



Support to Sustainability: Strategies for Expanding Your Caregiver Program

Mary Arthur, Lead Options Counselor
Kelsie Houston, Options Counselor





How We Grew Caregiver Support by 460% in Three Years

Discover the strategies that fueled a 460% increase in caregiver support services over the past three years. This presentation explores the core principles of building a sustainable caregiver support program through strong partnerships, rural outreach, and community engagement.

- The fundamentals of effective caregiver support, rural outreach, and collaborative partnerships.
- How our organization became one of only five Agencies on Aging nationwide selected to provide the GUIDE Program, currently serving 70 enrolled families.
- The natural evolution and expansion of Memory Cafés, caregiver support groups, and educational programming to meet growing community needs.
- Lessons learned and practical strategies that other organizations can adapt to strengthen caregiver services and expand their impact.
- Attendees will leave with actionable ideas for developing innovative programs, increasing community engagement, and creating sustainable support systems for caregivers and families living with dementia.

Caregiver Statistics

About 53 million people in the U.S. assist a spouse, relative, friend or neighbor with tasks like cooking, dressing, and bathing.

According to a survey conducted by SeniorLiving.org¹:

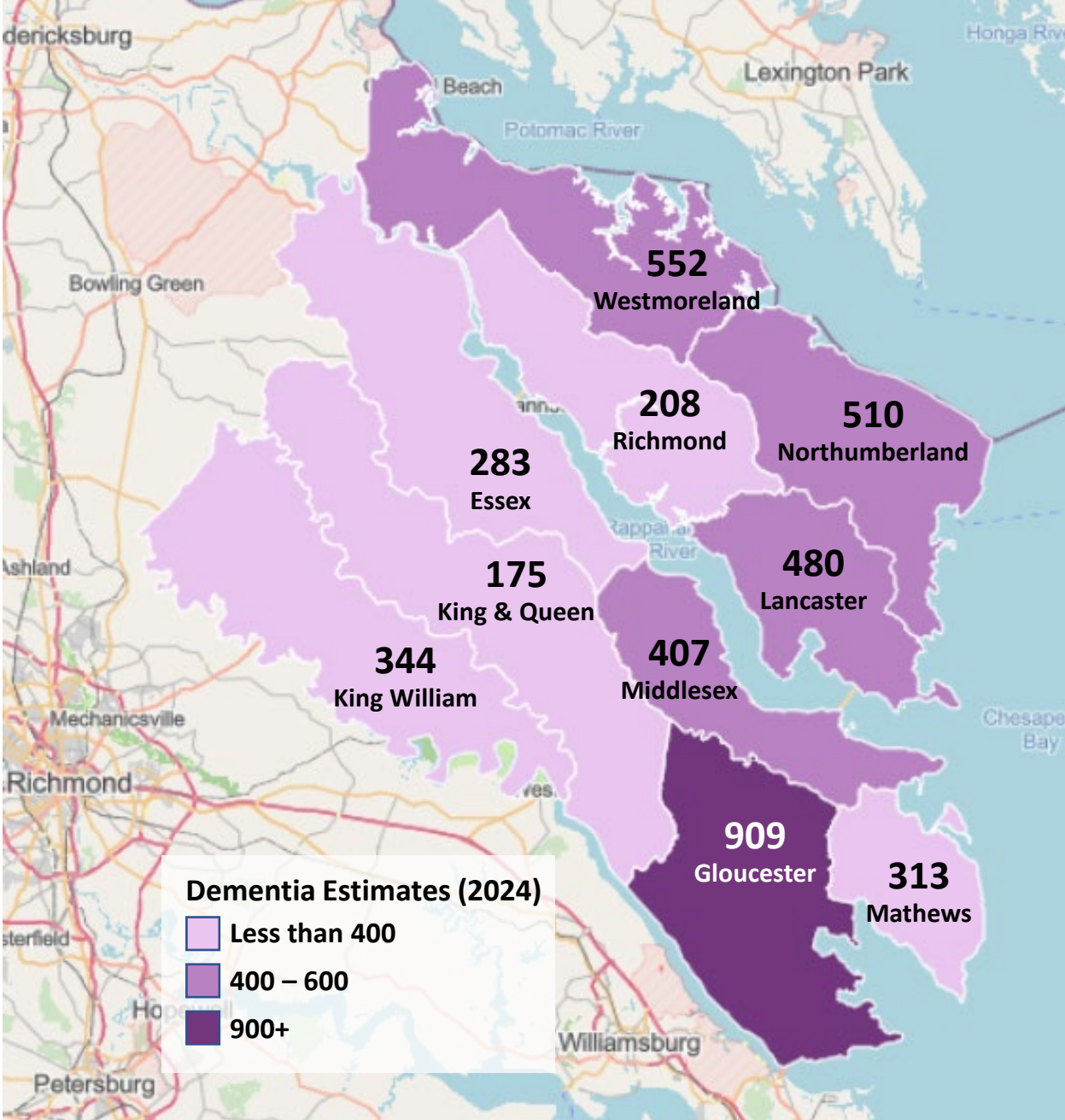
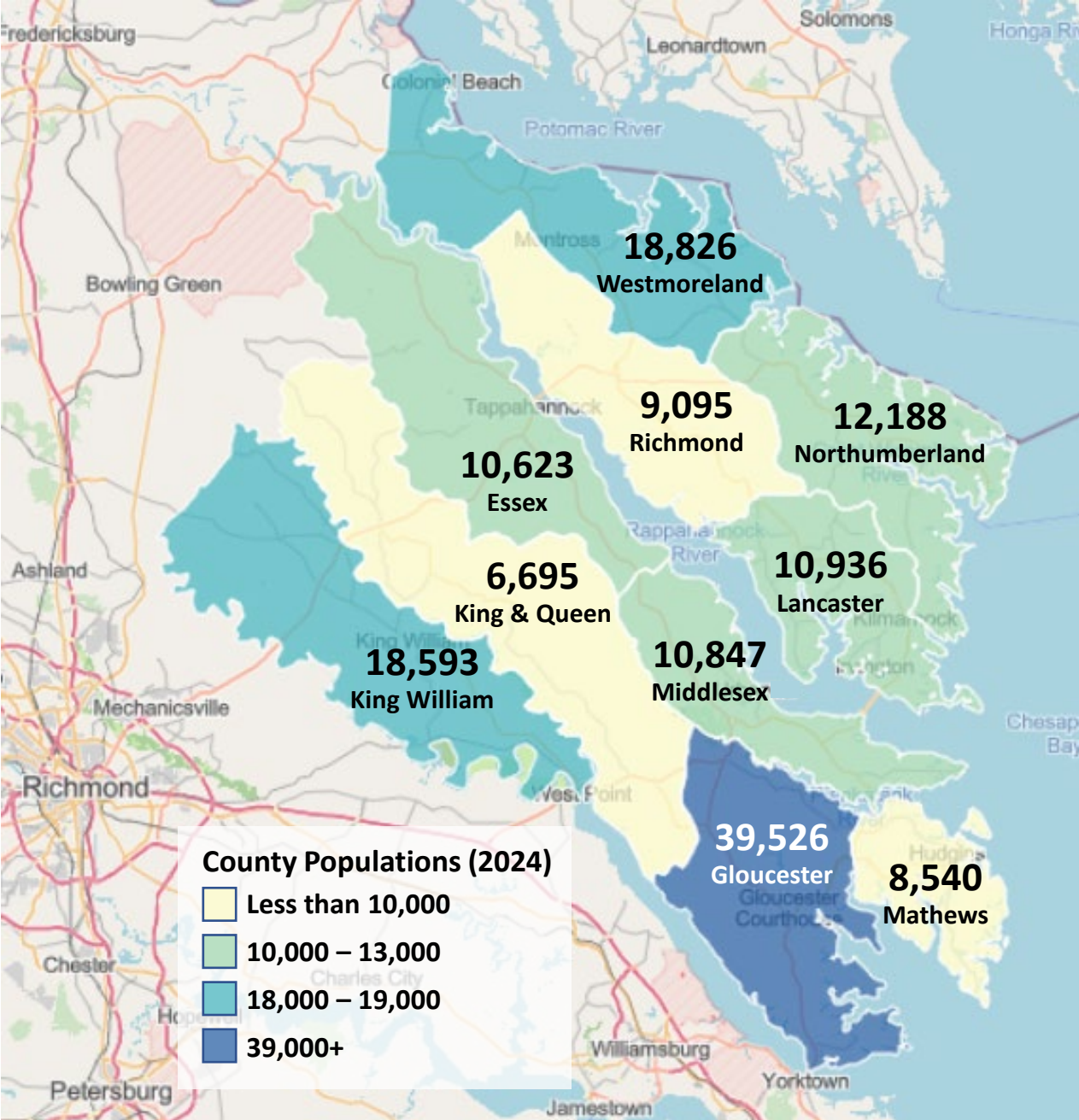
- 53% of caregivers work full-time
- 59% of caregivers are caring for a parent
- 43% of caregivers live with the person they care for
- 72% of caregivers report emotional stress
- 51% of caregivers report financial strain
- 43% of caregivers report loss of sleep
- 36% of caregivers report feelings of depression

