



Waltham Connections
for Healthy Aging

Outreach to Ugandan and Spanish-speaking Seniors in Waltham, MA

(October 2023 - September 2024)

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Contents

About Us.....	1
Executive Summary.....	2
Outreach to Ugandan seniors.....	2
Outreach to Latino seniors.....	4
Discussion.....	5
Connections Outreach Grants and Programs.....	6
Methods and Data.....	7
Findings.....	8
Outreach to Ugandan seniors.....	9
Outreach to Spanish-speaking seniors.....	15
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	22
Appendix.....	24

About Us

Waltham Connections for Healthy Aging is a coalition of senior activists and agencies that are working to make Waltham an aging-friendly community, as well as a model for community involvement for seniors. The group has its roots in a 2015-6 study led by Brandeis Professor Walter Leutz and his partner, Betsy. Our theme of "Connections" expresses our aim to connect seniors to one another and to a more age-friendly city. Connections has led a number of initiatives to create a more age-friendly and inclusive Waltham. We have focused on social participation, communication, nutrition, physical activity, lifelong learning, and civic participation.

Executive Summary

Since 2021, Waltham Connections for Healthy Aging (Connections) has used grant funding to support outreach to Latino and Ugandan older adults in Waltham. Connections is a program of Healthy Waltham, and we work closely with the Waltham Council on Aging (CoA) and other agencies. This report documents the growth and achievements of the outreach work during the past federal fiscal year (October 2023 - September 2024). Funding for the period was \$15,000 in federal Title III funds and a \$37,000 grant from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation.

Prior to Connections' outreach work, Spanish-speaking seniors and Ugandan seniors seldom used the CoA's senior center. Staff did not include Spanish speakers, and focus groups of Latino seniors conducted by Connections found that seniors knew that and as a result did not come for help. A 2017 focus group with Ugandan seniors found them to be very isolated and fearful of engaging the broader community. Only 3 of 25 in a 2022 focus group had heard of the senior center and only one had used it.

The outreach is led by a Spanish-speaking and a Ugandan outreach worker. This report relies on a review of records kept by the outreach workers, as well as interviews with outreach staff. It shows a substantial growth in participation of Latino and Ugandan seniors in group activities and in accessing services and benefits. Community organizing and agency collaborations have been key features of the work.

Outreach to Ugandan seniors

The Waltham area has the largest population of Ugandans in the U.S., and it includes many seniors. The current Ugandan outreach worker, hired in 2023, is an older Ugandan woman who is a semi-retired CNA. We based the new

worker at Africano Waltham, an important community agency for the area's Ugandan population. Africano reached out to seniors through its large WhatsApp group. At first they asked seniors to drop in on Tuesdays at a Ugandan hair salon to socialize and hear speakers. Soon the "Golden Years" group outgrew the salon and moved to Africano's community center.

The goals have been to get seniors out of their homes to have fun together, and to get them better connected with the larger community. Every Tuesday for 4-5 hours they organize exercises for mind and body, sharing of life stories, trips, and ethnic food. The worker frequently brings in outside speakers who have presented on finances, caregiving for children (including how to get certifications), and service access. Presenters have included Springwell, the Boston Medical Center's Immigrant and Refugee Health Center, and SHINE. The worker also helps individual seniors connect to programs and services. In this she works closely with CoA staff and the Latina outreach worker.

Because the group grew so quickly, Connections gave Africano \$13,000 (included in the \$37,000 of Tufts funds mentioned above) in Spring 2024 to support more time for the outreach worker, three part-time staff, supplies, and supervision.

By September 2024, more than 100 individuals had received some service or participated in a group meeting since the previous October. A slice of records from May to July show that 57 seniors participated at least once in the three months, and 23 of them attended 7 times or more. The outreach worker's time increased in pace with the program growth: from 5.3 hours a week average in October-December to 11.8 hours in April-June.

Word of mouth has been an important ingredient in growth. Another was Connections' Welcome to the Digital Age (WDA) free Chromebook training program. Ten Ugandan seniors took the 9-week course, which helped them

feel comfortable and welcomed at the CoA. Africano also runs a twice a month sub-pantry of the large Healthy Waltham food pantry. The worker and Africano colleagues help seniors access the food, including providing rides home and delivery.

The growth of the program shows that the large population of older Ugandans can be reached and enjoy participating, accessing benefits, and being welcomed. Over the coming year there are plans to bring more of the Tuesday programming to the CoA. This will be a space and scheduling challenge, but it is worth doing to increase Ugandan seniors' connection to the larger community.

