

Resilient & Unwavering

Annual Highlights Report
FY2020

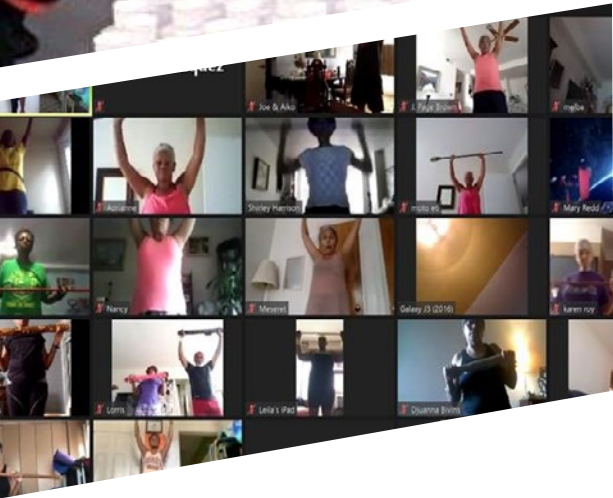




Turbulent & Challenging Year

This past year was—without question—a turbulent and challenging year: impeachment proceedings, a roller-coaster economy, global pandemic, civil unrest and demands for social justice.

The one constant, however, has been PSS's unwavering commitment to carrying out its mission and supporting its clients. Through it all, the staff of PSS were successfully able to pivot and respond. More importantly, the lessons learned have been shaped into best practices and new strategies so that PSS is ultimately transformed into an even more effective and responsive organization.





Unwavering Commitment

In October 2019, PSS took its Tenth Center—PSS Highbridge Gardens—under its wing. The goal of all of our Centers is to help older adults stay “healthy, engaged and connected”.

Our Centers do this for hundreds every single day through our expansive programming. From arts and culture, computer classes, health and exercise and more, PSS Centers offer something for anyone and everyone...at no cost. The most important part is the family that each client automatically joins when they become a Center member.

During the height of the pandemic, PSS staff were unrelenting in their commitment to helping older adults. Under the City’s quarantine, all senior centers found themselves suddenly closed but PSS Center staff quickly rallied to provide grab and go meals for a few more weeks.

Shortly thereafter, Centers began providing urgently needed pantry boxes, household supplies and Personal Protective Equipment to the City’s most vulnerable elderly. Centers also found alternative ways to support their members in maintaining a sense of normalcy in an otherwise very uncertain world. Some Centers sent daily activities like puzzles and word searches to members along with pantry boxes. Others delivered craft supplies that were then used in creative group projects via Zoom. All Centers found innovative ways to interact through different mediums ranging from telephone apps like WhatsApp to connect with friends to Zoom for virtual learning.



Lifelong Learning

Formally launched in January 2019, [PSS Life! University](#) quickly proved to be a powerful and effective community education portal.

By offering informative presentations and engaging events at no cost, this unique and robust program has attracted thousands of participants from all five boroughs and even beyond. In the first six months of FY2020, Life! U offered over 250 different events on a wide range of topics to nearly 3,000 participants.

After NYC was abruptly quarantined in March, our dedicated volunteer “faculty”—the instructors and presenters of Life! U—immediately switched to providing their valuable information virtually via Zoom. Many wildly popular webinars “sold out” as registration exceeded capacity on topics such as [“An Overview of NYC’s Services for Older Adults”](#) presented by DFTA Commissioner Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez and her staff, and the March 23 presentation [“Covid-19: What Older Adults and Caregivers Need to Know”](#) by Dr. Aparna Chopra, Weill Cornell. To help the PSS community remain

healthy, Life! U offered online wellness events on Stress Reduction, Chair Yoga and Pain Management. Attorneys specializing in Elder Law provided instruction on Medicaid, Estate Planning and Home Care Advocacy, while experts from Senior Planet and Candoo Tech presented a series on [“Staying Connected While Social Distancing”](#).

This year, PSS was excited that the nonprofit program Money Made Simple officially took up residence as a formal partner of PSS Life! U. Money Made Simple provides personal finance educational sessions that support PSS’s mission to strengthen the capacity of older New Yorkers by helping them make informed financial decisions. In April and June, PSS hosted its popular webinar [“Managing Your Finances in These Uncertain Times: 5 Simple Actions You Can Take”](#), presented by Anthea Perkinson, CFP, EA, Director and Content Developer, Money Made Simple.



Launching Dementia Friendly Communities

PSS Circle of Care began the fiscal year by launching a “Dementia Friendly Community” (DFC) in every borough.

The PSS DFC Initiative is PSS’s innovative effort to build a community’s capacity to support both those suffering from memory loss and those who care for them. Over the past year, communities in Melrose (the Bronx), St. Albans (Queens), East Flatbush (Brooklyn), the South Shore (Staten Island), along with Morningside Heights (Manhattan) were engaged. Furthermore, Dementia Friendly America—a national network of those seeking to ensure that communities across the U.S. are equipped to support people living with dementia and their caregivers—welcomed PSS Circle of Care as a member.

We are equally proud of the Circle of Care team’s response to the COVID-19 crisis. When COVID-19 hit NYC in March, PSS Circle of Care staff were positioned to quickly adapt to a quarantined city. Care Consultants make it a priority to maintain contact with their clients, conducting regular wellness checks via phone, email and Zoom.

Through PSSLife! University’s platform we now offer a wide range of virtual programs including classes, support groups, wellness events, and joint enrichment opportunities that both the caregiver and their care partner can engage in together.

Circle of Care is incorporating the best practices of this new virtual reality into our ongoing services to family caregivers. For example, Staten Island staff coordinated a virtual forum during which caregivers talked about their experiences as a caregiver for someone with memory loss during COVID-19. They are also developing an ongoing *PSS Dementia Friendly Community Resource Hour* during which relevant information and resources are shared. PSS staff have transformed the COVID-19 crisis to an opportunity to make our services even more accessible, relevant and effective. We are eager to embrace the challenges we confront in this “new normal!”



Reclaiming Passion & Purpose

Coming of Age witnessed incredible growth this past year as it expanded into cultural and literary events, genealogy, intergenerational conversations, as well as highlighting women over 50 who are embracing opportunities to grow and thrive.

Diverse workshops on reclaiming passion and purpose, personal evolution and the chemistry of happiness were especially popular. With the expansion of its webinar events, Coming of Age is reaching a much larger audience.

The Men's Group grew from regular monthly meetings to include outside socializing and then bi-weekly Zoom meetings once the pandemic hit. It has even spun off an independent men's group.

The highlight of 2019 was a collaborative event with nonprofits Encore.org, CSS/RSVP and ReServe Inc. producing a sold-out event "Ageful Talent: Tapping into the Unlimited Potential of NYC's Older Adults". Author/activist Ashton Applewhite's keynote challenged the audience to claim their power and potential to make a difference and rise above ageism. This event showcased our respective outreach to older New Yorkers.

Coming of Age continues to offer its signature series of four interactive, facilitator-led Explore Your Future workshops, engaging participants in rich dialogue, posing self-reflective questions, and helping participants set S.M.A.R.T. goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and TimeBound) to explore their passion and purpose.

To learn more visit our website at www.comingofagenyc.org.

Special thanks to Rutgers Presbyterian Church for its generous support and donating valuable space for the PSS administrative offices.

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