Research by AARP
indicates²:

**Nearly 80% of
caregivers pay out
of pocket for care
costs**

**Out-of-pocket costs
average \$7,200
annually**

Estimates of Total County Populations and Number of People Living with Dementia



Your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) can be an important resource to assist not only older adults, but also people living with disabilities or chronic conditions and caregivers of all ages. Each AAA is different - services may include:



MEALS: Home-delivered or served at centers



RIDES: Accessible, affordable transportation



PERSONAL CARE: Help in your home



SOCIALIZATION: Fun and friendship



HOUSING: Resources for homelessness



INFORMATION & REFERRALS



EDUCATION: Evidence-based health programs



CAREGIVER SUPPORT: details, next page



In FY2025, we provided:

Meals: 184,546

Rides: 132,299

Care Hours: over 2.4 million

People Served: 36,463

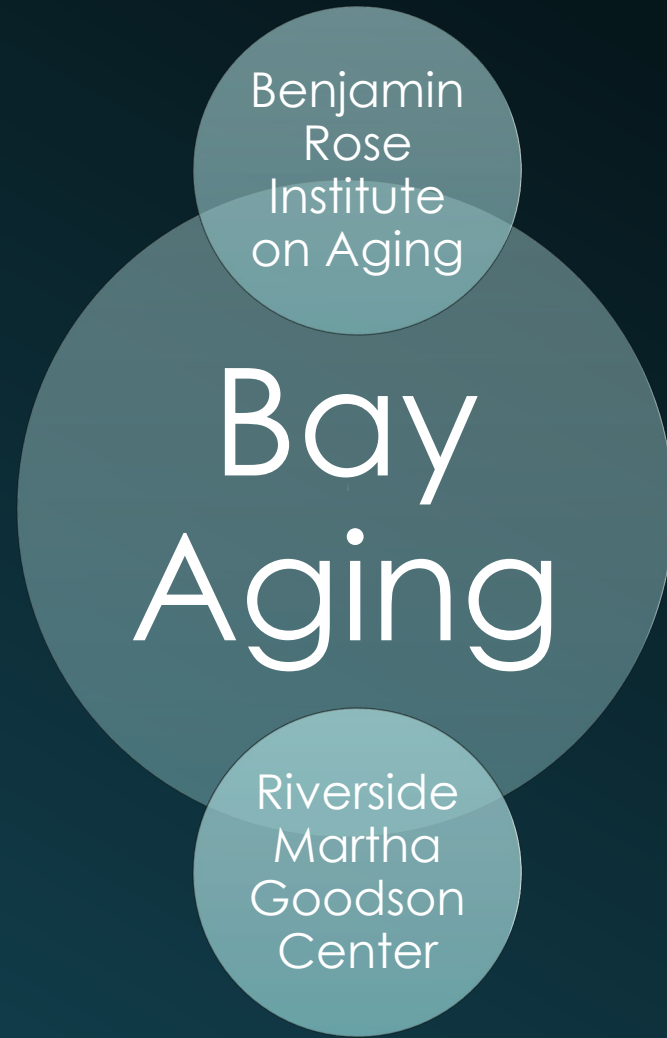
How is started:

- Bay Aging conducted a Community Needs Assessment and found a surprising statistic
- The national average at the time was 1 in 5 Americans serve as a care partner
- In our area, 1 in 3 identified as a care provider
- 25% of the people who live in Bay Aging's service area are age 65 and older, whereas only 15.9% of Virginia's population is 65 and up
- Our Foundation Board moved to action and planned to create Caregiver Support



Partnerships...

