



Positive Aging

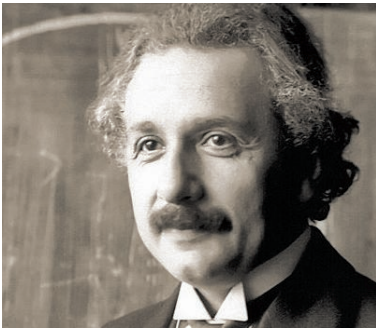
Newsletter

Winter 2026 Edition

The Power of Pivoting— Lives Well-lived after 50

As the new year gets underway and we focus on fresh starts for 2026, it can be inspiring and energizing to look at some lives well-lived.

Enjoy these brief glimpses of well-known individuals who turned to new interests and commitments as they aged. Then take a moment to think about adding to your own legacy of compassion in 2026. Build into your resolutions some bold new philanthropic moves.



Albert Einstein



Audrey Hepburn



Robert Smith

When Albert Einstein was 61, moving toward the end of his scientific career, he became a U.S. citizen. Within a few more years he joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), where he campaigned for the civil rights of African Americans. He considered racism America's "worst disease." "I do not intend to be quiet about it," he once remarked.

His own experiences in Nazi Germany fueled his empathy and activism. He reached out to the Black opera singer, Marian Anderson, and provided hospitality in his home, after a Princeton, NJ, hotel refused her stay.

He went on to use his moral voice and resources to promote aid for refugees, international security with an end to wars, and social justice for all human beings.

(story continued, page 3)

From Jim Wigfall, CEO

It's always the right time to turn toward compassion.



Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we step into a new year, I often find myself reflecting on a simple but powerful truth: it is always the right time to turn toward compassion.

After 50, many of us have lived enough life to know that compassion isn't abstract. It's learned, practiced, and deepened over time. It shows up in how we care for one another, how we respond to change, and how we choose to stay engaged with the world around us. A life well-lived isn't defined by a single path, but by our willingness to keep opening our hearts to new purpose, new understanding, and new ways of giving back.

At Sound Generations, we see every day how compassion transforms lives; whether through a shared meal, a friendly visit, or the quiet reassurance that someone is not alone. Volunteerism and support for those less fortunate are powerful expressions of compassion, and they remain essential as more older adults face isolation, hunger, and uncertainty.

The beginning of a new year invites reflection. In this edition of Positive Aging, we share how inspiration can energize compassion and lead to newfound meaning in one's life. Because no matter our age or stage of life, choosing compassion is always a meaningful place to begin.

With gratitude and hope for the year ahead,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Wigfall". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "J" and "W".

Jim Wigfall, CEO

Lives Well-lived (continued)

Since the early 1950s, Audrey Hepburn's unmistakable screen presence and talent have captivated several generations of film enthusiasts. But she was not satisfied with stardom.



After 1967, Hepburn gradually moved away from moviemaking to raise her children; and later she found new ways to expand her own story and impact. At a pivotal moment in her life, she set out to invest her energy and resources into helping those in need.

She considered it the greatest role of her career.

Audrey never forgot the critical services that UNICEF delivered when she was a young teenager in The Netherlands. After German occupation ended in 1945, Hepburn and many others needed immediate food and medical assistance. "I was very under-nourished," as she put it — expressing her gratitude during talks and interviews.

In 1988 she became the UN's UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. The next year she spoke before world leaders gathered to adopt the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. At times she was giving up to 15 interviews a day, transforming her popularity into a force for public good. Field trips took her to Ethiopia, Turkey, Venezuela, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Bangladesh, Thailand, Vietnam, and Sudan—ensuring increased attention and resources for women, children, water programs, schools, better nutrition, and the sheltering of refugees.

In 1992, while battling cancer that would soon end her life, she kept going. That year, Audrey's UNICEF work took her to France, Kenya, Somalia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Audrey Hepburn on Aging:

"Living is like tearing through a museum. Not until later do you really start absorbing what you saw, thinking about it, looking it up in a book, and remembering."

"As you grow older you will discover that you have two hands: One for helping yourself, the other for helping others."

"Nothing is more important than empathy for another human being's suffering. ...We have to feel for one another if we're going to survive with dignity."



Robert F. Smith earned his fortune in the private equity and venture capital field. By 2014 he had turned his focus toward community uplift, education for under-

privileged youth, and social justice. Smith always remembered his own internship at Bell Labs; and now continues to express gratitude through a long list of generous programs and donations.

In 2015, Smith paid for the college education of all the recently rescued Nigerian girls who had been abducted by the militant group, Boko Haram. Smith funded the entire student loan debt of the 2019 Morehouse College graduating class—a reported \$34,000,000 gift.

