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CONNECT WITH LIFEQUEST,
CONNECT WITH LIFE!

23



Purpose and Belonging...

For 42 years, LifeQuest of Arkansas has positively impacted the lives of our members. In a letter to the editor, LifeQuest's Executive Director shared her own observations of how LifeQuest's mission continues to enhance the intellectual engagement, social connection, and physical wellness of the adults we serve.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR, published in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, October 5, 2023

I very much appreciated the article on Sept. 17 in the Perspective section titled "Social Isolation." We have a program right here in our city working to address this issue among older adults.

LifeQuest of Arkansas is a nonprofit organization which serves to enhance the lives of older adults through lifelong learning and volunteer experiences. Through my years associated with LifeQuest, I have learned how vital social connection is to our members' overall health. As the article mentions, adults over 65 are the demographic most at risk for the negative health effects of isolation.

We know that about 41 percent of our LifeQuesters live alone, and that this percentage is even higher for older adults in our community and state. At LifeQuest, this knowledge strengthens our resolve to help members build social connections by participating in lifelong learning classes, taking trips together, and volunteering in the community. Many of our members join because they're seeking connection and purpose after a significant life change; they've recently lost a spouse, retired from a long career, moved across the state or country to be nearer to children and grandchildren, or suffered a health event and need to be closer to hospitals.

I love to see members join, connect with others, get involved in classes and volunteer activities and develop a renewed sense of purpose and belonging. Volunteering in the community together, discussing books and ideas, traveling, dining, and learning together all provide opportunities to stay connected and develop meaningful, purpose-filled lives centered around healthful longevity and active aging. As the article states, there are solutions to the problems of loneliness and isolation. Thank you for highlighting this issue and for providing a few good models for positive, impactful action.

Leah Greenfield
LifeQuest of Arkansas, Executive Director

***Thank you, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette,
for your sponsorship of LifeQuest!***

Our Mission

To promote **healthful longevity** and **active aging** through **lifelong learning** and **meaningful volunteerism** within the community.



LifeQuest is like a small, liberal arts college for older adults, except classes are provided for the fun of learning. There are no tests, grades, or required attendance!

-- Ruth Shepherd



Our Vision

LifeQuest's programs are built on three pillars: **intellectual engagement**, **social connection**, and **physical wellness**.

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Whether teaching a course in a special area of knowledge or contentedly adopting the role of student in a variety of courses, LifeQuest participants gain valuable insights into numerous realms of intellectual inquiry while also benefitting from the ever-present camaraderie that is one of the hallmarks of this program. -- Chuck Chappell

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“Geography is a people's subject, not just a place subject.” So states Jerry Hanson as he expounds on his love of teaching geography. As an online instructor teaching from his home in Virginia, Jerry covers the world for participants who might not have a chance to visit Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans, etc. In his classes, Jerry delves into climate change, food security, politics, and other issues affecting the geography of the world. “While I've been a teacher, I have also been a student. LifeQuest offers that to us all.” -- Jerry Hanson

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Our Members

LifeQuest members are active, engaged retired-aged adults who participate in-person and online, volunteer their time, and are engaged in their community.

210 NEW members joined in 2023!



“ I’m a fitness enthusiast and try to get 10,000 steps a day. LifeQuest exercise classes like line dancing, pickleball, walking class, yoga and tai chi are great for the mind, body and spirit!
-- Colleen Vollman (pictured far left)

Celebrating Connection!

Enrollment numbers over the years

		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Winter	645	622	700	711	687	356	320	482
	Spring	570	560	603	593	0	322	348	467
	Summer	286	294	338	354	0	192	265	395
	Fall	694	765	779	735	447	302	467	552
Year totals		2195	2241	2420	2393	1134	1172	1400	1896
Highest ever									

As the enrollment numbers climb, so does the collective spirit of LifeQuest. It's a testament to the program's ability to not only survive but thrive, offering a space where human **connection** is as integral as the educational opportunities provided. The rising enrollment is not just a numerical achievement; it's a celebration of our members' resilience and the enduring human bonds that make LifeQuest a truly enriching experience for all involved.

