

THE SHEPHERD'S CENTER OF RICHMOND GRAY MATTERS

DECEMBER 2024

OLDER ADULTS, ACTIVE & ENGAGED

Meet New Staff Member Myra Isaacs

Myra Isaacs has been delighted to call Richmond home since 1991. She has lived in such disparate geographic areas as Atlanta, Georgia; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Madison, Wisconsin; northern New Jersey and New York City, as she pursued both educational and professional opportunities.



Myra Isaacs,
Client Services
Coordinator

Committed to lifelong learning and community improvement, Myra has served in a number of mission-driven organizations, including United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg, Virginia Supportive Housing, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Senior Center of Greater Richmond, and the School of Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University. In each position, she facilitated stakeholder participation, community outreach, volunteer coordination, and education and programming. She also served as a patient advocate for the Bon Secours Hospital System and program analyst with the Virginia Medicaid system.

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TOP NEWS

- NEW STAFF MEMBER
- PAULEY FAMILY FOUNDATION GRANT
- GUIDED AUTOBIOGRAPHY WORKSHOP WITH JOHN COUNTRYMAN

Shepherd's Center Receives Pauley Family Foundation Grant

Taking client ride requests and ensuring we have enough volunteer drivers to meet these needs is a cornerstone of the services The Shepherd's Center provides for seniors. Coordinating transportation, however, is both labor-intensive and time-consuming. For the past decade, our small but dedicated staff has juggled these vital client services alongside their primary job responsibilities.

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Myra Isaacs, cont.

Myra is passionate about healthcare and the role of health in issues of social justice and community building. Her gift is being an effective communicator and networker; using those skills for both friend-raising and fund-raising for causes to which she is committed. An alumna of the University of Michigan and Georgia State University, Myra earned advanced degrees in Health Services Administration and Business as well as a B.A. in City Planning and Urban Design from New York University.

With a love for music and the theater, Myra rehearses and performs with two community choirs - the Henrico Pops Chorus and the Good Vibrations Chorus, performing in the Glen Allen Cultural Arts Center, The Henrico Theater, and in retirement communities throughout the Richmond area. She volunteers as an usher for Altria and the Dominion Energy Center. Seasonally, she can be found happily tending her vegetable and herb garden and donating extra produce to food banks. An avid animal enthusiast, she relishes time with her 3 rescue cats (all siblings found abandoned in a feral colony by a cat rescue organization). Bottled for their first few months, they adore all humans. Her two adult children reside out of town - a son in Chicago and a daughter living overseas.

Pauley Family Foundation Grant, cont.

This year, we were fortunate to find a solution for this challenge thanks to the generosity of The Pauley Family Foundation.

Known for its commitment to education, health, and human services in the Richmond region, the Foundation invited The Shepherd's Center to apply for a grant to fund a part-time Client Services Coordinator position. To our delight, the grant was approved, and the funds became available to turn this vision into reality.

In September 2024, we welcomed Myra Isaacs to our team as our new Client Services Coordinator. Myra has dedicated herself to building strong connections with both our wonderful clients and our devoted volunteer drivers. Since joining us, she has helped recruit and train 12 new drivers, with plans to bring many more on board.

Thanks to Myra's efforts—and the support of The Pauley Family Foundation—we are better positioned to meet the growing transportation needs of seniors in our community. Her contributions ensure that we can continue this vital service for years to come, and for that, we are truly grateful.

New Building,
New Growth



Guided Autobiography Course with John Countryman

We are pleased to announce a new workshop being offered through the Center, featuring our very own Lifelong Learning Coordinator, John Countryman. Complete details are below. You can register for the workshop at the bottom of this page.

Guided Autobiography Workshop

When:

Fridays

February 14 – April 18, 2025

9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Where:

The Shepherd's Center of Richmond
5101 Monument Ave. Suite 105
Richmond, VA, 23230

What is "Guided Autobiography?"

