Somebody to lean on
Iona by the Numbers

In fiscal year 2015, Iona directly helped 2,942 older adults and their families with the challenges and opportunities of aging. We did this by meeting basic needs, providing connection and support, and offering fitness and creative engagement opportunities. 450 volunteers gave 27,946 hours of their time in furthering Iona’s mission. We reached an additional 20,000 people with information from our website and Resource Guide.

Here are highlights and accomplishments of the past year:

**Basic Needs**
- 532 vulnerable older adults in the community benefited from our expert care management and counseling support.
- 204 older adults received 47,910 nutritious and well-balanced meals to their homes.
- 83 people with memory loss and/or physical frailty received 40,984 hours of care by participating in Iona’s award-winning Wellness & Arts Center, which offers weekday programs including art therapy and health support for individuals with physical and social needs. In addition, 90 family caregivers benefited from respite and support.

**Connection and Support**
- 4,605 calls to Iona’s Helpline from 2,869 people were answered by our expert staff who always take the time to listen and connect families to community resources at Iona and beyond.
- 1,398 family caregivers found information, respite, and education through direct care and support services.
- 94 older adults from diverse neighborhoods and backgrounds enjoyed 5,479 meals and activities at the Active Wellness Program at St. Alban’s.
- 78 people benefited from our Take Charge/Age Well Academy classes for those who are newly retired or considering it and want to get the most out of the next decades of their lives.

**Fitness and Creative Engagement**
- 101 older adults stayed healthy and active through our fitness and wellness classes, increasing their strength and flexibility through dynamic classes taught by engaging professionals.
- 500 people attended art workshops, Lunch & Learn events and Meet-the-Artist receptions, engaging with exceptional local painters, printmakers, photographers, fiber artists, and sculptors who are over 60 years of age.

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.
Imagine a hotel ballroom filled with men and women singing together. Guests who attended Iona’s 2015 Art of Caring luncheon know that is exactly what happened on May 8, when syndicated Washington Post columnist Michelle Singletary led a gathering of several hundred in song.

Widely known and respected across the country for her “The Color of Money” personal finance advice column, Michelle has also been a family caregiver. At the luncheon, she shared moving and very personal stories of caring for her father-in-law and her mother during their final, challenging years.

Then she turned to the crowd and asked them: “How many of you have a long-term plan?” She clarified: “I don’t mean long-term care insurance. I mean a plan.” Very few hands went up.

“Look to your left. Look to your right,” she said. “You or someone you know can be served by Iona.”

“We all need a hand,” she went on. “But it takes resources to do that. Someday we will all need somebody to lean on.”

Which is how she came to lead the entire gathering in singing Bill Withers’ 1970s classic, “Lean on Me.”

With a slight tweak (and apologies to Bill Withers), we have adopted this anthem as the theme of our 2015 Annual Report: “Somebody to Lean On.”

In the following pages, you’ll read how older adults and caregivers lean on Iona both in times of crisis and times of opportunity. Our special thanks to Dr. Hahn, Caroline, Richard, Gilbert, Stella, and Leland for sharing their stories with us.

All of us need connections to other people to thrive and survive. At Iona, we help families make those connections. The community depends on us to do that. We know that from the desperate calls to our free Helpline from people inquiring about housing options, memory loss, Medicaid, and countless other questions to which we know the answers. We see it on the faces of family members when they drop off their loved ones at our Wellness & Arts Center, knowing their mother or father or spouse will enjoy a day of engaging activities while they enjoy critical respite from caregiving. We hear it at our Take Charge/Age Well AcademySM sessions, where newly retired men and women find joy and comfort in planning the next stage of life. And we see it when our expert social workers and nurses — “care managers” — sit down with families to create that all-too-important long-term plan Michelle Singletary referred to in her remarks.

For more than 40 years, our community has leaned on Iona. Yet, this has never been work that takes place in a vacuum. Throughout our history, Iona has leaned on the community — our partners, our volunteers, our donors, and our board — countless people who believe in our mission of “supporting people as they experience the challenges and opportunities of aging.” That support is more critical than ever as people live longer and face more complex challenges, such as waiting lists for home-delivered meals and the D.C. area’s affordable housing crisis. We are in this together! To the entire Iona community who support us in supporting families and neighbors, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

Now, once more with feeling:

We all need somebody to lean on.

