



## Senior Services Plus: Taking care of those who first cared for us

In 1973, a group of Alton, Illinois, residents witnessed firsthand the struggles of their friends and neighbors facing food insecurity. Motivated by a deep sense of community, they took action, founding Senior Services Plus, Inc. (SSP). With the support of Hattie Harrington, they applied for grants from the Illinois Department on Aging to fund both recreational services and nutritious meals for older adults. Their hard work paid off when they served their first meals in March 1974, marking the beginning of a legacy that continues to benefit thousands of older adults across southern Illinois.

SSP's mission is Providing Resources and Opportunities to Individuals as they Age, with a vision of Everyone aging Successfully. Over the decades, this principle has driven the organization's growth, expanding its services to meet the evolving needs of older adults. Today, Senior Services Plus offers 14 programs across eight counties in southern Illinois, reaching thousands of individuals. By relying on grants and donations, SSP is able to offer many of its programs free of charge, ensuring access to essential services, regardless of financial situation.

As the Baby Boomer generation ages, the demand for such services is greater than ever. SSP recognizes the challenges of a growing, aging population and remains committed to diversifying funding sources while filling gaps in services for older adults. By collaborating with other nonprofits, SSP maximizes its impact.

One of SSP's most significant and long-standing programs is Meals on Wheels, which serves older adults across Madison

and St. Clair counties. The program delivered over 270,000 meals annually to a weekly average of 1,500 clients in fiscal 2023. There are no income requirements to receive meals, and while a suggested donation of \$4 per meal is appreciated, no one is ever turned away due to inability to pay. For many, these meals provide not only nourishment but also a connection to the outside world.

In addition to Meals on Wheels, SSP's Congregate Dining program offers a social and nutritional lifeline for older adults. At its primary site in Alton and a satellite site in Granite City, older adults come together for hot meals in a social setting. Like the Meals on Wheels program, Congregate Dining is available to adults aged 60 and over, with a suggested donation of \$4 per meal. However, no one is turned away if they cannot contribute financially.

SSP's dedication to meeting the needs of older adults goes far beyond meals. The organization offers Non-Medical In-Home Care, employing approximately 400 staff members to assist with daily tasks like cooking, cleaning, errands, and personal care. This program helps seniors remain in their homes longer, preserving their independence.

Additionally, Transportation services, which grew by 50% in 2024, provide reliable rides for seniors to appointments, grocery stores, and other essential destinations. Another vital service,

SSP also helps older adults navigate complex applications such as Medicare enrollment and public assistance programs through the Information and Assistance.

These services are available at no cost, ensuring that seniors can access the benefits they need.

SSP takes a holistic approach to senior well-being through its Wellness Center, which offers fitness classes, equipment, and training tailored to older adults. The facility, expanded in 2019 through a successful capital campaign, helps seniors maintain physical health and independence.

Another important program is Nutrition Counseling, where a Registered Dietitian provides personalized dietary advice to Meals on Wheels clients. This helps seniors manage chronic conditions and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

What truly sets Senior Services Plus apart is its commitment to the community. The Foster Grandparent Program, an intergenerational initiative, recruits older adults to assist children with reading and academic support. The Community Resources program connects volunteers with seniors for small home projects and technology assistance—services that keep older adults safe and engaged in their homes.

Under the leadership of CEO Theresa Collins, Senior Services Plus has continued to grow. Collins, a dedicated leader in the agency for over 15 years, has worked her way up to becoming the organization's CEO. She is a passionate advocate for older adults and plays a key role in shaping SSP's future.

As SSP looks ahead, it remains focused on its mission to help older adults age successfully. With an array of vital programs and services, the organization is a beacon of hope and support for thousands of seniors. By continuing to



SSP staff Teyonce and Sarah pack the portable freezer that takes meals to SSP's Belleville Meals on Wheels distribution site that will be delivered to St. Clair County residents. (Courtesy Senior Services Plus)

innovate, collaborate, and advocate, SSP is ensuring that every older adult has the opportunity to live a healthy, independent, and fulfilling life.

In a time when the aging population continues to grow, the work of organizations like Senior Services Plus has never been more important. Through compassion, dedication, and a tireless commitment to service, SSP is making a lasting difference in the lives of older adults, one meal, one ride, and one connection at a time. To learn more, visit [www.seniorservicesplus.org](http://www.seniorservicesplus.org).

## Madison County Fallen Officers Memorial Fund seeks donations, memorial bricks purchases

Members of the Madison County Sheriff's Office, with the support of the Police Benevolent and Protective Association Unit 118, have launched a campaign to create a new memorial after recently recognizing a growing need to update the currently existing one.

"After recent in the line of duty deaths, we recognized a growing need to update the memorial," an official announcement said. "The current memorial resembles a tombstone and lacks sufficient space to add more names. Members of the Madison County Fallen Officers Memorial Fund, a 501(c)3 organization, believe a new memorial is needed not only to truly honor our fallen brothers and sisters, but also serve as a reminder to the community and officers county wide of the dangers they face."

The Madison County Fallen Officers Memorial Fund was created to raise funds through donations and the selling of memorial bricks to achieve a brand-new memorial. With approximately 27 names from agencies all over Madison County, organizers are hoping citizens and corporations will assist in building an



An artist rendering of an updated Fallen Officers Memorial at the Madison County Sheriff's Office. (Courtesy of the Madison County Fallen Officers Memorial Fund)

everlasting memorial.

Donors are asked to the website [www.madisoncountymemorialfund.org](http://www.madisoncountymemorialfund.org) to make a financial contribution or to purchase a memorial brick.

Memorial bricks purchased will be added to the existing memorial site and will further serve as a reminder how the community came together to show their support to law enforcement and to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

<https://www.ibjonline.com/2024/10/30/madison-county-fallen-officers-memorial-fund-seeks-donations-memorial-bricks-purchases/>