

# Front & Center

*Sharing the Power of Healthy Aging*

*A publication of the Senior Center. Vol. 3, Issue 1*



Hansie Haier describes the Center as “a dynamic, ever-renewing place of delight and growth for those who have achieved ‘senior-ity.’”

## Hansie Haier shares how she is finally **Pursuing a Passion**

Years ago, when I was an avid learner of not quite fifty, I discovered the wide array of interesting programs offered at the Senior Center. I love to write, so “Writing for Pleasure” was at the top of my list—my number one impetus to join the Center just as soon as I was old enough! When I joined at fifty I was still working as a nurse, so I negotiated for time off on Fridays to attend the writing program.

### Thanks to you, Hansie and her friends find inspiration and growth at the Center.

It turned out to be every bit as much fun as I’d hoped. I loved exchanging stories with fellow writers of a certain maturity, passion, and humor. Together we even published a collection of writing and artwork, *Creature Features*, which was sold in various pet-related venues for the benefit of both the Senior Center and the Charlottesville Albemarle SPCA. You can’t beat the feeling that comes from doing something you love and contributing to worthy causes in the process.

After a couple of years, I went back to work full-time and could no longer come to the Center and “Writing for Pleasure.” But I never forgot it, not at all! When retirement finally came, I was more determined than ever to return to writing, and to rejoin the Center and my favorite program.

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Age-Friendly is for Everyone

## Introducing the Charlottesville Area Alliance

*A Critical Collaboration*

Three things you should know about age-friendly communities:

1. We have an aging nation, but few age-friendly communities.
2. Age-friendly is not about old people—it’s about all people.
3. Creating an age-friendly community doesn’t require setting up another program or agency, it means using existing resources in a better way.

Consider the sheer number of Boomers combined with increased lifespans and it’s clear that communities interested in self-preservation must figure out how to retain and attract seniors. Fortunately, planning for the needs of an aging population benefits all constituents, because age-friendly communities work for residents of every age. Many of the elements that make communities attractive to seniors also appeal to Millennials, now the largest living generation. By helping everyone stay healthy and involved, these well-designed, livable communities sustain economic growth.



Age-friendly is not a new concept. The World Health Organization (WHO) established its Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in 2006 to help cities prepare for rapid population aging and urbanization. To lead the way for an age-friendly community locally, the Senior Center, JABA, JAUNT, OLLI, the Alzheimer’s Association, Cville Village, Hospice of the Piedmont, and Westminster Canterbury joined together to form the Charlottesville Area Alliance.

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## The More You Know

# A Win for Awareness

The National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) recently honored the Senior Center with a Program of Excellence Award. "The BIG Think: Is Charlottesville Ready for the Age Shift," a collaborative project with JABA, was recognized as a creative initiative that successfully raised awareness of aging as a community-wide issue for a new audience of local leaders. The program generated media attention and helped build momentum that led to the Charlottesville Area Alliance, a new community collaboration working for an age-friendly community.

## Does **A Matter of Balance** really impact people's lives?

At the conclusion of the **8-week participant workshop** ...

- 91% had made changes to their environments to help prevent falls
- 100% felt more comfortable increasing their activity level
- 100% planned to continue exercising
- 100% would recommend the workshop
- 73% were more sure they could find a way to get up if they fell
- 64% felt sure they could protect themselves if they fell

To enroll in the next workshop or become a Coach, contact Jennifer Ayers at 434.974.7756 or [jennifer@seniorcenterinc.org](mailto:jennifer@seniorcenterinc.org).



You can help reduce the

# Fear of Falling

*Volunteers Needed for Coach Training!*

Among those 65 and older, more than one in four falls each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one out of five falls causes serious injury—2.8 million older people are treated in emergency rooms and more than 800,000 are hospitalized. Adjusted for inflation, the direct medical costs for fall injuries are \$31 billion annually.

The impact of falls is not just physical. Fear of falling keeps many older adults from staying active or leaving the house by themselves. As confidence and independence plummet, seniors can find themselves in a downward spiral. Loss of activity leads to loss of leg strength and mobility. This then leads to isolation and loneliness. The next step down is frailty and a reduced quality of life, which can lead to increased health care costs.

