



# HOMEPORTS, INC. ANNUAL REPORT

2009

HomePorts, Inc.  
P.O. Box 114  
Chestertown, MD 21620

HomePorts is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in the State of Maryland in 2007. For more information call 443-480-0940 or see [www.homeports.org](http://www.homeports.org)

---

*Cover artwork by Deb Brown.*

*Prints available at The Finishing Touch, Chestertown, MD 21620*

HomePorts, Inc. assists in providing services for older adults who want to live independently. For an annual fee, members receive referrals to recommended paid providers as well as access to volunteers for a wide variety of home care and maintenance needs.

### **Board of Directors**

Larry Schroth, Jr.\* - Outgoing President  
Muriel Cole, Vice- President and Incoming President  
Juliana Dulmage, Incoming Vice-President  
Jane Hukill, Secretary  
Charles Hawkins, Treasurer  
Sandra Bjork  
John Durocher  
James Hill\*\*  
Louise O'Brien  
Ladd Rutherford\*  
Suzanne Street  
\*outgoing

John Christie  
Carl Gallegos  
Sandra Willett Jackson\*\*  
Anita Rudnick  
Caroline Schroth  
James Urda\*  
\*\* Incoming

### **Executive Summary**



“AGING IN PLACE”, remaining in one’s own home as we grow old, often requires major adjustments and outside assistance. Recognizing that over 19% of those in Kent County are over 65, a group of local residents has set up a community service to help older adults continue living safely and

comfortably in their own homes. HomePorts, incorporated as a Maryland nonprofit, is a membership organization whose goal is to provide support for those who wish to age at home for as long as possible.

HomePorts is modeled after many similar organizations now operating in other regions of the country. Founding members have studied other such services, which are cited by experts as the wave of the future. The first one in Boston, known as Beacon Hill Village, has been in operation for seven years.

HomePorts' mission is to identify, monitor, and ensure access to a wide range of services. For an annual fee, members have a telephone referral service for needs such as transportation, home maintenance and repairs, yard work, home companion care, housekeeping, pet care, technology assistance, and bill-paying. The Board of Directors has interviewed and approved 49 vendors who are deemed reliable and fairly priced. Many offer

discounts when referred by HomePorts. In addition, a cadre of 43 volunteers is available to help with local transportation, shopping, and home visits.

A total of 54 member households have joined. Members made a total of 58 requests for vendors; the most common services needed were for handymen, home care, and transportation. Volunteers provided 150 hours of assistance, in response to 78 member requests. Many members have indicated that they do not currently need any services, but have joined in order to have the services available in the future.

HomePorts issued a quarterly newsletter and hosted three educational sessions for members, volunteers, and vendors. Assistance in marketing was provided by Washington College's extracurricular organization Students in Free Enterprise. Paid advertising and public service announcements were used to publicize the availability of HomePorts, and a table at the Saturday Farmers Market in Chestertown also attracted potential members.

Throughout 2009 the telephone was staffed full-time by a volunteer Board member. In December 2009 HomePorts hired its first paid staff, Stephanie Sullivan, as Executive Director. The Town of Chestertown has donated office space in the Town Hall, which is staffed part-time.

Membership fees and individual donations of time and money covered most expenses for 2009. However, in order to establish the permanent infrastructure for equipment, promotion, and other overhead expenses, applications were made to several foundations for grants. One grant has been received which has enabled HomePorts to purchase a computer and other equipment and to publish its newsletter monthly in 2010, though it does not cover any salary costs.

In 2010 emphasis will be placed on expanding membership, raising funds, offering educational programs for members, considering help for low-income homeowners, and participating in a new national Village-to-Village Network.

### **Benefits of Membership**

**+ Access to vetted, reliable paid providers for a variety of home maintenance and care needs, often at a discount**

**+ A cadre of volunteers to assist with local transportation, home visits, errands, and chores**

**+ Educational and social opportunities as part of an aging-in-place community**

**Because this is the first Annual Report, background on the program as well as appendices listing HomePorts guidelines is included.**

## **Background**

Presently 19.3% of those living in Kent County are over 65, and the over-85 age group is the fastest growing segment. According to recent AARP studies, most older people want to remain in their own homes, “aging in place”.

A “self-help” approach is being used in a number of communities to assist those who want to age in place. Non-profit membership organizations are being established to link home services with residents who want to live independently. The goal of these organizations is to ensure access to a wide range of vetted services to help members remain safely and comfortably in their own homes as they age. Most act as a referral service for transportation, home maintenance and repairs, home health care, yard work, housekeeping, pet care, and other needs and maintain a cadre of volunteers who offer rides, shopping, and home visits. The pioneer organization, founded in 2002, is Beacon Hill Village in Boston, Massachusetts.

