



SEARCH AND CARE: 50 YEARS YOUNG

It was 1972; The Godfather had come out, Nixon had just visited China, and though the Knicks had made the NBA finals for the second time in three years, New York was in trouble. A resident of Yorkville, Reverend Clarke Oler was growing increasingly aware of the dire situation faced by older adults in his parish. As the news filled with stories of adversity, Oler decided it was time to act, and set to founding an organization which would help older adults. He teamed up with LMSW Sue Chandler and together they established Search and Care. In those early days, the organization's team of four would at times go door to door to check on older adults in Yorkville. Their ethic and dedication would create a ripple effect which has molded Search and Care into the agency it is today.

The best life you can live is a life of service. — Esther Henderson

In 1990, Esther Henderson was brought on as a "Teen Shopper," a position originally designed for teenagers as a part-time job after school. Soon, Esther—now a Care Manager—was working full-time for the agency and became famed for her thoughtful and patient demeanor with clients. "I had so many life experiences while working at Search and Care. The best life you can live is a life of service; once you're content, you can thrive." Esther became a key figure in the organization, welcoming years of employees and clients through Search and Care's doors.

A decade later in 2000, Susan Siroto, LCSW, joined the organization and is now the Clinical Director. She's proud of Search and Care for continuing to provide real, comprehensive care management directly in the client's home. She is happiest when she can help achieve favorable endings to challenging cases and is pleased to have initiated the annual "Holiday Pet Stocking"

packages for clients. "Members of the staff go out of their way to attend to and accommodate clients," Susan said. "I hope the agency continues to provide good, intensive care management and individualized care well into the future."

BRIAN KRAVITZ, RETIRING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: 17 YEARS OF SERVICE

Bet you didn't know... Search and Care, 50 years young, was founded way back in 1972 as a small church-based outreach program helping Yorkville's older residents age in place. Today we employ over 30, offering nearly 20 essential, often unduplicated services—many provided directly in the home. From our original 10 block radius, today we reach deeply into more than 100 New York City blocks, encompassing Yorkville, Carnegie Hill, East Harlem and now the Upper West Side. Last year alone, nearly 1,400 vulnerable older adults sought out our empathic, comprehensive care which enabled them to age independently without having to consider more daunting choices such as skilled nursing facilities, assisted living, or moving in with relatives.

Search and Care runs the gamut: from helping clients secure vital benefits and entitlements (e.g., Meals on Wheels), to "Talkin' It Out" informal counseling, pet upkeep, financial oversights, medical escorting, technology tutelage, homecare, nursing, occupational therapy, daily enrichment and therapeutic groups, emergency groceries to address food insecurities, and even a Handyman On-Call. Every single one of these services has always been fee-free! In short, our caring multidisciplinary team of professionals strives to offer everything an older person might need to live safely in their cherished home and community—with security, quality of life, and peace of mind.

Robin Strashun entered the fold in 2005 as Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator, also overseeing "Pets + Elders Together" and "Medical Escorting," both of which are mainstays in Search and Care's programming today. Robin is passionate about client care after more than 18 years with the organization. "People are not projects, nor are they black and white. There are different nuances of care. We do one thing really well; acute, focused delivery of individualized in-home services."

Esther, Susan, and Robin are now integral to the Search and Care family. When the founding Executive Director Sue retired and needed help, it was Esther who became her Care Manager—committed to helping Sue live comfortably in her last years. Just as Sue and Reverend Oler originally intended, Search and Care is still dedicated to making sure no older person falls through the cracks.

How do we do this? It's all thanks to our loyal donors and funders. Perhaps you believe Search and Care's model is unique, and that your contributions will make a huge difference. Our promise to you is that they do! We spend every dollar we raise prudently, to yield the most good for our clients' wellbeing.

With this said, I enthusiastically welcome LMSW Aaron Rooney, Search and Care's new Executive Director. With Aaron at the helm, I feel confident our agency will be in good hands.

The experience of guiding this wonderful agency has been an honor and a joy, and I thank you all for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. As I retire and look back on 17 years as Search and Care's Executive Director, it sure seems like it has gone by "in a New York Minute." I am no longer the young man I was back then, and as time marches on, I ask myself *how did I ever become that senior citizen, too?* It's a community I feel lucky to be a part of, and I'm grateful that if I ever need them, Search and Care will be there for me.