Recognized worldwide, Guided Autobiography (GAB) was developed by Dr. James Birren, a gerontologist at the University of Southern California, to encourage individuals to document their life stories.

In GAB workshops, participants are led through themes and priming questions that evoke memories of life events. Over a period of ten weeks, participants will write two-page stories on life themes and read them to a small group of receptive classmates.

The Guided Autobiography environment is a safe space for individuals to organically connect over shared experiences and at the

same time create the foundation for a theme-based life-story document.

Participants will also be invited to submit one of their stories to the next anthology of GAB stories produced by the Birren center.

Who are the instructors?

The workshop will be led by Certified Guided Autobiography instructor and gerontologist John Countryman and gerontology and GAB student Grace Holliman.

What is the cost?

This workshop is open to new and existing Shepherd's Center members (\$25/year), to those who register for winter 2025 classes, and to those who registered for the 2024/2025 Fall Tuition Deal.

How do I register?

Registration is required. The course will be limited to eight participants on a first-come, first-served basis. To register call the Center's office at 804-355-7282.

Questions? Email John Countryman at countryman@tscor.org

Events!

VA War Memorial Tour

Members of the Center met at the Virginia War Memorial on Nov. 12th for a free guided tour followed by lunch at TJ's at the Jefferson Hotel.

Events! will take a pause during December, but keep an eye out for upcoming Events! in January and beyond.



Open University Japanese Language Students Gather



Sabine Horn, Open University instructor.

The Beginning Japanese class met at the home of sensei (teacher) Sabine Horn last month for pizza and a movie. Everyone brought a dish to share for lunch.

We were having so much fun visiting and getting to know one another better that we almost forgot to watch the movie.

The movie was "Sweet Bean" a heartwarming story about the simple joys of life. It was shown in Japanese with English subtitles. Sabine graciously provided us with a translated vocabulary of many phrases from the movie. It was encouraging to see how many of the phrases we could understand. Tanoshikatta! (It was fun!)

Jamie Coomer

Open University student, Shepherd's Center board member



Annual Drivers Meeting



Julie Adams-Buchanan talks to volunteers during the Drivers meeting.

On Wednesday, November 13th, we held our Annual Drivers Meeting at our new location, 5101 Monument Avenue. The event saw an enthusiastic turnout with 22 RSVPs from both new and experienced drivers, who were joined by staff and several Board members.

The meeting provided an opportunity to review best practices, share valuable tips from our seasoned drivers, and listen to some entertaining stories from the road, as our drivers reflected on the rewarding connections they've made with our wonderful and appreciative clients.

In addition to the heartfelt moments, we also heard about the lasting friendships formed between drivers and clients—connections that go beyond transportation and touch lives in meaningful ways.

As always, the gathering was a warm and social occasion. Everyone enjoyed connecting with one another over homemade baked goods, including some delicious gluten-free options.

Attendees were also encouraged to consider attending Open University classes, where they can engage in presentations on hobbies and areas of expertise they're passionate about.

Additionally, we invited our drivers to spread the word about volunteer opportunities. We are eager to expand our volunteer base and are asking drivers to encourage their family members, friends, and members of their civic or religious organizations to consider joining us as volunteer drivers.

The Center is excited to open up our client waiting list and begin serving more seniors in the community, as we train new volunteers to help us meet the growing demand.

Myra Isaacs
Client Services Coordinator

Ornamental Grace

Recently, my husband shared a simple yet charming design for an ornament he had created. When I expressed my enthusiasm, he asked if I would like him to make one for each member of the Shepherd's Center board of directors and staff. While his offer warmed my heart, I hesitated, given how many he would have to make. Without missing a beat, he responded, "That's fine, I would like to show my gratitude to the Shepherd's Center for helping you to age with grace." And then I got a hug! What a guy!