### **Planning for a Kent County aging-in-place organization began in January 2006.**

After reading an article in the AARP Magazine on Beacon Hill Village, Larry and Connie Schroth called an informal meeting on January 5, 2006, at the Union United Methodist Church in Worton to explore the feasibility of establishing a similar program in Kent County. A total of 23 people attended.

A number of those initial participants spent the next two years researching the concept and holding discussions with various local organizations, with leadership provided by Jim Urda and others. Visits were made to Swarthmore, PA, to interview the director of a service there, and guidance was obtained at a national conference in Boston organized by Beacon Hill Village.

In October 2006 the group began a partnership with the Washington College Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) chapter under the direction of James Fouss. The students conducted a market research study, using a phone survey, to determine local interest in various types of services that might be provided.

Two out of three respondents in a randomly-chosen sample of over 160 older residents indicated that, in their opinion, the referral service concept of HomePorts was viable and would be accepted in this area. Those surveyed said they don't want to burden their children (83 percent) but that it's important to stay in their own home as they age (78 percent).

The founding group then raised initial funding to make an application as a Maryland not-for-profit corporation, which was obtained on June 27, 2007. Tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) organization was received from the IRS on September 19, 2007. By-laws were developed, defining the service area as the greater Kent County area, in addition to the Kingstown/Chester Harbor area and Crumpton, with eligibility restricted to those 55 and older.

Assistance was obtained from both SIFE (Washington College) and the local chapter of the Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) in preparing a business plan. Several open meetings were held to refine the concept. Volunteers were recruited, and vendors were interviewed.

The Board of Directors, all local residents, bring a variety of experience and perspectives to the management of the organization. Members include two attorneys, two physicians, and a number of retirees who have spent careers in management, public service, science, real estate, and academia.

### **Limited Operation Research Study**

To test the concept, during the period March 1 through May 31, 2008, HomePorts conducted a pilot program for 18 local households. Sue Urda served as Program Coordinator, staffing the telephone during normal business hours five days per week. Several of the research subjects suffered from a chronic illness; three had a cognitive impairment and are cared for by the spouse or daughter. Sixteen of the 18 owned their homes, one in Rock Hall, three in Queen Anne's County (with a Chestertown address), and the remainder in the Town of Chestertown. Income levels varied significantly.

Services requested and received included airport transportation, Spring landscape assistance, house cleaning, health aide services, and installation of a handicapped access ramp. Households paid for some (professional) services, and volunteers handled other needs.

During the study members of two of the households were in a local nursing home. At the conclusion of the study, all members were in their own homes.

HomePorts helped one family significantly in the process of release from the nursing home and readying their own home for them.

Attention was given to fall prevention, with many of the participants vulnerable to falling in the home. Recognizing that the leading cause of death by accidental injury in those over 65 is from falling, the seniors were encouraged to have free home safety assessments. Eight were performed.

At the end of the study, participants were surveyed to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of the services received, Board members visited each participant to obtain feedback.

The majority of participants were extremely pleased and enthusiastic about becoming members; and results indicate that the HomePorts concept is a viable one for greater Kent County.

A total of eight made use of HomePorts providers during the study. A total of 65 calls were received. On a scale of 1 to 10, the level of satisfaction with the overall value (considering price and quality) of the service provided ranged from 5 to 10, with an average of 8.4. The HomePorts Board maintained a list of 33 volunteers to provide local transportation assistance, home visits, etc. Four households made use of volunteers. The others indicated that they had no needs at present. Several noted the anticipated need for future help with local transportation.

### **Lessons Learned from Research Study**

- ◆Be very clear about the services available- explain them and repeat them. Some were not aware of the volunteer pool, for example.
- ◆Always ask the paid providers to give an estimate before performing the work, and ask the members to require an estimate.
- ◆HomePorts volunteers can encounter households where there are more needs than HomePorts can satisfy, and the boundary of where HomePorts services stop can become fuzzy. HomePorts cannot replace next of kin or those with the authority to make decisions for frail elders.
- ◆More vendors/providers will need to be interviewed and added before the start-up of the full operation.
- ◆Periodic home visits are important to remind people of the services and the policies, resolve any uncertainties and answer questions, and obtain feedback.



*Ladd Rutherford, Carl Gallegos, Larry Schroth, Connie Schroth, Jane Hukill, Charlie Hawkins, Sandy Bjork, and Louise O'Brien at a Board meeting. The Board meets monthly, and, under the direction of a Board member, standing committees meet to coordinate aspects of the services.*



*Jim Urda, a founding Board member*

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

### Implementation

The service began in October 2008, with Louise O'Brien serving as Program Coordinator. Presentations were made to civic organizations, the program was described in local newspaper articles and advertisements, and brochures were widely distributed. A kick-off open house was held on October 3, 2008, to recruit members and volunteers and introduce vendors.

