



Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors

SENIOR CONNECTIONS

3131 Minnehaha Ave. Suite A, Minneapolis, MN 55406

612-729-5799

Winter 2025/2026

Living Generously An Interview with David and Willie



For more than 26 years, David Rompa and Willy have shared a friendship. What began as an act of care has become a lifelong partnership built around mutual respect, community service, and chosen family.

Willie first came into David's life through David's former partner, Willie's brother. Willie was living (but not thriving) in an institutional setting in Illinois. He started coming to stay with them for increasingly long visits. Eventually, they were able to have Willie live with them permanently. To access the support Willie needed, David became Willie's licensed foster care provider.

When the relationship ended, it was a no-brainer for David that Willie would stay with him. David is a parent and feels that caring for others is part of his nature. Twenty-six years later, they are family. "When we first met, Willie was nonverbal," David recalls. "Now, we talk all the time, and we've even developed our own language. My children always say, 'He's not a foster resident, he's family.' And that's exactly what he is."

David and Willie have an exciting life. Not only is David's signature style vibrant and colorful, but they are involved in their community, activities, church,

Longfellow/Seward
Healthy Seniors
Holiday Party!

Tuesday, December 9
10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church,
2730 E. 31st Street, Minneapolis

Bingo, live music, gift bags,
drawings, prizes and refreshments!

Join us for some holiday fun!

and, most importantly, helping others. When David and Willie first connected, Willie was not very comfortable interacting in his community. Now, Willie loves going to concerts and plays—especially Shakespeare. He is involved in a bowling league and plans to take part in the Special Olympics. David now jokes that he has to limit how many community education classes Willie takes.

Willie enjoys giving back to his community. He works with Metro Resources, serves food at Loaves and Fishes, delivers Meals on Wheels, visits older adults
(Continued on page 5)

Our Mission: *To enable community seniors to live healthy, independent and socially connected lives.*

Interview with a Volunteer

Lori Anderson has been a volunteer driver with Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors since 2020. She regularly drives clients to and from medical appointments, and has made such a good impression that several clients ask for her by name. We asked Lori a few questions about her volunteer experience with LSHS:

Why did you start volunteering with LSHS?

During the tumultuous times Longfellow went through after the killing of George Floyd, I felt the strong need to support my community. I heard about LSHS and thought driving seniors to doctor appointments would be a beneficial activity. Many years ago my father had volunteered for the Red Cross doing exactly this, and I had admired him for it.



Lori Anderson, LSHS Volunteer

What do you like most about being a volunteer driver?

The greatest pleasure I derive from being a volunteer driver is making new friends and listening to people's stories. I enjoy people, and this is also a means to 'pay it forward' for a time when I may need similar services. It's also an extremely simple effort that actually makes a big difference in people's lives.

Why would I recommend this volunteer opportunity to others?

I personally think that this type of volunteer activity affords me the opportunity to be exposed to community members that I am not normally acquainted with – people who are in need and often invisible. I have grown personally as I have developed a greater understanding of how my neighbors live and the obstacles they face. Plus, it is so easy!

Lori Anderson was on the board of directors for Metro Blooms for 10 years and has volunteered as a Hennepin County Master Gardener since 2000. She loves to weave and garden in her spare time.

OUR SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Individual Support Services For Seniors

- Nurse visits and assessments
- Foot care services
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Friendly visitors
- Grocery shopping assistance
- Food distribution/delivery
- Information, referral and advocacy
- Outreach to Somali elders
- Technology support

Community Health Promotion Activities

- Nurse In Clinics
- Senior Socials & Health Talks
- Diabetes Support Group
- Solos Resource Group
- Exercise, art, and tech classes

Volunteer With Us!



Learn more by calling

612-729-5799

or visit us at

LShealthyseniors.org



Contact Us!

Phone: 612-729-5799 ● Website: www.LShealthyseniors.org ● Email: info@LShealthyseniors.org

Find us on Facebook at **Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors**, and on Instagram at **LShealthyseniors**

Activities and Classes from Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors

Senior Social & Health Talks

Senior Socials are held the third Tuesday of each month and are co-sponsored by Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors and Minneapolis Community Education. A free Nurse Is In/Blood Pressure Clinic is also offered. No registration necessary. Suggested donation is \$1.00. **All socials are held at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 East 31st Street, Minneapolis.**

Replenishing the Well: Taking Care of Ourselves

Tuesday, January 20, 10:30- 11:30 am

Join certified Celebrant and Public Speaker for Bradshaw Funeral Services, Tony Del Percio for an informative seminar exploring the many stressors that can impact our well-being. You will learn healthy, practical ways to care for yourself — including setting boundaries, finding balance, and cultivating mindfulness.

