



**north shore senior options**  
positive aging support services

# Providing Comprehensive Care with Compassion, Expertise & Dedication

An affiliate of North Shore Senior Center, North Shore Senior Options was carefully designed to focus on the ever-increasing needs of older adults so they can maintain a maximum quality of life as they age. Senior Options works closely with seniors and their families to ensure they are knowledgeable about all of the resources available to them. The dynamic team provides an assortment of services including: care management, guardianship, money management, home safety assessments and psychotherapy.

***“The comprehensive set of services North Shore Senior Options provides is unique in the communities we serve. This suite of specialized services is a natural extension of North Shore Senior Center’s mission and the future for financial sustainability of the Center.”*** —Jordan Luhr, Executive Director

Thanks to the tireless dedication of the team and a well-thought out strategic plan by Director Liz Gordon, Ph.D., Senior Options has made tremendous strides in the past year. The team has formed critical partnerships with leading legal, financial and healthcare organizations to ensure clients’ ever-growing needs are being met. Key partners at time of print include Peck Ritchey, LLC, Wintrust Financial, NorthShore University HealthSystem and NShore Patient Advocates.

Liz explained, “We are currently in a rapid growth period, and it’s critical for us to have strong partners who have proficiency in these areas. Nurses, for example, play a key role in the direct care of patients so having the nursing expertise of NShore Patient Advocates helps us better understand the healthcare needs of our clients. All of these partnerships are particularly important for our professional guardianship and power of attorney clients.”

## Care Management

Program Specialist and Care Manager Lauren Hogan, LCSW, consults with families whose loved ones are in need of various services and community resources. “I identify gaps in clients’ care and provide guidance and information on the array of services available in the community,” she said. “One of the biggest differences we make in our clients’ lives and the lives of their families is the added layer of comfort at a time of many unknowns as we help them navigate the resources available to them.”

## Behavioral Health

Behavioral Health is another area of growth for Senior Options. Led by Terri McHugh, LCSW, clinical supervisor, behavioral health therapists specialize in challenges typically experienced later in life such as the loss of a loved one, unresolved relationship conflicts, and living with medical complications and functional impairment. She said, “Through psychotherapy and PEARLS (the Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives), we help clients frame their situations so that they feel more manageable, often coordinating with other professionals for an integrative approach. Our commitment comes from a shared interest in promoting value and purpose in the community.”



Therapist Carrie Cutler, LSW, meets with clients in their homes and at the Center’s Northfield and Niles locations. Last summer she and Terri ran a group therapy program with residents at a local senior living facility. “We addressed many issues relating to older adults that can be overwhelming and cause a person to become depressed. The group talked about feelings of loneliness, the stress of finding help at home, transitioning into assisted living, and worries about the future,” she said. Carrie and Terri will continue to hold group therapy sessions at the Center’s Northfield office.

Eddie Meyer, LSW, program specialist and psychotherapist, wears many hats on the North Shore Senior Options team. As a counselor for the evidence-based PEARLS program, he helps enhance the emotional well-being of seniors who are experiencing symptoms of depression. As a program specialist, Eddie helps seniors and their families learn about the resources available through Senior Options. He also offers home safety assessments for those looking to make modifications to their homes to help them age safely in the community. He said, “The act of connecting people to the services that help them meet their goals is very meaningful to me.”

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## Guardianship & Daily Money Management

North Shore Senior Options' newest service, guardianship, allows Senior Options to serve as guardian of a person and/or estate. Guardianship is court-appointed and protects people from neglect, exploitation or abuse, and encourages development of self-reliance and independence.



Guardianship of a person can be appointed to someone who lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make responsible decisions concerning themselves. According to Guardian Care Manager Maya Jacob, "Guardianship is a system that has been put in place to ensure vulnerable individuals do not go without care, treatment, and the necessities of life. As court-appointed guardians, we serve as advocates to help people navigate their personal and

financial affairs. At one point vulnerable, these individuals gain the necessary support to thrive and survive."

Senior Options has expanded in this area with an added money manager to address guardianship of estate. As guardian of estate, Senior Options manages a person's income, assets, bills and debt as well as other financial transactions. Daily Money Manager Denise Ledford shared that working with clients gives her an opportunity to do good for others in honor of those who have helped her in her life. "I can enthusiastically share a skill set with remarkable individuals who have paved the way for younger generations and help them to

fundamentally safeguard assets during a timespan in their lives it may count the most."

One of Senior Options' key partners in guardianship is the law firm Peck Ritchey. "Peck Ritchey has extensive experience in providing professional legal services to hundreds of seniors and families in the area of guardianship and other related elder law issues," said Liz. "Their team of lawyers is instrumental in providing legal consultations to us, and we are fortunate to be able to utilize their counsel as we navigate these guardianship cases."

## The Senior Options Team

Senior Options also works with an advisory committee comprised of board members and Center staff to act as a sounding board for the team as it expands its areas of expertise. The committee provides feedback and insights as the team explores new avenues of service, such as dementia consultation/counseling, which will soon be added to Senior Options' key specialties. Staff members also participate in ongoing professional training to remain on the frontlines of changes and developments in the social service industry.

Liz said the success of the team, in addition to the high level of expertise, is due to the way they collaborate and even cross over in their responsibilities. "The level of collaboration and integration embodies the mission and values of North Shore Senior Center. And, if we can't help someone, we don't stop there. We always refer them to the appropriate resource, such as the Center's Senior and Family Services, House of Welcome Adult Day Services or other community support, so they can receive the care they need."



The Senior Options team (L to R): Terri McHugh, Denise Ledford, Eddie Meyer, Maya Jacob, Liz Gordon, Lauren Hogan, Carrie Cutler, and Evelyn Medina. Missing: Naomi Ben-Attar Yablom