The Program Coordinator visited each new member personally, obtained their emergency contact information, and provided a kit of materials. Several grant proposals were prepared, and a web site was established.

### Membership

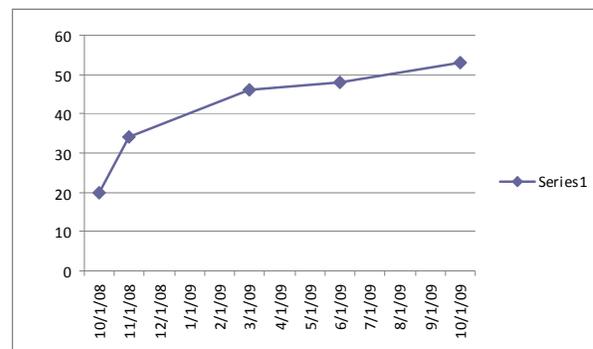
The Board established a goal of obtaining 50 members during the first year. The graph below indicates the actual growth in membership:

One year's experience leads to the conclusion that there are two categories of members: 1) those who have an occasional or frequent need for services due to limitations caused by age or illness, and 2) those who belong because of their belief that the service is important to the community and potentially of benefit to them if maintaining their home and health becomes a challenge.

In the 15-month period from October 1, 2008 through December 15, 2009, there were a total of 133 requests from members for assistance. Of these, 64% requested volunteers. All but 12 of these callers needed local transportation. Other needs included pet care, technology help, food shopping, and money management.

Of the 58 vendor requests, almost half were for home companion or health care, handyman services, or long-distance transportation. All requests were filled with the exception of a few services, such as driveway paving and masonry work, for which HomePorts does not have a vendor referral.

Member requests included 64% for volunteer help and 36% for referrals to paid vendors.



*Growth in Membership since HomePorts Inception*

After one year as members, 83% of participants have renewed their memberships. An evaluation has been done to determine satisfaction with HomePorts via

written surveys and interviews. With 23 households responding, results are as follows:

On a scale of 1 to 5:

5 (strongly agree)

4 (agree somewhat)

3 (neutral)

2 (disagree somewhat)

1 (disagree strongly)

- Initial visit helpful : 4.6
- Home safety assessment beneficial: 4.6
- Volunteers courteous, punctual, and professional: 4.7
- Vendors, courteous, punctual, professional, and fairly priced: 4.9
- Newsletters address seniors issues: 4.9
- Educational presentations of interest: 4.9
- Best Feature of HomePorts:
  - Access to volunteers and approved vendors: 4.6
  - Security- help for the future: 4.8
  - Support of an important community service: 4.8

Examples of written comments included:

“I would renew because I want this community I live in to have this service available.”

“I feel safer being a member.”

“Volunteers I’ve had have been very courteous, helpful, friendly.”

### **Highlights of 2009 Accomplishments**

- Recruited 43 volunteers
- Developed list of 49 vetted local vendors
- Organized educational and social events
- Opened office
- Hired Executive Director
- Obtained grant to purchase equipment and publish newsletter
- Surpassed goal of 50 memberships in 1<sup>st</sup> year, with 83% renewal rate
- Responded to 133 requests for services

### **Other Member Services**

#### **Home Safety Assessments**

According to recent AARP studies, only 16% of those over 50 have modified their homes for safety or comfort as they age. Most homes were not designed with older adults in mind. Long-time homeowners are frequently resistant to changes inside the home, but stronger lighting, installation of grab bars, securing floor coverings, and de-cluttering rooms can be life-saving.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falling is the leading cause of injury among those over 65, and six out of ten falls occur in the home. Many people who fall, even those who are not injured, develop a fear of falling. This fear may cause them to limit their activities, leading to reduced mobility and physical fitness, and increasing their actual risk of falling.

HomePorts has arranged with Chestertown Orthopedics and Sports Medicine to conduct comprehensive home safety assessments for members to ensure that the home is safe and senior-friendly. An occupational therapist provides this service, with the fee paid by HomePorts.

About half of the participating households have taken advantage of this offer. A number of recommendations have been made as a result of the assessments, with several participants following up on small structural changes made in the home subsequent to the visit (e.g., to improve basement access or improve shower safety). They were also given catalogs for handicapped equipment, when needed.

*You can knit a sweater by the  
fireside, Sunday mornings, go for a  
ride.  
Doing the garden, digging the  
weeds, who could ask for more?  
Will you still need me, will you still  
feed me, when I'm sixty four?  
John Lennon and Paul McCartney*

“Some needed lots of help. Some needed a little,” according to David Collier, who performed most of the assessments. “Some just appreciated me confirming that they are set up OK. One had arranged for their daughter to be there to walk through the house with me, which was very helpful,” he added.