Outreach to Latino seniors

Connections has worked with the CoA on outreach to Latinos since late 2019, when the first outreach worker put in six months before the 2020 pandemic closed down the senior center. Connections also started translating the CoA newsletter into Spanish in that timeframe. The current worker – a retiree who is an MSW and SHINE counselor – was hired in July 2023.

The outreach worker holds regular hours at her office in the CoA, where she meets seniors to help connect them to services and programs. Her records show that the most common areas of need are housing, financial, utilities, medical, and legal. She also connects seniors to the WDA program, in which more than half of the 100 participants over the years have taken the course in Spanish.

In February, the worker organized the weekly Hora del Café, a time and place for Latino seniors to socialize and share refreshments. The worker has networked with community agencies for speakers to come to show how to access services, including Springwell, AARP, Charles River Health, and the

TRIAD officer. The worker also helped create larger events for the whole community in the CoA auditorium, including celebrating Latino Heritage Month and a Ugandan/Latino luncheon. Latino seniors report that these activities have helped them feel comfortable and welcomed at the CoA.

The number of Latino seniors reached by the programming increased substantially over the period. Using the worker's encounter records, I compared the first and third quarters of the year. The average number of new seniors seen each month rose from 7 in the first to 13 in the third. Worker encounters with individual seniors rose from 9 per month to 25. By August, the number of seniors on the list who had come to the weekly Hora del Café totaled 45. In line with the growth, the worker's hours have risen in each quarter from 5 hours a week from Oct.-Dec. to 8.8 hours from April-June.

Discussion

By almost any measure the outreach to Latino and Ugandan seniors has been a success. The workers have networked with other agencies to provide information, access to services and benefits, and food pantry events. Latinos and Ugandans are coming to the senior center (and Africano) regularly and they feel increasingly comfortable there. However, the future of the outreach work is in jeopardy. Without new support, the Tufts funds will run out before the middle of 2025. If and when that happens we will have only the Springwell grant (less than a third of last year's spending on outreach). We are seeking new foundation funding but at this point have no assurances.

Connections Outreach Grants and Programs

On September 30, 2024, Waltham Connections for Healthy Aging (Connections) completed its third year of federal Title III funding (via Springwell) to help support outreach to Ugandan and Latino seniors in Waltham, MA. The \$15,000 in Title III funds were supplemented by \$37,000 from a prior grant to Connections from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. The budget supported two part-time outreach workers, supplies and food, part of the Connections Program Manager role, and 15% indirect costs for Healthy Waltham (Connections' fiscal agent). There was also a \$13,000 payment to Africano Waltham for staff and materials for the growing program. This report analyzes and reports on the outreach work in FY 2024. Prior reports cover earlier outreach work.¹

The Latina outreach worker was based at the Waltham Council on Aging (CoA), and the Ugandan worker was based at Africano Waltham. Both were hired in July 2023 under the second year of Title III funding, replacing previous outreach workers. The Latina worker is a retired MSW with hospital experience who is also a SHINE counselor. She speaks fluent English, Spanish, and Portuguese. The Ugandan worker is a semi-retired CNA with volunteer experience at the Boston Medical Center's Immigrant and Refugee Health Center. She speaks fluent English, Luganda, and Swahili.

Both outreach workers received orientation and training from CoA staff and Connections leadership. This included learning to help register seniors at the CoA to facilitate their participation in programming there. The Latina worker also was a member of the semi-weekly Connections Coordinating Committee (CC) meeting for the entire study period. The Ugandan worker joined the CC in April 2024.

¹ All studies and reports cited herein can be found in the Resources section of the Waltham Connections website: <https://www.walthamconnections.org>

Methods and Data

This report addresses the following research questions:

- What programming/help did the workers offer?
- How did seniors participate?
- How much time did the workers put in?

Each of the outreach workers kept weekly records of her activities and time, as well as the number of seniors served. However, as described below, their record keeping methods differed. This was a function of the evolving nature of the outreach provided – particularly the evolution of the new program at Africano - and the professional experiences of the two workers.

The Latina worker maintained office hours at the CoA for meeting with individual seniors, and she recorded what she did in each encounter in a daily log (redacted example in Attachment A). The log also noted meetings and communications with colleagues and other agencies, as well as time meeting with groups of seniors. To create this report, I read and summarized all the weekly logs submitted by the Latina worker from October 2023 through August 2024.

