

## **Michael Lerner Earns the SCMAFC “Lifetime Achievement Award”**

The Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church is pleased to award Michael Lerner with a **“Lifetime Achievement Award”** in recognition of his ten years of dedication and exceptional volunteer service to the organization.



Michael joined as a volunteer driver and board member starting in 2016, recruited by a member of his temple who was stepping down from the board. Within months, he became more involved as a Ride Coordinator and a member of the committee handling face-to-face interviews. Michael has served continuously since then in almost every role of the Board.

With his deep commitment, over the years Michael served in a variety of different capacities, including assisting with the recruitment of new volunteers, editing our quarterly newsletter, assessing potential new clients, and chairing the financial audit committee.

Most importantly - he served as the Board's vice-chair for four years and then as chair in 2021, during which he led the organization with a steady hand through the challenging times of the early COVID pandemic. He convened special ad hoc committees to address new challenges and find creative solutions.

Michael's strong belief in having well-written processes and procedures has facilitated the education of new volunteers and helped maintain operational consistency. He took the initiative to write many important policies and procedures covering all aspects of the organization's operations. These include chair, screener, and face to face interview procedures for the client assessment committee. He also wrote clearly organized and helpful procedures for the Ride Coordinators and oversaw major improvements to the volunteer application form, among others. For many years, Michael has been a valuable resource for all Board members in need of advice and guidance, and a fount of historical knowledge.

He has been essential to the continued effectiveness of the organization, and steps down from his board position in December 2025 knowing that SCMAFC is in a stronger position with a deep bench of new leaders stepping up to carry on the mission. We heartily applaud and graciously thank him for the thousands of selfless volunteer hours he has expended on behalf of the SCMAFC mission, and for all the hours yet to come as he continues to fill in as a backup Ride Coordinator and assist with volunteer recruitment! Congratulations Michael!

— Carrie Le and Jan Auerbach

## Survey comments from our drivers

We recently surveyed our drivers and received many responses like these:

“Driving gets me out of the house and talking to people. I've become friends with a few clients and have spent additional time with them (going to lunch, for example). I've gained so much from talking to my clients, and I wish I could drive more often.”

“I've cultivated new relationships, and it make me feel a strong sense of accomplishment knowing i can assist as a driver of elderly clients.”

“The variety of clients we serve is so interesting. They genuinely seem to enjoy spending time with us on our way to and from their appointments.”

“Several of my regulars who “graduated” from PT have become friends. And some of the older riders are incredibly supportive of my challenges with my parents with great advice!”

“I have enjoyed getting to know several of the riders. They have all been interesting and appreciative. And I really appreciate a volunteer opportunity that is so flexible and easy to adjust to my schedule and travel plans.”

“I have met community members I never would have met. When I am feeling down about the world, driving a community member reminds me that even an act that seems simple can be transformative for others.”



## Attention Volunteers – Save the Date

Our Holiday Volunteer

Appreciation Luncheon will be on Friday, January 16 at Wildfire at the Tysons Galleria. An invitation will follow closer to the event.

We'd love to see you there.

## Ride Coordinators

Mary Highsmith  
Jan Gordon  
Jan Auerbach  
Irv Auerbach  
Mark Turco  
Rob Osberg  
Lisa Dickerson  
Kathy Peroff

Ride Statistics January-September 2025	Jan-Mar 2025	Apr-Jun 2025	Jul-Sep 2025
Count of Unique Riders	93	88	82
Count of Unique Drivers	86	80	74
Rides Given by Volunteers	968	970	966
Miles Driven by Volunteer Drivers	9,063	8,860	8,794
Total Hours Logged by Drivers	931	922	900
Extra Stops Requested By Riders	110	87	91

In the most recent quarter, our drivers provided over \$20,000 in savings to our clients, versus if they had to pay for taxi rides themselves!

## New Volunteers July-September 2025

Mark Trachtman  
Sean Yates  
Eshan Parkash  
Andrew Bradick  
Michael Connelly  
Roxanne Englund  
Judy Rudman  
Michael Jawer  
Madelyn Ross  
Margaret Flannery-Goodman  
Nancy Steelberg  
Kenneth Bershtein

## Volunteer Profile – Sharon Short

Sharon was raised in Waco, Texas where she stayed to attend Baylor University. She studied accounting and information systems. Coming to the Washington, DC area for her first job after college, she worked in the federal government where she spent her career in contracting and budgeting. She started programming computers in COBOL on a home-based IBM PC with floppy discs and followed the evolution of computing industry like so many others.

She met her future husband shortly after coming to the area. They settled in McLean and raised their four children here. Now retired they spend five months a year in Naples, Florida where they maintain a second home.

Sharon is an active pickleball player. Pickleball keeps her busy along with her volunteer work at the McLean Baptist Church, a supporter of Shepherd's Center. For Shepherd's Center, she's an active driver, driving clients a few times a week. She also serves on our Communications Committee where she helps maintain our many lists. She helped convert us to the Constant Contact software that now supports our communications.

---Ed Groark



## PIZZA, CANNOLI AND GOOD CONVERSATION

In appreciation of the often thankless work of our volunteers, Shepherd's Center likes to arrange social events for volunteers to meet each other and develop a deeper connection to the organization.

On September 18, Shepherd's Center hosted our first outdoor volunteer appreciation event and what a great success!

A *Modo Mio* pizzeria in Arlington opened its terrace for us and we had sunshine and an enthusiastic crowd of over 30. Rave reviews on the food and service, and a great opportunity to mix-and-mingle, which we love to do!

Board Chair Carrie Le presented high-driver Connie Van Zandt with a gift card and best wishes as she relocates to Reston. Her many contributions in addition to driving include:

- data analysis and reporting of driving statistics required for certain grants and for our SCMAFC newsletters
- improving the data quality in Ride Scheduler with a focus on accurate mileage reporting which more clearly shows our actual volunteer impact
- helping plan and manage volunteer appreciation events including tracking attendance and sending reminders through Constant Contact

Connie plans to continue her volunteer work by driving for Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia (NOVA) and for the Reston Community Center program. They are very fortunate to have her support them.

— Carol Edelstein



shepherd's center

OF MCLEAN-ARLINGTON-FALLS CHURCH

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## SHEPHERD'S HERALD: Volume 11, Issue 3

The Shepherd's Center invites you to follow our Facebook page by "liking" <https://www.facebook.com/SCMAFC> as well as visiting our website <http://scmafc.org/>

Ed Groark — Newsletter Editor

Special thanks to **Suellen Skocki** of the McLean Baptist Church for formatting and printing the newsletters.

### SCMAFC Board of Directors

**Carrie Le** *Chair & acting Communications Chair*

VACANT *Vice Chair*

**Jan Auerbach** *Secretary*

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**France Vareilles** *Member At-Large*

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church is a nonprofit 501c(3), licensed in Virginia. Donations may be mailed to SCMAFC, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd, McLean, VA 22101. Contact the Center by phone at 703-506-2199, through its Website <http://scmafc.org/>, by email to [contact@scmafc.org](mailto:contact@scmafc.org), or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SCMAFC>.