"I feel so good now and full of energy!" exclaimed 74-year-old Ms. R after Search and Care’s Yoga Day in June.

Priscila Gallegos, MSW, invited celebrity yoga instructor, Kristin McGee, to guide seniors through safe, simple stretches and chair exercises—rejuvenating minds and bodies.

Participants reported being “thrilled” with Kristin’s positive energy and asked her to return. During a conversation, Mr. M said, “I did poses I never thought I could.”

Kristin told her Instagram followers, “I was so impressed by those who showed up willing to breathe and stretch alongside each other. When I looked at Ms. O—who’s 90-years-old—doing a baby tree pose beside her wheelchair, I thought to myself, this is truly what yoga is all about.”

Better Safe Than Sorry

Too often, we hear about older people being exploited—whether it’s over the phone, via email, or on the street. To tackle this issue, Search and Care organizes lunchtime workshops to foster our older neighbors’ safe, sustained independence.

In May, Care Manager Tianna Anderson arranged for Crime Prevention Officer Anthony Nuccio (NYPD 19th Precinct) to lead our first “Senior Safe NYC” workshop at Search and Care.

“Ever heard of check-washing?” asked Officer Nuccio. “People steal checks directly from USPS mailboxes, and can erase your name and dollar amount. If you must send a check, use the safety pen provided to you in your gift bag.”

Attendees listened with rapt attention as Officer Nuccio spoke about many other issues, including burglars posing as utility workers to gain entry to your home, or how to freeze your credit—making it impossible for thieves to open accounts in your name.

“In the gift bag,” Officer Nuccio said, “we also included a crime prevention booklet with a lot of good tips, and a safety bracelet with an alarm. It’s very, very loud.”

After a question and answer session, an attendee, Mr. R, thanked Tianna and Officer Nuccio for organizing the workshop. “There are a lot of scammers out there preying on older people,” he said. “It’s been really helpful learning about how we can protect ourselves!”

Did you know that the health risks of elder loneliness are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes per day?

—Harvard Health Publishing

If you’d like to volunteer as a companion, please call Robin Strashun at (212) 289-5300.
WHAT WE DO
SEARCH AND CARE’S RANGE OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Care Management: Care Managers arrange for benefits and entitlements, homecare, transportation; advocate in housing, legal, and medical matters.

Mental Health Specialist: Empathically listens and counsels; connects clients to resources; intervenes during crises; supports clients facing depression, anxiety, bereavement, and substance use.

Cognitive Care: Helps the memory-impaired and cognitively diminished; provides opportunities for caregiver support.

Money Matters/Budget Assistance Program: Field Financial Navigators (retired bankers) help organize documents, pay bills, create monthly budgets, disperse money, reduce debts, mitigate elder exploitation.

Pets & Elders Together (PET): Provides pet upkeep and care; emergency food and supplies; identification of trusted “pet fosters” when clients are in distress; educational workshops for senior pet parents.

Senior Computer Education: Silver Circles offers one-on-one and group tutorials on the ABCs of using computers, tablets, cell phones, and more—brings technology to a forgotten generation.

Nursing: Agency RN and RN Graduate Interns educate seniors about their medications, make homes safer, provide discharge follow-up care, offer health and wellness tips, and provide emotional support.

Medical Escorting: Carefully vetted escorts safely accompany older people from their homes to vital physician appointments, and back.

Therapeutic Groups and Enrichment Activities: Tea & Creativity, Medical Rap, Lunch Bunch, Movie Matinée, La Hora del Cafecito, Newsroom, Active Minds, Wednesday Walkers, Mind Body Soul Initiative, Pet Parent Workshops.

Volunteerism: 175 intergenerational, multicultural volunteers offer companionship, shopping/errands, prescription pickups, friendly strolls, tech tutorials.

Telephonic Monitoring: Weekly check-ins with seniors on our radar but not currently receiving active services are conducted.

Occupational Therapy: Columbia Univ. Occupational Therapy interns reduce apartment risks, prevent falls, increase comfort, and address safety issues.

Homecare: Two agency homecare workers shop, clean/declutter, launder clothes, cook, and accompany clients to vital appointments when needed.

Annual Holiday Pet Stocking: Brightens our clients’ and their pets’ lives.

Spread Some Cheer: 100+ volunteers visit our most isolated and lonely clients—for many, their only visitor(s) during the holidays.

iChoose: Mentorship program at Central Park East High School and an East Harlem housing complex—engages seniors who impart their sage wisdom and positive values to teens, encouraging healthy decision-making.

Emergency Safety Closet: Provide free supplies to improve clients’ stability and comfort upon discharge from hospitals and rehab facilities.

Community Sentinels: Help us identify older neighbors who may need our agency’s care, while striving to create more age-friendly communities.

In FY18, Search and Care was awarded GuideStar’s “Gold Seal of Transparency.” In addition, the agency was awarded Charity Navigator’s “4-Star Highest Rating” (sixth year in a row) for “adhering to best practices and executing its mission in a financially efficient way.” Only 7% of nonprofits evaluated achieved this, “indicating that Search and Care outperforms most other charities in America.”

Karyn Exilus, a Silver Circles Senior Computer Education Coordinator, arranged summer one-on-one computer coaching for seniors at NYC Council Member Ben Kallos’s office. “I led two informative 45-minute sessions each week,” she said. “Seniors asked for help with a lot of different things, from using email for the first time, to transferring photos from an old computer to send to family members.” One woman, Ms. K—a children’s book author—wanted to learn how to use Google Docs so she could store and work on her writing in the cloud. “Can’t wait to read your book!” Karyn said as Ms. K grinned.

Ms. C, a woman Karyn helped install the NextDoor app on her tablet, practically lives next door to Karyn. “We were chatting while installing the app to sell old camping gear when Ms. C happened to mention she lives on Roosevelt Island. ‘Well so do I!’ I informed her.” (And Ben Kallos represents Roosevelt Island, too.)

Karyn emphasized that seniors not only appreciated the computer help, but enjoyed talking with someone. “When I help clients, socializing may not be the main reason they come, but most seem to enjoy chatting. I think that’s a good thing.”