



Compassion Coalition

Ways to Connect with the Elderly

“It's a partnership. We want elderly people to be as healthy and as happy as they can be. If we can step into their lives and provide them services, then they're doing us a favor too because they're giving us an opportunity to serve.”

~ Marie Alcorn, CAC Office on Aging

Make a Difference through Prayer

- Thank God for the many organizations and volunteers in our community who care faithfully for seniors—meeting needs and making friends.
- Thank God for the many older volunteers in our community sharing time and talents to bless others in their community.
- Pray for continued advances in the fight against age-related diseases such as Alzheimer's and other dementias.
- Pray for relief of isolation and depression in seniors, especially those in need with little or no support system.
- Pray for salvation and peace of mind for older people facing chronic illness or death, especially those who are estranged from families or from the church.
- Pray for grandparents raising grandchildren to be given a special measure of grace and strength, and for healing in their families.
- Pray for the many parents who feel squeezed and stressed by caring simultaneously for young children and aging parents.
- Pray that the network of Knoxville services may be able to respond adequately to the growing number of older persons in need of assistance. Pray for public policies to address this growing wave with wisdom and compassion.
- Pray for a culture of respect for older persons to be nurtured in our society.

Make a Difference through Your Life

- Avoid negative stereotypes about older persons. Don't assume everyone becomes feeble and senile as they age. Some of the most active, intelligent, and self-sufficient persons in our society are our seniors.
- Work to eliminate age discrimination, especially in work situations or in the provision of social services.
- Get to know elderly individuals in your neighborhood or congregation. Check on them on a regular basis, even if only to say hello and that you are there for them. In an automated society that many elderly persons find less user-friendly, they may crave real human interaction.
- Take your children to a nursing home to interview residents for a living history project – learn from people who lived through wars, the Civil Rights era, and revolutions in technology. You affirm a person's value by listening to their stories.



Compassion Coalition

- Honor the memory of a beloved grandparent or elderly relative by volunteering for a ministry that serves older persons, especially those who have no family to look after them.
- For information about the network of social services available in Knox County for seniors 60 or older, call the Senior Citizens Information & Referral Service (865-546-6262).
- Encourage older people to remain engaged in meaningful activities that help combat three of the plagues of aging: loneliness, helplessness, and boredom. Help older persons to connect with volunteer opportunities that draw on their lifetime of skills and experiences.
- If you are an older person: Know that regardless of income or physical ability, seniors can and do make a difference in Knoxville! (Check out the opportunities available through the Senior Corps, 865-524-2786.) For example, one valuable contribution might be to pray through the prayer lists in this Guidebook.

Make a Difference Through Your Church

- A Helping Hands Resource Library is available to churches from the Alzheimer's Association (865-544-6288) free of charge and contains books, pamphlets, and reference materials to assist individuals and their loved ones who are affected by Alzheimer's disease.
- "Adopt" a low-income elderly household (for example, through Project LIVE, 865-524-2786) and ensure that their basic needs are met by providing transportation, groceries, help with errands, and financial assistance with utilities or medications as needed, as well as companionship and spiritual nurture.
- Many elderly residents of Knoxville rely on food aid to stretch limited budgets. Fight hunger among older persons by organizing food drives for food pantries and meal programs.
- Members of the church with skills in carpentry and construction can serve together to provide minor home repairs and accessibility alterations, such as building wheelchair ramps or installing grab bars in bathrooms.
- Collaborate with a medical clinic or the Office on Aging (524-2786) to offer health services to seniors, such as health screenings and guidance on health care options.
- Provide counseling and mental health services targeted to elderly residents. Become educated about signs of depression and elder abuse in the congregation and community (contact the Elder Abuse Program, 865-637-8000).
- Offer seniors opportunities to become active in meaningful volunteer service, which enhances the well-being of the volunteer as well as the community.
- Host a support group for adult children struggling with care for aging parents, especially caregivers of elders with dementia.
- Become a partner to a nursing home or assisted living facility (especially one that is



Compassion Coalition

home to many residents who are low-income or isolated from family). Ask about ways your church can be a blessing to residents and staff. Ideas include:

- Help new residents with relocation (such as moving personal items and helping find pets a new home)
- Visit regularly with residents
- Support fundraising events
- Improve facilities with repair or beautification projects
- Provide large-print books and supplies for recreation activities
- Lead worship services and special music
- Offer prayer and spiritual counseling for residents and staff.

See the Compassion Coalition website (www.compassioncoalition.org) for a list of facilities.