Though I might dispute the "graceful" aspect, being part of this remarkable organization has truly been both an honor and a joy. The board, volunteers, and staff have invested countless hours to enrich the Richmond community. It has been my privilege to know these dedicated individuals, both professionally and personally.

While this may not define "aging with grace," it certainly keeps me invigorated and continually striving to do more. And the fact that my husband, Gene, perceives the value of this chapter of my life is yet another cherished gift. So, to both Gene and the Center, my heartfelt thanks.

*Pam Atwood,
The Shepherd's Center board secretary*



Gene and Pam Atwood

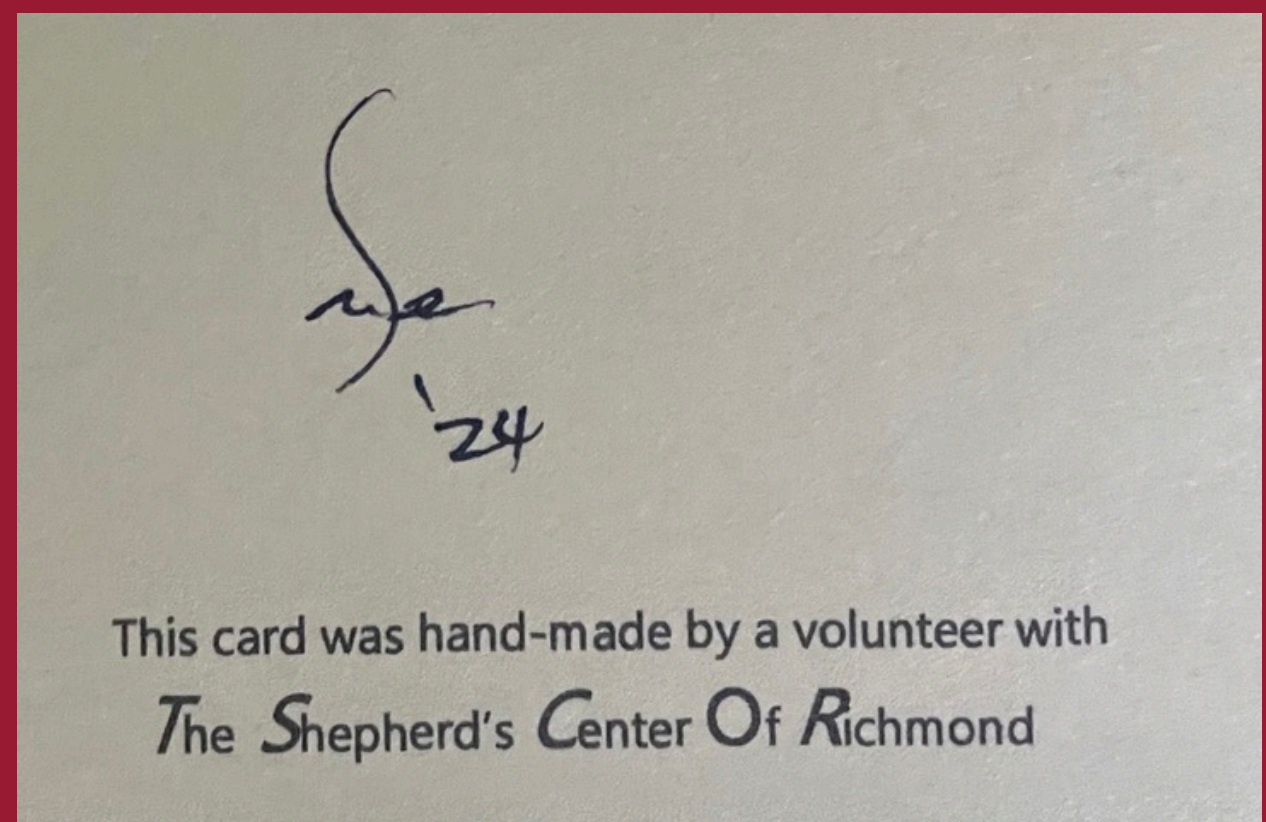
The Beauty of Thanks

For several years, the Development committee has been provided with beautiful hand-made thank-you cards to send to select donors. These cards are made by talented Shepherd's Center volunteer, Sue McLain. Thank you, Sue!