Soon after the Ugandan worker started at Africano, she invited seniors to a weekly meeting called “The Salon,” since it convened at a Ugandan hair salon for several hours every Tuesday (no services required). The seniors were recruited primarily through Africano WhatsApp accounts, which the local Ugandan community uses for communication. Soon the number of participants was too large for the salon space, and meetings moved to the Africano community center. Also, some seniors came to Africano every other Thursday to access a food pantry run by Africano in collaboration with Healthy Waltham.

For each month, the Ugandan worker maintained and submitted a spreadsheet listing all seniors who have ever participated in the outreach program, noting whether each participated on a particular day the program met. She also noted services to individual seniors outside the group programming. The worker also maintained and submitted a hand-written journal that summarized what occurred at each meeting (example in Attachment B). To create this report, I reviewed, summarized, and provided excerpts from the participation charts and the hand-written logs.

One shortcoming of this report is that I did not gather information from Latino or Ugandan participants in the outreach programming. I hope to do that in a future report, perhaps through interviews, surveys, and/or focus groups.

Finally, besides being the Connections evaluator, I also work as the principal supervisor of each of the workers. During the year I met quarterly with each of them to hear what they were doing, give advice, and see how Connections could better support their work. We also see each other more frequently at the Connections CC meetings.

Findings

Below I report findings regarding Ugandan and Spanish outreach work in turn. Due to differences in record-keeping and reporting, the descriptions differ somewhat. However, each shows a combination of work with seniors individually and in groups, as well as work with colleagues at the CoA and collaboration with other agencies.



Ugandan seniors, including the outreach worker (center), dancing at the August 2024 Ugandan and Latino Multicultural Luncheon.

Outreach to Ugandan seniors

Participants and participation

Prior to hiring the current Ugandan outreach worker in July 2023, Connections supported a Ugandan worker based at the CoA from August 2022 to February 2023, when she resigned.² We chose to base her successor at Africano because Waltham is where many members of the large Ugandan population in the area come together for social, religious, and commercial pursuits (Waltham is locally known as “little Kampala”). Information is on their website: africanowaltham.org.

Earlier Connections studies found that many Ugandan seniors are very private and are uncomfortable in public situations. A 2017 focus group participant said the seniors were “under the beds,” and another focus group in 2022 found that only three of 25 participants had heard of the Waltham senior

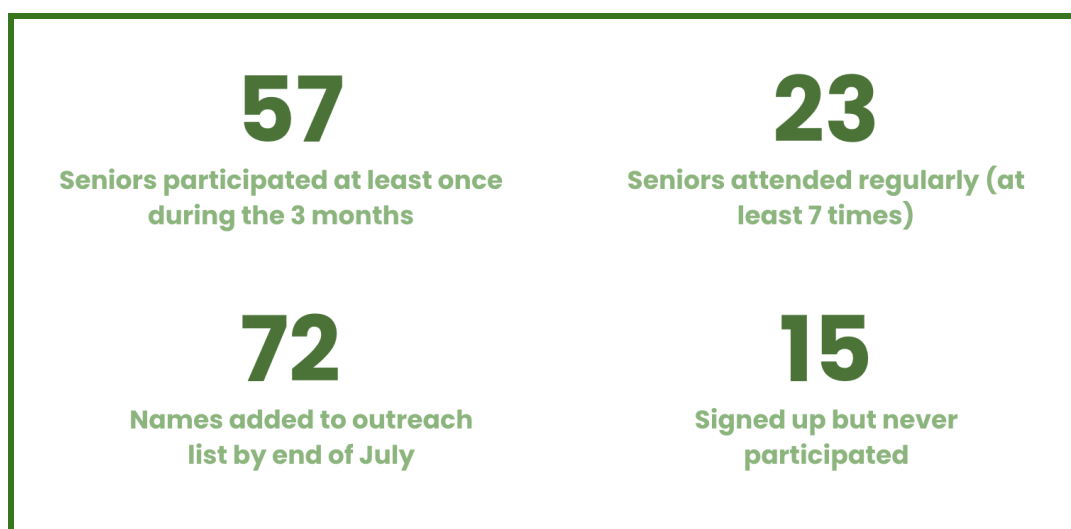
² Report on first Ugandan outreach worker: <https://www.walthamconnections.org/reports>.

center and only one had used it.³ We have also learned that while almost all Ugandan seniors speak and can understand English, many feel more comfortable and assured speaking Luganda.