Restless Leg Syndrome: When You Just Can't Sit Still

Tuesday, February 17, 10:30 - 11:30 am

Take a closer look at Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) — what it is, why it happens, and what you can do about it. Dave Gagne, with the Restless Leg Foundation will talk about common signs, possible causes, current medical interventions and simple tips that can help you get a better night's sleep and feel more comfortable every day.

Women & Aging: Pelvic Health

Tuesday, March 17, 10:30 - 11:30 am

As we age, changes in our bodies can affect pelvic health — but these challenges don't have to be accepted as a normal part of life. Join Rachael Jarman, PA-C, from Herself Health for a discussion on common pelvic floor concerns such as bladder leakage, prolapse, and discomfort. Learn strategies to maintain strength, comfort, and confidence at every stage of life.

Recycling 101

Tuesday, April 21, 10:30 - 11:30 am

Are you a pro-recycler? A wish-cycler? A recycling skeptic? Learn what happens to your recyclables, pick up helpful resources, and get your questions answered by Minneapolis Recycling staff.

Grey Matters: Understanding Anxiety in Older Adults

Tuesday, May 19, 10:30 - 11:30 am

Mental illness is not a normal part of aging. Persistent symptoms that significantly interfere with daily living and relationships may be a sign of anxiety or another mental health concern. A presenter with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will cover risk factors, warning signs, treatment, recovery, suicide prevention, and resources for supporting older adults managing anxiety.

Technology Clinic

Friday, February 27, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 East 31st Street, Minneapolis.



Do you have questions about your computer or cell phone? Join us for a free technology clinic for older adults! Bring your device, and volunteers will be on hand to help you with your questions. Free. Registration is required.

Movies & Music

Using technology to stream media

Wednesday, February 11

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 East 31st Street, Minneapolis.



Want to listen to a favorite album on the go? Or use your computer to watch movies? Learn how to use free and paid options to access music, movies, and television shows with your devices. Stay after the presentation to get help with installation or troubleshooting. Free.

Register for all classes and activities by calling Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors at **612-729-5799** or emailing **juliaockuly@LShealthyseniors.org**.

Diabetes Support Group

Second Wednesdays, 2:30 - 3:30 pm
December 10, January 14, February 11
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 East 31st Street, Minneapolis.

Do you have Type 1 or Type 2 Diabetes? Interested in health information and a friendly community? Join Beth Peltzer, MSW, facilitates the Diabetes Support Group meetings. New members are welcome!



Solos Resource Group

Fourth Wednesday of each month
11:00am – 12:30pm
Brackett Field Park Community Center
2728 S 39th Ave, Minneapolis

Solos are individuals who, either by circumstance or choice, are not relying on traditional family supports to facilitate aging. Each month we will cover a different aspect of planning, either with a presentation or group discussion, as well as time to socialize and share resources. All are welcome!

Low-Impact Exercise Program

Thursdays beginning January 15, ongoing class
11:00 – 11:45 am.
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 East 31st St., Minneapolis.



The Arthritis Foundation Low-impact Exercise Program (AFEP) is a low-impact, recreational

exercise program for people with or without arthritis. Trained AFEP instructor Julia Ockuly will cover range-of-motion, endurance-building activities, relaxation techniques, and health education topics. All exercises can be modified to fit your activity level. **Join at any time!** Suggested donation of \$2.00 per class.

Chair Yoga Online

Ongoing Class
Wednesdays, 10:00 - 10:30 am via Zoom.

Chair yoga will focus on the breath, linking breath to movement, stretching, and balance. No experience is necessary. All you need is a chair and comfortable clothes! Instructor Barb Yanish is a certified yoga teacher who aims to make yoga accessible to all. Free. Registration required. **Join at any time!** *Not sure how to access classes via Zoom? Call Healthy Seniors at 612-729-5799 and we will help you get set up!*



Mod Podge & Mandalas Art Social

Monday, January 26, 3:00 - 5:00 pm
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 East 31st Street, Minneapolis.

Join us for a lively art social! Try mandala rock painting, decoupage, or a little of both. Instruction, materials, and refreshments provided - you are also welcome to bring your own decoupage materials. Beat the cold with some artsy fun! \$2.00 for supplies



Coffee Club

Third Wednesdays, 1:30 - 3:00 pm
December 17, January 21, February 18
Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church
4101 37th Ave. S, Mpls.

