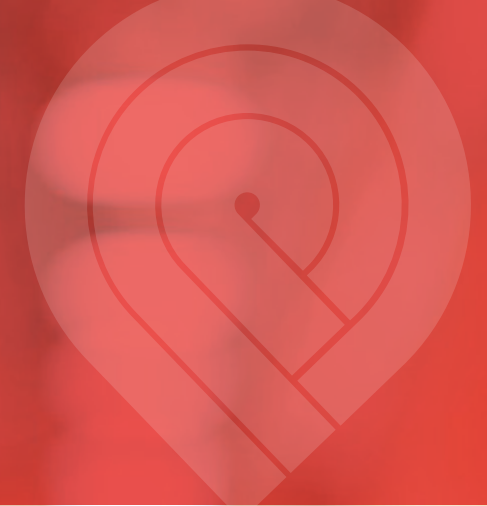




# ENRICHING AND EMPOWERING LIVES

A Case for Supporting Older Adults

# WE'RE ALL GETTING OLDER – EVERY DAY



This looks different to each of us, but most share common goals: to age well, age in our homes, and remain independent contributors in our communities.

This takes support, and the need for those resources is growing quickly. At a time when the population is rapidly aging, and the cost of senior living facilities is soaring, the need for innovative and compassionate solutions for older adults in their homes is critical. Pathlights provides hope and support on this journey.

**Pathlights is the go-to community resource to help older adults and adults with disabilities remain in their homes with dignity for as long as possible.** Your support will help make this possible today and help sustain a compassionate community that meets their needs tomorrow.

# CHALLENGES FOR OLDER ADULTS ARE CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITIES



With a rapidly aging community, the wellbeing of adults affects the wellbeing of all of us. Most of us will experience at least one of these hurdles as we age.



## FINANCIAL STRAIN

Older adults may face financial challenges due to retirement, fixed incomes, and healthcare expenses. Inflation, rising costs of living, and unexpected medical bills can contribute to financial stress.

About 14% of older adults in suburban Cook County are considered low income, higher than the U.S. poverty rate of 11.5%. This means many are making difficult choices between basic needs like filling prescriptions and buying groceries.



## FOOD INSECURITY

Having nutritious food is vital to maintaining health, but it is a major hurdle for many older adults. For some, mobility issues make shopping difficult. For others, rising food costs strain fixed incomes.

The need is skyrocketing: Pathlights has experienced a dramatic 46% increase in demand for nutritious food since 2021.



## SAFETY

1 in 10 older Americans experience elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation every year. It's a crisis here in our community.

Pathlights has seen year over year increases in reports of abuse, with a 19% increase in allegations from 2021-23.





### **CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES**

Many older adults become caregivers for spouses or other family members, adding to their responsibilities. Chances are, you are or know a caregiver. This role can be physically and emotionally demanding, especially if the caregiver is also dealing with their own health issues.

Last year, Pathlights provided resources to over 500 caregivers, helping them care for both their loved ones and themselves.



### **ISOLATION AND LONELINESS**

Social isolation and loneliness are prevalent challenges among older adults, especially those who live alone or have limited social connections. Lack of social interaction can negatively impact mental and emotional well-being.



### **HOUSING INSECURITY**

Older adults may encounter difficulties related to housing, such as affordability, accessibility, and the need for age-appropriate housing options. Maintaining independence while addressing housing needs can be a complex issue.

# CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS MEAN MORE OLDER ADULTS NEED SUPPORT



There are over 88,000 older adults living in the Pathlights service area. The number has grown by 20% since 2010 and the need continues to soar. Our service area is expecting 50% growth in the population of those over 65 by 2030.

**Communities we serve face some of the greatest need in all of Cook County.**

For example, Worth Township has the second largest population of persons over 60 in the county, with over 37,000 individuals. More than 28% of the population in Palos, Lemont, and Orland Townships are older adults, the largest percentage of older adults in suburban Cook County.