*Your support makes
what we do possible.*

The front, inside and verso (clockwise from top right) of this year's hand-made thank-you cards by Shepherd's Center volunteer, Sue McLain.



The winter session of Open University begins Monday, January 13, 2025. See the schedule and register online at tscor.org

***NEW* Open University Inclement Weather Policy**

In the past, Open University has followed the weather cancellations of local school systems; however, a new policy is now in place. In the event of inclement weather, Shepherd's Center leadership will make the determination. Closings and delays will be announced via email to our students and volunteers.



Annual Campaign

What an incredible year it has been! Last year I promised growth - and thanks to you - we delivered. We have reached significant milestones that lay a solid foundation for the future of The Shepherd's Center of Richmond. Starting with moving into an expanded office on Monument Avenue, establishing a new Open University location at Lakeside United Methodist Church in Northside, increasing course offerings and seeing more participation at Open University, and welcoming new volunteers and members - this truly has been a year of "New Building, New Growth!"

Personally, as a volunteer driver, an Open University instructor, and as president of the Board of Directors, I have seen firsthand the profound impact our programs and services have.

Our donors have always been generous and this year we've set an ambitious annual appeal campaign goal to raise \$50,000. With your continued support, I am confident we can achieve it. Contributing is easy. Simply go to tscor.org and click the "Donate" button in the upper right hand corner.

Thank you for your unwavering support of The Shepherd's Center of Richmond. Together, we're building a stronger, more vibrant community.

Peter C. Pettit
President, Board of Directors

More Ways to Give



Buying the perfect present is not the only way to give. Consider these ideas as you do your holiday shopping this year:

- Don't know what to give to the person who has everything? Make a donation to The Shepherd's Center in their honor.
- Purchase a membership with the Center or winter Open University tuition for a friend.
- Remember the Center in your end-of-year giving. Donations can easily be made online.
- Matching Gifts - make a donation using your employer's matching fund program, if available.

All of these gifts support the Center's mission and makes Richmond a more caring community for older adults. Thank you!

New Building,
New Growth



In Memoriam

We regret that we have been remiss in including this feature in our newsletter for some time. Below are the names of persons who were in some way a part of The Shepherd's Center family and who have since passed away. This list is from January, 2022, through the present day.



Tom Bass
Bev Becker
Martha Cooper
Franz de Kock
John Dunnavant
Mariette Eggleston
Barbara Felton
Jennifer Ferris
Vaughan Gary
Patricia Goad
Bill Griffin
Jane Howells
Robison James
Florence Kvesich
Alberta Lindsey
George Longest
Marion Mahon
Ginny Moretz
John Neblett
James A. Payne
Mary Payne
Barbara Slack
Ursula Sorensen
Frances W. Twiss

Donors *

In-Kind	Hal Costley
General	\$66,368
Clients	\$2,110
Memorials	\$3,100
Bequests	\$10,000
Annual Appeal	\$29,156

Matching Gifts

- Markel Corporation
- Universal Leaf Foundation
- The Benevity Community Impact Fund

Groups

- Lakeside United Methodist Church
Men's Group
Fellowship-Crusader Class
- Grace Baptist Church