Make a Difference as a Volunteer

Connect with the following organizations that serve the elderly:

Affordable Medical Options for Seniors Program (CAC Office on Aging): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>

An information and advising service that helps people who are over the age of 55 utilize all available resources to reduce the cost of their prescription medicines.

- Complete intake questionnaires by talking to consumers in person or on the phone.
- Research various programs online and help consumers fill out applications for free medicine; follow up with former clients to see if they need help.
- Distribute program information to doctors' offices, pharmacies, and hospitals.
- Serve on the AMOS advisory committee.

Alzheimer's Association, Eastern Tennessee Chapter: 865-544-6288, <http://www.tnalz.org>

Provides education, support, advocacy, and training to individuals, family members, and professionals dealing with Alzheimer's disease.

- Help with general office duties such as data entry and mailings.
- Assist with special events such as community health fairs, Memory Walks or Golf Tournaments.
- Spend time with seniors at one of the Association's adult day services in the community.

Computers for Homebound and Isolated Persons (CAC Office on Aging/Project LIVE): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>

Provides donated computers for homebound and isolated persons.

- Install computers for clients; provide troubleshooting when recipients need help with the equipment.

Ways to Connect: An excerpt from Compassion Coalition's 3rd edition of the Salt & Light Guidebook



Compassion Coalition

- Teach clients how to use email and the Internet to connect with people and resources.

Grandparents as Parents (CAC Office on Aging): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>

Provides information and support for grandparents who are raising grandchildren without a parent in the home.

- Help grandparents with respite care, house cleaning or errands.
- Become a volunteer advocate to accompany grandparents during Juvenile Court custody hearings and school meetings.
- Families: Collect children's books to donate, or raise funds for school supplies and sports uniforms for children.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (ETHRA): 865-691-2551, <http://www.ethra.org>

Protects the rights of residents of long-term care facilities (nursing homes, assisted care living facilities, and residential homes for the aged). Ensures that each resident receives the highest quality of care and life.

- Attend 12 hours of training to become certified as an ombudsman and be assigned to a particular long-term care setting to:
 - Inform residents and their families of the role of the ombudsman to act on behalf of the residents.
 - Visit the long-term care facility for one hour per week to learn about problems the residents may be encountering.
 - Advocate for changes that would increase the quality of care.
 - Refer any allegations of neglect or abuse to ETHRA for investigation.

Mobile Meals Program (CAC Office on Aging): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>

Delivers hot meals weekdays to Knox County residents age 60 or older, who cannot cook for themselves and have no one to prepare meals for them. There is a low charge per meal.

- Pick up a route one day a week and deliver meals during your lunch hour.
- Help the Mobile Meals staff pack emergency meals when inclement weather is expected.
- Families: Deliver Mobile Meals and visit with people who live alone.

The O' Connor Senior Center (CAC Office on Aging): 865-523-1135,

<http://www.knoxcac.org>

A community focal point where seniors 55 and over can gather to socialize, participate in programs that will improve and enrich their quality of life, and broaden their involvement with the community.

- Teach a computer class or lead an activity for senior adults.
- Help with health screenings, holiday activities or other special events.



Compassion Coalition

- Families: Prepare and serve food.

One Call Club for Seniors (CAC Office on Aging): 865-524-2786,
<http://www.knoxcac.org>

A membership program that allows people over age 60 to make one phone call to access reliable, reasonably priced services they need to maintain their health and remain in their homes – from yard maintenance to transportation to health care. Sliding scale fees available.

- Work in the office: answer phones, call members about birthdays or other daily reminders, prepare mailings, and conduct member/service evaluations.
- Verify service provider references and recruit new vendors.
- Assist with set-up for “Lunch and Learns” or other presentations.

Passport (Covenant Health): 865-541-4500, <http://www.covenantpassport.com>

A membership program that helps people over age 50 enjoy better health and get more out of life in a variety of ways. The website provides tips on healthy lifestyles, answers to health questions, and physician referrals.

- Assist at special events such as health screenings, lectures, and seminars.
- Help register members for vaccination clinics.

Placing Animals With Seniors (CAC Office on Aging/Project LIVE): 865-546-6262,
<http://www.knoxcac.org>

Places adoptable animals from the Young-Williams Animal Center with low-income seniors over age 60 who live in pet-friendly environments in Knox County. Project LIVE works with the seniors to see that a suitable match is made.

- Families: Take eligible seniors to the animal center to pick out a pet.
- Families: Visit elderly persons who have adopted a pet through PAWS.
- Families: Provide transportation to vet appointments.

Project LIVE: Living Independently through Volunteer Efforts (CAC Office on Aging): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>

Provides social worker assessment and case management, and recruits volunteers to provide services that enable seniors to stay in their own homes.