### **Education and Social Activities**

Several afternoon programs were offered to members and volunteers with speakers on topics of interest to seniors. Subjects included:

- ❖ Normal Aging vs. Alzheimers
- ❖ Skin Cancer Detection
- ❖ Terminal Illness: A Gentle Death

A Board member was also trained to provide counseling to members on Medicare Part D Open Season (prescription drug coverage). In November a “stammtisch”, or “monthly get-together around a table”, was instituted for members to meet for lunch informally.



*Sandy Bjork and Suzanne Street,  
Board members, discuss plans*

## HomePorts 2009 Facts at a Glance

**Office Location:** Town Hall, 118 Cross Street, Chestertown, MD 21620

**Year Founded:** 2007, with service beginning in 2008

**Tax Status:** 501(c)(3)

**Web Site:** [www.homeports.org](http://www.homeports.org)

**Telephone:** 443-480-0940

**E-Mail Address:** [info@homeports.org](mailto:info@homeports.org)

**Member Households:** 54

**Volunteer Hours Worked:** 150

**No. of Referrals Made to Paid Providers (Vendors):** 58

**Most Frequent Volunteer Service Requested:** Local Transportation

**Most Frequent Paid Provider Services Requested:** Handyman,  
Personal Home Care, Long-distance Transportation

### **Affiliations and Partnerships:**

Kent County Chamber of Commerce

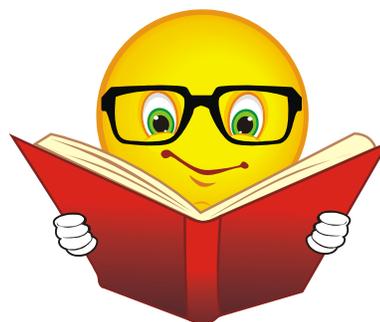
Upper Shore Aging, Inc.

Washington College

Rebuilding Together Kent County

Chester Valley Ministerial Association

Village-to-Village Network



## Vendors

**HomePorts has 49 approved vendors, in 20 categories of home services.**

HomePorts has a list of 49 approved vendors, who have been interviewed by the Vendor Committee and screened to ensure honesty, reliability, expertise, fair pricing, and quality of workmanship. Many offer a discount to members. All vendors complete a Vendor Application and Vendor Agreement and are specifically evaluated for their ability to work effectively with the older population. One was removed from the list, following notification, for lack of punctuality. HomePorts policy is to give precedence to local businesses; almost all vendors are based in Kent County.

House Repairs Categories of vendors are:

- Non-Medical Home Care
- Medical Home Care
- Transportation
- Yard/Garden/Lawn
- Geriatric Case Management
- Interior Carpentry
- Interior Painting
- Electrical/Plumbing/HVAC
- Appliance Repair
- Snow Shoveling/Plowing
- House Cleaning
- Window Washing
- Daily Money Management
- Pet Care
- Technology Service
- Financial Advisory Services
- Clothing Alterations
- TV Repair
- Piano Tuning

HomePorts policy is to request background checks for those vendors in the categories of non-medical and medical home care and house cleaning. HomePorts has contracted with Kroll Background America to perform these investigations.



*HomePorts Open House, October 2008*

## Volunteers

*Words are plentiful; deeds are precious.*  
*Lech Walesa*

A total of 43 volunteers have offered to help HomePorts members. Although not all have been given an assignment, needs have grown as membership has grown. Several sessions were held to familiarize volunteers with HomePorts. Four volunteer coordinators establish policies and regularly review performance. The types of volunteer services requested include:

- ❖ Local transportation
- ❖ Grocery shopping for members
- ❖ Relieving caregivers for an hour or two
- ❖ Balancing a checkbook
- ❖ Removing items from the attic
- ❖ Moving boxes from house to garage
- ❖ Cat and dog care
- ❖ Technology assistance

On October 6 a meeting for all volunteers was held as a celebration of the completion of HomePorts' first year and offered a chance to hear what HomePorts has been doing, and exchange experiences with other volunteers. Volunteers were asked for suggestions to facilitate assistance to members.



*Volunteers and members share ideas*

## Communications and Marketing

A critical aspect of successful implementation is notifying the public of the service, particularly the segments of the population, both older adults and their grown children, who can benefit. Often seniors are more isolated, and the concept of an aging-in-place organization is not a well-known one.

A marketing plan was prepared which has a number of discrete activities. Press releases have been issued, paid advertisements have been purchased, and brochures are widely circulated to public places. Volunteers have staffed a table at the Saturday Chestertown Farmers Market with informational materials. A speakers bureau has been established, and HomePorts is a member of the Kent County Chamber of Commerce.