Africano used word of mouth as well as its existing WhatsApp groups (Youngster - 80 individuals, Radio Uganda Boston - 200, Pantry - 207, Business - 400) to reach Ugandan seniors. By September 2023 there were 35 seniors who had participated in the Salon and were enrolled in a new Golden Years WhatsApp group. The group grew steadily during the reporting year, and by September 2024 the reporting sheets had the names of more than 100 individuals who had received some service or participated in some group since October.

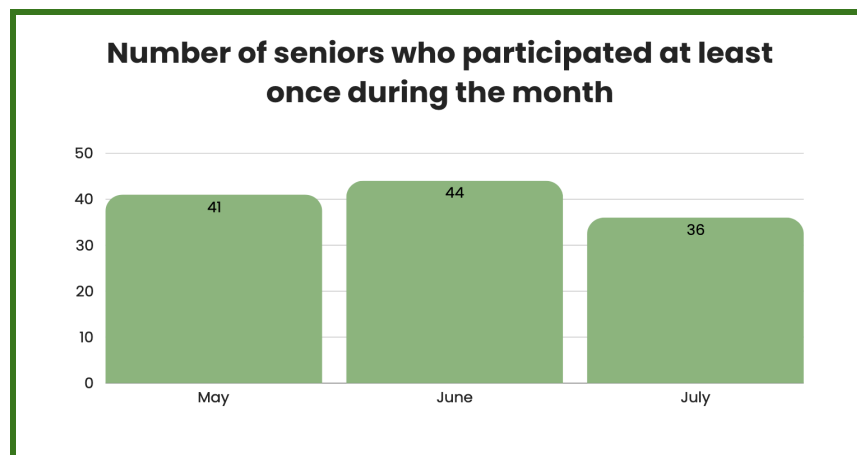
By early 2024 it became clear that the large and growing Golden Years group needed support beyond the outreach worker. Africano and Connections agreed on an additional payment to Africano of \$13,000 from our earlier Tufts grant for calendar year 2024 to support staff, administrative, and food costs.

To get a sense of the size of the daily program, I reviewed the participation charts for May-July 2024. The participation data are summarized below.



³ See reports on 2017 and 2022 focus groups: <https://www.walthamconnections.org/reports>.

The picture that emerges is 23 people who might be called regulars (7 days or more in the three months) and 34 who attended or were served every other week or less. In each month at least half of the 72 people on the list participated.



The increase in participation from September 2023 correlates with the worker's increasing time on the job: from 5.3 hours a week average in October-December, to 8.6 hours in January-March, to 11.8 hours in April-June. The \$13,000 grant from Connections to Africano paid for three additional part-time staff to help with communications, exercise, drama and other activities. Expenditures for food and supplies were picked up by the Title III grant, the Connections grant, and by a CHEF grant that Africano received from the Hannaford Foundation.

Programming

There were several parts of outreach programming at Africano:

The Salon: The core of the programming is the weekly Tuesday meeting at Africano from about 10AM to 3PM. Each day there are activities and a light lunch, with occasional trips and regular outside presenters. By the summer, daily attendance was 20-40.

The food pantry: By the summer 12 to 25 seniors were showing up to get food from the pantry, with some receiving home delivery or a ride home with their groceries.

WDA: The Welcome to the Digital Age (WDA) program provides a free Chromebook computer, free wifi, and training on how to use both. Ten Ugandan seniors took the 9-week program in early spring 2024 and six took a refresher course that summer. (Class photos of the refresher course including both Ugandans and Latinos included here)



Service to individuals: Equal in importance to group activities was helping seniors access services and activities at the CoA, including the CoA social worker, a SHINE counselor, and the Spanish outreach worker. The Ugandan outreach worker also helped participants access medical services, legal services, and food and supplies. She also arranged and sometimes paid for transportation, occasionally accompanying seniors to provide interpretation.

These components and aspects of the outreach work are well described in the handwritten notes from the outreach worker and from my notes on various meetings I held with Africano staff (excerpts from notes below). Topics and activities that stand out include:

Safety and security:

People want to come to the Salon and Africano and other places where they feel comfortable and safe. Our community is a social community. They like to

tell their stories. Go for walks. It's hard to say – 'guys, your time is done.'
(Africano Director in October)

Social connections and healthy activities in the Salon:

It was a day that was great for seniors. We had a Thanksgiving time Africano group. We ate and drank tea and after that we each one of us got a gift of fresh fish, vegetables, and Matoke. (Worker notes)

We did word searching. We were at class and our guide teacher was the beloved salon lady. Very humbly she guided us one by one. We had to try on and on We did a lot of exercises. We lifted heavy weights. And we had a lot of fun talking about our pasts. Snacks of samosa and tea. (Worker notes)