-- Leah Greenfield, Executive Director



Executive Directors:

Ann Leek, 2008-2016, Leah Greenfield 2021 to present, Emily Ingram, 2016-2020

Our Program

LifeQuest classes serve as the cornerstone of this organization, encompassing a diverse array of subjects—from literature and language to arts and music, history, politics, science, health, and exercise. The broad range of topics covered reflects the richness and depth of the educational offerings at LifeQuest.

LifeQuest stands as a unique volunteer-led program in our state and region, setting it apart as a beacon of knowledge, community, and shared learning. The distinctive nature of LifeQuest lies not only in its curriculum but also in the passionate commitment of its volunteers.

**2023 by
the numbers:**

175 classes

925 lunches and meals served

242 volunteer instructors

1842 individual class participants

2500 active members

17 Arkansas counties

15 states outside of Arkansas

“
As I reflect on my journey with LifeQuest, I am grateful not only for the artistic inspiration it offers, but also for the invaluable connections and emotional support that have become an integral part of my post-retirement, post-caregiver life. LifeQuest is not just about classes; it is a testament to the power of community, empathy, and shared passion for lifelong learning. -- Anne Parat



Our Volunteers

LifeQuest is a volunteer-led organization! ALL of the classes are taught by volunteer instructors. In addition, LifeQuest teams donate their time at the **Arkansas Foodbank** and members may become trained as adult literacy tutors through **Literacy Action of Central Arkansas**.

2023 Volunteer Hours:

- 4,587 hours of volunteer instruction
- **9,482** total volunteer hours

242 instructors
19 Board Directors
21 Curriculum Committee members
58 program volunteers (mail crew, foodbank, lunch servers, nametag crew)

That's comparable to a \$242,308 impact to LifeQuest and the community!

“ My volunteer roles at LifeQuest as a member of the board and curriculum committee help keep me active and my mind sharp! As a foodbank helper, I'm finding new ways to contribute to my community. Volunteering enriches my life and is a great way to make friends! -- Sheri Simon



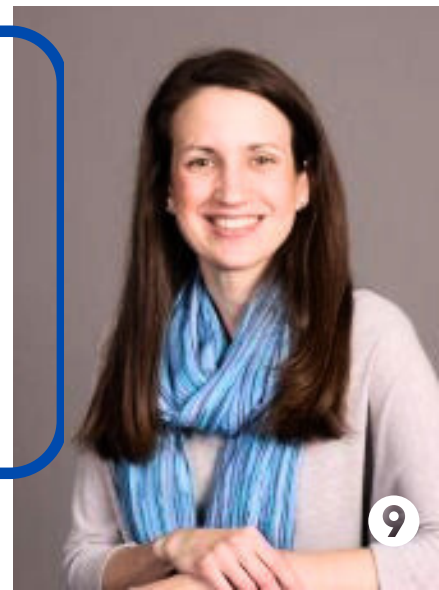
Our Supporting Congregations

In 1981, LifeQuest was founded by 14 interfaith congregations as Shepherd's Center of Little Rock to meet the intellectual and social needs of older adults. For 42 years, area congregations, now 22 in number, have supported LifeQuest programs. We are truly grateful and strive to be good stewards of their generosity.



Lifequest provides such a valuable service to older adults in our community by providing opportunities for learning, fellowship, physical activity, and service. Our church loves sharing our campus with the many participants of this dynamic program.

-- Lindy Vogado, Associate Pastor for Belonging and Outreach, Second Presbyterian Church



Our Sponsors

LifeQuest sponsors care about our members and community. Their generous contributions enable LifeQuest to provide quality programs and to offer **scholarships**.