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Smith
President, Board of Directors

Sally S. White
Executive Director
Leland Kiang, who manages and frequently answers Iona’s free Helpline, has a lot of people leaning on him. 2,869 to be exact.

That is the number of people who made 4,605 calls to the Helpline in the past year. Staffed by social workers every weekday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Information & Referral Helpline was set up to answer common — and uncommon — questions and to refer callers to services and programs in our area. Anyone can call the line. Iona gets inquiries from residents throughout the region as well as family members living across the country and overseas who have older relatives in the Washington area.

“My affinity for working with older adults stems from my grandmother, who helped raise me,” says Leland, who has a master’s in social work from Catholic University. He worked as an Iona case manager before taking over the Helpline in 2008. The job, says Leland, is part social worker, part resource librarian.

Most of the questions to the Helpline come from caregivers — spouses, adult children, close friends, and professionals — but some come from older adults interested in resources for themselves. Callers represent the spectrum of income levels. During the recession, there was an increase in inquiries related to financial support. Today, many people are looking for affordable housing.

Callers also want to know about free or low-cost transportation services, home care services, government benefits, and home-delivered meals. “Sometimes the call is from an adult daughter or son who has noticed that mom or dad isn’t functioning well,” says Leland. “They are overwhelmed and don’t know what to do.

“Our job is to sort out where the need is,” he says. “If the caller is anxious, I let her vent, which gives me time to figure out how I can help.” Questions run the gamut. Are they trying to find out if Medicare pays for long-term care? How to support a parent who is being discharged from the hospital? How to help a family member who is depressed or socially isolated? Leland frequently refers callers to Iona’s team of experts, which includes case managers, social workers, and a dietician, among others.

Beyond the Helpline, Leland produces the Bi-Weekly Resource Digest distributed to a mailing list of 1,000 area professionals. “The Bi-Weekly Digest is phenomenal, very valuable,” said Mary Ann Floto, United Way’s 211 Program Manager. “I’ve passed it on to information and referral colleagues in Maryland and D.C.”

Asked how this work has influenced thoughts about his own aging, 49-year-old Leland points out that he has the privilege of witnessing both the challenges and the rewards of aging. “I’ve seen a lot of courage and resiliency,” he says. “At Iona — and throughout the community — I’ve seen people collectively coming together to help others. If anything, it’s inspiring.”

To get answers yourself call (202) 895-9448 and ask for the Helpline or email info@iona.org.
“I’ve seen a lot of courage and resiliency.”
Two of us can’t do what Iona does

It’s hard enough taking care of one parent with a serious illness. Imagine taking care of two — while living in a different city.

Caroline Scully was living in Massachusetts. Her parents were living in the District’s Glover Park neighborhood, next door to her brother. Then things began to unravel.

Her mom, Bernice, was diagnosed with a rare neurological condition. At the same time, her dad, Richard, was developing memory problems.

Still in Massachusetts, Caroline began managing their medical care and overseeing their finances, along with her brother. "It became so stressful going back and forth, I decided it was better to be with them," she said. She left her home and partner in New England to move in with her parents. "My brother and I were focused on making sure our mother was comfortable and getting the best possible care and that our father was taking his medications and getting out."

Looking back, Caroline realizes she didn’t understand the health care system. "It’s not set up for people to understand," she says. "I thought my parents needed to move into assisted living. Iona’s staff convinced me they could get good care at home."

Caroline hired Iona’s care managers to conduct a comprehensive in-home assessment and tailor solutions specific to her parents' strengths and preferences, as well as their challenges and risks.

"Iona has been a hub of resources and services for us," says Caroline who also has benefited from Iona’s social workers and support groups, and has participated in its advocacy efforts. After her mother passed away at home in October 2014, Caroline enrolled her father in the Wellness & Arts Center, Iona's adult day health program for older adults with chronic health issues.

When Caroline picks up her father, she finds him having a conversation with a staff member, engaged in a small group activity, or in art therapy. His artwork has been displayed in several Iona exhibits. In addition, experienced nurses and nursing assistants monitor his health. Is his blood pressure high? Is he losing weight? If he needs physical therapy, it’s available at Iona.