Join a fun and social group for coffee, pastries, and pleasant conversation! All are welcome!



Darning 101

Wednesday, January 7, 2:00 - 4:00 pm
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 2730 East 31st St., Minneapolis.

When rips and tears happen to your socks, t-shirts or other knit garments- don't throw them away, darn it! Lauren Callis with The Curiosity Studio will help you learn to repair the knit garments in your life during this fun, two hour darning class.



(Living Generously, from front page)

in long-term care homes, and helps with newsletters at their church. "Willie loves the music at church," David says. "He doesn't always look like he's listening, but he always is."

David is also deeply linked to his community. He began his career as a probation officer, then became a chemical dependency counselor, and eventually the HIV/AIDS Director for the Minnesota Department of Human Services, overseeing grants and contracts for mental health and substance use programs. After retiring in 2019, he didn't slow down.

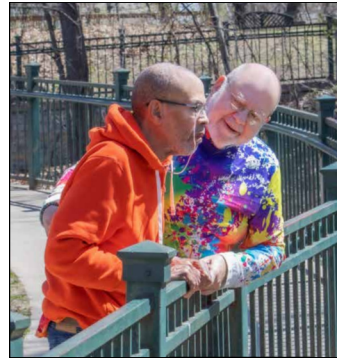
David is on the Board of Directors at Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors and actively volunteers. He especially enjoys helping with the annual holiday party. He is also on the advisory board for Friends & Co, involved with the Southside Community Health Center, and on his church council at Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church.

David and Willie's home is a hub of generosity. Over the years, David has fostered 59 individuals, including youth, adults, and families. Even now, his door remains open. He and Willie support unhoused neighbors, allowing them to store possessions, shower, and do laundry when needed. They keep Narcan and fentanyl test strips stocked at home and at church, ensuring their community has access to life-saving tools.

Friends sometimes worry about the way David opens his home. "I've never been hurt," David says. "I've had things stolen, but why wouldn't you steal when you have nothing? What does it say if I won't help? I don't want to be too afraid to be who I am as a person." Willie says he loves meeting the new people. "The house," David says, "is always a mess, but it's full of life."

Each year, David gives gifts to more than 70 people, including every child at his church. "I started doing that when I was nine," he says. "I bought bags of chocolates and gave them to everyone I knew."

David jokes that people at his church tease him by



saying, "I suppose you are meeting with another leader." He says that he wishes more people would take the risk to be part of their community, know their neighbors, advocate, raise hell, and connect with other people. "The more our paths cross, the more we can unify against problems. If I can afford to help," he says simply, "then I should."

Willie has words of wisdom too. He says that he loves the music.



JOIN OUR BOARD

Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors is currently looking for passionate and dedicated individuals who are interested in helping older adults live independently. Board members play an integral part in guiding our mission and ensuring that we are able to serve our community for years to come!

Learn more and apply to become a board member by calling **612-729-5799** or visiting www.LShealthyseniors.org/board

Your Donation Helps!

Any donation of any size helps Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors provide essential support to your neighbors

A donation to LSHS provides food, rides to medical appointments, technology assistance, social opportunities, and so much more!

Thank you for your generosity!

Thank You...



Goofing around at the LSHS Volunteer Appreciation Celebration



Volunteers and clients at a technology clinic



Guests enjoying the 2024 LSHS Holiday Party. We can't wait to see you for this year's celebration!



Want to learn more about LSHS news, events, community activities, local information and more? **Subscribe to our monthly email news letter!** A fun monthly email jam-packed with useful content!

Email us at info@LShealthyseniors.org, or visit us at LShealthyseniors.org to subscribe!

Want to exercise, get outdoors, and help a neighbor? **Volunteer to shovel snow with LSHS!** Older adults in our community struggle to remove snow from steps and walkways. Help a neighbor keep their home and our sidewalks safe!



Did you know that LSHS offers free in-home visits and phone calls from our Community Nurse. Here are some services that we can provide:

- Fall risk assessments
- Health review/concerns
- Blood pressure checks
- Vision loss screenings & free low-vision products

Interested in meeting with Barb deBorhegyi, our Community Nurse? Give her a call at **612-449-7536**.

Food for Older Adults



- Grocery delivery from food shelves
- Assistance with grocery shopping
- Grocery gift cards for lower-income seniors

Adults age 60+ who live in the Longfellow, Seward, Hiawatha, Howe and Cooper neighborhoods are eligible.

Enabling community seniors to live healthy, independent and socially connected lives.



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