Fortunately, older adults don't have to let fear restrict their activities. *A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns about Falls* is an evidence-based program that emphasizes practical strategies to reduce fall risk factors and increase activity levels. A grant from the Genan Foundation has made it possible for the Senior Center to implement and offer this program. Even better, the grant enabled us to become a licensed Master Trainer site, so its impact reaches beyond the Center, expanding the program in the community and surrounding areas.

Senior Center Program Director Jennifer Ayers and personal trainer Martha Bachman traveled to Phoenix last February to earn A Matter of Balance Master Trainer Certification. Master trainers train volunteers, called coaches, who in turn teach participants—older adults concerned with falling who want to live more confidently and independently.

Jennifer and Martha held their first Coach Training in September 2016. Trainees included five staff members from JABA, four participants from the Richmond area, and one from Northern Virginia. The next step is for each of these newly-minted coaches to conduct two participant workshops within the year.

*A Matter of Balance* is a successful and sustainable way to address the costs—physical, mental, and financial—of falls. Volunteer leaders make it an affordable intervention that can be offered more often and in more places, reaching significantly more people. With the support of the Senior Center, these Coaches will help others change the way they age.



Tai chi, offered four times a week at the Center, is another way to improve balance.

*“Pursuing a Passion” continued from page 1*

Although my plan was to simply participate in the program, I was drawn into the role of facilitator by one of the Center’s super-volunteers, Al Falcone. Despite my initial reluctance, this has proved to be one of the best concessions of my life. Though it has its occasional challenges, overall it is truly a gift.

Today, “Writing for Pleasure” is a vibrant program bursting with diversity, talent, exuberance, laughter, love, and growth. We have the priceless opportunity to support each other as we share our works. And so, I am grateful for my fellow writers and for our Senior Center where so much is possible. Thank you.

—Hansie Haier, September 7, 2016

*“Introducing the Charlottesville Area Alliance” continued from page 1*



The award-winning “BIG Think” featured speaker Matt Thornhill.

The Alliance will use WHO’s indicators of age-friendliness to measure impact. These include buildings and outdoor spaces; transportation; housing; social participation; civic participation and employment; communication and information; and community support and health services.

It’s clear that government partners and a community-wide focus will be essential for success. The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital, and Albemarle County Administration have recently joined the effort to foster age-friendly policies and practices among government, nonprofits, businesses, and the public.

Through evaluation, planning, education, advocacy, and engagement, the Alliance hopes to create a community that fosters happier, healthier residents of all ages. New partners are welcome!

Charlottesville Area Alliance partners are advocates, leaders, contributors, and stakeholders in the community, serving or advising the senior population. For more information about the Alliance, please contact Peter Thompson at 434.974.4577 or [peter@seniorcenterinc.org](mailto:peter@seniorcenterinc.org).

“Winning communities in the future will be the ones that invest in creating great places to live, work, learn, and play at every age. Charlottesville Area Alliance is the right idea at the right time.”

—Matt Thornhill

Founder & President, Boomer Project & GenerationsMatter

You spoke. We listened.

## The Center at Belvedere: Route Revision

*As a community-owned organization, the Senior Center must be responsive, realistic, and relevant in the face of growing and changing needs.*

*With your support, marching down these three tracks simultaneously will get us to Belvedere as soon as possible.*

### **Track 1: Securing Capital Investments**

With your encouragement, we asked the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County to make a capital investment in The Center at Belvedere and the future of healthy aging. Our vision aligns with the City and County’s strategic priorities of healthy living, lifelong learning, economic development, and community connectivity. This project is a fiscally responsible opportunity for private/public partnership.

### **Track 2: Pursuing Partnerships**

For the next few months, the focus is on formalizing mission-based partnerships that may influence the building’s final design. UVA Health System and Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital are both interested in having a presence at the Center. We are also discussing how we might work with the new Brooks Family YMCA to maximize our available space together. *Seniors will remain the Center’s focus*, but The Center at Belvedere will also encourage multi-generational engagement which research shows benefits older adults.