# PATHLIGHTS: A VITAL PART OF A HEALTHY, EMPOWERED AND COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY



Like you, we believe that we all deserve to age with dignity and maintain a quality of life. The home and community-based services that Pathlights delivers allows older adults to age in place and maintain their independence for as long as possible. **Pathlights helps more than 15,000 people each year understand their options as they age, access critical resources, and live life to the fullest.**

## OUR MISSION

Pathlights aims to be a premier leader in human services, supporting individuals regardless of demographics or circumstance. We help guide older adults, adults with disabilities, their caregivers, families, and friends along their best path to aging. We listen and empower our clients to take steps that can enhance their lives. Our work is both innovative and compassionate, focused on helping individuals who are navigating the aging process have equal access to food, care, and safety.

## OUR VISION

Pathlights envisions a world where aging is not synonymous with limitations. **With the help of partners like you, we are creating a future where aging is embraced, independence is cherished, and dignity is non-negotiable.** We are committed to creating a supportive environment where older adults can thrive within the familiar settings of their homes. This ensures a brighter, more fulfilling future for all.

Raising awareness of the needs of older adults and the programs and services available is important to ensure we reach everyone who can benefit from our services.

Pathlights works within communities to strengthen collaboration and increase engagement, contribution and investment by community organizations and members.

Educating older adults, their caregivers, and those in the aging community is essential for promoting health, safety, independence, and overall well-being throughout the aging process. Pathlights provides many educational opportunities so individuals can make informed decisions to enhance their quality of life.

Our programs are designed to meet the greatest needs:

- Access to nutritious food
- Economic stability
- Safety and well-being
- Caregiver resources and supports

**We offer the right resources at the right time to meet individuals and families on their journeys.**



# OUR PROGRAMS SUPPORT OLDER ADULTS AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES



Our work can be life changing for individuals and those who love them. We listen and empower our clients to take steps that enhance their lives and help them age in the community safely, for as long as possible. Our work is also vital to creating strong, healthy, compassionate communities. This means we pride ourselves on collaboration with diverse partners, convening conversation and action to promote policies that support aging populations.

**Promote Independence:** We provide resources that allow older adults to age in place and maintain their independence for as long as possible. These services assist with activities of daily living, supports, and social engagement, enabling older individuals to stay connected to their communities.

**Enhance Quality of Life:** Pathlights contributes to a higher quality of life

for older adults. These services include home delivered meals, benefits enrollment support, and assistance with tasks that may become challenging with age.

**Promote Dignity and Choice:** Pathlights empowers older adults by supporting them in making choices about their care and lifestyle. This approach respects their autonomy and preserves their dignity.

**Reduce Costs for Families and Taxpayers:** Supporting older adults in the community is typically more cost-effective than institutional care. Community-based services allow individuals to receive the necessary support while avoiding or delaying the need for a more expensive nursing home or long-term care facility placement.





**Reduce Healthcare**

**Costs:** By promoting preventive care and early intervention, Pathlights' services can contribute to reducing overall healthcare costs. Timely support and interventions can help manage health conditions, preventing the need for more expensive medical treatments.

**Support Caregivers:**

In addition to serving older adults directly, Pathlights provides much-needed support for family caregivers. By offering respite care, education and training, and other resources, these services help caregivers maintain their own well-being while caring for their loved ones.

**Strengthen Local Communities:**

Investing in community-based services strengthens local networks and resources. It fosters a sense of community and solidarity, where neighbors and community members support one another, creating a more resilient and inclusive society.

**Prevent Social Isolation:**

By providing opportunities for social interaction, Pathlights reduces social isolation and loneliness among older adults. Social engagement is essential for mental and emotional well-being.

**Address Demographic Changes:**

As populations age, supporting older adults in the community becomes increasingly important. Community-based services can help communities adapt to demographic shifts and create environments that are age-friendly.