"Team meetings are remarkable," she adds. "My father gets wonderful feedback from the staff. They all have thoughtful things to say."

At the end of the day, he's energized — in contrast to when he’s home all day and tired. "That’s because two of us can’t do what Iona does," says Caroline.

"Our family’s relationship with Iona started small with me calling every once in a while and not really understanding all that the organization has to offer," she adds. Having tapped into most of its services and expertise, she has nothing but gratitude. So does her father who, at a recent team meeting told the staff: "As you go through life you don’t often find people interested in you. You all seem to have a secret training ground for compassion."

Richard and Caroline Scully.
“...a secret training ground for compassion.”
Stella “Starr” Clarke, kept running into the sociable stranger in her Cleveland Park neighborhood. Each time, his message was the same: “Come check out the club.” After four invitations, she had to see this place for herself.

The “club” turned out to be Iona’s Active Wellness Program at St. Alban’s, held every weekday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the grounds of the National Cathedral. The program attracts older adults from the neighborhood and beyond who are drawn to the nutritious lunch and diverse activities — such as exercise class, a farmer’s market with free produce and field trips.

“I like the people and we have a lot to talk about, whether we are black, white, pink, or blue,” says Stella, 80, who is married and has children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren but appreciates the opportunity to do her own thing.

She has been doing her own thing since she was three years old and fell in love with dance. A native of Guyana, South America, Stella honed her skills as an interpretive and Caribbean folk dancer and, at an early age, was crowned Carnival Queen. She founded a well-known dance school; her “Dancing Dolls” performed for presidents and other dignitaries. In Guyana she is considered a national treasure. She was recognized by the government in an official ceremony celebrating her as a national cultural icon.

When she moved to the U.S., Stella was invited to train with the prestigious Alvin Ailey Dance School. She has been teaching dance ever since, even recreating “The Dancing Dolls” with children of Caribbean heritage living in the Washington area.

Frequently asked her secret to staying “young,” Stella’s response is morning exercise — in the shower! — where she stretches, twists, and touches her toes. “The warm water loosens you up; that’s why I look and feel like a teenager,” she laughs.

At St. Alban’s, “we talk about everything from our families to our finances. It’s as if we’ve known each other for years,” says Stella, who has been participating in the program since 2013.

Courtney Tolbert, who manages the St. Alban’s program, “is one in a million,” says Stella. “She’s constantly adding new programs. For instance, September is National Hispanic Heritage Month so we listened to Joan Baez and José Feliciano and went to the National Portrait Gallery to see an exhibition about Dolores Huerta (the farm workers’ movement leader).”

“We all have such incredible lives,” says Stella, noting that a recent event featured a discussion about a new book by Alec McRae, another St. Alban’s participant. And, in fact, Stella herself (along with granddaughter Kahina Haynes, School Director of Dance Institute of Washington) performed at St. Albans. “I plan to dance until the day I die,” she says with a twinkle in her eye.
“I plan to dance until the day I die.”
It was “a perfect storm,” says Dr. Lorna Hahn. She is referring to three events that conspired to turn her life upside down between 2008 and 2011.

A political scientist who taught international relations at American, Catholic, Georgetown, and Howard Universities, Dr. Hahn is known for her research and books relating to Africa. John F. Kennedy, who was a U.S. senator at the time, wrote the forward to her first book, North Africa: Nationalism to Nationhood. More recently, her research has focused on the Arab Spring.

But in 2008 her attention was elsewhere. That is when the Great Recession hit. “The stock market crashed and took my savings with it,” she says. Like many others in our region and around the country, Dr. Hahn suffered a major financial setback. As if the recession weren’t enough, she came to the end of a research contract, which was not renewed. Then, in January of 2011, she was rushed to the hospital with bleeding ulcers. Several blood transfusions later, she found herself back home — behind in her bills and at risk of eviction.

A friend suggested she contact Iona. That’s when the petite Dr. Hahn met Iona’s nurse care manager, Fiona Druy. Fiona jumped into action — addressing Dr. Hahn’s health challenges by arranging for healthy home-delivered meals and a nutritional supplement. To deal with her financial issues, Fiona connected Dr. Hahn with the nonprofit Legal Counsel for the Elderly and coordinated the services of three lawyers with expertise in different areas. The attorneys addressed issues with her landlord, including overdue repairs to her apartment and late rent payments. They discovered she was eligible to file for her Schedule H rent rebate for the previous three years and that she qualified for an increase in monthly Social Security payments.