“ We are proud to partner with LifeQuest because we share their passion to promote healthful longevity and active aging. At Advanced Physical Therapy, we are dedicated to assisting our patients return to wellness and maximize quality of life with the most efficient and individualized plan of care.

-- Andrew Davis, DPT, Clinical Director of Orthopedics, Advanced Physical Therapy



Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield makes an impact on LifeQuest members' health and wellness



When my gym closed because of COVID, my retirement and other life changes led to inactivity. I missed feeling strong and energetic.

I signed up for LifeQuest classes about three years ago and last spring I joined the LifeQuest Team to participate in the Blue & You Fitness Challenge. I was intrigued and hopeful that the program would be the motivation I needed to get moving.

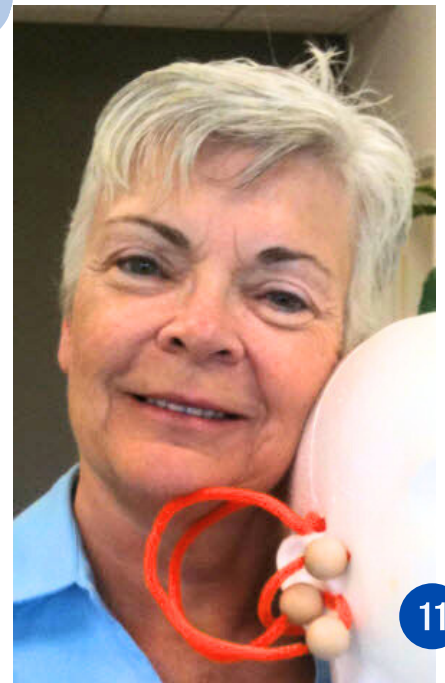
A week into the challenge, I knew it would be just what I needed! I liked to see how many points I accumulated every day just by being healthy. It's very helpful to keep active when there are so many opportunities to be a more involved participant at LifeQuest!

I don't expect to win any medals or trophies. Instead, the prize I want is to continue on the path to feeling better for my health and self-esteem. The Fitness Challenge has motivated me to keep moving toward wellness. It's working for me!

- Barbara Kane, LifeQuest member and 2023 Blue & You Fitness Challenge participant



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Our Educational Partners



Last winter, CALS historians taught an 8-week class, “History with CALS,” which explored local topics such as the diary of an Arkansas soldier in the Civil War and interesting facts from the Encyclopedia of Arkansas; broader topics like women’s and Black history, and topics far afield such as the court attire of Russian Tsar Nicholas II.



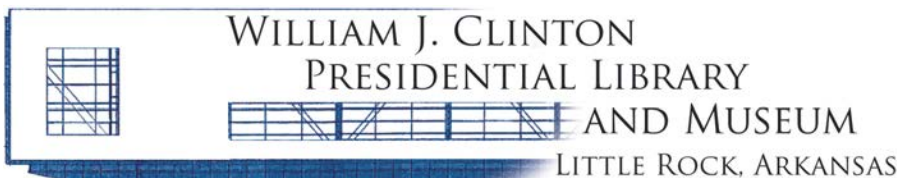
Partnering with Literacy Action of Central Arkansas (LACA) strengthens our mission to promote “meaningful volunteerism in the community.” LifeQuest is a training site for LACA to train adult tutors to make an impact in our community by helping adults and families in need of literacy assistance.



In November we enjoyed a special presentation on the life and legacy of Little Rock activist, Robert “Say” McIntosh. As a special treat and tribute, the dessert menu included sweet potato pie made from his famous recipe.



