

Respite Care Atlanta, Inc.

E-Mail Newsletter

 **SPRING 2022**

RESPITE CARE ATLANTA WELCOMES ITS NEW DIRECTOR

It's Spring 2022 and in addition to this seasonal change comes a change in leadership at Respite Care Atlanta. After almost four years as the director of this incredible respite care program, I am passing the baton to a new director, Jenna Smith. Jenna is passionate about uplifting and supporting communities to ensure everyone has the same opportunities to live a life full of dignity and love. Her professional experience has been concentrated in the nonprofit arena in service organizations including the Bobby Dodd Institute, Quality Care for Children and Projects Abroad. Jenna's past responsibilities and accomplishments are in the areas of volunteer management, fundraising, and community and donor relations. She begins her role as RCA Director on April 1. RCA is excited to have Jenna jump aboard!

Starting a nonprofit organization is never easy, especially one that depends so critically on a committed volunteer team and a generous and loyal donor base to power the mission. You have supported us during start-up, early growth, and the unprecedented challenges we experienced with Covid-19. I can proudly say that as a young community-based program, we have pulled together and successfully navigated through some uncharted and turbulent waters since opening in September 2018.

The need for adult social-recreational day programs focused on people living with dementia and their caregivers continues to escalate nationwide with insufficient resources to meet it. So, we continue to build our RCA bench of compassionate hearts that will support our return to pre-Covid operations of three days a week. While we can't save the world, the RCA Board of Directors, staff and volunteers wholeheartedly believe that we must do what we can.

I am so grateful to our member families, past and present, who have placed their trust in us. We know the importance of our work, and we have great admiration for the courage and resilience of our caregivers. It is also clear how deeply we love our members!

As I bid farewell, I want to thank the RCA Board for giving me the opportunity to live my passion while at RCA. My thanks also to RCA's program volunteers. You are an extraordinarily kind, committed and talented group, the heart and soul of the organization and a blessing beyond measure. I am so proud of the work we have done together and know you will continue to deliver for RCA's families in the days ahead. I will be cheering you on from the sidelines for your next successful chapter!

Sincerely,

Wendy Liverant



Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon 2022

Club RCA honored its many dedicated volunteers with a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on February 19th. Second-Ponce Baptist Church's Fellowship Hall was festively decorated with ~50 heart-shaped balloons, and volunteers enjoyed a tasty buffet lunch prepared by Chef Ambrose. Charlie Battle, Master of Ceremonies, addressed the gathering and honored Wendy Liverant, outgoing Director, for her outstanding service to RCA. John Stewart, Volunteer Coordinator, recognized and thanked all the volunteers.



Club RCA Member Activities

As you can see, we've been busy at Club RCA this spring. We do enjoy a variety of activities from exercise to crafts to cognitive games, but most of all we enjoy each other!



Marci and Linda get moving!



Decorating the garden for Easter



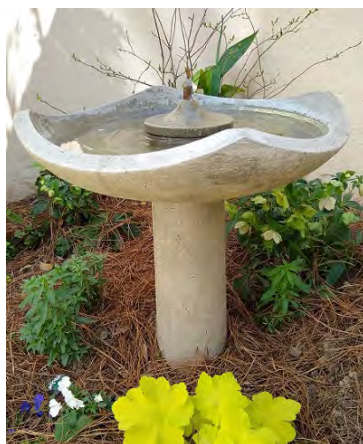
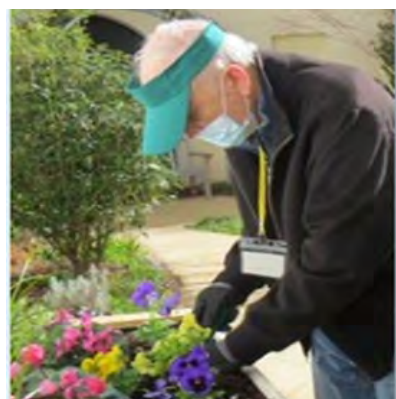
A tote bag original in progress

Sarahs' Garden Welcomes Spring

Sarahs' Garden welcomed the delights of spring with the return of daffodils and tulips, Lenten roses along the border, and the Star Magnolia blooming with fragrant white flowers. The Lady Banks climbing roses began to adorn the wooden arbor, and the Tea Olive tree filled the garden with its fruity aroma.

