



TRELLIS™

2022 Year in Review

“A society that does not value its older people denies its roots and endangers its future. Let us strive to enhance their capacity to support themselves for as long as possible and, when they cannot do so anymore, to care for them.”

– Nelson Mandela

2022 Year in Review

2022 was a transitional year for Trellis, both in our evolution as an organization and in our work in the community. We formalized our hybrid work environment. We strengthened our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and deepened our relationships with organizations that provide services to people facing disparities. And we made significant strides in efforts to align social care with clinical care for better health outcomes for older adults.

Please review our accomplishments in this report. Where data are available, we included comparisons to the previous year's results.



Program Accomplishments



BY THE NUMBERS

Older Americans Act Administration

In our role as the Area Agency on Aging in the seven-county Twin Cities metro area, our Older Americans Act team works with direct service provider organizations to fund services that meet local needs and preferences. Our providers produced greater outcomes in 2022 with similar dollars compared to 2021. In 2022, the team:

- Awarded funds for an expanded menu of services, including technology, visiting, nutrition education and consultation.
- Added TRUST Inc. as a new provider. Touchstone Mental Health and Pillsbury United Communities received funding to expand availability of healthy aging classes.
- Funded over 954,000 meals to 7,090 older adults, 70% of which live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (income less than \$27,180 per year).
- Told the stories of four people who are beneficiaries of Older Americans Act funding with these community partners: Lutheran Social Service, Pillsbury United Communities, Presbyterian Homes & Services and Touchstone Mental Health.

\$13.1 million
distributed

33,271  2%
served

40%  3%
BIPOC served

45  10%
organizations
funded

Clif Watson is the full-time caregiver for his grandchildren. Lutheran Social Service supports him in this journey. [Watch a video with their story.](#)



Senior LinkAge Line Services

Trellis provides Senior LinkAge Line® services in partnership with the Minnesota Board on Aging. The Senior LinkAge Line is a key resource for older adults who want to optimize well-being as they age and for people who care for them.




Benefits and Options

Benefits and Options team members provide information and assistance to Senior LinkAge Line callers. They are on the front lines of helping older adults and caregivers find resources and answers to their questions.



BY THE NUMBERS

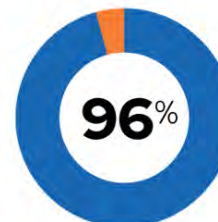
31,640  6%
inbound calls

5,680  2%
callers assisted
with Medicare Open
Enrollment

Making an impact on people's lives

A caller's aunt was paying for a rent increase out of her \$100/mo personal needs allowance under the Elderly Waiver program. The SLL specialist connected the caller to her care coordinator and arranged for her rent costs to be covered. The caller said that she could not stop crying before she called the SLL, and that it made her day to know that someone cares about older adults and their families.

Caller satisfaction



Received the
information
they sought



Said the
specialist was
knowledgeable



Would recom-
mend Senior
LinkAge Line

n=1069



BY THE NUMBERS



Preadmission Screening

The Preadmission Screening team identifies individuals who require skilled nursing and ensures that those who enter a skilled nursing facility require the level of care provided.

During 2022, the team **sent mailings** to 159 area nursing homes and hospitals, sharing information about the Senior LinkAge Line and **presented** to 347 hospital discharge planners, nursing home social workers, managed care and county case managers across the state to educate about the preadmission screening process. In total, the team made 635 contacts, surpassing their goal of 500.

30,059
screenings

3%

56%
of all screening
statewide

2,376
follow-up
calls

6%

Making an impact on people's lives

A Preadmission Screening Specialist followed up with a person who had just returned home from a short-term nursing home stay. The spouse reported the person needed complete care but they had run out of Medicare coverage for a nursing home stay and were waiting for home care to start. The specialist connected the spouse with a variety of services, including VA services that the individual qualified for but was not receiving. The spouse was excited to learn about caregiver support and eagerly agreed to a referral to Return to Community services.



Return to Community

The Return to Community team helps people dealing with complex health situations go home after a stay in a nursing facility or hospital—or to remain in their homes even when facing difficulties.

In 2022, the team's focus was on increasing in-person visits in the community. They saw a nearly five-fold increase in visits.