- We partnered with the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging (BRI) to offer free consultations to unpaid caregivers who reside in Virginia's Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck. BRI Care Consultation™ is an evidence-based program that helps caregivers create an action plan, connect with community services, and communicate with family and friends about difficult conversations related to care.
- A partnership with Riverside Center for Excellence in Aging and Lifelong Health was created: Caregiver Advisory Workgroup, a group of local leaders and stakeholders who offered input about hosting listening sessions and where to host them. Caregiver Conversations were coordinated to hear from local caregivers, their needs, and community input.



Bay
Aging

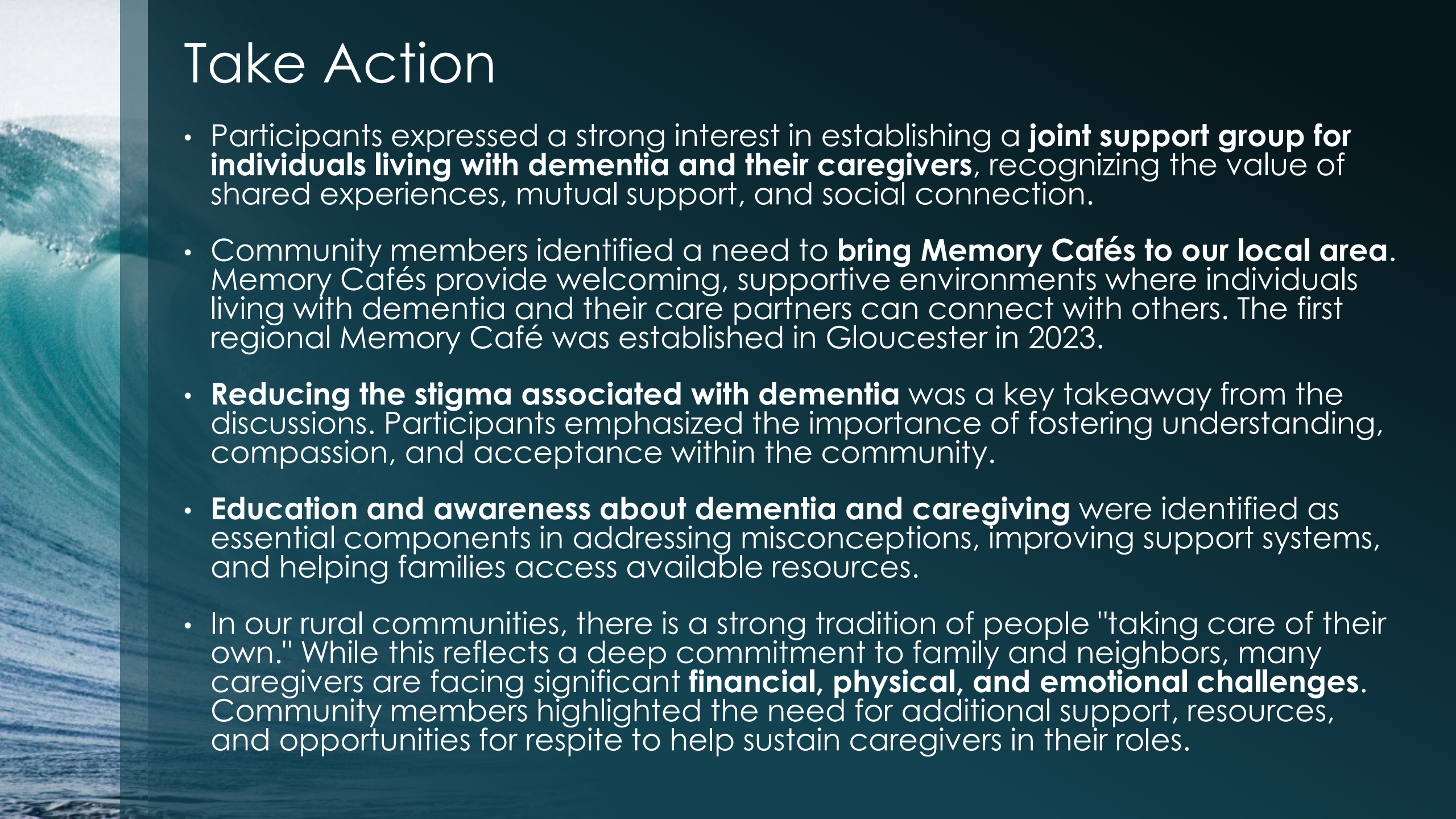
Benjamin
Rose
Institute
on Aging

Riverside
Martha
Goodson
Center

Community Conversations



- Bay Aging's region, comprised of 10 counties in the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck, includes 115,000 adults (per the April 2022 Bay Aging Community Needs Assessment) of which 33% are identifying as family caregivers.
- This prevalence is higher in comparison to many national estimates of family caregivers which are approximately 22% of the total population. Therefore, the Bay Aging service area represents a larger number of family caregivers that are and can be served by programs they and their community partners offer.
- Counties were selected for caregiver conversations based in part on caregiver density reported, and in part by easily accessible and centrally located sites. The caregiver conversations were held at 5 different sites and engaged more than 60 residents, service providers, and Bay Aging's team members.
- The overarching themes from the sessions were increasing awareness and accessibility of existing programs, providing programs with elements of social interaction, and offering an information hub managed by knowledgeable professionals.
- The importance of community was echoed throughout all the caregiver conversations and exemplified in a comment made by a participant "It takes a village to support a caregiver."



Take Action

- Participants expressed a strong interest in establishing a **joint support group for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers**, recognizing the value of shared experiences, mutual support, and social connection.
- Community members identified a need to **bring Memory Cafés to our local area**. Memory Cafés provide welcoming, supportive environments where individuals living with dementia and their care partners can connect with others. The first regional Memory Café was established in Gloucester in 2023.
- **Reducing the stigma associated with dementia** was a key takeaway from the discussions. Participants emphasized the importance of fostering understanding, compassion, and acceptance within the community.
- **Education and awareness about dementia and caregiving** were identified as essential components in addressing misconceptions, improving support systems, and helping families access available resources.
- In our rural communities, there is a strong tradition of people "taking care of their own." While this reflects a deep commitment to family and neighbors, many caregivers are facing significant **financial, physical, and emotional challenges**. Community members highlighted the need for additional support, resources, and opportunities for respite to help sustain caregivers in their roles.

Caregiver Supports & Services



**The new
GUIDE Model
has become
another
component of
caregiver
support for
qualifying
beneficiaries
who wish to
participate.**