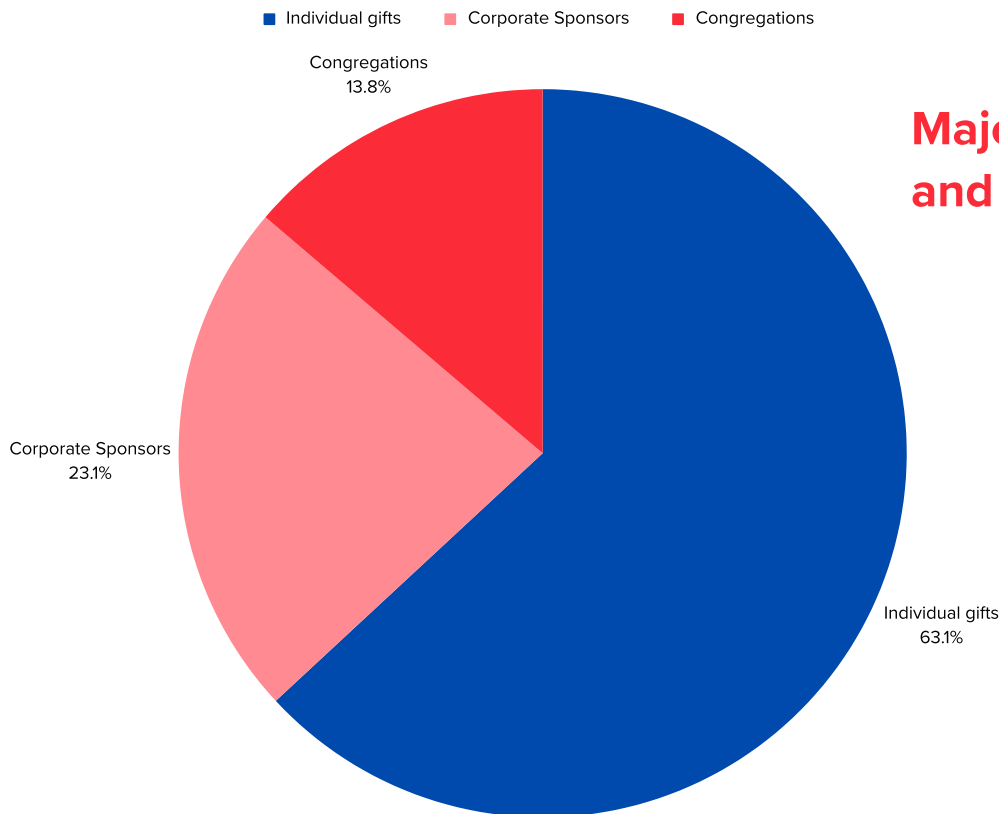
Arkansas Geriatric Education Collaborative sponsored several classes throughout the year supporting LifeQuest’s three programmatic pillars: intellectual engagement, social connection, and physical wellness.



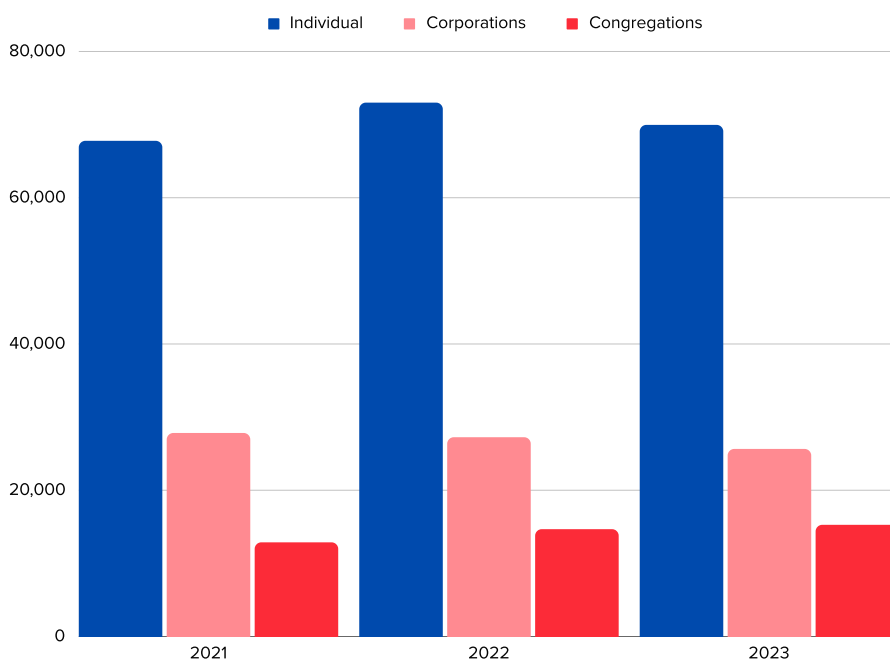
Archivists and members of the Library staff taught “The Presidential Library in Your Backyard,” an 8-week class that concluded with two field trips to tour the Library’s special collection.