BY THE NUMBERS

3,236
RTC client referrals  29%

555
received full services  20%

923
check-in calls  12%

165
in-person visits  480%

Making an impact on people's lives

In a routine check-in call, a Return to Community team member learned that “Barb” and her husband were considering downsizing and relocating to more supportive housing. The specialist discussed options which might better support their changing needs. She was also able to assist Barb with resources for home-delivered meals, lawn-care services and decluttering services, addressing needs that would have gone unmet without the follow-up call.

Volunteer and Outreach

The Volunteer and Outreach team delivers education and information throughout the seven-county metropolitan area in partnership with community organizations. Volunteers provide Medicare counseling on the phone and at in-person sites, do community presentations and conduct other activities with departments across Trellis.

- For the first time in 2022, the Outreach team offered Senior LinkAge Line presentations with **American Sign Language**, reducing one barrier to accessing information. The presentations are available as videos on trellisconnects.org.
- The Outreach team partnered with Sheletta Brundidge for an in-person **“Let’s Talk Medicare” forum** held in North Minneapolis. The session featured four community members who shared their stories of support from the Senior LinkAge Line. [View the video.](#)



BY THE NUMBERS

30
new volunteers  36%

87
volunteers  13%

3,634
volunteer hours  5%

\$117,489
value of hours  8%

50
media interviews  108%

197
presentations  39%

Making an impact on people’s lives

The Trellis Outreach team has been nurturing a relationship with African Community Services for some time. Shortly after a recent presentation about the Senior LinkAge Line, Abdullahi Sheikh, program manager at African Community Services, faced a crisis. A 67-year-old gentleman with a rare medical condition was “dumped” at the door of ACS. Abdullahi said this was “incredibly frustrating (and difficult) for my entire team. But Trellis and the Senior LinkAge Line helped solve the problems for this man. I cannot express how grateful we are to the whole team.” [Read the whole story.](#)

Data Management Program

The Data Management Program oversees the information that populates the [MinnesotaHelp.info](https://www.minnesotahelp.info)® and Help Me Connect websites. The database includes listings for social services across Minnesota. A few highlights for 2022:

- Added **culturally specific identifiers** to listings in MinnesotaHelp.info in the 'Specialization' category to help searchers narrow their results for services offered to Hmong, Somali, Native American, Hispanic/Latino and other communities.
- MinnesotaHelp.info now lists **Minnesota Department of Health survey and complaint details** for licensed Assisted Living Facilities. This joins the existing Medicare Compare, MDH surveys and substantiated complaints already listed for Hospitals, Inpatient Rehabilitation, Home Care, Nursing Homes, Hospices, Boarding Care Homes, Supervised Living Facilities and Dialysis providers. Looking at the Quality tab for these programs will help users make informed choices on which provider will meet the standard of care needed.