### **Track 3: Phasing the Master Plan**

We have re-engaged Bushman Dreyfus Architects and senior center design experts LifeSpan Design to evaluate phasing construction. These professionals will team up with Center staff, participants, and Board members to update the design.

With hard work and your support, in the coming months these tracks should converge to form the best path forward to The Center at Belvedere. Let’s get this thing built—for those who need it today and for the thousands who will benefit from it in the future.

*If you have any comments or questions about The Center at Belvedere, please contact executive director Peter Thompson at 434.974.4577 or [peter@seniorcenterinc.org](mailto:peter@seniorcenterinc.org).*

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## Did you know?

The Senior Center is one of only 3 senior centers in the country (out of 12,000!) that are financially independent from their localities. Nationwide, citizens and localities consider senior centers core public services like education and safety.



## You're Invited to a "Destination" that Makes a Difference

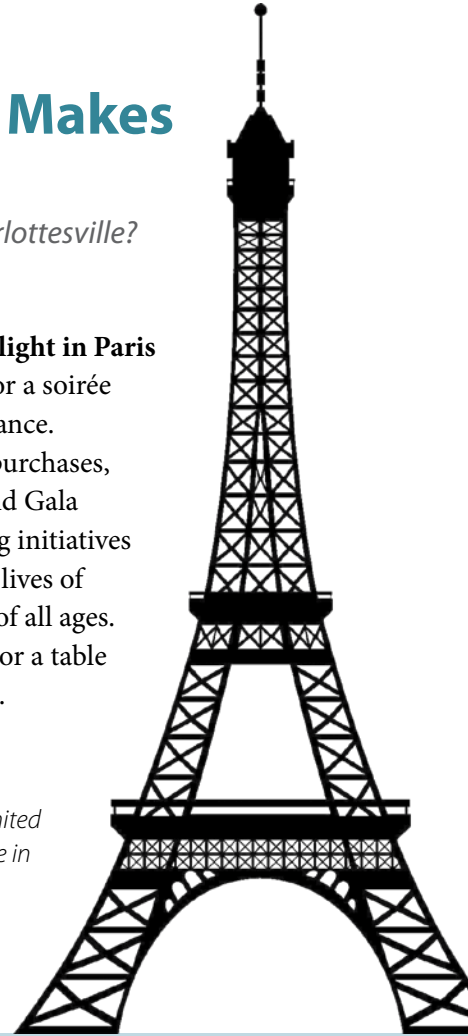
*Travel to France without leaving Charlottesville? Mais oui!*

Join us for the **Grand Gala 2017: Moonlight in Paris** on Saturday, February 25 and you'll savor a soirée infused with the feeling and flavor of France.

Each year your sponsorships, ticket purchases, program ads, and donations to the Grand Gala provide crucial support for healthy aging initiatives that make a difference, every day, in the lives of local seniors and community members of all ages.

Call now to learn how you can sponsor a table or place a program ad before it's too late. Contact Kirstin at (434) 974-7756 or at [kirstin@seniorcenterinc.org](mailto:kirstin@seniorcenterinc.org).

*Keep an eye out for the announcement of a limited number of individual tickets that will go on sale in late January!*



## Are you in the Robey Society?

*If you've included the Senior Center in your estate plans, the answer is Yes!*

Just like Frances Jean Robey. Although Jean died in 1989, she lives forever because of the gift she put in her will.

Jean left her entire estate to the Senior Center and it was the final piece needed to build our home at 1180 Pepsi Place. Touching thousands of lives each year, Jean's generosity helped transform aging in the Charlottesville-Albemarle region for over 25 years. Today, the Robey Society honors Jean's generosity and that of all the individuals who have included the Senior Center in their wills or other estate plans.

Already in the Robey Society? Thank you for making healthy aging your legacy! Not sure if your name is on the list? To check, contact Kirstin at (434) 974-7756 or at [kirstin@seniorcenterinc.org](mailto:kirstin@seniorcenterinc.org).

While we want to thank you properly and welcome you to the Robey Society, we will not publish your name if you wish to remain anonymous. Just let Kirstin know your preference. Thank you!

HEALTHY AGING  
never gets old 

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