# OUR PROGRAMS PROVIDE A RANGE OF CRITICAL SUPPORTS TO MEET THE GREATEST NEEDS

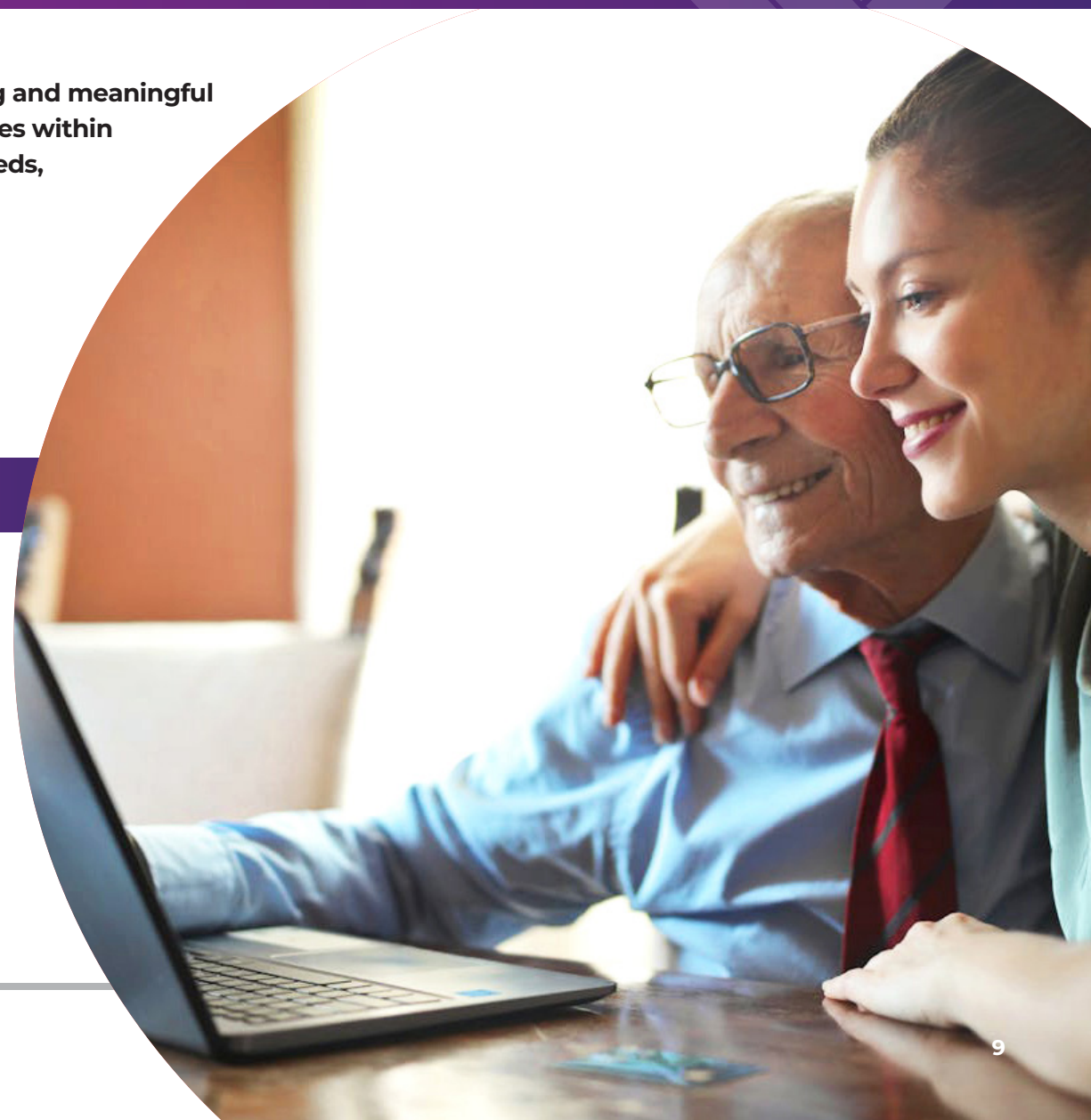


**Like you, we believe older adults deserve to live fulfilling and meaningful lives, enriched by the support, connections, and resources within their communities. Our assistance addresses unique needs, fosters independence, and enhances quality of life.**

Our programs and services are needs-based, and most are available at no cost. We serve people across all financial levels and some programs follow specific eligibility requirements.

