Joana Miranda, 67, had an eclectic career. Back in 1974, she moved from Brazil to the United States seeking work. At the time, a friend bet that she wouldn't last six months away from her home. “She said in six months I would return with my tail between my legs,” Joana says. “I told her, ‘I bet I’m going to like it, and I’m going to stay.’ That’s the number reason why I did!,” she jokes. That’s Joana in a nutshell: Hardworking, spirited, and just a little stubborn.

Since then, she’s worked on Capitol Hill in the Senate Dining Room, in hotels throughout the District, and at the American Indian Museum and Hirshhorn Museum, where she retired in 2014.

Her retirement hasn’t been easy. Joana’s pension is just $570 a month. Though she’s eligible for social security, she hasn’t been able to tap into that benefit because of an expired identification card. After four years of setbacks and red tape trying to get new documents, Joana had given up. “I had lost hope,” she says. “I was depressed.”

Fortunately, you were there to restore her faith.

Feeling hopeless, Joana connected with Iona. Your donations ensured that a case manager was assigned right away to help her navigate the complex world of local and federal benefits. “It was like I had a personal assistant,” she says.

Within months, her case manager delivered what Joana was waiting for: A replacement citizenship certificate. This support has been monumental for Joana because it’s allowed her to get a government-issued ID. With it, she’s now able to claim her social security benefits. As a result, her income has nearly tripled.

Thanks to her new ID, which your donations secured, Joana now also receives Medicare and Medicaid. She has a new primary care physician and a reduced Metro fare card. Truly, this one document has been life-changing for Joana.

Without your generosity—which funds our social workers’ salaries—Joana would still be struggling to get by on her limited income. Thankfully, because of you, today she doesn’t have to worry as much anymore.
You make a difference

With you...
Older adults with limited resources and networks have a safety net to turn to whenever a crisis occurs—like an empty food pantry, a hospitalization, or a utility shut-off notice.

With you...
Individuals with memory loss and other health challenges enjoy conversation, art therapy, music, and more in our Wellness & Arts Center—and their families get a much needed break.

With you...
Your older neighbors avoid evictions, access critical health care, and get needed support services that help them thrive in their homes.

With you...
Caregivers have tools and support to cope with the daily highs and lows of caring for a loved one.

With you...
Adults without a traditional support network access education, guidance, and community to plan ahead.

With you...
People with memory loss get critical money management so that a bill is never missed.

A happy update to a long journey, thanks to you

“Without Iona, I wouldn’t have known about St. Mary’s Court—or how to apply.”

You might remember Gregory Shadley’s story from last year’s Annual Report. At 62, Gregory faced a long and scary list of health issues, including diabetes, a pulmonary embolism, and multiple strokes.

Feeling overwhelmed by his health, housing, and financial challenges, he had reached out to Iona.

Because of your support, we could respond quickly. Gregory was assigned a case manager to help him navigate the complex world of local and federal benefits. He tapped into food stamps, a rental rebate, home health link aide, and more.

Last you heard in Gregory’s story, he was waiting on a long list for an accessible apartment at St. Mary’s Court in Foggy Bottom.

We have good news for you!
After nine months on the waitlist, Gregory moved into his new apartment, with support from his Iona case manager.

Today, Gregory doesn’t have to worry about costly rent payments or navigating the eight steps to his prior basement apartment. It’s a huge relief for Gregory, who still faces a myriad of health issues.

“The challenges are still there,” he says. “But, I don’t have to worry so much anymore about housing. I appreciate what you’ve done for me.”

Because of your gifts, Iona case managers are out in the community every day, working with older adults like Gregory to access benefits and tap into the support they need. We are grateful for your commitment. *
From class participant to board member: How Rita Ross dove headfirst into Iona

I didn’t have an Iona 43 years ago when my father suddenly passed away from diabetes complications. He was 56. I also didn’t have an Iona in my life 24 years ago when my mother died. I now realize it may have been early onset dementia.

Trying to cope with grief, along with the many challenges in life, was at times emotionally draining. I was working full-time, and raising two sons with my husband. Looking back, I know that I would have done things differently if I had known about Iona.

But, I didn’t find Iona until after I retired from 30 years of federal service as an attorney with the FDIC. Given my family history, I had decided I would make time for learning how to navigate the ups and downs of aging. I took a class with Iona’s Take Charge/Age Well Academy and became hooked on Iona.

Since then, I’ve participated in workshops on topics like decluttering and planning ahead. I began to make philanthropic gifts in gratitude of the knowledge I was gaining. Most recently, I joined Iona’s Board of Directors.

Being involved with Iona has exceeded my expectations. It has been and continues to be the gift that keeps on giving.

Like me, you’ve probably felt bombarded by solicitations from organizations. There are a lot of choices out there.

Iona is one organization where you not only help others with your donations, but you can also help yourself.

It’s empowering to think about my future, and rewarding to share, what I’ve learned with friends, former colleagues, and neighbors.

It feels good to use my talents and skills for a reputable organization. I know that I’m putting my time to good use at Iona, where there is such a positive impact on people’s lives across the District.

When I give to Iona, I know that I am securing a future for others to access the resources they need. It’s an absolute joy to be involved in this wonderful community.
When finances are tight, neighbors turn to you for help

As you know, Washington, DC is an expensive city. For many of our neighbors with limited resources, that means cutting costs and making sacrifices on items they might need. When finances are tight, home items we take for granted are first to go.

Fortunately, your donations ensure that Iona’s social workers can meet these basic needs. Thanks to your support, along with generous funding from the Jack R. Anderson Foundation, Iona keeps a special Emergency Fund for our social workers to tap into whenever needed.

Your generosity has helped to purchase clean clothing and toiletries. You’ve funded vital deep-cleaning home services. Your donations have even helped to provide emergency money for rent, medical co-payments, and other bills. Truly, your impact is immeasurable.

Just ask Iona social worker Randy Smith. Randy frequents the Emergency Fund often. He’s purchased everything from paper towels to shaving cream for his clients, who otherwise can’t afford these basic necessities.

In addition to home essentials, the Emergency Fund can also help cover bills. This summer, for example, Randy tapped into the Fund to cover the costs of a client’s cable and phone bill. The $175 back payments the client owed was preventing him from getting services installed in a new apartment.

“He deserves to have a phone,” says Randy. “It’s his connection to the world. But, the cable company wouldn’t install anything until he paid the $175. He just doesn’t have that kind of money.”

Fortunately, because of your gift, Randy could step in.

Your support is more critical than ever as people live longer and face more complex challenges every day.

Thankfully, because of you, when a client needs new sheets or cash to pay for a late utility bill, they know they can lean upon Iona. And, in turn, Iona knows we can lean upon you. Thank you for your caring.

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YOU’RE PART OF IONA’S STORY!
What draws you to Iona’s mission of helping older adults and caregivers? Let us know! If you’d like to be featured in our next newsletter, please contact Rosie Aquila at raquila@iona.org or call (202) 895-9423.

CONNECT WITH IONA
Stay up-to-date with Iona online and connect with fellow supporters.

www.iona.org
www.iona.org/blog

[Link to Facebook and YouTube]
A grateful note for your support:

“After three months with diet, medication, and exercise, my total cholesterol dropped 50%.

Thank you for the great advice and kind manner. I am very appreciative of Iona. You are angels.”

- Iona client who received free nutritional counseling
older adults have benefited from case management and counseling support since January 2018.

Your donations ensure Iona’s team can respond with expert advice and caring whenever your neighbors need us most.

Thank you.