We started at Africano taking pictures. Seniors photo shoot. Seniors came, took or did make ups by our instructor from the salon. We looked young and beautiful. We took many of them. (Worker notes)

Each senior talked about how they came to the USA, what they faced, and what they did during their first weeks, months, in the new place. Most of us started with babysitting. But now or later they went to school for CNA, HHA, and worked with seniors. Others are retired and others are gone back to babysitting or to their families. (Worker notes)

Guest presenters at the Salon. Notes included descriptions of presentations by the Boston Medical Center's Immigrant and Refugee Health Center, a professional on how to take care of grandchildren, a physical therapist who led exercises, and Agape Home Care services on Mass Health programs. Here's a typical description:

We had a visitor today from Financing Management. He explained how to invest, how to build richness using our own money whether small money or big. He talked about how to know where we put our money. We talked about interest and inflation, which most of us did not understand. He talked of

many insurances. He promised to come back because it was not easy. He brought a lady who could explain to us in Luganda. (Worker notes)

Direct services. These include help with housing and MassHealth applications and linkage to the SHINE program, delivery of food and personal care items, and supportive visiting:

I visited a male senior living in Waltham. I found him doing very well. The last time I met him he was in a wheelchair. Now he can walk and drive. He was glad that I visited. (Worker notes)

Transportation:

Before the pantry I took a woman from Waltham to Cambridge to lawyer & interpreted. (Worker notes)

Rides are taking a lot of time and some expense, especially on pantry days. They take the bus to get to Africano but a senior with a walker and food bags has a hard time going home that way. Also, Africano bought diapers for a man and the outreach worker delivered them. (From my notes on a meeting in October)

WDA: The outreach worker took the free computer class along with 9 other Ugandan seniors. She entered notes about the classes.

Seniors were wary of WDA because they feared that their English was not good enough. I told them there would be a Luganda teacher.... We had a great evening learning new things, like moving the mouse, how to apply through the apps. We learned how to put our fingers on the keyboard. Then we did the email and we sent in our first email to our teacher. It was all great.... Before all this we had to register at the front desk at the senior center. Our pictures were taken and we were given a card. The card will help us to register at the front desk any time we go to the center. It made them comfortable and feel welcomed at the CoA. (Worker notes)

Summary of Ugandan outreach

This is a large and growing program addressing social, informational, nutritional, and inclusion needs of the Ugandan senior population. The participants in the Golden Years group are also having a lot of fun.

Outreach to Spanish-speaking seniors

Connections' first Spanish-speaking outreach worker started in late 2019, when we received a grant from Jewish Family and Children's Service to demonstrate how it could be done. Her work was cut short by the pandemic. As the pandemic died down, with Tufts and Title III funding, we hired a second outreach worker from August 2021 to February 2022, and then a third from June 2022 to July 2023, when we hired the fourth worker. The third worker has returned to her prior role as a long-time senior volunteer with Connections, and she still helps out with events, agencies, and individual needs of Spanish-speaking seniors. After a pilot with Connections funding, the CoA has translated the monthly CoA newsletter into Spanish for the last 4 years and also takes messages on a Spanish-option phone line.

Summary of Work and Needs

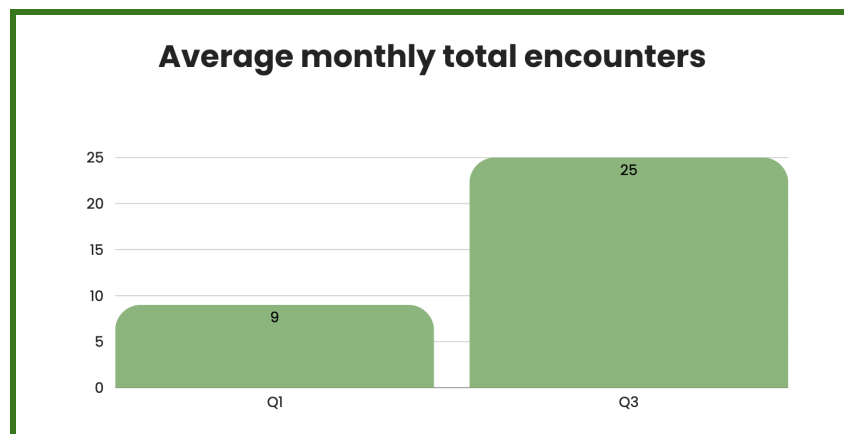
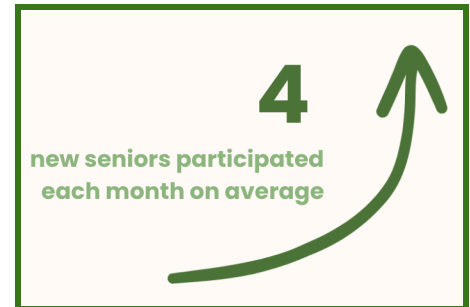
This section provides an overview of the worker's activities with seniors over the first three quarters of the year (October 2023-June 2024). I extracted the information from the worker's weekly report of hours and activities (Attachment A).