Our Donors

As registration fees only cover 44% of the operating budget of \$280,000, LifeQuest's success depends on the generosity of individual donors, corporate sponsors and supporting congregations. Thank you!



Major sources of funding and % of revenue in 2023



Revenue Yearly Comparison

Our Leadership

2023 Board Directors

Chuck Goldner, Chair
Mary Frances Cotham, Vice Chair
Nancy Fleming, Secretary
Martha Hunt, Treasurer
Chuck Chappell
Pat Goss
Leon Kaplan
Doris Krain
Kristen Lippencott
June Lloyd
Beverly Milford
Marvin Schwartz
John Shock
Sheri Simon
Cathy Slater
Laura Spradley
Mike Walden
Lindsay White
Bev Wittenberg

2023 Curriculum Committee

Rich Roy, Chair
Wayne Chapman
Chuck Chappell*
Charlie Frith
Regina Gibson
Martha Hunt
Doris Krain
John Mize
Mary Sha Moriarty
Anne Parat*
Melanie Pilcher*
Jon Poteet
Roby Robertson
Jeanne Rollberg
Angela Sewall
Sheri Simon
Eileen Turner
Elizabeth Vines
Connie Wardell
Ann West*
Dick Williams*

*= Advisory Group

Our Team

We're here to help! LifeQuest Office hours are
Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
501-225-6073



In 2023, I completed my eighth year at LifeQuest, the second as Executive Director. Observing LifeQuest members come together, whether in person or online, to engage in lifelong learning classes, embark on travels, dance, perform, share meals, and connect is an absolute joy! Enriching this journey are incredible partnerships with an impressive group of congregations, sponsors, and educational partners, and the steadfast support from an active board of directors and volunteers. I am privileged to work with an incredible team and remain grateful for the opportunity to contribute with them to the thriving community that is LifeQuest.

Leah Greenfield, Executive Director



I still tell people that I'm new to LifeQuest, but I'm starting my third year as Business Manager. I guess time flies when you're having fun, and LifeQuest is so fun! The staff, volunteers and members continue to amaze me with their thirst for knowledge and dedication to the organization. As Business Manager, I oversee business operations and work hard to keep us on budget. I look forward to many more years of helping LifeQuest and its members thrive.

Heather Thompson, Business Manager



My adventure with LifeQuest began in 2016. I am lucky to work with staff and instructors who have a passion for lifelong learning...everyday is an adventure! I love seeing members excited about the wide variety of classes and making new friends. I'm very grateful to Second Presbyterian for hosting LifeQuest and for their wonderful staff who help our in-person program thrive and run smoothly. I'm also grateful for our LifeQuesters learning how to navigate classes online – an adventure unto itself!

Gina Bridges, Program Director



I started with LifeQuest as a shuttle driver in 2018 and am now the Program and Volunteer Coordinator. This means I have the pleasure of working with our incredible volunteers who make all the magic happen. It is rare to find a volunteer assignment that does not feel like spending time with friends, and this is exactly what I have at LifeQuest. When not working on coordinating the various ways our members volunteer, I can be found roaming the halls helping out in classrooms, at my desk creating the quarterly brochures for the upcoming terms, and a myriad of other engaging tasks. There is no end to the fun that is my job!


Donna Elkey, Program and Volunteer Coordinator




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