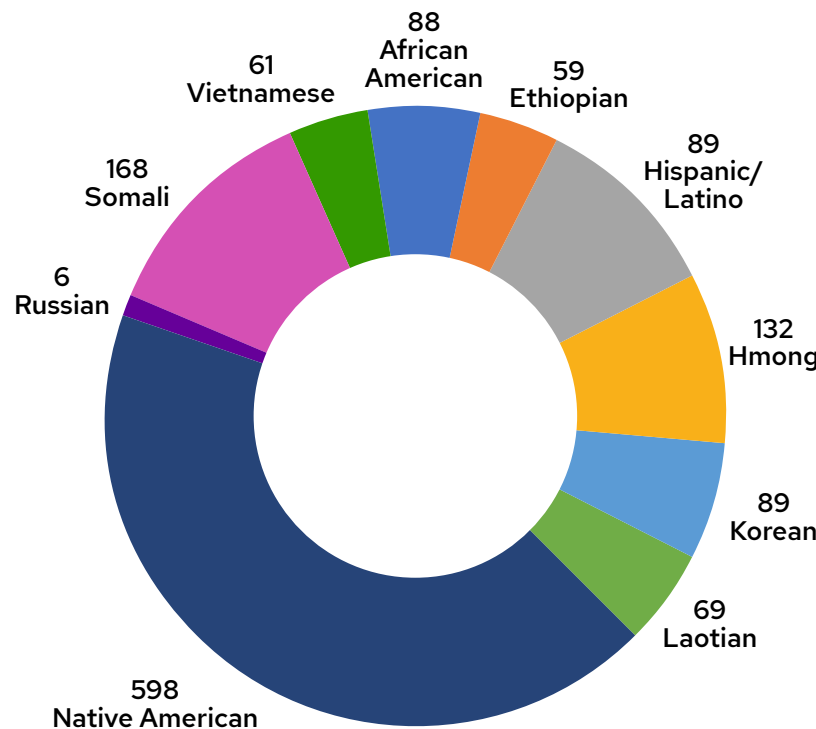


BY THE NUMBERS

11,339
organizations

40,751
services

177
hours saved
through process
improvement



**Culturally Specific Listings
in MinnesotaHelp.info**

Juniper

Juniper is a network of community-based and healthcare organizations that provides evidence-based health promotion classes to people across Minnesota. The Juniper team at Trellis lends backbone support for the network, including administrative, technological, financial and marketing supports. The Juniper team is also working to develop the infrastructure needed to deliver social care to people as these essential elements of health more frequently become a benefit of their healthcare coverage. In 2022, Juniper:

- Engaged a **record number of 8,031 participants** in Juniper classes.
- Successfully navigated the federal and state reimbursement systems to become a **Medicare supplier** and a **Medicaid provider**. This allows Trellis to receive reimbursement for providing the Diabetes Prevention Program.
- **Raised federal, state and private foundation grants** to support Juniper programs and fund our work as a federally recognized Community Care Hub, working to integrate social and medical care for better health outcomes for older adults.
- **Maintained contracts with four health plans to deliver Juniper classes**, including Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, HealthPartners, UCare and Itasca Medical Care (IMCare).
- Deepened our partnerships with the Minnesota Department of Health in becoming the first **“umbrella hub” organization** for the National Diabetes Prevention Program in the state of Minnesota and one of eight in the nation.
- Became a member of the **Partnership to Align Social Care: A National Learning and Action Network**, joining community-based organizations, health plans, health systems, national associations and federal agencies to co-design a national framework to advance social care delivery and improve health equity.



BY THE NUMBERS

8,031
participants  107%

664
classes  88%

90
providers

4
health plan
partners

97%
participants
would recommend
Juniper to a friend

Dementia Friendly Initiatives

Trellis leads three dementia friendly community initiatives across Minnesota and in some cases beyond Minnesota: **ACT on Alzheimer's**, **Dementia Friends Minnesota** and **The Remember Project**. Each of these initiatives strives to make communities good places for people with cognitive impairment to live and thrive. These are some highlights from 2022:

- Dr. Stephen Shuman and the Minnesota GWEP introduced **Dementia Friendly for Healthcare Advanced Training** and trained 199 dentists, dental techs, nurses and other healthcare professionals.
- Led monthly **Community of Learning sessions** for the ACT network, covering topics such as dementia in diverse communities and "Nothing About Us, Without Us."
- Launched **redesigned websites**, for ACT on Alzheimer's and Dementia Friends. Both are filled with content that helps communities meet their dementia friendly goals.
- Conducted a **Dementia Friendly for Dental Training for Qatar**, the first Arab nation to have a national dementia plan. Colleen Fritsch and Jen Rooney led the September session via Zoom.
- The Remember Project created a new play, **Mango Songs**, by Alia Jeraj that examines the question: "How do you find a memory everyone has forgotten?" The play sets the stage for a facilitated community discussion about memory loss, leading to reduced stigma and increased community support.



Alia Jeraj (left) is the playwright and performer of **Mango Songs** for The Remember Project. The project plans to lead community discussion connected to the play in 2023.




BY THE NUMBERS

\$8,000
in grants to 8
communities

325  18%
attended hybrid
Summit

544
professionals
received dementia
friendly for
healthcare
training

32
The Remember
Project events

2,295  11%
The Remember
Project participants

2,300
new
Dementia Friends

Trellis Pension and Retirement Rights

Trellis Pension and Retirement Rights provides legal services to older adults to ensure that they get the retirement funds they have earned. In addition to one-on-one work with clients, the team:

- Conducted **in-person outreach visits** to partners in Wisconsin and Iowa to discuss ongoing legal work and outreach.
- Held **virtual training sessions** with elder rights specialists and others at Area Agencies on Aging in Minnesota and Aging and Disability Resource Centers throughout Wisconsin.