Hours per week: Based on the Spanish outreach work prior to October 2023, we budgeted for the worker to put in 16 hours a week. In fact, she put in only 5 hours a week Oct-Dec, due in part to her continuing as a SHINE counselor

during the busy year-end season, and also due to the two holidays. She billed for 8.6 hours a week Jan-March and 8.8 hours a week April-June.

Participants and participation: The workers' increased hours are reflected in the number of office and phone encounters with seniors over the 9-month period. To summarize the detailed data in Attachment C:

- The number of unique seniors seen or phoned each month rose from an average of 7 per month in the first quarter to 13 in the third quarter.
- An average of 4 new seniors showed up each month over the whole period.
- Many of the seniors were seen multiple times, resulting in total encounters averaging 9 per month for the first quarter to 25 per month for the third.
- Because many individuals appear in multiple months in the logs, we cannot add the number of individuals each month to get a number for the total served in the period. Nevertheless, the number of total encounters helps give a sense of the demands of the job helping individual seniors.



Type of needs and outside agencies

To find out the types of needs being addressed I reviewed the worker's weekly logs from January through May of 2024. I noted and then totaled each time a need or an agency or program was mentioned, often regarding a referral. The most frequent needs were related to housing (22 mentions in the five months), financial (21), utilities (15), medical (13), and legal (10). Other needs mentioned 3 times or more included documentation, immigration, transportation, translation, and food. The most frequent agency mentions are the CoA (25), Rep. Tom Stanley (6), Springwell (5), St. Mary's Church (5) and the RMV (5). Details are in Attachment D.

Clearly, the Spanish worker helps people with a wide range of needs, and she works within and outside of the CoA to get things done. Demand for her services rose over the first 9 months of the year. In an interview six months into the year, the worker told me that word of mouth was becoming more important - from current clients, WDA graduates, and SHINE clients, all of whom were bringing in friends with other needs/issues. Case in point: While the worker and I were meeting, an older Spanish-speaking man came to the office. She asked him to wait, which he did. She had never seen him before.

Examples of needs and responses

- A man close to 80 who is undocumented and looking for work to survive. The CoA Director can give emergency help in a situation like this, e.g., \$50 gift cards for groceries.
- A couple with financial problems. One works and one doesn't. They lost internet access and his driver's license. He needs his driver's license to expand his reach in finding work.

- A referral from Springwell re: a Spanish-speaking client. Springwell hasn't had contact with her for six months. The outreach worker got in touch with her and told her to answer her phone. She got her an appointment with Springwell.

Examples of agency collaboration

From my notes on meetings with the worker I heard stories of successful collaboration with St. Mary's and Our Lady churches and Charles River Community Health Center about getting out information about the outreach program, helping seniors access food pantries, encouraging applications to the new Leland House low-income housing next to the CoA, better communications with Springwell, and a presentation on fraud prevention in English and Spanish by staff from Representative Catherine Clark's office.

But not all agency connections were easy or successful (from my notes in meetings with worker):

- **Charles River.** A Charles River nurse made a presentation to the coffee group (information on this below), but it's been difficult to connect to get services there. The nurse told the Charles River outreach people, but they didn't get back to the CoA. But they do refer to Connections.
- **Help with unemployment.** Both the prior and current outreach workers have had a hard time getting help with unemployment benefits, since there have been times when no unemployment offices were open and, more recently, the offices that are open require appointments and lack Spanish speaking capacity. Once, the CoA outreach worker and the Latina outreach worker drove people there but they were closed. You also can't call them. The Latina worker reached out to Tom Stanley, and he connected her with a staff member, who sent back an email with a contact for the unemployment office.

Then the unemployment office got in touch with the client and it started all over again. Seniors need someone who is able to help them navigate the process, along with the online work. The process is already complicated and confusing, but for the Latino seniors who don't speak English, don't have a computer nor tech skills, it's even more difficult.