*HomePorts volunteers with Washington College Students in Free Enterprise at the Saturday Farmers Market in Fountain Park, Chestertown*

A four-page quarterly illustrated newsletter has been mailed to over 600 members, volunteers, vendors, and local supporters.

The Washington College chapter of the national organization Students in Free Enterprise has worked with a HomePorts committee to develop the marketing plan and to produce a video describing HomePorts services. The videographers visited several HomePorts members who were asked to describe their experiences and impressions of HomePorts as well as the motivation behind their enrollment, i.e., their circumstances and interest in aging in place. Board members were also interviewed to obtain a summary background of the history and services provided.

**Effective marketing of this new concept has been recognized as a prerequisite to success and is a continuing priority.**

### **Recruitment of Executive Director**

A position description was prepared for an executive director and the part-time opportunity was advertised in October. Following development of evaluation criteria and receipt of eight applications, Stephanie Sullivan was selected and began work on December 1, 2009. The Board prepared a written policy that describes its role and its relationship with the Executive Director. Beginning in January 2010, she will assume responsibilities for handling members requests as well as management and administrative functions of the organization, under the guidance of the Board of Directors.



*Stephanie Sullivan, Executive Director, with Juli Dulmage, Board member*

## **Insurance**

Following research and discussion, the Board has purchased liability insurance for non-profit organizations that covers the Board of Directors, Executive Director, and volunteers.

## **Establishment of Operating Policies and Structures**

In July the Board held a retreat to develop various governance policies, which are included as appendices to this report. Standing committees have been set up for Finance, Communications, Fund-Raising, Special Events, Marketing, Vendor Relations, and Volunteer Coordination.

## **Office Space**

HomePorts has been given a central easily-accessible office on the second floor of the Chestertown Town Hall, donated by the Town. Grant funds have been used to purchase a computer, printer, copier, and Internet access. The office is normally staffed on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and by appointment.

**In addition to recruiting 54 member households the first year, substantial progress was evident when an Executive Director was selected and office space was acquired.**



*HomePorts Headquarters, Town Hall, Cross Street, Chestertown*

## **Coordination with Organizations in Other Communities**

**HomePorts is independent but is a member of a national network of organizations, or “villages”, having a similar purpose.**

HomePorts is one of the original 44 “villages” established in the U.S. According to *Beacon Hill Village: A Founder’s Manual Supplement (2009)*, there are seven distinctive characteristics of the village model:

- ✓ Villages are grassroots, membership organizations
- ✓ Villages are self-governing
- ✓ Villages are self-supporting, non-profit organizations
- ✓ Villages are consolidators of services
- ✓ Villages care for the whole person

- ✓ Villages have strategic partners
- ✓ Villages are driven by volunteers

Board members have participated in the first two annual conferences held, which have attracted hundreds of attendees from all over the country intending to establish similar organizations. HomePorts has established a liaison with villages in the Washington, D.C., area and with At Home Chesapeake, the closest village organization, which serves Anne Arundel County, but is in the initial stages of operation.

### **Budget and Financial Status**

HomePorts received a number of initial donations from the local community to support set-up and initial overhead costs. Membership fees have covered most first-year expenses, but infrastructure needs exceed the income generated by membership fees. Expenses have included telephone service, printing, postage, supplies, advertising, and web site maintenance. Applications were made for a number of grants, with one received that covers the costs of equipment and a monthly newsletter beginning in 2010. Notably, grant funds cannot cover any salary costs for the Executive Director. The Financial Statement (IRS Form 990) is available upon request.

### **Plans for 2010**

HomePorts plans to actively participate in the new “Village-to-Village Network”, or “VtV”, that has

been set up as a national membership organization by Beacon Hill Village. As a member, Homeports will gain from an exchange of ideas and experience and will receive custom-made software for maintaining its data base.

Concern has frequently been expressed that HomePorts annual membership fee precludes lower-income seniors from participating. HomePorts has not had the human or financial resources in 2009 to address this segment of the population. In 2010 the Board of Directors will develop options for supporting several “scholarship” recipients, in coordination with the Kent County Department of Social Services and other local organizations. Plans are to solicit grant funding to supplement resources for this endeavor.

Efforts will be made to negotiate discounts for members for additional vendors, expanding the number who now offer special rates for HomePorts.

Advertising and marketing will continue to be important activities. The video developed by students at Washington College (described above) will be completed and distributed. The brochure will be revised and improved, and regular events will be held to meet and exchange information on topics of interest to older adults.

