clearly she’s in good hands.”

Iona “goes above and beyond the call of duty,” adds Mildred. This winter, when they were without water for several days because of burst pipes, Iona saw to it that Jessie Mae had access to meals she normally would have had at home. “You don’t find programs like that,” adds Mildred.

Caring for a Congregation

“Many of our members are caring for aging parents or neighbors,” says Associate Pastor Steve Robertson of Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church. “Our role is to make sure we are doing everything we can to offer the support and encouragement needed to perform these duties well.”

Steve works with the church’s deacons, whose assignments include visiting homebound congregants—from parents of newborns to frail seniors. In recent years, the pastor has worked to “strengthen the conversation with our deacons...”
around their work with older adults.” Recognizing that these lay leaders are not formally trained as case managers, Robertson says, “My hope is they will be critical listeners and direct our members to useful resources in the community.”

One of the most valuable resources is Iona’s Deborah Rubenstein. A licensed clinical social worker and attorney, Deb has 15 years of experience as a geriatric care manager and psychotherapist. In her role as Iona’s Director of Consultation, Care Management and Counseling, Deb and her skilled staff frequently lead trainings at congregations.

In fact, Iona’s relationship with the faith community goes back to its founding 36 years ago when three local churches (St. Columba’s Episcopal, St. Ann’s Roman Catholic and Eld Brooke United Methodist) joined forces to create an organization that would provide information to people in need. Soon after, Iona’s board voted to focus on older adults, regardless of their ability to pay. Today, 33 faith communities are part of the Iona family.

Increasingly, congregations are turning to Iona to learn how to support aging members and their caregivers. Paula Jennings was on hand recently when Deb spoke to a group at Chevy Chase Presbyterian. The discussion focused on a broad range of issues from progressive care to the emotional toll on caregivers. “Iona made it comfortable to speak openly and to ask questions—no matter how poignant they were,” said Paula. “By the end of the presentation, I was not only considering the needs of my mother and mother-in-law, but beginning to think ahead to a time when my husband and I would be facing our own issues relating to aging.”

**Caring for the Community**

Elaine Kim is what you might call a late bloomer. An English major, after college she worked as a marketing and sales professional with a technology
Caregiving has many faces

company. But she didn't feel that job took full advantage of her skills or strengths.

“I’ve always enjoyed connecting with people one-on-one,” says Elaine, who is in her 30s. At the same time, friends have pointed out she is a good listener. At church, she was drawn to older members of the congregation. One of them in particular, a 93-year old World War II veteran, “exuded the spirit and joy of a kid,” she recalls. “I was in awe of the way he lived his life—with no regrets. He ultimately passed, but his spirit stayed with me.

By that time, Elaine had enrolled in a social work program at the University of Maryland-Baltimore. As part of her studies, last fall she began an internship at Iona where her responsibilities include providing care management, counseling and advocacy for clients. She also helps staff Iona’s low vision support group. “Elaine is very caring,” says facilitator Elly Waters. “If she senses someone needs special attention, she will call and see how they are doing.”

Working at Iona has exposed Elaine to a model of service that balances respect for self-determination with protection of vulnerable older adults. “It’s an innovative way of thinking about geriatric care,” says Elaine who is focused both on assessing a client’s risks and needs and his or her strengths, ultimately trying to find the best way to play to those strengths.

As for Iona’s strengths, Kim says the organization “never loses sight of its mission, its vision and its goal of serving the community,” she says. “They have put and continue to put every tool in place to help staff achieve these goals. It’s obvious that every person who works here, from the bottom to the top, cares about the work they are doing. This is inspiring to me as an aspiring social worker.”

Caring for a Parent

Iona’s Caregivers’ Support Group for Adult Children “has been my calm in the midst of a storm,” says Eric Rosenberg, who struggles with the challenges of caring for an aging parent with dementia, navigating relationships with siblings who may not always see eye-to-eye and feelings about living far away from his mother. “While I am active in a variety of activities and organizations—from synagogue to cycling—Iona has become an unexpected yet welcome anchor in my life.” —Eric Rosenberg

“While I am active in a variety of activities and organizations—from synagogue to cycling—Iona has become an unexpected yet welcome anchor in my life.” —Eric Rosenberg
activities and organizations—from synagogue to cycling—Iona has become an unexpected yet welcome anchor in my life.”

The youngest of four, Eric grew up in Long Island. His mother was a housewife, his father a physician. He lost his dad in 1991. Then, in 2007, his mother Edith moved to Michigan to be near her oldest daughter. Not long after, she was diagnosed with dementia. “Once it starts, it’s a one-way street,” says Eric quietly.

Being 500 miles away in Washington, he felt alone and overwhelmed, with nowhere to turn. That is until the day he was driving through DC and saw the Iona sign outside the Isabella Breckinridge building. His curiosity led him inside, where he was greeted by two friendly staff members who listened intently to his story, handed him a copy of Iona’s Resource Guide and told him about the support group for adult children. “Their encouragement gave me hope,” says Eric. “If Iona did nothing else but give people hope and produce the Resource Guide, it would be enough,” he says. The book is “a goldmine of information.”

Eric rarely misses the bimonthly support group, which is led by licensed clinical social worker Donna Tanner. (Iona also offers support groups for caregivers of spouses/partners with dementia, a Alzheimer’s Association caregivers support group, a group for people diagnosed with early stage memory loss and the people who care about them, a Parkinson’s group and one for people with low vision.) “Donna brings a quiet dignity to our group,” says Eric, adding that she validates everyone’s experience and is nonjudgmental. “The staff of Iona doesn’t care if you are black, white, Jewish, Christian, gay, straight. Once you are there, it’s like getting a big hug. It’s a safe place to be.”