- **Legal and immigration.** The ALFA International network of private attorneys can help with immigration issues. But the problem is that these legal services aren't for everything. For example, the senior center 15-minute legal consult wouldn't deal with custody or child support issues. Volunteer lawyers don't call back. You go around in circles.



Latino Heritage Month celebration 2024.

Group activities

Besides spending time on meeting individual needs, the worker took the lead on or closely assisted in organizing and offering group activities to Latinos and other seniors. Here is a list of new activities as they came out over the first 9 months of the fiscal year.

October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latino Heritage Month luncheon with a DJ • WDA begins and runs 6 weeks into November. (More than half of the 100 who have taken the course since its inception in 2021 have been Spanish speakers.)
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational fiesta
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hora del café begins (coffee at the CoA with programming in Spanish): By August there were 45 on the list of participants • English class – By July, 3 to 4 folks came consistently
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hora: Jay Higgins from Catherine Clark's Office
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hora: Presentation about Social Security in Spanish • Mother's Day: Latinos and Ugandans attended the CoA's Mother's Day event • Group went on CoA sponsored trip • Presentation in Spanish on how to apply for Leland Home housing next to the CoA (4 members of Hora won the lottery for apartments).
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hora: Officer John Bailey (TRIAD officer); Smartphone tutorial; Reiki and meditation class; AARP on taxes
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hora: Charles River Health Center nurse; ice cream and pizza; CoA Director visit; Smartphone tutorial, Part 2
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hora: Springwell on home care and volunteering, Lt. Farrick of fire on safety issues; police on safety • Holy Guacamole food event at CoA • Latino/Ugandan food fest at the CoA - Luncheon, group dancing, Springwell presentation. 41 Latinos; 26 Ugandans; 30 others. • Latina outreach worker featured on back of CoA newsletter
Upcoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-part series in Spanish on diabetes • Latino Heritage Month celebration • Visit by the Attorney General, Andrea Campbell on preventing scams and fraud • Dance classes for seniors with Parkinson's in English and Spanish • Alzheimer's Association presentation • Healthy Eating/Healthy Aging with Mt. Auburn Hospital

Summary of Spanish-speaking outreach

The Spanish-speaking outreach worker and her supporters have created a strong program of outreach, service to individuals, and activities in groups. A

wide range of needs are being addressed, particularly housing, financial assistance, utilities, and health/mental health. Often meeting these needs requires multiple visits as well as contacts with outside agencies. Translation and interpretation are often required in these contacts and in completing documents.

For some of the seniors who attend regularly this decreases their isolation and helps improve mental health. The son of one of the seniors called during the summer asking if the Hora del Cafe met at other, additional times and if his mother could attend more than once a week because she is otherwise alone at home all day. This group is providing much needed education about services in the community and how to access those services. It is a good opportunity for Latino seniors to learn how the system works. It is also a place where community stakeholders can make outreach to the Latino seniors. As an example, Latinos en Accion recently came to provide information about their food drive and donation of gift baskets to the community for Thanksgiving. Leland House made numerous visits to this group to inform them of the application process and continues to work with the outreach worker to complete the process for the seniors who were approved for an apartment. Springwell came to do a session on volunteering and also helped seniors complete a survey of community needs.

The worker, the CoA, and volunteers have organized numerous group events such as luncheons and outside speakers on benefits and services. The weekly Hora del Café has also become an important setting for social interaction. Overall, more and more Spanish speakers are feeling welcome at the CoA and taking advantage of programming there and from other agencies.



Hora del Cafe gathering featuring a presentation in Spanish on diabetes from a Charles River Community Health Center nurse

Conclusions and Recommendations

We have come a long way since 2017, when a participant in a Spanish-language focus group said: “The Americans, they have these centers where they receive support. They have services that help the elderly to fill the taxes. We have nothing in Spanish.... I do not know anything that currently exists, only the Aging Council, but the problem is, it’s not in Spanish.” And we have made progress with Ugandan seniors since 2022, when only 3 of 25 participants in a Ugandan focus group had heard of the senior center and only one had ever been there.

The range of individual help and social activities provided by the outreach program are well documented in this report. Something that also deserves a mention is how the outreach work has helped these groups feel more comfortable at the senior center. The availability of the outreach workers, the invitations to activities, and the WDA computer classes have also helped

seniors from these two immigrant groups feel welcomed and comfortable coming to the senior center. They are showing up and they are spreading the word. The Spanish-speaking outreach worker has mentioned that direct service work is also essential to this outcome – helping people is what builds trust and encourages them to keep coming back.

