

YOUR IMPACT in the

IONA COMMUNITY

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The Year Ahead

A message from Iona Senior Services' CEO, Joon Bang

Greetings!

We began the new year at Iona Senior Services by hosting our first Memory Café of 2024. The evening provides only a handful of times during the year for people with memory loss and their loved ones to unwind together in a judgement-free, fun, and supportive environment with good food, live entertainment, and a welcoming community. On that night, one of our family caregivers requested the song *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes*. He and his wife began slowly dancing to the lyrics, "They asked me how I knew my true love was true oh-oh-oh-oh-oh, I, of course replied, 'Something here inside cannot be denied.'"

That special moment reminds us today that while there are undoubtedly complex challenges caused by aging with and caring for people with memory loss, love gives us the power to transcend our obstacles.

As CEO, I often reflect on the deep sense of privilege that comes with the work of advancing Iona's mission, which contributes to the dignity of our aging community. I've felt a special connection to our work during the past two years as I have been able to support my mother as she cared for her mother with aphasia, mild dementia, and ultimately, my grandmother's end-of-life journey, and the grief process that followed.

Thousands of unique and important experiences are happening in our community every day. **At Iona, we remain focused on the vision of a society where everyone's basic needs throughout their aging journey are met and those who are vulnerable and living in the margins of society have the support they need.**

As the new senior service Lead Agency in Ward 2 and



Connie Zara and Elise Gillette enjoying Iona's first Memory Café of 2024.

continuing Lead Agency in Ward 3 designated by the D.C. Department on Aging and Community Living (DACL), we've expanded our service delivery model first piloted at the **Regency House** over a year ago to four additional low-income senior housing facilities in Ward 2. They represent a diverse community of over 500 older adults with an average annual income of less than \$15,000. We've incorporated community dining, resource navigation by licensed social workers, and added health and wellness programs to address their food insecurity and isolation. **Since the expansion of our programs in October 2023, Iona has served more than 12,000 meals in just three months to hundreds of food-insecure older adults;** and, to reflect the city's diverse aging population, we've also increased our citywide programs to meet the needs of low-income Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) older adults with language barriers. A tremendous amount of work has gone into the transition of our role as the Ward 2 Lead Agency, and I want to thank the DACL team and all of our staff for making the transition a success. I'm especially thankful for our Ward 2 team at our community dining sites, Oasis Senior Center, and AAPI

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New Iona Leadership Committed to Older Adults

In 2023, Iona Senior Services was named Lead Agency for Ward 2 and Ward 3 through the D.C. Department of Aging and Community Living's Lead Agency Competitive Grant program. Lead agencies are the primary service providers for the community. The new designation of the Ward 2 Lead Agency has allowed us to further expand our reach across the District and implement our socialization and food programs at six new locations: **Asbury Dwelling Place, Asian Pacific Islander Senior Center, Claridge Towers, James Apartments, Oasis Senior Center, and St. Mary's Court.** We also onboarded 10 new team members to help support food-insecure older adults aging alone and older adults who are housing insecure.

In addition to new team members from our Ward 2 locations, we are also pleased to announce that Iona has hired Rinaldo Washington as Iona's Chief Operations Officer and Stephanie Hubbard as Iona's Chief Development Officer. Their experience and leadership will advance Iona's mission and ensure that Iona remains a reliable resource for our vulnerable older neighbors.



Rinaldo Washington
Iona's Chief
Operations Officer



Stephanie Hubbard
Iona's Chief
Development Officer



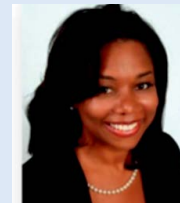
New Iona team members from our new Ward 2 locations.

New Members to Iona's Board of Directors

Iona Senior Services is excited to welcome our new board members, who will help us carry out our goal of meeting vulnerable older adults where they are to ensure their basic needs are met.



