

# Open Doors

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HomeSharing®

## Immense Value in Sharing a Home

by Jill Stein, MSW, Director of Client Services

Sally's children grew increasingly concerned about her well-being as they noticed her memory starting to falter after living alone in her home for many years. Worried that she might forget important tasks for self-care and home maintenance, they sought assistance from Home-Sharing. Their aim was to have someone present in the home during the day and overnight, both for emergencies and to provide an extra layer of oversight to ensure Sally's safety and well-being.

Seeker Melba had recently relocated from out of state for a job opportunity in the area. However, she faced challenges in finding affordable housing. Given her professional background in assisting people with disabilities, Melba was naturally inclined to help others. The prospect of connecting with a local family, caring for a senior, and simultaneously seeking suitable housing resonated deeply with her.

Initially apprehensive about inviting a stranger into her home after living alone for three decades, Sally met Melba and was immediately put at ease. Recognizing

the value of having someone to interact with and lend a hand with household tasks that had become more challenging with age, Sally embraced the idea. Seeing her children's relief and the comfort they derived from having Melba around further reinforced Sally's decision.



Sally

Both Sally and Melba have found immense value in sharing a home. For Sally, it means continuing to reside in the place she's called home for years, now with added support and companionship. For Melba, it marks the beginning of a new chapter—a fresh start in both her living situation and her fulfilling career, which she finds deeply rewarding.

## Loneliness is a Profound Health Risk

by Steven Nagel, Executive Director

In an article in the *Washington Post*, US Surgeon General Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy, MD, MBA, noted that Loneliness presents a profound health threat akin to obesity and smoking, aiming to rally Americans to spend more time with each other in an increasingly divided society. Dr. Vivek Murthy noted that ½ of US adults experienced loneliness, which has consequences for both mental and physical health, including a greater risk of depression, high blood pressure, anxiety, heart disease, stroke and dementia. It has been proven that loneliness increases mortality rates in seniors.

In New Jersey, the Department of Human Services reports 44% of all New Jerseyans over 65 are lonely. Some 71% of disabled New Jerseyans and 38% of our active and military and veterans. More than 2.3 million

residents are lonely or socially isolated (and it is likely higher than that!)

HomeSharing is an excellent resource to prevent loneliness! We combat loneliness one match at a time. In fact, in our 2024 Annual Survey of Providers and Seekers, 80% of Providers reported that being a HomeSharing client increased their companionship, and 83% of Seekers reported an increase in their levels of companionship.

If you know someone who could benefit from Home-Sharing's services, please have them visit <https://homesharing.org> or call the office at 908-526-4663. Tax deductible financial support is always welcome, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/5a44ratv> or mail your check to the office in the enclosed envelope.

## HomeSharing's 2023-2024 Platinum Sponsors



## From Our President

### Karen Thomas



“Home is where the heart is” where did this saying come from? The earliest account is attributed to a Roman Naval Commander, Gaius Plinius Secundus around 23-79 AD. Lord Byron in 1819 in his poem Don Juan wrote “for without hearts there is no home”. In 1829, we see the first American publication in *The Fayetteville Weekly Observer*, “Tis home where e'er the heart is”. And in 1857, the first reference using the

exact modern wording appeared in an American novel *Scandal* by J.T.Bickford, as “Home is where the heart is, Katie.”

Our human experience throughout centuries recognizes that humans need humans to combat stress level,

loneliness, essential life needs and overall happiness. As in our featured client story, we see this every day at HomeSharing when we successfully match a homeowner (provider) and a person seeking affordable housing. We do not charge either client, if they choose to donate to our services that is an option not a requirement. Having qualified certified professional Social Workers, volunteers, and key staff all attribute to our success. It costs to operate a nonprofit and we would not exist without donors, foundations, and corporations. As we fundraise in 2024 and beyond, we will need to increase our funding by 20% each year to keep up with the demand and the cost of doing business.

Your donation, no matter how small, will help tremendously in providing a resource to those providers who would like to keep their home in NJ, help at home and those that are working in NJ to find affordable housing. Would you consider donating today?