Another essential component of this work is the biweekly CC meeting (which includes the CoA Director). It serves as a space for the outreach workers to regularly report on their activities and learnings, as well as to raise concerns and ask questions about processes at the CoA. This regular collaboration prevents the outreach workers from working in a silo, and helps to ensure that they are aware of formal and informal processes at the CoA. These meetings have helped to make the CoA more inclusive by making processes like booking rooms or getting seniors signed up for events known. This has also made it easier for outreach workers to connect with relevant stakeholders to facilitate event planning and meet the needs of Ugandan and Latino seniors.

As described in the introduction, the funding for the outreach program has been anchored by grants of federal Title III funds through Springwell (\$15,000 per year). We have received notice that we will receive this funding again for federal FY 2025. Because of the success of the program and the growing demands on the workers, this year Connections supplemented the Springwell funds (\$24,000 for the outreach workers and \$13,000 to Africano) with money from a Tufts Health Plan Foundation grant that will be fully spent about five months into calendar year 2025. We are looking for a new grant to support this and other work of Connections.

Appendix

Attachment A: Latina outreach worker reporting format

INVOICE

Date	Activity	Amount
5/1/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Hora del cafe/SS presentation*Mtg with AA re documentation needed for heating assistance app*Mtg with ongoing client BB financial /RMV follow up, and test date/food insurity/financial issues*Lunch at Bentley* Tel calls with RMV*Mtg with (CoA case manager) re: CC and DD tel with clients re housing recertification and current medical issues + disc new referral and various other issues related to client needs + resources*tel calls to EE.... 6.5 hours	\$195
5/2/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Mtg with ongoing client FF/application completed for assistance with utility bills/updated on RMV test date/provided food pantry resources*Mtg with Waltham Connections*Mtg with GG re ongoing issues with Raft application decision/tel call with landlord/email to Bostonmetrohousing/searched website*documentation 4 hours	\$120

5/3/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *worked on flyer for taxes presentation *Tel call to MetroHousing Boston and tel call with landlord related to his difficulties completed his part of the online application +ongoing communication with GG for support around this process which finally ended! *communications with HH, II, JJ and TRIAD officer re programming 1.5 hours	\$45
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Total Amount: \$---

Signed off by: _____

Sign off date: _____5/17/24_____

Attachment B: Excerpt from Ugandan worker's narrative entries and records of participation

masters of Business Analytics

still work with seniors.
Others are retired, and others
gone back to baby sit or
to their families.
Later we were served with
Lunch, Snacks, and Cold Iced
juice. at 3:15 p.m we
started our journey back to
Waltham. We reached at
4:45 p.m, and at Africano, those
who stayed behind had no
transportation. I had to drive two
to their homes. One who was
going to Molder I had to give
a tax 40\$ to be taken home.
all went well.

Attachment C

Encounters with individual seniors October 2023-June 2024

Month	# of unique individuals encountered (in office or phone)	# who were new	# seen multiple times	Total encounters with individual seniors
October	7	3	2x-2	9
November	7	3	3x-1, 2x-2	11
December	5	4	3x-1	7
January	15	7	4x-2, 3x-2, 2x-3	28
February	14	3	6x-1, 2x-2	21
March	14	3	3x-2, 2x-4	22
April	16	7	8x-1, 5x-1, 3x-1, 2x-4	31
May	12	4	8x-1, 5x-1, 2x-2	25
June	12	2	2x-5	17

Attachment D: Spanish outreach worker: Mentions of Needs and Outside Resources (January-May 2024)

Mentions of Needs

- Housing – 22 – Waltham, Boston & Newton housing authorities, congregate, landlord, (RAFT) Residential Assistance for Families in transition
- Financial – 21 –utilities, SS, unemployment, stress
- Utilities – 15 – heat, applications
- Financial assistance applications/issues – 14 – SSI, SS, SNAP, SSDI
- Medical/mental health – 13
- Legal – 10
- Documentation – 8
- Homeless - 5
- Immigration - 4
- Transportation – 3
- Translation – 3
- Food - 3
- Family, insurance, fraud, tax help at the CoA - 1 each

Agency/program/people mentions

- CoA – 25 – Help from social worker, front desk, events
- Rep. Tom Stanley – 6 – re unemployment office
- Springwell – 5
- St. Mary's church – 5
- RMV - 5
- Charles River - 4
- WATCH – 3
- Alpha (legal help with immigration)– 2
- Officer Jon Bailey - 2