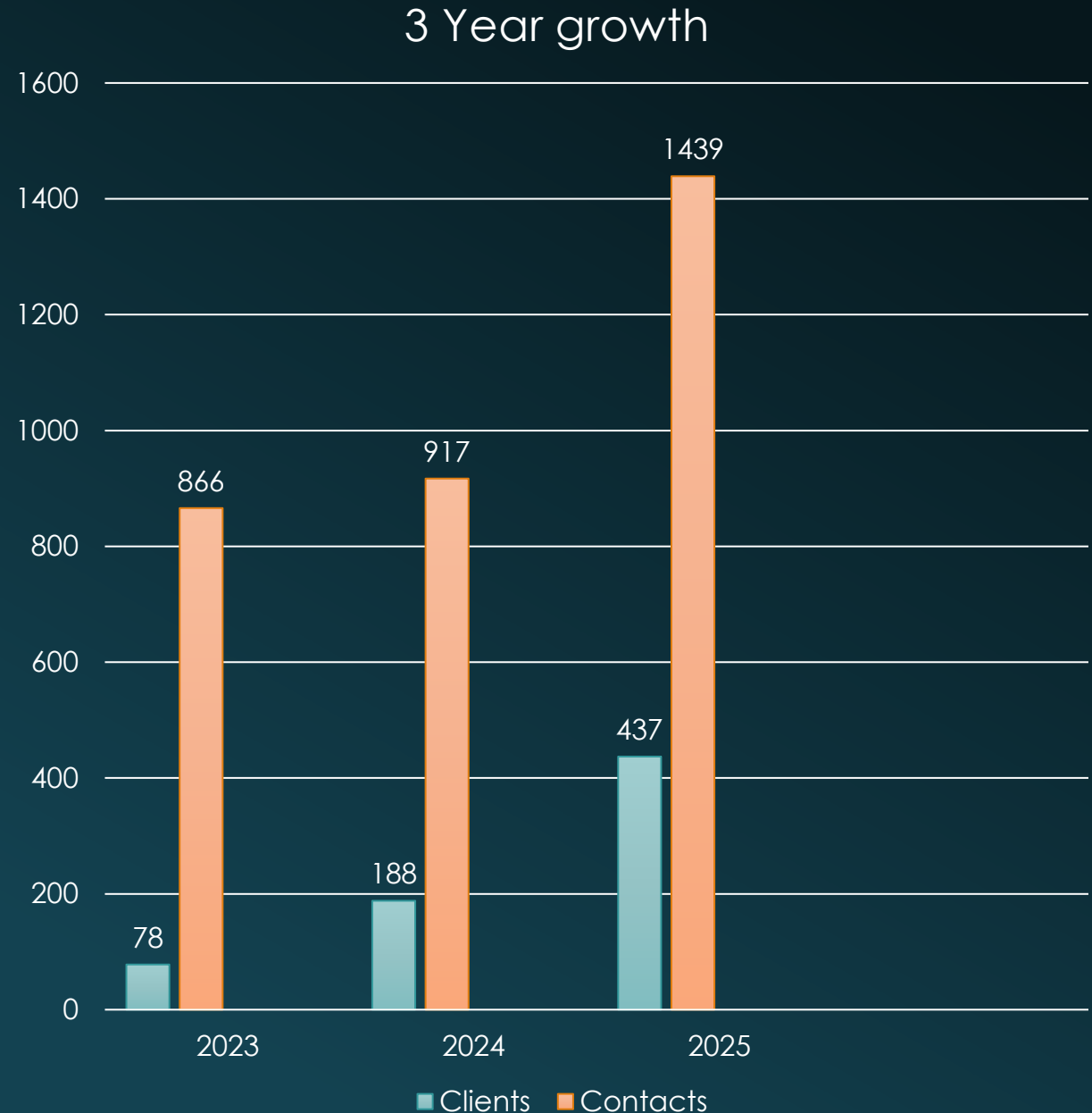
Commitment to Community

460% Increase in Caregiver Program Participation

Key Drivers

- ✓ Community partnerships
- ✓ Flexible engagement strategies
- ✓ Personalized support
- ✓ Caregiver-centered program design
- ✓ Consistent outreach

Providing active listening, a local resident to the area, and someone with personal experience has shaped our Caregiver Support Counselors' role in the community.



Key Partnerships

Partnered with

- Faith-based organizations
- TRIAD chapters
- Women's groups
- Long-term care facilities
- Healthcare providers
- Community organizations
- Local businesses and civic groups



Impact

- Increased visibility
- Expanded referral pathways
- Improved trust within communities
- Greater access to underserved caregivers

Person-Centered Engagement Strategies

Instead of expecting caregivers to come to us, we:

- Conducted in-home visits
- Offered flexible scheduling
- Provided individualized resource navigation
- Adapted communication methods

Lessons Learned

Relationships build engagement



What are micro-sessions?



Brief, focused interactions that:

- Respect caregivers' limited time
- Address immediate needs
- Build trust over time
- Create opportunities for ongoing support

Benefits

- Reduced barriers to participation
- Increased caregiver comfort
- Improved follow-through and engagement

Programs That Reduce Isolation