- Accompany older persons to medical appointments, on errands, or even to a nursing home to visit their spouse.
- Do light housekeeping, grocery shopping, yard care and other tasks as needed.
- Make limited minor home repairs and safety modifications around the house.
- Provide respite care for caregivers of seniors through the Family Caregiver Program.
- Families: Ask permission to take your children along when you provide transportation or go on home visits--many older people would love the interaction



Compassion Coalition

with a whole family.

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (CAC Office on Aging/Senior Corps): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>

RSVP provides people over 55 with information, training, benefits and placement with organizations that offer volunteer opportunities in Knox County. Assists nonprofit agencies with volunteer recruitment.

- Do you want to volunteer in the field of health care or technology? Serve seniors or children? Work in a museum or in a garden? Use your lifetime skills or try something new? If you are 55 or older, RSVP has a placement that's just right for you!
- All positions receive training and insurance for volunteering.

Senior Citizens Home Assistance Service, Inc.: 865-523-2920, <http://www.schas.org>

Provides companionship along with meal preparation, grocery shopping, light housekeeping and other services necessary for clients to remain in their own homes. Sliding scale fees are available for low-income seniors.

- Registered Nurses are needed to evaluate caregivers that perform personal care services.
- Provide cleaning supplies for clients who cannot afford them
- Families: Plant flowers, help with yard work, or run errands for those who need help but cannot afford to hire someone.
- Families: Visit with clients who do not have relatives in the area and cannot get out to socialize.

Senior Companion Program (CAC Office on Aging/Senior Corps): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>

Volunteers age 60 or older spend 20 hours a week providing friendly companionship or serving adult homebound clients with special needs (training is provided). In exchange, participants who meet income guidelines receive a stipend, travel reimbursement, a daily meal, insurance, and an annual physical.

- Make a new friend!
- Help with light cleaning and minor home repairs.
- Provide respite for caregivers who need a break.
- Donate medical equipment such as walkers, canes, and bath benches to elders who cannot afford them.

W.I.S.E. - Wellness in Seniors Education (Wesley House Community Center): 865-524-5494, <http://www.wesleyhouse.com>

Focuses on the physical and mental well-being of senior citizens in the Mechanicsville, Lonsdale, and Beaumont areas. Participants are transported from their homes each Friday to enjoy a meal and social time.

Ways to Connect: An excerpt from Compassion Coalition's 3rd edition of the Salt & Light Guidebook



Compassion Coalition

- Assist with the preparation of a hot, nutritious meal each Friday.
- Spend quality time visiting with participants or lead organized recreational activities.
- Facilitate an informative presentation for the members (with prior approval from Wesley House staff).
- LPNs are needed to call or visit members during the week to check on their physical well being.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Following is a list of additional organizations that work with and care for the elderly. Many of these organizations welcome volunteers. Ask about opportunities to:

- Offer companionship and assistance to elderly clients.
- Join seniors in recreational or educational activities.
- Provide transportation to appointments and errands.
- Work on improvements to facilities that serve seniors.
- Help with office work such as mailings and answering phones.
- Help with special events and fundraisers.
- Collect needed supplies.

Candleridge Plaza (Volunteers for America): 865-938-3394

An affordable, permanent housing program with planned activities, on-site amenities, shopping transportation, a Service Coordinator, and 24/7 emergency on-call staff.

Corryton Senior Center (Knox County Community Services Department): 865-688-0510, <http://www.knoxcounty.org/seniors/corryton.php>

Promotes recreational, social, and educational opportunities for active adults 50 and over, including exercise facilities, a computer center, an arts and crafts room and other amenities.

Elder Abuse Program (Child & Family Tennessee): 865-637-8000, <http://www.child-family.org>

A program through the Family Crisis Center for clients 65 and older who are being abused or neglected. Assists in finding safe housing or removing an abusive caregiver, and partners with Adult Protective Services to maximize resources and assure long-term safety. Clients are offered safety planning, transportation, a support group, accompaniment to court, medical care, and legal referrals.

Foster Grandparent Program (CAC Office on Aging/Senior Corps): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>

Volunteers 60 years or older serve 20 hours weekly in programs for children in the Knox County area. In exchange, participants can receive a stipend, travel reimbursement, a



Compassion Coalition

daily meal, insurance, and training.

Gift of Sight, Hearing & Dentures (CAC Office on Aging/SCIRS): 865-546-6262,
<http://www.knoxcac.org>

Provides for the purchase of eyeglasses, hearing aids, and dentures through an interest-free revolving loan fund to eligible Knox County seniors.

