



THE BUFFALO NEWS

Another Voice: Elder care solutions exist in our community

By Another Voice (<https://buffalonews.com/author/another-voice/>) | Published July 7, 2018

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By Maria Scrivani

A recent “My View” columnist decried the onslaught of helpless elderly people in our society, bemoaning the lack of solutions to all the problems attendant upon this stage of life.

He makes a compelling argument about a dearth of resources available to assist our growing aging population. The anecdotes he relates are disturbing, but hope is on the horizon. In fact, there are solutions available in Buffalo right here, right now.

One story shared is of a retired neighbor, in mental decline, demanding entrance to the wrong house on the block. The author sees “very old, helpless-appearing people” in wheelchairs and scooters at the mall. How will they stay safe at home? Who is taking them to doctors’ appointments? What about getting groceries? How can their boredom and loneliness be assuaged? Good questions, all. And happily, there are some answers.

Canopy of Neighbors, a membership and volunteer organization dedicated to helping people age well and independently, has been located at 805 Delaware Ave. since 2011. In response to an ever-expanding population of folks over age 62 who want to remain active and contributing citizens, while, ideally, staying in their own homes, Canopy is growing and going strong.

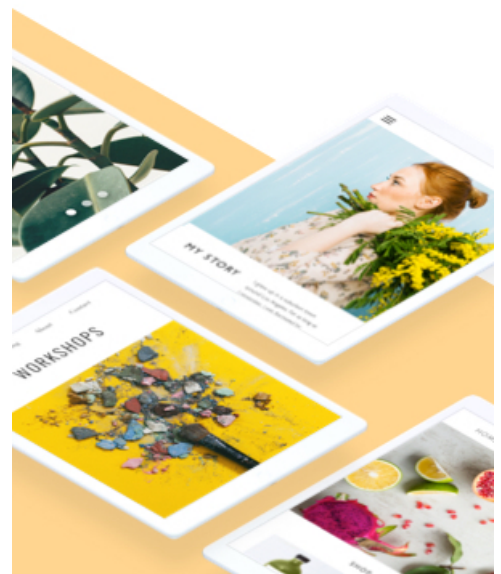
The agency is part of the “Village” network of aging-in-place communities, founded in Beacon Hill, Mass., in 2002, a nationwide response to the advancing aging population in this country. Its goal is to provide a grassroots, sustainable approach to supplying members with the human service supports they need to age in place.



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Perhaps you don't drive and need help getting to doctors' appointments. Maybe you'd love to go to a theater performance or a concert, but you use a walker and it's not easy to get out and about. Canopy has a cadre of volunteer drivers to assist.



Maybe you get around fine, but would just like to meet some friends for coffee, or discuss current events, or attend a session on mindfulness. We have those options, too, on a calendar filled with choices — places to go, things to do, and people to do them with. We can help you find a cat-sitter, plant-waterer or someone to hang pictures, help you declutter, and, perhaps most important of all, remedy social isolation.

It's called Canopy of Neighbors because the founders, a trio of Buffalo women — geriatric social worker Toby Laping, elder law attorney Gayle Eagan and health insurance marketer Liz Schreier — envisioned a return to a front-porch concept of life, where neighbors looked out for each other. It's not the only answer to this societal crisis, but it is a very good start.

If this aging-in-place concept appeals to you, please join us. Adding members and volunteers to our growing ranks is one way to address the problems — and participate in the many joys — of growing older right here in our own community.

Maria Scrivani is a Buffalo resident who sits on the board of Canopy of Neighbors, a not-for-profit agency that supports aging well and aging independently.

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