

# Community Impact 2019

At the Council on Aging of Central Oregon, our mission is to advocate for, empower, and guide older adults and their loved ones to live with independence and well-being. Our vision is to create a world that grows older better, together in all decades of later life.

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Our work would not be possible without the contribution of time and money of nearly 1,000 volunteers and donors in Central Oregon. Please contact us to learn more about the many meaningful ways you can help support the older adult communities we serve.



# Meaning, compassion, and support for older adults over four decades of later life



Susan M. Rotella, Executive Director

As a young girl growing up, I eagerly anticipated adulthood and all its milestones: a first driver's license; my 18th birthday and the privilege of voting; my 21st birthday, which was closely followed by college graduation and my first car, job, and apartment. It was exciting to come of age—and agency—in a world that supported my education, growth, and meaningful contribution to society.

Today, at 62 and as the executive director for the Council on Aging, my thinking is necessarily informed not by the excitement of early adulthood but by the challenges longer life expectancy pose for me and Central Oregon's community of older adults and their unpaid caregivers. They are daunting.

In 1965, when Medicare and Medicaid were enacted, life expectancy in America was 66.8 years for men and 73.7 years for women. Planning for retirement involved relatively short horizons of two to nine years.

Today, advances in medical treatment, technology, and healthier lifestyles have enabled average life expectancy to extend well into the mid-80s. Many of us can expect to go beyond that.

But since 1965, pension plans have diminished, and recessions and increasing costs of medical care have caused major financial disruption. Public policy, infrastructure, and programming have also not evolved with our longer life spans. All of these factors make our work of advocating for, empowering, and guiding older adults and their loved ones to live with independence and well-being all the more vital.

Across Central Oregon, Council on Aging programs and services enable thousands of clients to live safely and independently at home with connection, dignity, and well-being. Our offerings include:

- Meals on Wheels
- Free community lunches

## Life Expectancy at Age 65

	1965	1975	2020
	Medicare Enacted	Older Americans Act Enacted	Council on Aging's 45th Birthday
MEN	66.8*	68.8*	84**
WOMEN	73.7*	76.6*	86**

\* UC Berkeley      \*\* Social Security Administration

- Social events that reduce isolation
- Information and referral support
- Medicare guidance
- Legal assistance
- Case management
- Caregiver support and relief
- Volunteer opportunities

We are proud of what we've been able to accomplish. At the same time, there is much to do.

With almost a quarter of Central Oregon's population now over the age of 65 and the wave of Baby Boomers still cresting, we are increasingly hard-pressed to meet demand. For the first time in many years, our Meals on Wheels, home-care, and caregiver respite clients are being waitlisted. And challenges of affordable and mobility-appropriate housing, ageism-free employment, door-to-door transportation, and access to resources in rural areas seem all but intractable.

That's why, even as I plan for my older-age milestones—signing up for Medicare, receiving my first social security check—I am working with community leaders, local non-profits, and government officials to broaden conversations, increase engagement, and create new policies, programs, and budgets that address the challenges of aging in our communities.

There's a lot of work to be done to ensure all of us in Central Oregon have the chance to grow older better, together. Thank you for your support on this important journey.

Sincerely,

# Serving Seniors

61

By his own admission, client Rick Allbee is “too old for a roommate and too young for a group home.” The recently retired academic advisor is intelligent, independent, and loves to crack a joke. A severe neurological disorder forced him into an early retirement and consumed his pension. To save on rent, Rick bought an RV as a home; however, as the winter weather approached, his RV began to break down. The furnace went out. The plumbing backed up. The electrical wiring eroded.



**Rick Albee**  
Home repair grant recipient

After calling the national 211 helpline center, Rick was provided with a list of local resources that could potentially offer help, which is how he found the Council on Aging. Rick spoke with Client Services Manager Cassie Regimbal, who was able to make use of a home-repair grant that would replace the broken systems and extend the life of Rick’s RV—and his independence.

**3 HOME REPAIRS RECIPIENTS**  
> Deschutes 3

Betty, a former teacher and lifelong go-getter, is losing her sight and hearing. As a result, a task as seemingly simple as completing a form is foreboding and near-impossible, especially as she lives alone.

“I needed more help coping with this world,” says Betty. Five years ago she reached out to the Council on Aging and met Case Manager Christine Foy, who has connected Betty with local resources and supports. Recently, Christine helped Betty complete the paperwork to apply for a free hearing aid through a grant from Miracle Ear. “I’m so appreciative that Christine has been able to help me, because I didn’t really know what to do. She’s a friend as well as a provider. It’s just wonderful.”