Grants

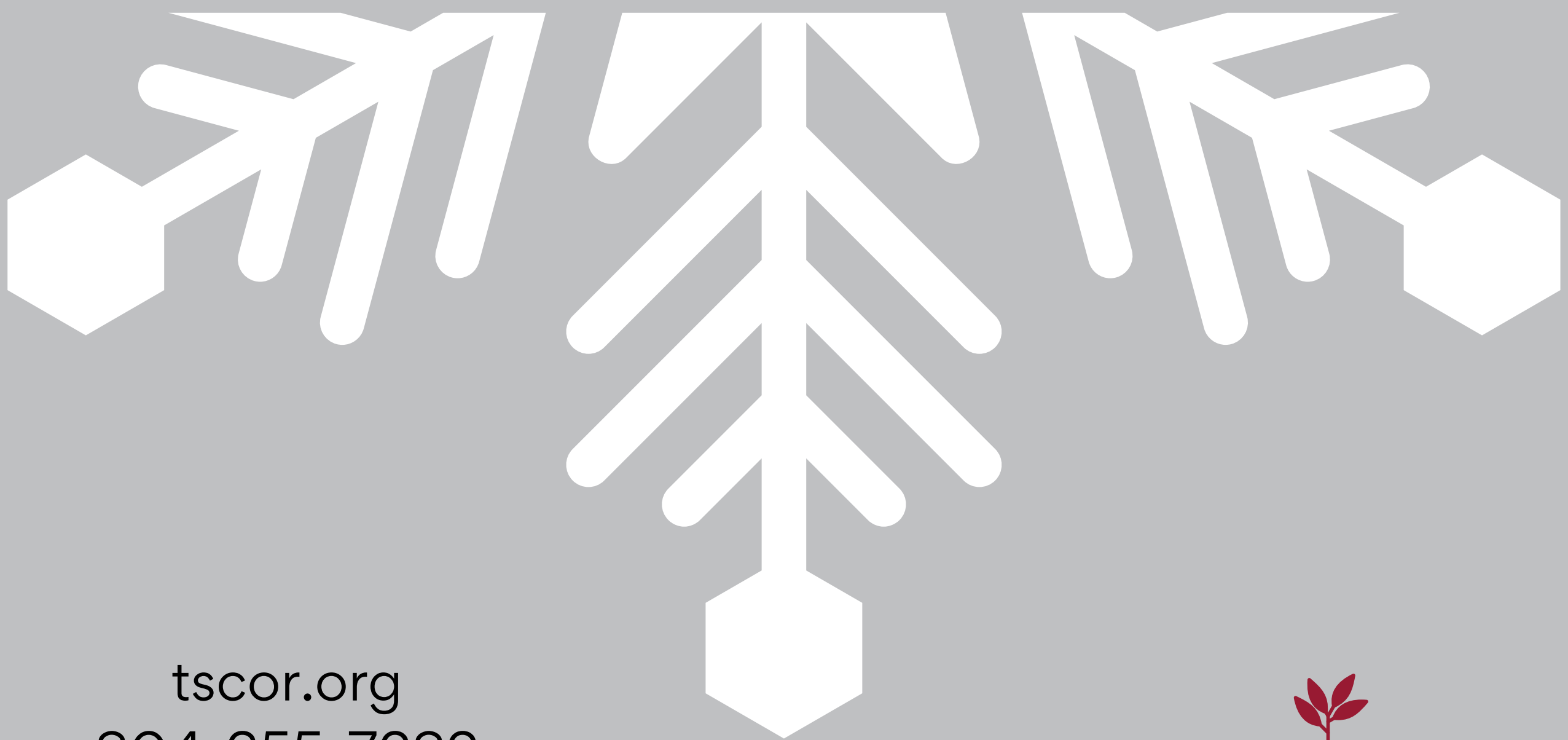
- ITN America
- Pauley Family Foundation
- St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Endowment Fund, Inc
- St. Mary's Catholic Church

*** From 7/1/2024 - 12/13/2024**





Happy Holidays
from The Shepherd's Center of Richmond.
We wish you a joyful season
and a peaceful New Year.



tscor.org
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tscor@tscor.org



New Building, New Growth



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The Shepherd's Center of Richmond

**Encouraging older adults to remain active and independent through
lifelong learning and volunteer service to their peers.**