Halls Senior Center (Knox County Community Services Department): 865-922-0416,
<http://www.knoxcounty.org/seniors/halls.php>

Promotes recreational, social, and educational opportunities for active adults 50 and over, including exercise facilities, a computer center, an arts and crafts room and other amenities and activities.

Legal Aid of East Tennessee: 865-637-0484, <http://www.laet.org>

Ensures equal justice for elderly, abused, and low-income people by providing a broad scope of legal assistance and advocacy.

Office on Aging (Community Action Committee): 865-524-2786,
<http://www.knoxcac.org>

A public non-profit agency that supports the well-being of seniors. Assesses needs, provides information about services and programs, and develops new resources as needed. Serves all seniors but concentrates on women, minorities, and all who are poor or in frail health.

Relative Caregiver Program (Foothills Care): 865-483-9111

Supports children who are not living with their parents to keep them from entering state custody. Offers several services to relative caregivers including information and referral, caregiver support groups, activity/support groups for children and teens, educational workshops, respite & recreation, family advocacy, outreach, and start-up or emergency financial assistance.

Samaritan Place (Catholic Charities): 865-684-1880, <http://www.samaritanplace.com>

Meets the needs of older adults in housing crises through emergency shelters, transitional housing, and supported housing. Also provides overnight respite and adult day care for families who need caregiver support.

Senior Citizens Information & Referral Service (CAC Office on Aging): 865-546-6262,
<http://www.knoxcac.org>

Helps people 60 years and older navigate the network of services in Knox County. Provides information and referrals related to health, employment, housing, transportation, legal services, recreation, support groups, emergency assistance, in-home



Compassion Coalition

services, and minor home repair.

Senior Corps (CAC Office on Aging): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>
Seniors contribute their skills, knowledge, and experience to make a meaningful difference for individuals, nonprofits, and other community organizations in our area. Knox County seniors join with thousands of seniors nationwide who serve others through their local Foster Grandparents, Retired Senior Volunteers and Senior Companion Programs.

Senior Employment Services (CAC Office on Aging): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>
Helps seniors re-enter the job force, with a referral from Workforce Connections (865-544-5200). Offers free computer classes, customer service training, and workshops on interviewing skills and resume writing.

Seniors Freedom (Knoxville Area Transit): 865-637-3000, <http://www.ci.knoxville.tn.us>
A partnership between Knox County government and KAT that allows anyone 65 or older to ride for free by presenting their Medicare card and an ID upon boarding a bus. Seniors can call KAT for help planning bus routes.

Senior Nutrition Program (CAC Office on Aging): 865-524-2786, <http://www.knoxcac.org>
Provides midday meals Monday-Friday for seniors at community congregate locations. No income restrictions and no charge for meals, but contributions are requested. Night and weekend meals may also be purchased.

Shannondale Friends Program: 865-690-3411 x 857
Ministers to the residents of Shannondale by praying regularly for them, making weekly contact through visitation or greeting cards, or organizing a musical group.

The Strang Center (Knox County Community Services Department): 865-670-6693, <http://www.knoxcounty.org/seniors/strang.php>
Promotes recreational, social, and educational opportunities for active adults 50 and over. Offers a wide variety of clubs and classes such as computers, foreign language, arts, music, cards, and fitness. Call if you would like to receive a monthly newsletter that features current activities.

South Knoxville Senior Center (Knox County Community Services Department): 865-573-5843, http://www.knoxcounty.org/seniors/south_knox.php
Promotes recreational, social, and educational opportunities for active adults 50 and over, with a library, computer room, swimming pool, and other amenities and activities.

Ways to Connect: An excerpt from Compassion Coalition's 3rd edition of the Salt & Light Guidebook



Compassion Coalition

How to Learn More

- Pick up the most recent edition of the *Senior Service Directory*, a free comprehensive resource guide published by the Knoxville-Knox County Office on Aging (865-524-2786).
- Invite a representative from the East Tennessee Human Resource Agency (ETHRA, 865-691-2551) to speak to your group on elder law topics.
- The Alzheimer's Association (865-544-6288) provides informational classes four times a year.
- Meetings of the Knoxville-Knox County Council on Aging, held 8-9 times a year, are open to the public at the John T. O'Connor Center. Call the Office on Aging (865-524-2786) for information.
- The Office on Aging (865-524-2786) features an annual day-long seminar called *Aging: A Family Affair*.
- The Senior Citizens Information & Referral Service (865-546-6262) is available to set up a table at a fair or share information about the program with groups.