More recently, he donated \$15,000,000 to Cornell University, providing financial aid to engineering students from historically under-represented communities. Now 63 years old, he carries on — also donating \$300,000 to Jane Goodall's youth environmental program, Roots & Shoots. ■

We're Gaining New Positive Aging Partners! Join Us, and Them!

When you commit to giving monthly to Sound Generations, you become a Positive Aging Partner, joining a community of over 180 caring, thoughtful change-makers. Together, they contribute over \$100,000 a year to our safety net of services. 12 times a year. 13 different programs. 25,000 older adults. 25,000 families and homes.



Sound Generations is King County's largest nonprofit for proving comprehensive assistance to older adults. We deliver compassion, connections, and care to those that need it most, sometimes at critical periods in their lives.

Many of our programs provide personalized, professional support to navigate housing insecurity, behavioral health challenges, and other hard to reach resources.

We set an ambitious year-end goal for 2025: build a stronger base of reliable support through our Positive Aging Partners. And it worked. From November 1-December 31, nine new members joined, bringing our community to 186 dedicated partners. Their collective commitment now generates \$102,000 annually, which is a steady, mission-critical investment that allows us to plan boldly, respond quickly, and serve our community with confidence.

Each donation we receive sustains our promise: We won't forget them. We see them. We value and include them. ■

"I am a senior. I give to support programs like Meals on Wheels. I also go to the senior center. These times are tough and even more tough when you can't buy groceries. This is what I can do and it makes me feel good."

– Client & Supporter, Carolyn Eng



Scan to learn
more about
Partnering.

Volunteering, or Simply Assisting Others— It Could Slow Your Brain's Aging.

Regularly helping others, even for just a few hours a week, may significantly slow cognitive decline as we age.

Whether reaching out to help others informally or signing up to assist in a program, studies reveal that 2 to 4 hours per week helping others can result in a 15% to 20% reduction in age-related cognitive decline.

A major 20-year study recently published in Social Science & Medicine and led by University of Texas-Austin faculty member Sae Hwang Han indicates that small acts of supporting others help sustain brain health. **"Everyday acts of support—whether organized or personal—can have lasting cognitive impact,"** said Han. "Conversely, our data show that completely withdrawing from helping is associated with worse cognitive function," Han said. "This suggests the importance of keeping older adults engaged in some form of helping for as long as possible, with appropriate supports and accommodations in place."

"Many older adults in suboptimal health often continue to make valuable contributions to those around them," Han added, "and they also may be the ones to especially benefit from being provided with opportunities to help."

Ready to volunteer?

Many of our volunteers who provide transportation and other services are, themselves, older adults—and they get a boost from their involvement. In addition,

the events we host to raise funds wouldn't be possible without the help of our volunteers! Throughout the year there are many ways to get involved and touch the mission of Sound Generations.

If you'd like to help us champion the older adults of Western Washington at the Inspire Positive Aging Awards in the spring, or if you want to help us fundraise at our Golden Gala in the fall, we'd love to have you join the fun!

Learn more by emailing our Mission Engagement Associate Kaitlyn at kaitlyn.redwood@soundgenerations.org or give her a call at **206.727.6230**. ■

Below: Volunteers and staff enjoy serving together at our IPAA and Gala events.



Positive Aging Champions Will Rise In May



Nominate someone you know who is at least 60 and inspires others!

Inspiration blooms this May as older adults rise up when Sound Generations hosts the Inspire Positive Aging Awards! IPAA celebrates older adults across Western Washington who motivate those around them to rethink the aging process and what they want their aging journey to be. It's a day that reflects what's possible



when compassion, courage, and vitality come together to build community.

You can nominate any individual who is at least 60 years old and lives in Western Washington in the following 6 award categories: Advocacy & Activism, Community Service, Defining Inspiration, Health & Wellness, Intergenerational Impact, and Lifelong Learning. Submitting a nomination is a great way to honor an older adult you know. It brings visibility to the ways positive aging is unfolding and benefiting so many.

Award recipients will receive the public and monetary recognition they deserve!

Have someone in mind who inspires others to lead a full and engaged life? Join us in honoring the beauty of lives that have blossomed over time, and are still blooming!

Nominate them starting January 14th through March 12th at 11:59 pm! Visit soundgenerations.org/nominate or scan the QR code below. If you have questions reach out to Kaitlyn Redwood at kaitlyn.redwood@soundgenerations.org. ■



Scan to nominate someone you know.

*Below: A few of the spirited moments glimpsed during the 2025 Inspire Positive Aging Awards!
Consider nominating someone you know, and plan to attend the event in May.*



Community Dining Stepped Up in 2025!

At a time when food security was jeopardized for thousands, and government programs were in doubt...

Sound Generations' Community Dining responded, serving meals to 34% more older adults in 2025 than 2024—improving the health and nutrition and decreasing isolation for over 7,000 elders!