Volunteers have been busy creating a stimulating environment for Club RCA members. Delightful painted rocks were hidden in nooks and crannies all over the garden for members to discover on visits. A new stone fountain, contributed by volunteers Amanda Gregory and Carter Morris and their spouses, provides the calming sound of moving water. Garden-related activities inside have included planting spring bulbs in jars to bloom at home and a talk on pollinators likely to be found in the garden.

An early warm day allowed members to don their sun visors and gloves for activities at the raised planting table, which accommodates walkers and wheelchairs. Small groups of members along with their volunteer companions planted colorful spring flowers in February followed by lettuce, spinach, and Swiss chard plants later in March. Due to the pandemic, this is the members' first spring to enjoy hands-on "digging in the dirt," and it appears to be a favorite!



IN MEMORIAM

Respite Care Atlanta would like to remember its cherished members whose earthly journeys have recently ended. We were privileged to know them in life and to serve them and their loving families.

Steven J. Martin, Sr.
June Dudley Ottley, Sr.
Walter C. Sturdivant, Jr.
John W. Winborne, III

VOLUNTEER
SPOTLIGHT

RCA is pleased to spotlight Sally George, a dedicated and long-standing volunteer.

How long have you been a volunteer with Respite Care Atlanta? My volunteering with RCA began in summer 2019. In March 2020, we closed for Covid-19 until the summer of 2021. I was thrilled to restart.

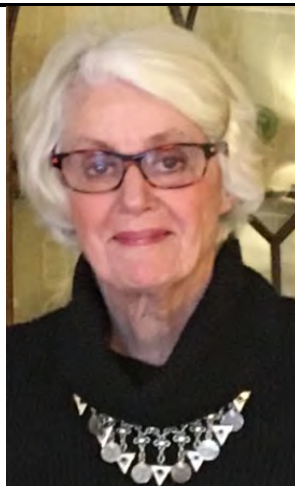
What motivated you to consider volunteering with RCA? My husband, Walter, has been a Companion volunteer since RCA's inception and his truly rewarding experience motivated me to join.

What is your primary role and why did you choose it? My primary role is a "Goodbye Gal" which combines housekeeping and social interaction with our members. We are the end-of-day group. As a Real Estate Agent, I chose this position as it was more compatible with those demands.

Please explain what your role entails and its value to the program. The "Goodbyes" clear and clean tables, sanitize chairs, handle kitchen duties, and help other volunteers as needed. Our main job is shepherding our members to their person/transportation after the planned activities have ended for the day.

Can you share what purpose and meaning you derive from your service to RCA? I have volunteered in different arenas, but this commitment has meant a unique relationship and experience for me. The positivity of the environment has a strong effect on me. Despite obvious difficulties, the smile on each face is so restorative, warm and loving.

What aspect(s) of your role do you like the best? I enjoy being with and joining in with the members and volunteers much more than wiping down chairs and drying glasses.



*RCA Goodbye Gal
Sally George*

What qualities and/or abilities are best-suited for this role? I would say acceptance of differences, managing expectations, flexibility, sunny temperament, and compassion for all with whom you interact.

Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers about your experience in the RCA program? One cannot imagine what you can gain from this experience and exposure. You are uplifted

in a way that stays with you. As you witness declining status in our Members, empathy and gratitude fill your life as you are giving so much love and acceptance to those in our care.



Respite Care Atlanta is always in need of committed and compassionate volunteers to serve our caregiving families and grow our program. We are conveniently located at Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, 2715 Peachtree Rd. NE, Atlanta, GA 30305. We invite you to join one of our onsite Volunteer Information Sessions to learn more about our program opportunities. Upcoming sessions are:

Monday, May 9, 10-11 am
Monday, June 13, 10-11 am

Contact **Jane Brann, Administrative Coordinator**, at jbrann@spdl.org or **404-591-4365** to reserve a spot. We look forward to your joining us!