I close by asking you, dear donors and friends, to keep supporting Search and Care—a nearly 90% privately funded agency—so that we will continue to raise the funding necessary to humanely serve more of New York City's vulnerable and increasingly homebound older adults who will surely need us in the future.

With my simple but heartfelt thank you.
Warmly,
Brian

WINTER 2022 CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF FEE-FREE, IN-HOME CARE

“My office has worked closely with Search and Care on many cases, and I know how important their work is to my constituents and so many other New Yorkers.”
 — New York State Senator Liz Krueger

Vivid Memories of Search and Care 33 Years Later



REV. VAL OGDEN IN THE BACK RIGHT, WITH STAFF, 1989

Reverend Doctor Val Ogden is one of Boston, England’s foremost clergy. She has dedicated her life to serving the people around her. In 1989, before her years in the Church, she travelled across the Atlantic to spend a summer in New York, a trip which would change her life.

In the late 80s, Search and Care was still a small agency focused primarily on providing services to older adults in Yorkville. The agency actively recruited volunteers to make home visits to vulnerable older adults. A far less connected world

with her coworkers and clients. The experience, she says, was “transformative.”

During a recent visit, Val said, “For me it all started at Search and Care. Those months delivering people groceries, checking up on them in their homes inspired me to live the life I do today.” She was delighted that everyone—from full-time staff to volunteers—strove to provide kind, caring, personal care for older neighbors. She emphasized that her experience more than 30 years ago still informs her pastoral work with older people to this day.

“Thirty years later my memory of Search and Care remains vivid, joyous, and fills me with gratitude.” — Rev. Val Ogden

than today, checking in door-to-door was a key component to identify older people in need. (A cornerstone of our model to this day!) With its community-based mission and focus on individuals, Search and Care was a perfect match for the ambitious Val, whose affinity for charitable work drew her to our agency.

For the next three months, Val worked closely with Executive Director Sue Chandler and Search and Care’s team, developing close relationships

As Val ended her visit, she left with a parting note which captures the ethos Search and Care has worked so hard to maintain over its 50 years. “Staff and clients were so professional and hospitable, so kind to the ‘English girl.’ Thirty years later my memory of Search and Care remains vivid, joyous, and fills me with gratitude.”

All the Best in 2023

People and Pets Aging in Place Together

The sounds of deep baritones and Care’s mission to our older and soft tenors often floated through Mr. R’s Upper East Side apartment as he listened to the operas of Puccini, Verdi and Mozart. Characterized by staff at Search and Care as a lovely man—artistic, creative, and joyful—Mr. R lived alone, except for a small black-and-white spotted cat named Alejandro. Mr. R often said that Alejandro “taught him how to love again.”

Yet the work hasn’t been easy. With generous support, Search and Care defrays the costs of critical surgeries, veterinary visits, grooming, pet food and supplies; facilitates monthly “Pet Pro Workshops” with animal experts; encourages advanced pet planning; and more. PET has already seen a major expansion from its genesis. With support from PetSmart Charities—in collaboration with PAWS NY and Animal Haven—Robin is encouraging social service agencies, hospitals, and other organizations throughout NYC to add pets to their client/patient intake forms—relieving a major source of stress during trying times.

As he aged, Mr. R gradually lost the ability to care for his beloved Alejandro. Mr. R’s severe arthritis made it impossible for him to bend down to feed him or give him water. Suddenly, the loving relationship that had formed between the two fell into jeopardy as Mr. R succumbed to the effects of old age, and so in his and Alejandro’s time of need, he called Search and Care.

Mr. R wasn’t the first person to

—Kindly Support—
SearchandCare.org/Donate



Mr. R, Alejandro, and PET Volunteer

reach out to Search and Care about helping a pet. Around 15 years ago, our agency began receiving regular calls for aid as older adults struggled to care for their animals. R’s home for years. Eventually, when Robin Strashun became the point person for these requests and has a deep passion for the wellbeing of animals and their older pet parents—even adopting several animals from clients who passed away! More than a decade later, PET continues to extend Search

Search and Care is dedicated to providing the same level of care offered to Alejandro and Mr. R. The two were able to live happily in Mr. R’s home for years. Eventually, when Mr. R became sick during the pandemic, he was terrified that his kitty would be alone without him. With a support system established, Search and Care fulfilled Mr. R’s most meaningful wish—finding a loving home for his best friend and family, Alejandro.