## Services include:

- Adult Protective Services
- Benefits & Advocacy
- Caregiver Support
- Choices For Care Program
- Home-Delivered Meals
- Information & Assistance
- In-Home Services
- Options Counseling
- Shared Housing



# OUR IMPACT



Served

**70,609**

home delivered meals  
(a 30% increase!)



Investigated

**532**

allegations  
of abuse



Directed

**25,128**

intake and  
referral calls



Completed over

**1,700**

cost saving  
applications



Saved our clients over

**\$1.2M**

through cost savings  
benefits programs



Completed

**2,486**

in-home  
assessments



Engaged volunteers  
who served

**8,802**

hours



Helped

**14,928**

clients

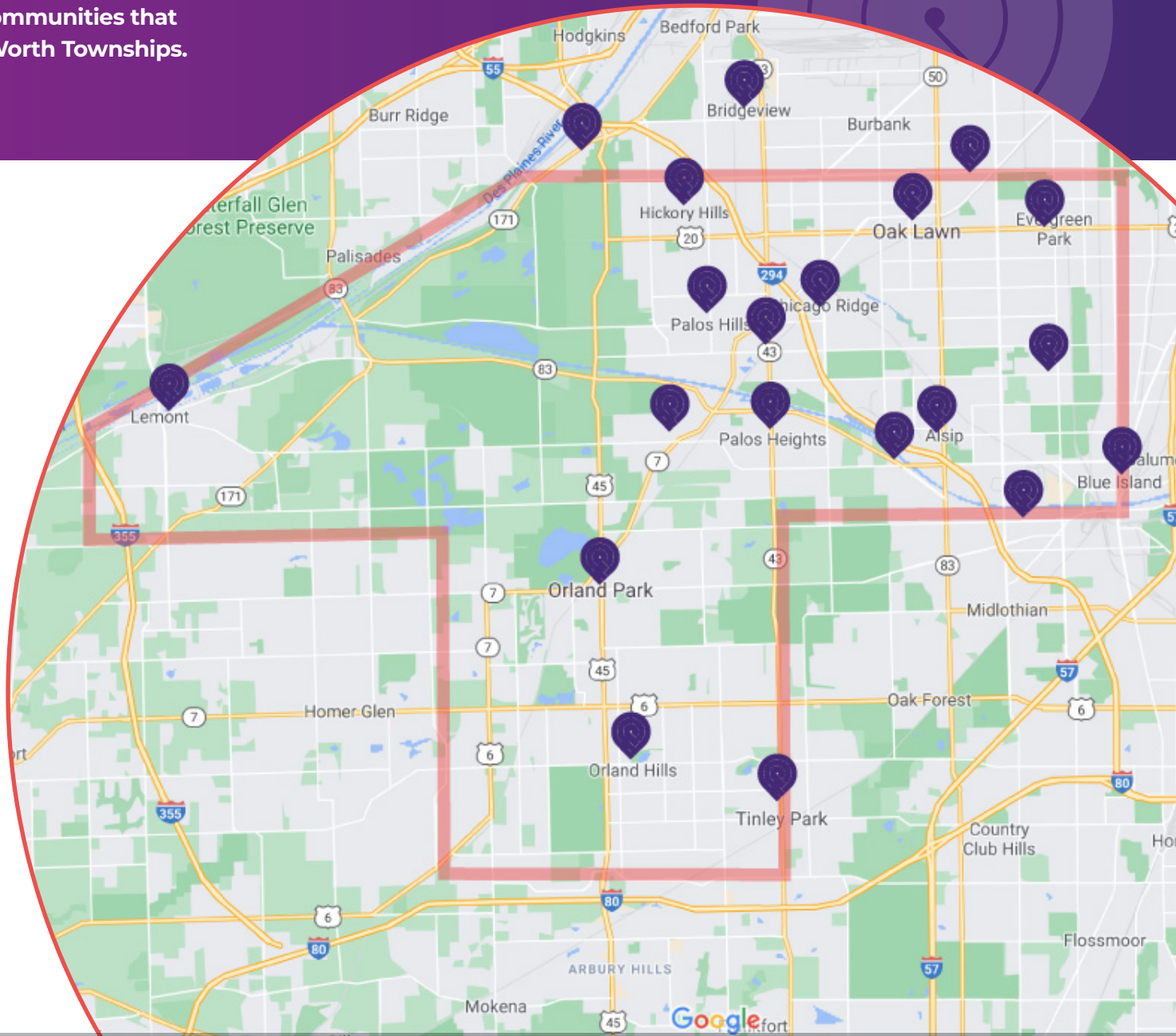
Data based on our last fiscal year; October 2022–September 2023.

# COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

We guide people in the 20 different communities that make up Palos, Lemont, Orland, and Worth Townships.

## Our service area includes:

- Alsip
- Blue Island *(north of 135th Street & west of Western)*
- Bridgeview *(south of 87th Street)*
- Chicago Ridge
- Crestwood *(north of 135th Street)*
- Evergreen Park
- Hickory Hills *(south of 87th Street)*
- Hometown
- Lemont
- Merrionette Park
- Oak Lawn
- Orland Hills
- Orland Park
- Palos Heights
- Palos Hills
- Palos Park
- Robbins *(north of 135th Street & west of Western)*
- Tinley Park *(west of Harlem)*
- Worth
- Willow Springs *(south of 87th Street)*





# FINDING HELP AND STRENGTH TO CARE FOR MULTI-GENERATIONS



Caregivers sandwiched between the needs of multiple generations often describe themselves as “a hamster on a wheel.” They are people like Monica Rose, who fell into the role a few years ago when her aging mother, father and aunt first needed continuous help.

“I was just running and running,” says Monica, a mother of four and grandmother of nine. When family needed her to step in, she began driving from her home in Orland Park to her relatives’ homes in Schaumburg regularly. On her off days, she headed south to Manteno, to help her son and his wife, who was battling brain cancer. In between, she worked at her job as a graphic designer.

“It was too much,” the 62-year-old says now. Exhausted and in need of ideas, she turned to the Orland Township office. “I stopped in and just said, ‘I need help,’”

Rose recalls. She was immediately referred to Pathlights.

**“Pathlights is the definition of caring,”** Monica says. From helping with supplies and information to offering stress-relief classes, Monica says Pathlights has given her the strength she needed to carry on. “Their outlook on people is just phenomenal,” she says.

Monica and her extended family decided the best way to care for the older family members was to move them to Orland Park. She was able to rent a home that suited all three and was only a few minutes away from where she lives with her husband.

Sadly, during the next few years, Rose’s aunt, father and daughter-in-law passed away. But she is grateful that having family members nearer enabled her to spend more time with everyone.

Today, Monica continues to oversee care of her 92-year-old mother, who requires round the clock attention. With her mother’s funds rapidly diminishing, the extended family, including siblings, her adult children, nieces and nephews, all pitch in to pay for rent, utilities and live-in care.

The responsibility has weighed heavily on Monica. “It is definitely stressful and has changed our lifestyle,” she says.

“Caring for my relatives is important to me. I know my mom won’t be here forever and she needs me. Plus, she’s always been there for me.”

Monica said she’s learned a great deal about coping from others who are in



similar situations, and meetings with Pathlights' staff has opened doors on ideas and assistance.

"A lot of people like to keep their lives and struggles private, but because of that they may not know there's help out there. **Pathlights is there to listen and help. They're so wonderful.**"