*An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come. Victor Hugo*

## HomePorts Principles

The scope of services provided by HomePorts is defined by several basic principles. Services provided by HomePorts meet the criteria described below:

- The Service does not duplicate or compete with a service provided by a public agency, such as Upper Shore Aging. Where existing services may have similar objectives, the HomePorts-provided service will draw on, or complement, existing services.
- The focus of HomePorts services is in-home care, those services that allow for, or promote the ability of, seniors to remain in their own homes, living independently.
- Services may be offered by HomePorts that encourage seniors to socialize and participate in community events; such services are supplemental to the basic mission of ensuring timely and cost-effective help for members to remain in their homes.
- HomePorts is a facilitator and communicator rather than a direct provider of a service.



# **GOVERNANCE POLICIES**

## **1. CODE OF ETHICS**

HomePorts, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) Maryland corporation, founded by local residents, in order to help its members live life to the fullest in their own homes as they grow older. HomePorts seeks to ensure the highest possible member satisfaction with the activities and services provided, maintaining quality control of all paid and volunteer services associated with HomePorts. HomePorts does not intentionally duplicate or compete with a service provided by a public agency. Where existing services may have similar objectives, the HomePorts-provided service will draw on, or complement, existing services.

## **2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

HomePorts makes every effort to avoid conflicts of interest as well as the appearance of conflicts of interest. No Board members, committee members, paid staff, or their immediate families are to be affiliated with any HomePorts vendor, except in the case of a Board member who may be appointed to serve as a representative of vendors. In such a case, he or she will be recused from decisions concerning selection or retention of vendors.

## **3. DOCUMENT AND INFORMATION SHARING, RETENTION, AND DESTRUCTION**

Member information is considered confidential and is not shared without the express consent of the member, unless withholding such information may jeopardize the health or safety of the member. Board members, staff, and volunteers are regularly reminded of this requirement. Upon joining, HomePorts members sign an agreement that HomePorts reserves the right to be in touch with those individuals listed on a member's current contact sheet in any instance affecting health or safety.

All files are maintained by the HomePorts staff, who treat them as confidential material. Paper files are destroyed by shredding one year after the expiration of a member's enrollment. Financial and tax forms are retained in accordance with the law.

Confidential information, e.g., about a member or vendor, is not shared electronically. Member addresses or names are never shared with other organizations.

## **4. HOLD HARMLESS**

All members sign a statement upon enrollment that states that HomePorts will be held harmless with respect to any direct or indirect liability in connection with services contracted for by members with third party providers recommended by HomePorts.

Volunteers sign a "Release of Liability and Confidentiality Agreement" form.

Volunteers who drive their own vehicles in the performance of HomePorts services are covered by their individual auto insurance policies. When driving a member's vehicle, a volunteer is covered by the member's auto insurance policy.

## **5. BACKGROUND CHECKS**

All HomePorts providers in the categories of Non-Medical Home Care, Medical Home Care, House Cleaning, and Financial Advisory Services are required to have a criminal background clearance. Vendors providing Transportation services are required to have a driving record check. Copies are retained on file with the administrative staff. HomePorts pays for criminal background checks except when an agency is used, in which case the agency is required to refer only employees who have had criminal background checks. When calling HomePorts for a referral for a provider who will likely work inside a member's home, members are advised that this category of provider is or is not required to have a criminal background check.

## **6. WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

Any employee, Board member, HomePorts member, or volunteer may, at any time, report in good faith any alleged unlawful activity, policy, or practice to a member of the Executive Committee or Program Coordinator. Anyone doing so is protected against retaliation from disclosing or threatening to disclose any activity, policy, or practice that he or she reasonably believes is a violation.

## **7. GIFT ACCEPTANCE POLICY**

Employees, Board members and volunteers are prohibited from receiving gifts from vendors. However, these persons may accept gifts given in recognition of personal business transactions, unrelated to HomePorts.

Paid staff are prohibited from accepting gratuities from HomePorts members.

## **8. TRANSPARENCY**

All members receive HomePorts comprehensive annual report and, upon request, may receive the HomePorts income tax return (Form 990).

## **9. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Membership is open to any household in Kent County or nearby communities in Queen Anne's County which has a resident who is over 50 years of age.

Following payment of the annual fee a HomePorts member is entitled to all of the attributes and benefits of membership. The HomePorts Board reserves the right to exclude membership to anyone who it deems cannot be satisfactorily served by HomePorts. Acceptance of members, volunteers, and vendors is without regard to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin.

Volunteers are selected based on their interest and references, which must confirm their ability to interact effectively with older people, their reliability, and their ability to provide a needed service (e.g., a driver's license for providing transportation, physical ability to assist a frail elder).

## **10. FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND FUND-RAISING PROCEDURES**

HomePorts will maintain financial and fund raising procedures in accordance with commonly accepted standards for not-for-profit organizations.