Making an impact on people's lives

"Carmela" was entitled to one-half of her ex-husband's pension benefit. As a person with low-income, she needed this benefit to help her meet her necessary monthly expenses. To obtain the benefit, she needed to file a Qualified Domestic Relations Order ("QDRO") with the pension plan and the court. With limited resources, Carmela was unable to afford an attorney to draft the QDRO. She also was reluctant to contact her ex-husband to obtain the information she needed because of a history of domestic abuse. Pension and Retirement Rights attorneys worked with contacts in the private bar and were able to locate an attorney who agreed to draft the QDRO pro bono. The team successfully submitted the QDRO and it was approved by the plan and the court. As a result, Carmela will receive a \$520 monthly benefit for the remainder of her life.



BY THE NUMBERS

64
new cases

64% *

200
contacts made in
community

50%

* The program experienced staff vacancies during the year that impacted capacity.



ElderCare Development Partnership

The EDP team helps community organizations build capacity and sustainability so they can provide services that meet the needs of older adults in their communities. In 2022, EDP:

- Provided **technical assistance** to 28 organizations as they applied for Live Well at Home funding from the Department of Human Services. Sixteen of the organizations were awarded grants which totaled \$2.4 million.
- 10 chore/home modification providers sent staff to attend the three-day **Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) Certificate training**. This certification allows these organizations to offer older adults safety and home modification assessments to help support aging in place. Prior to this training, the only certified CAPS providers in our region were for-profit contractors.
- In collaboration with LeadingAge Foundation, Diane Graham-Raff provided three **“Grant Writing 101” training sessions** with 246 participants from 137 organizations, including staff from five Indigenous nations/organizations.
- Trellis hosted a six-week **Financial Leadership Cohort** that trained 22 individuals from 16 organizations on the basics of financial maintenance practices, internal controls, recordkeeping and budgeting.

Trellis staff helped the Korean Service Center celebrate their 10th Anniversary of offering Tai Ji Quan classes.



BY THE NUMBERS

28
organizations
received technical
support

16
of those
received funding

246
participants in
“Grant Writing 101”

Equity

Trellis defines equity as “the process of eliminating disparities and improving outcomes for everyone.” The consequences of inequities are often experienced acutely by older adults and caregivers from Black and Brown communities, a byproduct of a lifetime of discriminatory, non-inclusive policies and lack of responsive systems.

During 2022, the board and staff articulated a vision, supporting pillars and goals for ensuring that Trellis is an equitable organization.

Highlights of our equity work in 2022:

- Created an **Equity Action Team** made up of staff from across the organization.
- Ramsey County recognized Trellis for participation in the **Inclusive Workplaces Cohort**.
- Trellis was invited to the **USAging Building Accountability for Health Equity Learning Collaborative**. The collaborative will help participant organizations identify and pursue health equity goals and strengthen institutional accountability.
- Participated in the **Racial Equity Dividends Index** through the Center for Economic Inclusion and was recognized for ‘promising practices’ in the Products and Services category.

VISION

Every older adult has access to meaningful services and resources to support their wellbeing.

To achieve this vision we must be:

EQUITABLE

Trellis and the people served reflect the diversity of the community. Pursuit of racial equity and cultivation of an inclusive culture is at the center of all our work.

ENTREPRENEURIAL

Trellis pursues our vision with creativity, compassion, rigor and measured risk to design and implement innovative solutions.

Equity goals

01

Review and modify policies and systems to ensure they are equitable

02

Ensure Trellis board, staff, contractors, and volunteers reflect the diversity of the people we serve and embrace an equity mindset

03

Deliver products and services that are accessible and meaningful to the people we serve, focusing on those most in need

04

Use our voice and resources in partnership with others to catalyze equitable outcomes for the people we serve

Board and Staff



Alison Colton
Deputy General Counsel,
Blue Cross and Blue Shield
of Minnesota



Ellie Zuehlke
System Director,
Philanthropic Advisory Boards,
Allina Health

New board members

We added four new board members to our Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging (D/B/A Trellis) board at the end of 2022. These members' terms will start in January 2023. Earlier in the year, we also added a new member to our Innovations for Aging board (D/B/A Trellis).

Meet our new board members.



