Hazel called for help, and you were there

Every day Iona’s social workers are out in the community working with older adults to arrange critical, and often life-saving, services.

Your support has helped your older neighbors access essential health services. You’ve ensured that Iona can provide nutritious home-delivered meals. You’ve made it possible for our team to lead the way when navigating complex federal assistance programs.

And, for Hazel Williams, your support has done all of that – and more.

After moving to Regency House, the only public housing for older adults in Ward 3, Hazel was looking for help. While she had housing she could now afford, she still faced challenges. With limited resources of just $750 a month, she needed a case manager to connect her to various public benefits. Researching and signing up for the assistance programs on her own was extremely daunting. “I knew I needed help,” says Hazel.

Fortunately, because of your continued support, Iona has had a long-standing relationship with Regency House. Hazel was immediately connected to Iona social worker Liza Chapkovsky.

In a matter of months, Liza had secured free meal delivery and recertified Hazel’s Food Stamps status. Additionally, she arranged for a physician and psychotherapist to visit Hazel at home. They were able to address Hazel’s medical needs and help her cope with transitioning to a new neighborhood. Liza also accompanied Hazel on an appointment for new prescription glasses. She even coordinated for Hazel to receive a free cell phone.

Without your support, which funds our social workers’ salaries, Hazel would be struggling every month to afford basic necessities like food and hygiene products. Though small tasks to some, this assistance has allowed Hazel to live independently in her community. For that, Hazel is deeply grateful. “I couldn’t do this on my own,” says Hazel. “Liza, she’s my girl.”
IN HER OWN WORDS...

You have given us a new and happy life

My name is Carolynn Maatta, and I am honored and delighted to share my story with you.

My husband, Chuck, has had dementia for nine years and is medically frail. He goes to seven doctors and takes 17 medications a day. He had become very demanding and was always criticizing. He was very difficult to be around. All he wanted to do was watch TV all day.

I made him do cognitive activities, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy everyday, which he resented. I was trying to slow down his decline into dementia.

You cannot imagine how difficult it is to care for someone with dementia 24/7.

But then I found Iona! Chuck started in April and within a few weeks his behavior started to change. He became friendlier. He became more helpful. He started joking around with our family and even giving out compliments. He was easier to get along with and started making conversation. He seemed happy.

He started to get up one hour earlier on the days he went to Iona. I was amazed by his new behavior.

Recently, we flew to Portland, Oregon to visit our daughter. Chuck was in the aisle seat and I was in the window seat. I wasn’t feeling well, so I slept on the plane. When I woke up, the stewardess was serving Chuck a dish of ice cream with a bottle of Bailey’s Irish Crème.

I asked the woman next to me what was happening and she said, “While you were sleeping, your husband was flirting with the stewardess and making everyone laugh, so they asked him what he likes to drink and they brought him this treat.” Again, I was amazed and stunned at this new behavior.

Other memory loss programs may have professionals with expertise in dementia care, but they do not deliver this care with lots of tender love and smiling faces, as the Iona staff does.

Here at Iona, the staff lets the clients feel important and empowered. They take care of their needs and their wants and do it all with smiling faces.

They are truly an exceptional and outstanding staff to have accomplished so much with Chuck, and I am thankful for each and every one of them.

Chuck still has dementia and he is still medically frail. Chuck still needs a lot of work, and he still needs a lot of care. But I am no longer alone on this journey because I have Iona to guide me.

Iona has given us a new and happy life, and for that I am truly most grateful. ♦

Make a gift online. It’s safe, fast, and easy.
Iona.org/Donate-now.
isolated older adults received 47,292 nutritious and well-balanced meals to their homes in 2017.

Your generosity provided this relief to the many older adults who struggle to know where their next meal is coming from.

Thank you for keeping your vulnerable older neighbors in your heart.
“There’s no downside to supporting Iona. You help others, and you learn something. By being involved with Iona, your sensitivity heightens. You get to learn a lot more about the challenges of aging, and put it to use for your own family to plan ahead.”

– Derrick Chin, Iona donor and volunteer
Derrick Chin finds inspiration from his home office. Or, more specifically, from a plaque he has there. It reads, “Do what you can with what you have today.” It’s a philosophy he has taken to heart, especially after his wife, Eunah Kim, died in 2015.

“My wife passed away at age 49,” Derrick says. “We planned to be together forever. Little did I know, we wouldn’t even make our 12th wedding anniversary.”

Today, he keeps Eunah’s memory alive by giving back to the causes important to them both. “She was a giving person all of the time,” he says.

It’s something they had in common, as evidence by Derrick’s long list of organizations he’s volunteered and donated to over the years.

Though Derrick had known of Iona for years, it was only in May 2017 that he first got involved. He was looking for a trusted aging services organization to dedicate his time and resources, partly due to negative experiences he had when caring for his own parents. “My mom broke her femur bone and she had to go to rehab through a nursing home. I didn’t like the way that they treated her,” says Derrick.

The experience got him thinking about aging services in general. At one point, Derrick even considered starting an organization himself. That changed, but his dedication to addressing the challenges facing older adults remained.

So, when he was introduced to Iona, he dove in headfirst. “I was impressed by the scope of services that you provide,” he says. Derrick became a consistent donor and also began volunteering his time as a weekend meals and friendly visitor volunteer. “I’ve always wanted to do something for disadvantaged folks. But, I’m only one person,” says Derrick. “Iona can do so much more.”

Today, Derrick remains inspired to give because of the growing needs he’s witnessed firsthand as a volunteer. “You go to these apartment buildings, and they look good from the outside. But, once you get inside you see that it’s a façade,” he says. “It was a surprise to learn about how many disadvantaged elderly there are in Northwest, DC.”

Fortunately, with Derrick’s support, along with your generous contribution, Iona ensures our older neighbors are safe, connected, and well-nourished.

“‘It’s my duty to give back and be generous to the community’

As the aging population continues to grow, your commitment will be even more critical.
Thanks to you, Iona was there when Suzanne needed advice and resources

Seventy-three years old, widowed, and with no children, Suzanne Kramer knew she needed a plan. Because of your generous support for Iona’s Take Charge/Age Well Academy™, you ensured Iona would be there for her.

Read how your gift made an impact, in Suzanne’s own words.

“Last May, I had the pleasure of attending my first Iona class, ‘Aging Solo.’ The class appealed to me for a number of reasons.

As a widow for the past three years, with no children, I have become increasingly aware of my need to understand and plan for my future. When I came across the class description on a listserv posting, I thought, ‘This class fits the bill.’

During the class, a number of Iona and community experts covered critical topics I had never considered. We discussed choosing where to live, financial planning, and building a social network, among other things.

These presentations, as well as the input from other class participants, provided me with an excellent overview of important things to think about and plan for. I learned several issues I need to take care of now, such as signing up for Long Term Care Insurance and having my will reviewed and updated. I learned about options for continuing care and facilities in the area.

Thanks to Iona, I’ve now begun information visits. And, in the future, I want to meet with an Iona care manager for individual help with planning.

Iona’s experts and my fellow classmates provided me with far more information than what I have touched on. But, the overall effect was to give me a better comfort level for my future. I received a comprehensive understanding of what I can do to get ahead of the aging process and where I can take steps to prepare.

Thank you for offering this class! Iona is an extremely valuable source of help and support, and it’s a comfort knowing I can rely on you in years to come.”

Your support of Iona ensures older adults like Suzanne have peace of mind and confidence for whatever lies ahead. Thank you for helping Iona provide resources, and teach critical strategies for successful aging.