“At my low point,” she says, “I told Fiona, ‘I shouldn’t have gotten into this mess.’ Her response made me feel better. She said: ‘This could have happened to my own mother.’ In fact, during stock market crashes, grown men have thrown themselves out of windows because they couldn’t cope with their circumstances.”

Iona’s staff “knows what they are doing,” said Dr. Hahn. “They have access to competent people in many areas, such as the law. Because of my circumstances, I got thousands of dollars of free legal advice.”

Dr. Hahn still receives nutritious food through Iona and support from the Legal Counsel for the Elderly. Grateful that her health and finances are at a better place, she remains active with her research and writing.

Thinking back on the past few years, Dr. Hahn says, “I never thought I’d have to tap into the services of a local social services organization. But I did. I appreciate Iona more than I can say. By sharing my story I hope to help someone else.”

Dr. Lorna Hahn with Fiona Druy.
“...By sharing my story I hope to help someone else.”
Gilbert Lavine didn’t plan to retire at 61.

A native Washingtonian, Gilbert was working as a treasurer at a major company that underwent an acquisition. He stayed on for a year after the acquisition before retiring in 2012, much earlier than he had anticipated.

“My career was cut short,” he says. “I was in shock. Sixty-five seemed like the right time to retire, yet here I was in my early 60s without a plan and no idea how I was going to spend my time.”

But not for long. His 88-year-old mother-in-law’s health was failing, so the family decided to move her to the Washington area. “She became my project,” says Gilbert. “Getting her to doctors, socializing with her — that was my new phase of life, one I had not contemplated.”

Feeling overwhelmed, he contacted Iona, where he learned about its new Take Charge/Age Well Academy SM for retirees or those who are thinking about retiring. He became part of the very first group. “By listening and learning, I really began to address my retirement,” Gilbert says. “I hadn’t stopped to do that because I was going from crisis to crisis.”

The series touches upon such issues as nutrition and exercise – which Gilbert had been neglecting for years. He took up running and completed several 5K races. One of the Academy’s themes is how to take care of your body. “What worked in the past may not work as you age,” says Gilbert, who has learned to eat small meals throughout the day instead of several large ones.

“Most importantly, Take Charge/Age Well provided me with an hour or two a week to focus on myself,” he says. “When you’re taking care of a family member, the last person you take care of is yourself.” After the series ended, he continued to meet with — and lean on — other Baby Boomers in the group.

The Academy also inspired Gilbert to volunteer. He used his skills as a treasurer for a statewide non-profit organization. Just prior to his mother-in-law passing away in 2014, he signed up to volunteer two days a week at Cashell Elementary School in Rockville, Maryland, helping students with math and reading. “I hadn’t been around little kids in a long time,” he said. “I love seeing all that energy.” So much so that he’s happily signed on for a second year in the classroom. Says Gilbert, “It’s what Lylie Fisher (who leads Take Charge/Age Well), calls an ‘encore career.’ It’s very enriching.”

“The day I wandered into Iona was a good day for me,” he says. “It helped me stop the day-to-day running around and begin to understand the next stage of my life.”

Gilbert Lavine with student, Kameron Tomasetti.
... I was in shock.
Responding to Community Needs

In response to the growing needs in our community, Iona is expanding several of its signature programs. This year, we began planning for the renovation of our Wellness & Arts Center, which will allow us to accommodate more men and women living with memory loss, diabetes, Parkinson’s, and other chronic health issues in our award-winning adult day health program. We are also growing our care management services, which include coaching, support, and problem-solving for family members caring for an older relative, or consultations and care management for older adults who want to stay independent. In addition, our Take Charge/Age Well AcademySM has expanded to include nine different classes for Baby Boomers who have retired or are thinking about retiring and are planning the next stage of life.

Alzheimer’s Support

Iona’s new staff member, social worker Christine Kenny, is providing city-wide support to people with mild memory loss who live alone. Funded through the D.C. Office on Aging, Christine provides money management support, making sure that clients pay their bills on time, are managing their personal funds, and are not being exploited. The program is open to residents of every Ward in the city.