**56 HEALTH & MEDICAL DEVICE RECIPIENTS**  
> Crook 4  
> Deschutes 44  
> Jefferson 7

**Betty Harms**  
Device recipient



89

72



**Gail Knotek**  
Former member of the caregiver support group

When Gail’s husband Jim had a stroke and his health declined, the previously shared duties of running their home fell solely on her shoulders. At first, she managed well. But soon the burden was overwhelming.

Gail found help in a Council on Aging caregiver support group. “The very first thing I realized,” she says, “is that I wasn’t alone.” Not only did the group provide a sense of shared experience, but it also meant practical advice from others about everything from how to deal with incontinence and laundry, to what to do for self-care breaks. “It’s like this weight comes off your shoulders,” Gail says. “There are so many people out there who are caregiving and have no idea that there is help and that they don’t have to feel so alone.”

**60 RESPITE GRANT RECIPIENTS**  
> Crook 19  
> Deschutes 40  
> Jefferson 1

**3,303 SENIOR DINERS**  
> Crook 943  
> Deschutes 1,948  
> Jefferson 412

**Gail & Paul Kirk**  
Senior lunch diners



92

World War II veteran Paul, 92, met wife Gail, 82, while he was playing in a band that performed at the Bend Senior Center. They were married there in 2016, between the senior lunch and the afternoon dance—with 200 people in attendance and lots of dancing.

Now they meet old friends each week at the Council on Aging’s senior lunch. Paul has dementia, which has progressed dramatically over the past year-and-a-half. And although he is unable to speak much, he does recognize faces and loves to smile. Gail, his sole caregiver, enjoys the chance to get out of the house that the Thursday lunches provide. “I’m pretty well tied-down,” she says. “Paul relies on me quite a bit. But I’ve noticed that when we come here, he becomes more independent.” He also “gets stubborn,” she says, such as the time it took four friends to convince Paul to sit down to eat his meal. “Some days are better than others,” she laughs.

# Council on Aging Services Throughout the Arc of Aging

Impacts and Benefits of Council on Aging Programming	Programs & Services	Age Group			
		60	70	80	90
Finding purpose and meaning in supporting Central Oregon's older adult communities with later life volunteer opportunities	Meals on Wheels drivers	X	X	X	
	Congregate dining prep & cooks	X	X	X	
	Medicare counselors	X	X		
	Council on Aging admins	X	X		
	Advisory Council members	X	X	X	
	Board of Directors members	X	X		
Reducing isolation and improving well-being and health outcomes	Social events	X	X	X	X
	Senior lunches	X	X	X	X
Underpinning financial stability with Medicare Counseling	1st-time enrollment support & annual reviews through Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA)	X	X	X	X
Educating concerned adult children and unpaid caregivers; reducing burnout, decreasing loneliness	Information & Referral services	X	X	X	X
	Caregiver support groups	X	X		
	Respite grants	X	X	X	
Providing aging support so those 60+ can remain living safely at home with dignity and well-being	Advocacy & case management	X	X	X	X
	Meals on Wheels deliveries	X	X	X	X
	Nutrition support for pets	X	X	X	X
	Home & personal care	X	X	X	X
	Health & medical devices	X	X	X	X
	Home repairs	X	X	X	X
	Options counseling	X	X	X	X
	Transportation subsidies	X	X	X	X

Because later life now extends well past “retirement” age, the Council on Aging offers a range of programs and services that support older adults throughout their 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s.

Last year, Council on Aging staff and volunteers delivered a range of high-impact services that brought peace of mind and support across Central Oregon, including:

## Nutrition

- 82,085 Meals on Wheels delivered
- 39,764 senior lunches served
- 1,552 hours of nutrition education

## Information & Referral

- 12,619 general web inquiries and calls answered
- 32,636 hours of Medicare counseling
- 31,648 copies of Directions resource guide distributed

## Outreach

- 3,809 adults met at 90 events

## Volunteers

- 116 new volunteers
- 17,153 hours of volunteer support

## Caregiving Services & Support

- 10,106 hours of home/personal care
- 1,941 hours of paid respite support
- 1,993 hours of case management services

## Health & Fitness Classes

- 8,132 hours of physical fitness and fall prevention education
- 329 hours of Chronic Disease prevention

## Transportation

- 5,983 subsidized rides for 311 seniors