Eric says he has learned two key lessons from the support group. First “if you don’t take care of yourself, you can’t take care of someone else.” Secondly, “caregiving should start before the need becomes obvious.” In other words, don’t wait for a crisis. Reflecting back on his own experience, Eric regrets he didn’t take a more proactive role after his father died and left a large void in his mother’s life. If anything, he hopes others can learn from his experience, and from Iona.

Eric and his wife Jennifer and son Jacob
Caregiving has many faces

“The Center staff couldn’t be a more supportive and positive group. It radiates good will which, in turn, is picked up and radiated back by the participants.” —Bill Schaefer

Sharon and Bill Schaefer
Caring for a Spouse

“It’s been a long six years,” says Bill Schaefer. “It’s hard to believe it’s been six years, and it’s hard not to know how long it’s going to go on.” Anyone who has cared for a loved one with Alzheimer’s disease understands what Bill is talking about.

Bill and Sharon’s relationship is a story of love and loyalty. College sweethearts, married for 47 years with two grown children and two grandchildren, the Schaefer’s never expected that soon after they moved from their house to a condominium in a lovely wooded neighborhood, they would learn that the agitation Sharon had been experiencing was Alzheimer’s. She was 63.

“From the start, I’ve tried to support Sharon in having the best life she can in spite of this,” Bill says. Needless to say, it hasn’t been easy. Gradually, their social world has narrowed dramatically.

Friends stopped calling. One exception is Mary Lou McGee, an Iona Board of Associates member who walks with Sharon every week, just as they have for 30 years.

When Sharon was first diagnosed, one doctor gave Bill a book for caregivers with a title that said it all: The 36-Hour Day. “I’m tired,” he admits one morning, having been up the night before with Sharon, who also has Type I diabetes. To maintain some balance in his life, he meditates for 30 minutes every morning. He recently rejoined a book club.

He has also arranged for Sharon to attend Iona’s Adult Day Health, Wellness and Arts Center two days a week, which allows him to meet friends for lunch, catch up on paperwork or just be by himself.

Prompted by Bill, Sharon—a former psychotherapist—offers her own take on the Center. “I’m a booster!” she says. “It’s just got welcome all over it.” A recent New York Times article revealed that creating positive emotional experiences for Alzheimer’s patients diminishes stress and behavioral problems. The Schaefer’s son gave a copy of the article to his dad, with a note saying “That’s what you give mom.”

Bill gives Iona a lot of credit. “The Center staff couldn’t be a more supportive and positive group, Bill says. “It radiates good will which, in turn, is picked up and radiated back by the participants.”

One staff member told him recently, “even when Sharon gets agitated, she always resets to happy,” said Bill, who agrees. “After a day at Iona, she is more outgoing and has more energy. I’ve seen how the program lifts her spirits.”
Iona is deeply grateful for gifts in the past year from our generous donors, whose thoughtful support has been critical in advancing our mission.
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Make a Difference. Iona depends on your support in order to provide assistance for everyone facing the challenges of aging.

Make a Financial Contribution. Your financial support will assist Iona in providing the best programs and services to older people and their families in our community. Please consider making a donation. An envelope is included in this mailing or you can donate online at www.iona.org or by calling 202.895.9401.

Make a Planned Gift. A donation through wills, bequests and other charitable trusts is a tremendous way to support Iona’s work. Leaving a legacy for generations to come will truly change the lives of seniors. For information, contact the Development Department at 202.895.9401.

Volunteer. Iona is an organization that was started by the community for the community, and it can only remain successful with the efforts of dedicated volunteers. We have volunteer assignments for people of all ages, skills and experience. Come to Iona to learn how you can be a part of keeping our organization strong. Whether it’s a group project, individual interest or community service requirement, Iona has a place for you. Contact our Volunteer Coordinator at 202.895.9425 or volunteer@iona.org.

Advocate. Join other consumers, advocates and healthcare providers to work with the District government on long-term care issues. Contact the DC Coalition on Long Term Care, 202.895.9435 or jlevy@iona.org. For information about Transportation Initiatives, contact Pedestrian Advocate Marlene Berlin, berlin.mg@gmail.com, or call Iona at 202.895.9448. To learn more about the DC Senior Advisory Coalition, contact swHITE@iona.org or call 202-895-0246.
In fiscal year 2010 Iona accomplished what very few non-profit organizations have done in the city during this time of economic hardship. Despite a mid-year cut of 5% in government funding, Iona met or exceeded our program goals, serving more people who were in greater need than in any other time in Iona’s history. In closing out the fiscal year in September, 2010, we presented an income statement showing a positive balance to the Board of Directors for the first time in many years, a turn-around that is due to the generosity of our funding partners and individuals in the city, and also due to a reduction in expenses by over 22% from 2009 to 2010.

Iona is audited by Strack and Stanfield, LLC. For a copy of the most recent audited financial statements, please contact Iona at 202.895.9416 or email info@iona.org.
Thank you to our volunteers who provided thousands of service hours — delivering meals, visiting homebound seniors, supporting Iona’s activities — and are absolutely essential to Iona’s mission and work.
Mission. Iona supports people as they experience the challenges and opportunities of aging. We educate, advocate and provide community-based programs and services to help people age well and live well.

Vision. We envision a community that celebrates, values, respects and protects the contributions and possibilities of every individual.