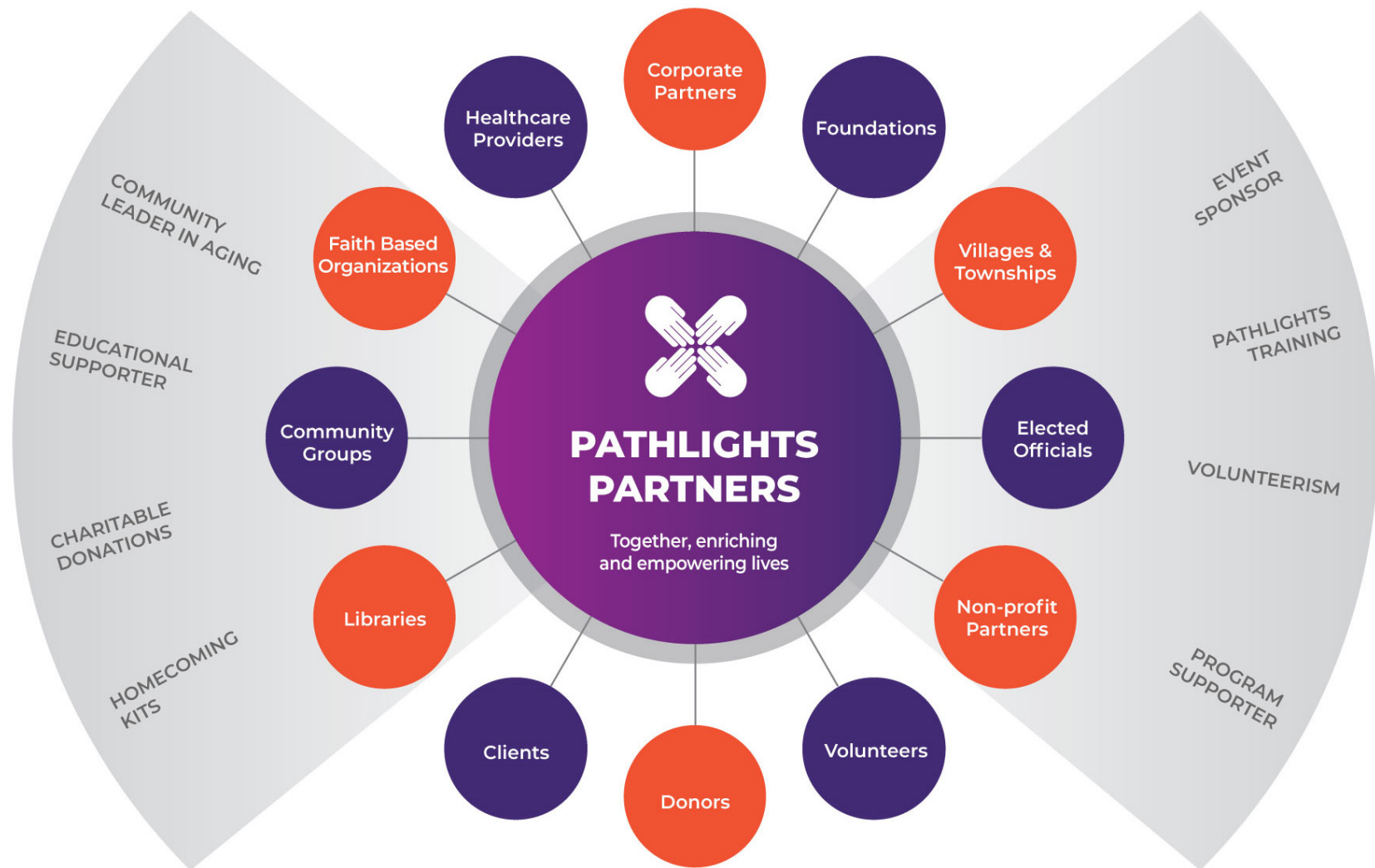
Having added help in her corner, Monica says, is both a comfort and a confidence boost that she can continue to give her mom the best care possible. "People don't realize how difficult it is for older people to accept what's happened to them. My mom and dad were used to taking care of us. Now we are taking care of them," Rose says.

**"You don't ever expect this to happen, but we're all going to age. And when we do, we'll want to know there is help."**



# PARTNERSHIPS PROMOTE HEALTH AND SUPPORT DIGNITY

Pathlights offers many opportunities for partnerships to help meet your goals and advance our mission.





## JOIN US

The needs of older adults in our communities is growing. And, with rising costs for everything from health care to housing, the services that Pathlights provides have never been more critical. The support of partners like you can help Pathlights meet urgent needs today and help shape a caring, compassionate community that supports well-being, health and dignity.

### LEARN MORE

[www.pathlights.org](http://www.pathlights.org)

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