Creating Connection and Community

Programs Included:

- Caregiver support groups
- Memory Cafés
- Educational workshops
- Social luncheons and dinners
- Dementia-friendly activities
- Caregiver appreciation events

Outcomes

- Increased social connection
- Improved emotional well-being
- Stronger peer support networks





Adapting During Challenging Circumstances

Flexibility Leads to Sustainability



A lot of caregivers cannot leave their loved ones for support

- Transitioned to virtual programming
- Created hybrid participation options
- Increased telephone support
- Expanded individualized outreach

Result

Services remained accessible despite barriers.

Measuring Success

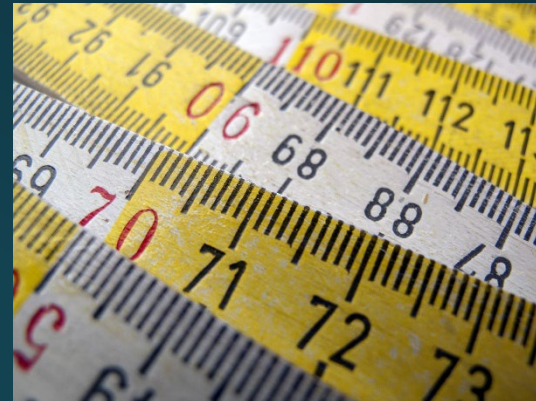
Tracking Growth and Impact:

Metrics Monitored:

- Program participation
- Caregiver contacts
- Support group attendance
- Community referrals
- Partnership development
- Satisfaction feedback

Data Helps Us:

- Demonstrate value
- Secure funding
- Improve services
- Plan for sustainability



Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) Model



GUIDE is a new Medicare program that aims to integrate health care and social supports to:

- Improve quality of life for people living with dementia
- Reduce caregiver burden
- Delay (or prevent) nursing home placement

Medicare selected 390 organizations nationwide, including Bay Health Solutions, to implement the GUIDE Model.



Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) Model

How does GUIDE help eligible beneficiaries?

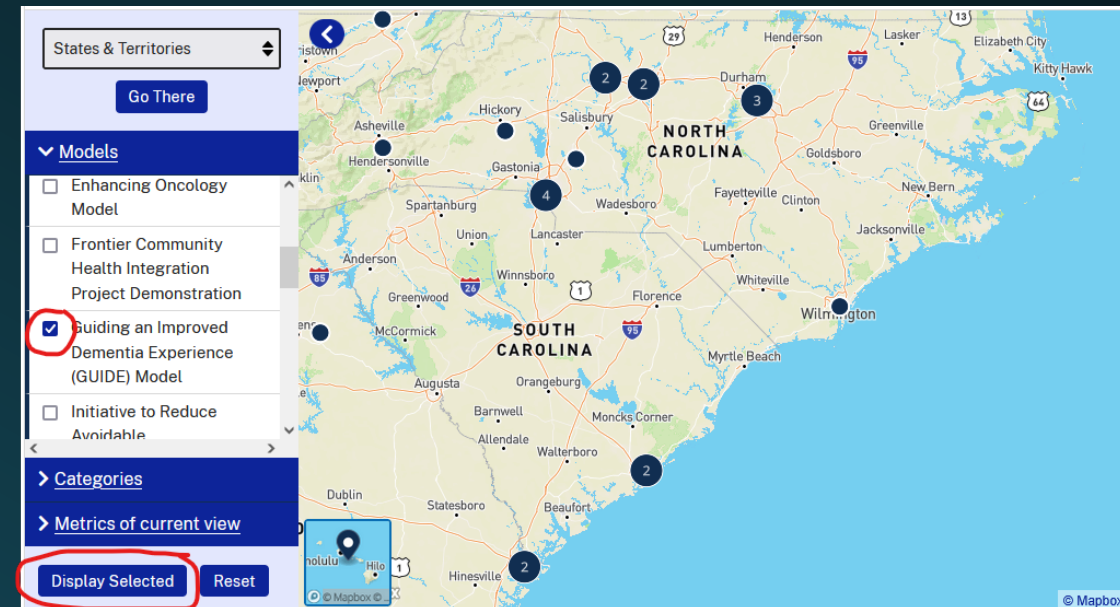
- GUIDE is a new Medicare program that provides a package of **care coordination** and **caregiver support** for eligible beneficiaries diagnosed with dementia and their caregivers
- **No co-pays or out-of-pocket costs**
- Annual **respite allowance** of \$2,625 for those with moderate to severe dementia
- Ongoing monitoring & support with a **24/7 help line**
- Enrolling in GUIDE does not impact other Medicare benefits or change your PCP or specialists



Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) Model

Visit Medicare's website to see options for your location:
<https://www.cms.gov/priorities/innovation/where-innovation-happening>

- Under Models, choose GUIDE
- Click on Display Selected
- Click the circles on the map
- Contact a provider near you



Replicable Strategies for Other Communities

What Others Can Implement Today

- Identify hidden caregivers
- Develop community partnerships
- Use micro-engagement opportunities
- Offer flexible service delivery
- Reduce participation barriers
- Track outcomes consistently
- Build programs around caregiver needs

Big Takeaway

Small, intentional connections create lasting impact.



Financial Sustainability



- Research the providers in their area and reach out to them about partnership opportunities
- Depending on their current programs and capacity, your company may be able to provide services such as conducting home assessments, providing adult day services, or providing home care.
- Sponsorship and donations from local businesses
- Grant opportunities

From Support to Sustainability

Key Lessons Learned

- Caregivers thrive when they feel seen and supported
- Partnerships expand reach and impact
- Flexibility increases participation
- Community builds resilience
- Sustainability starts with relationships

- ***Final Thought***

"When we meet caregivers where they are, we create pathways to lasting support, stronger communities, and better outcomes for families."



Comments or Questions:

Please contact us for further information:

Mary Arthur, marthur@bayaging.org

Kelsie Houston, khouston@bayaging.org