## HomePorts Privacy Policy

As a valued HomePorts member, we respect your privacy to an extent that exceeds the law. HomePorts has an “opt-in” meaning that HomePorts will never share your information with others unless you have authorized it or we are legally bound to do so. Most organizations are “opt-out”, meaning that they will share your information unless you tell them not to. *No junk mail or unsolicited phone calls derive from HomePorts.*

The four components of our Privacy Policy:

1. Members tell us how and with whom we may share your information. We will share your personal information with others only if:
  - You authorize HomePorts to share information on your behalf
  - If required by law
  - The Emergency Contact who you designated on your application requests it
2. HomePorts needs to collect certain demographic and personal identifying information in order to serve you effectively. The information HomePorts collects is obtained from:
  - Your membership application, and any other information you provide orally, in writing, or by e-mail contact
  - Communications from family, vendors, or volunteers
3. HomePorts keeps your information secure and confidential. Staff and volunteers have access only to the information that is needed to serve you. Procedures require that staff and volunteers strictly maintain your confidentiality. Staff, Board members, and volunteers are kept up to date on HomePorts security and privacy practices. HomePorts uses physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards that comply with Federal and common business standards.
4. Should you cease to be a member in good standing, HomePorts will continue to maintain your privacy under the policy described above.

# Volunteer Procedures and Guidelines

Three groups comprise the HomePorts community:

**1. Members-** those residents of Kent County, Chester Harbor, the Kingstown area, and Crumpton who join HomePorts for the services offered. Members must be over 50. They may also be volunteers.

Two benefits of joining HomePorts are:

- A. Access to a cadre of local volunteers to assist with day-to-day tasks, such as errands or shopping.
- B. Access to pre-screened vendors who provide reliable home repair and maintenance work and charge members directly, based on fixed rates.

**2. Volunteers** – local residents who, without pay, offer to assist members.

HomePorts volunteers are an invaluable resource, performing service that makes Kent County a special place to live.

Volunteers complete an application and may be interviewed prior to selection. The Volunteer Coordinating Committee approves all volunteers.

The Board of Directors may decide to remove a volunteer at any time, if services are not performed in a satisfactory manner or if the following procedures or guidelines are not adhered to. If a volunteer no longer wants to serve as a HomePorts resource, he or she must notify the Executive Director, preferably in writing and should, if possible, give a reasonable timeframe for ending services.

**3. Vendors** (also called Providers) – those business persons who have been recommended to and interviewed by the Board of Directors, after completing an application. All are deemed honest, reliable, and reasonably-priced. Vendors sign an agreement with HomePorts and must have licenses and criminal background checks, as appropriate, according to the service they render. The Board of Directors may decide to remove a vendor from the list of providers at any time, if services are not performed in a satisfactory manner.

HomePorts' primary responsibility is to the safety and well-being of our members. To that end, HomePorts will utilize the unique talents, skills, and experience of volunteers and vendors to help seniors remain comfortably in their own homes.

## Volunteer Assignments

The Executive Director selects a volunteer for a task based on 1) the volunteer's skill and interest, 2) the volunteer's availability, and 3) the volunteer's geographic location in relation to the service needed. The Executive Director makes requests of volunteers by telephone or e-mail.

Each volunteer will maintain a time sheet of hours worked and periodically provide this information to the Executive Director.

Because HomePorts is a 501(c)(3) organization, the established rate for miles traveled in support of HomePorts for volunteer work can be deducted from one's income taxes. Volunteers must maintain their own records of miles traveled.

### **Volunteer Responsibilities**

- Upon assignment, the volunteer calls the member to set up the time to meet the member at his/her home and to determine just what activity is to be performed. There should be a clear mutual understanding of what is expected from the volunteer.
- Volunteers are required to be on time for assignments and to present a neat and personable appearance. If an unavoidable delay of more than 10 minutes occurs, the volunteer must call both the member and the Executive Director.
- Smoking is not allowed nor is the use of alcohol before or during an assignment.
- Volunteers will accept assignments only when they are physically healthy enough to do so and are not carrying a communicable disease.
- In some cases volunteers may have to speak a little louder and clearer than normal, and be prepared to repeat themselves. Upon meeting the member, the volunteer and the member should, together, clearly define the specific help needed (the expectations).
- Volunteers are required to treat all members with respect, courtesy, tact, and patience. In the event of a disagreement or uncompleted assignment, the volunteer should immediately contact the Executive Director.
- Members or their families may share confidential information with volunteers, such as financial or health issues. *This information is not to be shared*, with the exception of any situation which may endanger the member's well-being. Privacy of HomePorts members must be ensured. Volunteers will not disclose information about members to anyone outside of HomePorts. Any concerns about a member should be reported to the Executive Director.
- Volunteers will report any unsafe conditions in the home to the Executive Director.
- If a volunteer believes that a vendor is not performing satisfactory service for a member, the volunteer should notify the Executive Director, *not* the provider.
- Volunteers may not accept money from members or expensive gifts. If offered money, volunteers may suggest that the member give a donation to HomePorts. A tax-deductible receipt can be prepared.
- If taking the member to a medical appointment, make sure the member has the necessary insurance cards and paperwork.
- If shopping for the member, confirm before leaving that you have the correct amount of money for shopping. If you find while shopping that you were not given enough money, call the member first and arrange either a) to put some items back, or b) to pay out of your own pocket and be reimbursed by the client immediately afterwards.

