

YOUR IMPACT in the

IONA COMMUNITY

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Iona's Washington Home Center opens in historic moment, thanks to you.

This month, Iona is scheduled to welcome the first participants to our new Washington Home Center in Congress Heights in Southeast DC. The new adult day center will provide the same high-quality care for older adults with cognitive and physical challenges as our Wellness and Arts Center in Northwest.



“Older adults deserve the very best, no matter where they live,” says Center Director Thomye Cave, a pioneer in the field of aging services.

Thomye joined Iona's staff in July, bringing with her an impressive resume that includes three decades as Executive Director of the Downtown Cluster's Geriatric Day Care Center, where she developed innovative inter-generational activities, wellness programs and art therapy activities.

“For far too long, people living East of the River have been neglected,” she said. “But Iona Executive Director Sally White had a vision – and now I am blessed to be part of that vision.”

You, our donors, made that vision possible.

“Many individuals, organizations and our lead donor, the Washington Home, made this state-of-the-art center a reality by putting their energy and financial support behind

it for the higher good,” Thomye said. In addition, she expressed her gratitude to the many partner organizations and business, faith, nonprofit and government leaders in Wards 7 and 8 who are committed to providing the best social services possible to residents East of the River.

The center is opening at a historic moment, Thomye said, “as we focus our attention on our country's long history of neglect and maltreatment of its Black citizens. We can hold our heads erect knowing we have created a program that is second to none, that the participants will be safe, engaged and happy here and that their family members will find peace of mind and much-needed respite from caregiving.”

“For every older adult who walks through our doors, we are honoring our parents, our aunts and our uncles who never had the opportunity to be part of a center like this,” she said. “This is our legacy.”

This is your legacy. ■

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A MESSAGE FROM IONA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For 45 years, Iona Senior Services has made life better for thousands of older adults and families throughout Washington, DC, thanks to you. When Iona closed our building on March 17th, we never expected the long road ahead—that we'd still be working from home, worried about so many in our lives, and wondering about our future.



Yet, despite the circumstances, I have deep gratitude and hope. In this time, we've innovated and shifted our programs in ways that I could not have imagined earlier this year. Believe me, we could only jump into action because of your commitment to our mission.

We don't really know what the upcoming year looks like for us. I wish I knew. What I can tell you is this: Iona will always work hard to protect and provide for older adults and their families, in large part because of our wonderful community.

Thank you for caring and supporting our lifesaving efforts. Stay safe.

Gratefully yours,

Sally S. White
Executive Director

YOU MAKE DREAMS COME TRUE.

Mohamed Osman and Liza Chapkovsky have been through a lot together. When Mr. Osman—a native of Sudan who has called the District home for two decades—learned his green card was about to expire, he turned to Liza for help (as we reported in our fall newsletter). Because of you, Iona was there to help

He doesn't have to worry any more. With support from our network of caring donors, Liza made all the arrangements for Mr. Osman to take the citizenship test. He passed with flying colors.

"Liza did everything for me from the very beginning," he says. "She made the dream real."



Mohamed Osman with Liza Chapkovsky as she displays his Certificate of Naturalization.

Mr. Osman every step of the way, from the application process to getting fingerprinted.

When the green card came through, Mr. Osman was full of joy. But he also had his eyes on a bigger prize: becoming a U.S. citizen.

"As an immigrant, I was constantly looking to the right, looking to the left, looking over my shoulder. I was always worried," he said. "To have all the benefits of an American means I will finally be able to relax."

In May, Mr. Osman participated in a small citizenship ceremony. While it was more modest than usual due to the pandemic, it provided him with the joy—and relief—he had long dreamed of. "This," he said holding up his certificate, "is the beginning of everything."

As this issue of the newsletter goes to press, Liza is meeting with Mr. Osman to show him how to register to vote.

Because of you the dream lives on. ■

A client and a donor, it's a win-win



Some people turn to Iona for its support groups. Some seek out our care management services because they want to have peace of mind and enjoy life without the worry of finding the right care, managing finances, or navigating a complex healthcare system. Others are attracted to our Active Wellness Program at St. Albans. And then there are those who sign up for our six-week Aging Solo series, which covers the practical aspects of planning for aging if you don't have support traditionally provided by family.

If you're Sarah Barnett, you sign up for all of these—and more.

“Iona has saved me time, stress, and money,” says Sarah, 80, who has had a long career in the legal profession and continues to work part-time for a retired attorney.

With your support, Iona's staff helped get her finances in order, determined that she was eligible for the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program and,

because her walking was impaired, helped her get a free Metro pass. “Every day I would get an email explaining what else they were able to do for me. I couldn't believe it.”

Sarah was also invited to serve on Iona's Citizens Advisory Group (CAG), which addresses critical issues affecting older adults in Wards 2 and 3. Being part of the advisory group, Sarah says, “combines learning what the DC Department on Aging provides to seniors, serving Iona, helping others, and working with like-minded people. Since COVID, I've gotten to know many people via Zoom seminars and meetings with Iona's CAG, Georgetown Village, and others. The sessions have become a large part of my life and helped me to cope during this time.”

“Iona has become a safety net for me and that's why I became a monthly contributor.” Sarah started by making a small monthly donation and has increased her contribution over time. “Whether you give \$3 a month or \$300, it shows Iona your care.”



Fortunately, with Sarah's monthly support, along with your contributions, Iona is able to provide the range of services that have helped Sarah and so many others to age well and live well. ■

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You are making a difference in the lives of older adults throughout Washington, DC.

YOU ARE PROVIDING COMFORT TO THOSE LIVING ON THEIR OWN

At Iona, we know how challenging it can be for older adults who live alone. Social isolation and loneliness have been linked to higher risks for heart disease, high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline and even death. The physical distancing and stay-at-home orders imposed during the pandemic make isolated older adults even more vulnerable to serious health conditions.

With your dedicated support, Iona offers programs that support adults of all income levels and needs who are aging solo. For one of them—69-year-old John Collinge—Iona’s Transitions in Aging support group is the place he turns to “to compare approaches and resources, talk about how I am feeling and grouse if I need to grouse—especially during the pandemic,” he says.

Pre-COVID, the group met in person at Iona’s Albemarle Street building, where connections and friendships quickly developed. In March, Iona seamlessly transitioned to holding meetings by telephone and videoconferencing.



John Collinge with his wife, Zandra Flemister, and son, Sam.

significantly harder,” John says. “Finding Iona gave Zandra joy and meaning and helped preserve my sanity.”

On a recent Zoom, the “Transitions in Aging” support group discussed everything from whether it is safe to eat out or get a haircut to what they are reading and watching at home. “There’s a level of comfort and trust with this group that has developed over the years,” John says.

Thanks to your support, Iona currently offers a dozen support groups for older adults and family caregivers and facilitated by professionals. John sees the groups as “a safety valve. It’s a place where I can let my hair down. Perhaps most important of all, it gives us a chance to tell the other members how much we care about them.” ■



“The advantage of Zoom is we can see how everyone looks and gauge how they are doing,” said John, who, like most of the members, lives alone. His wife Zandra Flemister, who was a

participant in Iona’s Wellness and Arts adult day center after she was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer’s, lives at a long-term care facility. “Without Iona, our journey would have been

DONOR ADVISED FUNDS

If you currently give through donor advised funds, it just takes a couple of minutes to designate a portion of your giving to Iona Senior Services to help make an impact on the lives of your neighbors. Visit iona.org/ways-to-give

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www.iona.org