Ralph Bazilio
*CEO, Bazilio Cobb
Associates PC
Managing Partner, Watson
Rice LLP*



Stacy Burnette, Esq.
*Senior Director,
Government & Regulatory
Affairs, Comcast*



Dwane Jones, Ph.D.
*Dean, College of
Agriculture, Urban
Sustainability, and
Environmental Sciences
(CAUSES), University of
the District of Columbia*



Judith Kozlowski
*Elder Justice Consultant
Senior Fellow, Women's
Institute for a Secure
Retirement (WISER)*



Mary Frances McGuiness
*Marketing & Corporate
Communications
Consultant*



**Raymond K. Tu, M.D.,
M.S., F.A.C.R.**
Physician

To learn more about our new board members, visit www.iona.org.

Thank You for Helping Seniors in Wards 7 & 8

Supporters and community members who entrusted Iona Senior Services to open our Washington Home Center in D.C.'s Congress Heights neighborhood gathered in November to celebrate the unveiling of our Donor Recognition Wall. The wall represents Iona's heartfelt appreciation to the community for supporting the vision of Iona's Washington Home Center and making it a reality.

With the addition of our adult day center in Ward 8, older adults and family members from across the Anacostia River and throughout the District, have access to support, resources, and a safe space for engaging and nourishing daytime activities.

We want to give special thanks to The Washington Home—A Charitable Foundation for their generous support to not only launch the Center, but continue its growth and impact.

Demonstrating their continued support, The Washington Home recently announced a matching gift challenge. **All gifts restricted to Iona's Washington Home Center made**



Iona board members (from l-r) Sam Kilpatrick, Jeneen Ramos, Shawn Mcleod, Ruthann Bates, Paula Blair, and CEO Joon Bang in front of the Donor Recognition Wall, November 2023.

through November 29, 2024, will be matched up to \$225,000. Please consider donating at **www.iona.org/ways-to-give** or with the enclosed envelope.

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Senior Center, for hitting the ground running to ensure the people we serve receive the care they need.

An issue of deep concern for many of us is the rising population of older adults who are experiencing homelessness. Nearly 40% of the city's unhoused are our older neighbors. **According to the District's annual count of unhoused persons**, there are 383 unsheltered seniors living in the area, up from 118 counted in 2022. Three of the unhoused people counted last year were older than 90, while more than two-thirds were 70 or older. Iona's new Oasis Senior Center is the only program in the District that provides a safe space for unhoused older adults to find a warm nutritious meal during the day while receiving supportive services and a community

that welcomes them. The data is clear that many older adults in the District are in crisis, and we will work to develop the solutions to ensure no one ages without a place to call home.

With 11,000 people turning 65 every day, we're expected to see a significant increase in the number of people living with dementia. At Iona, we are building an ecosystem of care for people with memory loss through our adult day health centers, dementia navigation, and money management. We're expanding on Iona's legacy volunteer program, the Friendly Visitor, with the launch of the *Age Well/Live Well* volunteer and respite program. This initiative seeks to support older people living alone with cognitive and physical impairments and family caregivers of neurodiverse individuals aging with dementia by providing respite through

volunteers under the guidance of a clinical social worker.

To learn more about our new locations and programs, please visit: **www.iona.org**

Whether they are moments that remind us of the power of love or the simple acts of compassion and kindness we see in our community, I am thankful you are walking alongside us to advance Iona's mission to ensure all people have the opportunity to live and age well.

With gratitude,



Joon Bang

Joon Bang

CEO, Iona Senior Services



4125 Albemarle St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20016



Iona's Age Well/Live Well Volunteer Program

In October, Iona Senior Services was awarded \$196,000 through an 18-month federal grant from Community Care Corps to support the new *Age Well/Live Well* Volunteer Program. Funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), Community Care Corps is a partnership of three national nonprofit organizations: The Oasis Institute, Caregiver Action Network, and USAging. The program also received \$10,000 in Uber credits to help older adults and those who care for them with their transportation needs.

The *Age Well/Live Well* Volunteer Program is a new initiative that will provide companionship for older adults living alone, those aging with disabilities, and in-home respite support for family caregivers of aging individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD).

"We have already received a number of requests from older adults seeking social visits and assistance with household tasks



Iona participant and volunteer play chess.

and grocery shopping. Some clients are even looking for support with a favorite hobby, such as crocheting, or to learn new skills." says Tania Gembala Sechriest, Iona's Volunteer Program Manager.

For more information about the *Age Well/Live Well* Volunteer Program or to apply to become a volunteer, please contact Tania at volunteer@iona.org or (202) 895-9419.