Volunteers are requested to attend periodic meetings for guidance and updated information on HomePorts policies, issues, and activities..

## **Supervision**

Supervision of volunteers in the responsibility of the Executive Director. Volunteers should call the Executive Director at 443-480-0940 with any questions. *In a medical emergency, volunteers should always call 911.*

Certain tasks are not suitable for volunteers. If a volunteer does not feel comfortable or qualified to perform the requested assistance, he or she should contact the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is not available, the volunteer should not perform the task.

## **Compensation and Record-Keeping**

Volunteers use their own vehicles, at their own expense, and certify that they have a valid driver's license and required auto insurance. There is no compensation for volunteering. An exception is for out-of-town trips. A volunteer may be reimbursed by the member at an established mileage rate. Such situations are to be coordinated in advance among the member, the volunteer, and the Executive Director. Volunteers must sign, and have witnessed, a "Release of Liability and Confidentiality Agreement".

## **Benefits for Volunteers**

1. Being part of a team that helps seniors remain in their own homes, with a sense of security, safety, and independence
2. Reducing the isolation of seniors and giving them peace of mind
3. Meeting a range of new people and enriching the lives of others
4. Experiencing the sense of personal fulfillment and achievement that comes from helping others



## **Expectations of Vendors**

- Be on time! If you are running late or need to reschedule, please call the member immediately so they know when to expect you. (Seniors do not deal well with sudden changes in schedules.)
- If you ring the doorbell and receive no answer, please call the member or the HomePorts office immediately.
- Be aware that a member may not want to accompany you to an inaccessible area if they are nervous or frightened – respect their feelings.
- Be considerate. Do not track mud through the house. If you need to use the bathroom, put the lid down after use.
- Be safety conscious. Do not leave electrical cords or work materials unattended.
- If you observe something of concern during your visit (person not coherent, house filthy, safety hazards such as scatter rugs, electrical cords, phone lines, or oxygen hoses that may cause a fall), please report the condition to the HomePorts office.
- Clean up after yourself.
- The member must pay you directly. If there is a concern or dispute, call the HomePorts office after you leave.
- Dress appropriately. No short shorts, tank tops, etc.
- Call the HomePorts office if you ever have questions or concerns about a member or a job that you've been asked to do.

## 2009 DONORS

HomePorts has received strong support from the community during an adverse economic period. Many “in-kind” contributions have been received that are too numerous to acknowledge here individually. Below are monetary donations received as of December 28, 2009.

### **Gold Donors (\$1000 or more)**

Neil W. Brayton  
Anne K. Charles  
Christian Havemeyer  
Jane E. Hukill  
Brenda E. Rocconi  
Anonymous

### **Silver Donors (\$500-\$1000)**

Janet Hewes

### **Bronze Donors (\$250-\$500)**

John C., Jr. and Margaret Barker Christie  
A. Thomas and Mary Virginia Clark  
Louise and John Durocher  
*in memory of Don Wierda*  
Audrey E. Rooney

### **Supporters (up to \$250)**

Margie R. Baker  
*in memory of Russell White*  
Tom and Margrett Beckett  
John D. and Mary C. Brereton  
Garry E. and Melissa N. Clarke  
Glenn and Juli Dulmage  
Jack and Sue Edson  
F&N Roofing Contractors  
Herbert M. Friedman  
*in memory of Victoria Smith-Friedman*  
M. Grant, Jr. and Elizabeth Gross  
O. Kenneth and Martha S. Hankins  
Phoebe L. Hendrix  
*In memory of Sonia Hendrix*  
John C. Huntington  
Richard and Diane Kalter  
H. Russell Morrison, Jr.

*in memory of "Jody" (Jody Taylor Morrison)*  
Jeannette and Philip Parish  
Cynthia V.C. Ramsey  
Gary R. & Nancy L.T. Robson  
Lawrence L. Schroth, Sr.  
*in memory of Hope Schroth*  
Anne W. Silcox  
Leslie and Dick Wendel  
Joan D. and Clifton F. West

In addition, HomePorts has benefited from generous in-kind support from a number of Kent County businesses.





*Making Home A Safe Harbor*

*Contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law and may be sent to HomePorts, Inc., P.O. Box 114, Chestertown, Maryland 21620.*