Josh Berg
Director of Services & Strategic Growth,
Accessible Space, Inc; Council Member,
City of Elko New Market; Adjunct Faculty,
University of Minnesota – CCAPS



Lisbeth Cachima
Medical Assistant,
Minnesota
Community Care



George Schoephoerster
Retired Geriatric
Medicine Specialist
(IFA)

Trellis Welcomed 24 New Employees in 2022



Sarah Adams
Older American Act
Grants Manager



Ashley Anfinson
Administrative
Assistant



Heidi Belholm
Community Living
Support Specialist



Sarah Callstrom
Community Living
Specialist



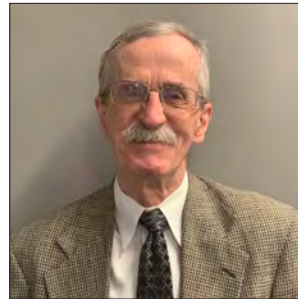
Ginger Carroll
Juniper Project
Manager



Anne Cole
Juniper Wellness
Engagement Specialist



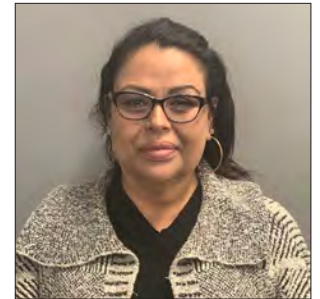
Kristina Faust
Accounting Specialist



Rory Foley
Pension and Retirement
Rights Attorney



Kendal Janousek
Community Living Support
Specialist



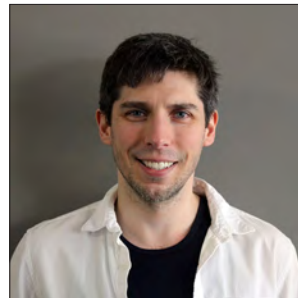
Cynthia Juarez
Juniper Wellness
Engagement Specialist



Cailee Lind
Volunteer Coordinator



Cynthia Maldonado
Community Living
Specialist



Casey Malone
Law Clerk



Simone Merriman
Benefits and Options
Specialist



Madelyn Miller
Community Living
Specialist

New Employees (continued)



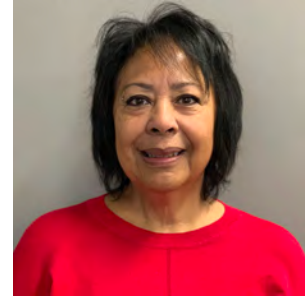
Ahmed Mussa
Community Outreach
Specialist



Jacque Nyhus
Juniper Healthcare Contract
and Compliance Specialist



Renee Ostenso
Community Living
Specialist



Loudi Rivamonte
Juniper Wellness
Engagement Specialist



Mai Vue
Benefits & Options
Specialist



Princess Walker
Juniper Wellness
Engagement Specialist



Miranda Wells
Senior Linkage Line
Specialist



Monika Westphaln
Marketing Specialist



Laura Wiski
PAS Administrative
Assistant

Recognition

CONGRATULATIONS

Values in Practice (VIP) awardees

(pictured left to right)

Rachel Von Ruden

Senior Provider Relationship Manager, Juniper

Jess Nordman

Data & Administrative Support Specialist, Older Americans Act

Jetta Wiedemeier Bower

Volunteer and Outreach Manager



**Trellis President & CEO Dawn Simonson
receives 2022 TRUST Award**

In receiving the award from the Women's Health Leadership TRUST, Dawn notes: "This award is an indication that healthcare professionals recognize that social care delivered by community organizations is important and impacts a person's health outcomes, and that feels promising." [Read the full story about the award.](#)

Advocacy



Campaign to promote COVID-19 vaccinations

Trellis partnered with the M4A (the Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging) to produce nine short video clips featuring older adults on why people should get vaccinated. In this photo, Dube Ganamo was being interviewed at the Brian Coyle Center in Minneapolis, part of Pillsbury United Communities. [See the videos.](#)

Legislative campaigns for meals for seniors and mileage reimbursement for volunteers

Trellis partnered with M4A on an effort in the 2022 Minnesota Legislature to add additional funds for meals for seniors. Dawn Simonson, co-chairs the Volunteer Driver Coalition and, along with other co-chairs, worked to get legislation introduced by Congressman Pete Stauber (R-MN) and Congresswoman Angie Craig (D-MN) to increase the mileage reimbursement rate for volunteer drivers from 14 cents per mile to 62.5 cents per mile.



Poverty conference
Trellis worked with the Minnesota Community Action Partnership on a statewide conference. Trellis Board Vice Chair, Vanne Owens Hayes; Dawn Simonson, President and CEO; and John Doan, VP of Operations and Equity, led sessions.

