



## Fellowship Square

### During Older Americans Month, Let's Pay Attention to the Rising Levels of Housing Instability and Homelessness As Many Financially Vulnerable Seniors "Age into Poverty"

*Older adults are at greater risk of homelessness than ever before. Local volunteers, donors and community groups helping older adults with limited resources to be recognized by affordable housing provider Fellowship Square at May 20 appreciation event.*

May 17, 2023 – Reston, Va. – During Older Americans Month in May, [Fellowship Square](#) is recognizing and celebrating the diverse community support its senior affordable housing communities receive from hundreds of faith organizations, nonprofits, companies, schools, agencies and individuals across the region that volunteer time and resources to ensure that its residents with extremely low income levels can live with dignity and independence, regardless of their financial circumstances. Amid [increasing housing insecurity](#) among older adults, Fellowship Square provides affordable housing to 850+ financially vulnerable older adults across its affordable apartment communities in Reston and Woodbridge in Virginia, and Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Residents of the Fellowship Houses – many who live on Social Security or Supplemental Security Income alone, with an average annual fixed-income of \$10,000/year – pay no more than 30 percent of their income toward their housing costs with the help of HUD subsidies as well as the support of the larger local communities.

President Biden wrote in his 2023 Older Americans Month [proclamation](#): 'On this 60th anniversary of Older Americans Month, we honor our Nation's senior citizens, whose lifetimes of hard work, devotion to family, and commitment to community have laid the foundation for the country we are today. We have a rock-solid responsibility to ensure our Nation's seniors can age with dignity and financial security.' However, older adults today are at [greater risk of homelessness](#) than at any time in recent history. As housing prices and healthcare expenses have exploded nationally and locally, older fixed-income renters are getting squeezed out and have fewer and fewer options. According to a recent Housing America's Older Adults report, the share of homeless individuals age 50+ jumped from [22.9% to 33.8%](#) in 2007–2017. The number of people age 62+ living in emergency shelters or transitional housing also rose by 69% percent over that same period.

"Today, only [1 in 3 eligible seniors receive housing assistance](#) because funding levels for affordable housing have not kept pace with demand. There is much progress to be made, federally and locally. At the same time, I'm pleased to share that so many in our hometowns of Reston (Hunters Woods Fellowship House, Lake Anne House), Woodbridge (Lake Ridge Fellowship House) and Upper Marlboro (Largo Landing Fellowship House) step up to the plate each and every day to ensure that the seniors in our Fellowship House communities are aging not just with dignity and independence, but with a richness of programs and opportunities to remain engaged and active," said Fellowship Square CEO Christy Zeitz. Local community support has included:

- **Medical Support:** The [Fenwick Foundation Dental Clinic](#) sends its mobile clinic to Fellowship Square's communities, providing thousands of dollars of free dental care to residents. The [Lake Ridge Rotary Club](#) supports eye exams and prescription glasses for residents at the Lake Ridge Fellowship House in Woodbridge, so residents there receive much needed services at no cost. A range of volunteers lead nutrition workshops, cooking classes, yoga, tai chi and more.
- **Legal Assistance:** [Wills on Wheels](#) sends lawyers to Fellowship Square properties to assist residents with estate planning tools like wills, trusts, and other legal documents to help them protect the few assets they have and relieve some of the financial burden on their families after they're gone.
- **Meals & Food:** All Fellowship Square communities receive food donations from organizations including [Capital Area Food Bank](#), [Cornerstones](#), [Panera Bread](#), [Whole Foods](#), and [Catholic Charities](#). Many local faith-

based organizations and community groups – such as **Christ the Servant Lutheran Church** and **United Christian Parish** (Fairfax Co., Va.), **Grace Lutheran Church** and **Lake Ridge Baptist** (Prince William Co., Va.), **Alexander Memorial Baptist Church** and **Greater Mt Nebo AME Church** (Prince George’s Co., Md), – regularly help with distribution, preparing and serving holiday meals, and more.

- **Community Activities:** Local nonprofit [Music To Free](#) leads monthly handbell classes at Hunters Woods Fellowship House in Reston, organizes resident recitals, and gives out tickets to local concerts in the community. The [Reston/Herndon Rotary Club](#) hosts monthly birthday parties at Lake Anne House and Hunters Woods Fellowship House, while Reston’s [South Lakes High School](#) has hosted “Paint and Sip” programs there. The oldest garden club in Eastern Prince William County, the [Trowel Garden Club](#), runs garden clubs at Lake Ridge Fellowship House, and Woodbridge-based [Tema Choir USA](#) has performed and volunteered there. Across all properties, a broad range of volunteers and volunteer groups run game nights, arts workshops, bible study groups, and holiday celebrations.

### **Honoring Community Support & Volunteers on May 20**

“Every President since [Kennedy has issued a formal proclamation](#) each May encouraging the nation to celebrate the countless ways that older adults enrich our communities and our country. At Fellowship Square, we are taking that a step further by not only celebrating the older adult residents of our properties and larger communities, but also celebrating the vast network of supporters, volunteers and donors who do so much – every day of every month – to support vulnerable seniors,” said Zeitz. Fellowship Square staff and residents will be honoring this broad network for supporters at an appreciation event on Saturday, May 20th at Lake Anne House in Reston.

[See a full list of local community organizations](#) that support Fellowship Square and its residents.

### **About Fellowship Square**

Fellowship Square, a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is one of the leading local providers of affordable housing and services to low-income seniors, owning 670 units (240 of them jointly) and serving more than 850 older adults. Through HUD funding and vouchers, residents of Fellowship Houses – many who live on Social Security or Supplemental Security Income alone, with an average annual fixed-income of \$10,000/year – pay no more than 30 percent of their income toward their housing costs, including rent and a utility allowance. Through professionally managed apartment communities, programming, and services, Fellowship Square ensures that residents have the support they need to live independent and fulfilling lives even in the face of serious obstacles, such as the high costs of housing in the greater Washington DC area. For more information on Fellowship Square housing options, volunteer opportunities or donations, contact [fellowshipsquare.org](http://fellowshipsquare.org), 703.860.2536 or [info@fellowshipsquare.org](mailto:info@fellowshipsquare.org).

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Reporters interested in covering or photographing the event, contact [Judy Singer](#)

**Interview opportunity:** Speak with Fellowship Square CEO Christy Zeitz about the unique housing issues local seniors face, causes underlying the rising homelessness in older adults. and affordable housing trends, challenges and opportunities in the DC region.

**Additional resources:** HUD Office of Policy Development & Research: [Housing for Seniors: Challenges and Solutions](#); Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies: [Housing America’s Older Adults](#); Census.gov stats on [older Americans and aging](#); American Society on Aging: [Homelessness Among Older Adults - An Emerging Crisis](#); Justice in Aging: [How to Prevent and End Homelessness Among Older Adults](#)