The Arts at Iona

Iona continues to recognize the importance of creativity in the lives of older adults. Since it opened in 2007, the Gallery at Iona has featured the work of more than 40 artists-in-residence, displaying more than 4,000 works of art. Featured artists have ranged in age from 60 to 98. Through our ongoing “Creative Aging Partnership” with The Phillips Collection, Wellness & Arts Center participants enjoy a series of programs including an exhibition of their artwork at the museum. The National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA), located at Iona, welcomed National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu, who met with Iona art and dance class participants during her visit. Later in the year, NCCA hosted the National Leadership Exchange & Conference on creativity and aging in America. The conference showcased Iona’s art programming and its impact on the health and wellness of participants.
Addressing Food Insecurity

Many older adults in our community continue to face hunger and food insecurity. With that in mind, we expanded our Farm-to-Table program, which brings free fresh produce to participants in our Active Wellness Program at St. Alban’s and residents of Regency House on Connecticut Avenue, Ward 3’s only low-income housing for seniors. In the past year, we provided a record 10,000 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables to those in need.

Pride. No Matter Your Age.

As part of an initiative to connect with and better serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) older adults and caregivers, Iona hosted our very first booth in this summer’s Capital Pride Festival. Our theme for the booth was “Pride. No Matter Your Age.” With bright-colored notecards and posters in tow, we asked attendees to share advice or words of wisdom to their younger selves. Throughout the day, we had more than 200 people stop by our booth and snap photos, write their responses, and get information about Iona’s programs and services.

Staff members and friends of Iona were proud to represent Iona at our first Capital Pride Festival in June.
Our Donors

2015 Contributors (Fiscal year October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015)

Every gift supports Iona’s mission to help people age well and live well. We appreciate all of the donors who contributed in fiscal year 2015. Thank you! While we strive for accuracy, should you find your information to be presented incorrectly or if you prefer your name to be listed differently in future, please contact us at (202) 895-9416 or development@iona.org.

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Advice from a Caregiver

"Make sure to take time away. Everyone says that. It's much easier to say than to do, but it's really important. I didn't understand how tired I was from caregiving until I stepped away from it. I came back refreshed and with more energy to be an engaged, loving caregiver."

— Caroline Scully

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Ms. Ina Bechhoefer

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Mr. Daniel Ezrow

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In Honor of Dr. Celia A. Ward
Ms. Mary L. Warner

In Memory of David Ezrow
Mr. Daniel Ezrow

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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. 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 older adults. For information, contact the development department at (202) 895-9401 or info@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, jlevy@iona.org or call (202) 895-9435. To learn more about the DC Senior Advisory Coalition, contact swhite@iona.org or call (202) 895-0246.

**Volunteer**
Iona was started by volunteers back in 1975, and only remains 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 and meeting the needs of older adults in the community. Whether it’s a group project, individual interest, or community service requirement, Iona has a place for you. Contact our volunteer coordinator at volunteer@iona.org.

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**Make a Difference**

Advice from an Expert

“Caregiving is a challenge few of us are prepared to handle. Professionals such as social workers and nurses — known as “care managers” — can be great coaches when you are trying to help an older family member. Even if you think your older relative will never accept help, the more you know the better prepared you will be if they change their mind or there is an emergency. Learn more about care managers by calling Iona at (202) 895-9448, and ask for our Helpline.”

— Leland Kiang

Thank you to our volunteers who provided thousands of service hours—delivering meals, visiting homebound older adults, supporting Iona’s activities—and who are absolutely essential to Iona’s mission and work.
2015 Financials
Fiscal year October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015 (unaudited)

Revenue
Government Grant $ 1,364,922
Contributions $ 1,493,728
Participant Income &
Insurance Reimbursements $ 741,252
Other Income $ 379,843
Investment Income $ 81,538
Donated Services & Facilities $ 150,035
TOTAL REVENUE $ 4,211,318

Expenses
Administration $ 389,878
Fundraising $ 497,762
Program Services $ 3,260,070
TOTAL EXPENSES $ 4,147,710
"Look to your left. Look to your right. You or someone you know can be served by Iona. We all need a hand. But it takes resources to do that. Someday we will all need somebody to lean on."

— Michelle Singletary

Advice from a Syndicated Washington Post Columnist