Karen A. Thomas,  
President Board of Trustees

## From Our Executive Director

### Steven Nagel



If a program has been delivering services to the community since 1984, would you agree it is successful? Many would. I see HomeSharing as an organization that has had great successes, but there is so much more to do! Our quest is to continue to add new

Providers. If you know of any of your friends, neighbors or family members interested in sharing that have an extra room in their home for additional income and assistance, and would like to be a Provider, please send them our way.

We serve 11 counties in New Jersey, and will soon be expanding our services in Monmouth and Ocean through funding from our new partner, the Affordable Housing Alliance, headquartered in Neptune.

We are also building new bridges to expand our outreach for new areas such as new Providers in South Orange and Maplewood. Through our sponsor and individual donations, we will continue to grow throughout the state.

We appreciate your donation and will continue to focus on providing vital services to our clients.

HomeSharing's staff is committed to continue to serve our mission: To create affordable housing solutions by matching those seeking housing with those who need additional income or services to maintain their homes, while fostering independence and dignity

Steven Nagel, Executive Director

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# Volunteer Focus: David Faas

## HomeSharing's Database Manager



Currently, I believe I am one of the longest serving continuous volunteers (if not the longest), having been here for many, many years. I've had the privilege to serve under **all** of HomeSharing's Executive Directors (Shuey, Renee, Lisa, and Steve) and work with all of the wonderful Social Workers and volunteers who worked here over all of those years. Everybody has been

focused on making HomeSharing the best place to provide affordable shared housing to the communities it serves, and expand the areas that it does serve in. It's also an office that people want to come back to. In fact, several people have left for a while and subsequently found their way back!

It is good to be using my considerable skills volunteering here to assist the clients — people who really do need our help. In my tenure here, I have worn quite a number of hats: Entering Data, Maintaining the Databases, Running Reports, Creating Reports, Writing Computer Programs to Generate Reports, Preliminary Background Checks, Grant Writing, Assistant Bookkeeper (being a backup QuickBooks person and entering donations and

printing checks when nobody else could), Photo Editor (making photos either look better, cropping them, and/or making them fit on a CD/DVD), Manual CD copier (Renee had the idea of giving Every Gala attendee a CD/DVD of the photos from the event, so I got to copy every disk one at a time), Mail Merge Maker and Label Printer, Phonathon Call Slip Maker (a slip of paper to assist a caller with soliciting a donation...Renee had the various groups printed on different colors of paper), Helping With Envelope Stuffing, Gift Basket Preparation, and whatever else needed to get done.

As I once remarked to Renee, "HomeSharing is like a box of chocolates, you never know what is going to happen any given day," which makes it an interesting place to be. Plus, it gives me somewhere to go, rather than sitting at home doing nothing.

Given my seniority, I tend to be a source of institutional knowledge about HomeSharing's past practices and Steve and Karen have jokingly remarked, "I know where the bodies are buried."

Ed. note—David was also the recipient of the HomeSharing Frank J. Semcer, Sr. Outstanding Volunteer Award at its annual Gala in 2021.

## HOMESHARING'S MISSION

*HomeSharing's mission is to create affordable housing solutions. We match those seeking housing with those who need additional income or services to maintain their homes, while fostering independence and dignity.*

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# Highlights of Recent Events



Executive Director Steven Nagel recently presented to the Alliance for the Disabled in Action located in Edison on the benefits of HomeSharing.



HomeSharing past Vice President Maureen Kalena is pictured with current Vice President Frank Semcer, Jr. upon winning the prestigious HomeSharing Cup at the 2024 Annual Pinball Tournament hosted at Frank's home.



Steven Nagel recently presented to the Kiwanis Club of Caldwell—West Essex comprised of business and community leaders from Western Essex County on HomeSharing. Executive Director Steve is pictured with Club President Joy Scally and Past State Governor Dean Konner



Executive Director Steven Nagel, Director of Client Services Jill Stein greet Somerset County Commissioner Director Shanell Pullins—Robinson after HomeSharing hosted a showing of "The Price of Silence" in collaboration with the Somerset County Board of Chosen Commissioners and the PeopleCare Center

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