

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

To reach the **office** or your **Match** call this number.

Senior CHAT Proxy Phone Number: 610-880-3095

- ✓ Your Match will be encouraged to wait for your call. If your Match does not answer, leave the **610-880-3095** number as the call-back phone number – not your personal number.
- ✓ If they do call you back and you wish to answer, that is strictly your decision.
- ✓ If you choose to allow your matched caller to go to your voicemail, to keep your contact information private, **DO NOT** include a phone number in your outgoing message.

Staff can and will disconnect matches within the system should anyone abuse this program by calling at inappropriate hours.

Scheduling Calls

Following the initial call, the day and time of the on-going weekly calls is something you and your Match will agree to and schedule.

Before you end the call, be certain to remind your Match of the day and time of your next call. *Ask them add it to their calendar and you do the same.

Email from Mon Ami, the tech company

Mon Ami has the phone system we are using to connect and capture our matches. When you are approved to be matched, you **may** receive a welcome email from Mon Ami's system.

Once you are matched, you **will definitely** get an email with information about your Match and you can begin calling them.

*****Remember to call from the Primary Phone number you provided or the proxy phone number will not work.*****

Being a Senior CHAT Volunteer is more than being a friend.

You are calling as a caring person with the responsibilities and in the role of a volunteer.

If your Match asks you to increase the frequency of your calls and you cannot or do not wish to, please contact the office. We will do our best to arrange additional connections for them.

Senior CHAT is strictly a phone-based calling program. If your Match asks you to 'visit' or perform other tasks that require in-person contact, you must complete additional training and provide two (2) references.

Please call the office for information about this process.

Boundary Awareness

Being involved with a lonely senior increases the potential for boundary violations. While you want to form a friendly relationship with your match, it is important to set boundaries.

Volunteer Time

You don't need to keep track of or report your hours of service because phone system tracks the number and duration of calls..

You should call the Senior CHAT office if:

- ✓ Your Match does not answer their phone after three attempts.
- ✓ You have any issues with or questions about your Match.
- ✓ Your Match tells you something 'in confidence' that you feel a need to report. (Sometimes people will tell us something in hopes of getting help.)
- ✓ Your Match says they are out of food or cannot cook for themselves.

Here's a look at how to get to know someone:

- ✓ Minimize distractions. Make calls when you can be present and focused.
- ✓ Ask genuine questions like - “How do you like to spend your time?” “What’s on your mind”?
- ✓ Avoid rapid-fire questions. Allow the conversation to guide you. Listen for cues from the other person.
- ✓ Allow for short pauses. Accept the awkwardness of brief ‘silences’. It can take a month to find a rhythm.
- ✓ Actively listen to their answers...waiting to speak until they finish...restating or empathizing with what they have said.
- ✓ Get them to elaborate on something that matters to them by asking “what else”, “what happened next”.
- ✓ Pay attention to **how** they respond. Learning to recognize someone’s level of interest can help you have a more fulfilling connection.
- ✓ Be honest. Let areas of similarity come naturally. If they do not, you can always introduce subjects you’re passionate about such as hobbies, places or pets.

To direct uncomfortable topics toward more appropriate ones, have a list of conversation starters prepared. Then listen for an opening to change the subject. For example, most people are comfortable discussing changes in the weather/seasons or their favorite foods or recipes

Topics to Avoid: Anything that causes tension or conflict.

The goal of the program is pleasant conversations that generate feelings of connection and satisfaction. If a topic comes up that feels uncomfortable or controversial don’t attempt to change someone’s beliefs or challenge their thinking or values.

When necessary, change the topic with a statement like, “That’s one way to look at it. Why don’t we get back to ___?”. (and switch to a topic where you have some common ground or interests).

Volunteer Callers Orientation



610-880-3095

SeniorCHATglv@hotmail.com

www.RSVPofLNC.org/SeniorCHAT

Senior CHAT is a no-cost, secure, safe, and friendly phone program for older adults. It is offered by Senior Corps RSVP of Lehigh, Northampton & Carbon Counties, in partnership with ShareCare Faith in Action and Mon Ami. **Senior CHAT** receives support from Lehigh County Aging and Adult Services.