Think of who you would like to honor with a gift.

This February, show your love to someone who has made a difference in your life. Shine a light on that special person through a donation that ensures aging adults will get the assistance they need. It's a meaningful tribute.

Throughout the month of February, when you donate to Sound Generations, we will send a tribute card from you to the person you indicate on the donation form.



Scan the QR code, make a tribute donation in someone's honor, and we'll send them a card!



Send a special note to that person who inspires you, gives you hope, brings a smile to your face, or who has shared in your life lessons. *If you choose to have a card mailed, your donation amount is not revealed in the mailing, and the card will be on its way within seven days of receiving your donation.*

Donate as a tribute to someone who is celebrating a milestone. Or make this a special gift honoring a loved one. Even if your special person is no longer physically present in your life, you can express your love for them with a tribute gift. ■

A Big Thanks to Our Workplace Giving Partners

Each holiday season, we have organizations that donate to the communities we serve here at Sound Generations. With the generous participation from the Seattle-area businesses Microsoft, Prowess Consulting, and Wilson Sonsini, we were able to raise \$17,905 for older adult services in King County! Our Holiday Workplace Giving program empowers companies, organizations, and individuals to come together and build a community of positive impact for those in need.

And in 2025, our Amazon Wishlist donors contributed over \$2,050 in gifts, providing specific items to help us help aging adults!

Workplace Giving & Matching Double your Donations

Are you a current donor or volunteer and would like to increase your impact? Did you know that thousands of companies match donations made by their employees to organizations like ours?

To check your eligibility, contact your employer's Human Resource department



or visit our website's "Workplace Giving" page to check if your employer matches donations. Every dollar counts and we can't thank you enough for your support of King County's aging population!

Reach out to our Mission Engagement Associate, Kaitlyn at kaitlyn.redwood@soundgenerations.org. You can give her a call at 206.727.6230 with questions. Or scan the QR code below and enter your employer's name. ■



2025 Caregiver Appreciation Event

Recognition, Celebration, and Support

Every day, unpaid caregivers provide critical support to those they love, often without rest or recognition. Many of these quiet heroes shared a unique experience in November, attending our **2025 Caregiver Appreciation Event**. Supporting these VIPs-for-a-day, Sound Generations facilitated a few hours of inspiring and refreshing activities to ensure that caregivers felt appreciated and encouraged.

We gathered at the Museum of Flight, sponsored by Visiting Angels and Jewish Family Service of Seattle; with partnership from Alexandar School of Natural Therapeutics and from Aging Wisdom. Inspiring words by Monique Ming Laven, an Emmy Award-winning journalist and anchor at KIRO 7 News helped set the uplifting mood. It was a day of sharing stories, relaxation, and community connections. Activities for caregivers included massage, reiki, art, and guided movement and breathing. And each attendee left with a fabulous goody bag!

Thanks to all those who contributed to help us honor caregivers for their compassion, strength, and commitment.



Because You Care, Please Share Your Feedback

Scan the QR Code to take our survey.

As we work on improving our systems with limited funding, please let us know how we can better serve you!



1. Focus & Deepen What We Do Best

Strengthen core programs aligned with community need and organizational expertise.

Sound Generations' programs are highly valued and deeply effective, particularly for those living with limited income or mobility. Over the next three years, we will invest in programs with the greatest impact and future relevance.

2. Elevate & Evolve Our Leadership in Aging Services

Grow our regional leadership role as convener, coordinator, and advocate.

Stakeholders told us they want Sound Generations to lead, not only in direct services, but in shaping the future of aging in King County.

3. Align People, Systems, and Infrastructure

Modernize the organization and increase capacity so we can sustain growth and impact.

4. Secure Long-Term Financial Stability

Build sustainable funding that supports growth now and into the future.

Sound Generations relies on government contracts which may be vulnerable to policy shifts and inadequate to cover full costs of the programs. Diversifying revenue is essential for stability and scale.

A Call to Partnership

The needs are growing. This plan is not simply a roadmap, it is an invitation.

Donors, funders, businesses, community members, and partners — join us in shaping the future of aging in King County. Visit soundgenerations.org.

When older adults can age their way, communities thrive.

Programs & Services

Food Security

- Meals on Wheels
- Community Dining

Transportation

- Hyde Shuttle
- Volunteer Transportation

Health & Wellness

- Physical Activity
- Fall Prevention
- Health Management

Assistance Services

- Pathways Information & Assistance
- Elder Education Institute
- Caregiver Support
- Minor Home Repair
- Legal Assistance
- Geriatric Regional Assessment Team (GRAT)
- Health-Related Social Needs



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A New Year, Recent Results, Exciting Plans

Winter News

