



SENIORS Helping SENIORS®
...a way to give and to receive®

For Immediate Release

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Seniors Helping Seniors® In-Home Services: A Great Example and Champion of Home-Based Businesses

What do Federal Express, General Motors, United Technologies, IBM, Procter & Gamble and General Electric have in common?

All six of these successful companies started during an economic downturn.

In this challenging economy, virtually everyone is looking for ways to make money. For many of us, we need not look any further than our own homes by exploring the hundreds of opportunities among home-based businesses.

And, speaking of homes, one of the fastest growing segments among home-based businesses is caring for the more than 35 million seniors and aging baby boomers in their own homes so they may remain independent and productive as they "age in place."

One of the fastest growing senior care home business/franchise opportunities is Seniors Helping Seniors® In-Home Services, Wyomissing Hills, Pa., which is unique because it matches seniors (receivers) who need non-medical in-home care and companionship with other seniors (providers) who offer them.

Philip Yocom manages the Seniors Helping Seniors organization's for-profit franchises and master license territories. His wife, Kiran Yocom, founded Seniors Helping Seniors in 1998 as a non-profit entity, which they ran out of their home for several years before it grew too large.

It is based on a unique idea— the mission is to provide seniors with the ability to choose an independent lifestyle in their own homes, for as long as possible, with the dignity and respect they deserve by finding caring seniors to help each other. "We want seniors to maintain their quality of life and to offer an alternative to the rapidly escalating costs of nursing home care," said Kiran Yocom.

By 2005 the Seniors Helping Seniors Berks County non-profit had grown rapidly. Kiran Yocom and her small staff were overseeing hundreds of receivers and providers and delivering thousands of hours of service to seniors, including transportation, housekeeping, meal preparation, yard maintenance, shopping, 24-hour companion care, and more.

Why not share the Seniors Helping Seniors concept?

Philip Yocom, who had a background in franchising, soon realized the incredible potential of establishing Seniors Helping Seniors franchises nationally. The power of Seniors Helping Seniors services was changing lives in Berks County. Why not share this special organization with the world?

Philip Yocom realized that it would be difficult to market the concept of Seniors Helping Seniors services as a non-profit business model. In early 2006, the Yocoms launched the for-profit Seniors Helping Seniors organization. The response was, as they say, history.

Today, the Seniors Helping Seniors network includes six regional owners, over 60 franchise partners, and representation in 22 states including Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.

Philip Yocom said, "One of the most appealing aspects of Seniors Helping Seniors is that it can be a very successful home-based business with numerous advantages—minimal capital investment, easy start up, requires only basic business skills and is not labor intensive. And, our franchises are designed serve a tight geographic area that allows finding a sufficient number of providers and receivers locally.

"We are in the business of keeping people in their homes; and what better way to make this tangible than by our operating out of our homes ourselves," he said.

Kiran Yocom added that Seniors Helping Seniors franchise partners comprise healthcare professionals, registered nurses, retired teachers, veterans, business people, non-profit staff, and many others. "We appeal to those who want a second career and who want to keep helping their communities, many from their own homes."

Why home-based business is our economy's backbone

Philip Yocom said that home-based businesses are the backbone of America's economy for several reasons:

- There are nearly 37 million home office households in the U.S. alone, according to top national research firm, IDC. More than 12 percent of American households have a home-based business, according to the Office of Advocacy, Small Business Administration (SBA).
- About 70 percent of home-based businesses will last more than three years, compared to 29 percent of other business ventures reports the Home-Based Business Institute (HBBI).
- Home-based businesses generate annual revenue of \$427 billion, according to HBBI. The average income for income-generating home office households is \$63,000, reports IDC.
- Women run 70 percent of home-based businesses, nearly 17 million, according to the National Center for Policy Analysis. (More than half of the Seniors Helping Seniors franchises are owned and operated by women.)
- Home-based businesses create 8,500 jobs daily, reports IDC, and today more than half of the small businesses in the U.S. are home-based—more than 24 million, according to the SBA.

"In fact, every 11 seconds, someone starts a home-based business with an 85 percent success rate over three years," he noted.

"Of course, the rapid growth of home-based businesses has presented some issues, particularly among municipalities like ours where we started. Governments have a tough job assuring that they give home-based businesses the rules they need to succeed without stepping on other residents' toes," Philip Yocom said.

"In two short years, what began 10 years ago as one woman's mission to help seniors in her community who could not help themselves, Seniors Helping Seniors organization has become a rapidly growing national family of franchise partners. With such success, Seniors Helping Seniors business was bound to feel some growing pains.

Operating out of home brought some early issues

One early obstacle that developed for the expanding Seniors Helping Seniors organization was continuing to operate as a home-based business. "Our franchise partners go through three distinct training programs. The first is an Open House at which we introduce ourselves, screen candidates and fully describe what they can expect by joining our Seniors Helping Seniors family," said Philip Yocom.

"After they invest in a franchise, we offer what we call New Partner Orientation and finally, Owner's Training. Both are multi-day, comprehensive sessions designed to empower our franchise partners with knowledge and business skills."

All three training sessions were initially held in the Yocom's home. At this time, the Seniors Helping Seniors Berks County office with two employees was located there as well.

Kiran Yocom said, "We held our Open Houses and training sessions on two Fridays each month and Seniors Helping Seniors non-profit was operating every day. We did everything we could to minimize the impact on our neighbors and the neighborhood, especially when we had a lot of guests who parked their cars near our home. The day-to-day traffic for the

non-profit was minimal.”

Neighbors, however, objected and the Yocombs were asked to attend a hearing before the borough zoning board.

“During that hearing,” Philip Yocom continued, “I realized that the regulations covering home-based businesses were rather parochial. With our Internet capabilities, and now a slow economy, more and more people are working out of their homes. They are contributing to our economy, and provided they are not running a steel mill in their basement, we think municipalities should encourage them.”

At the same time, other home-based businesses in the borough were facing similar issues. In fact, as many as 60 home-based businesses were expected to have to close their doors by the end of 2008 due to the existing borough regulations.

After assessing the situation, borough officials realized that Wyomissing had not implemented a 2002 State of Pennsylvania amendment to its Municipal Code. The amended code relaxed regulations covering home-based businesses. The borough recognized that changing its zoning codes to reflect the 2002 amendment would be beneficial to all.

Cooperating with borough results in license being granted

After working cooperatively with the borough Seniors Helping Seniors organization was granted a home-based business license. The license was a result of the newly implemented amendments from 2002 as well as Seniors Helping Seniors organization’s willingness to compromise on some issues.

The existing code specified that a home-based business could be run only by those members of the family living in the home. To comply with this requirement, the Yocombs moved Seniors Helping Seniors Berks County non-profit organization and its two employees to a nearby office building. In order to reduce the car traffic and parking in the neighborhood, guests are now shuttled to and from the home and parking is limited to the Yocombs’ driveway when business meetings take place.

“It was a win-win situation for everyone and, truly, a victory for home-based businesses. It was also an excellent example for our franchise partners throughout the U.S. as to how they can also be good neighbors,” said Philip Yocom.

Added Kiran Yocom, “If you are entertaining the idea of having a home-based business, contact your city or county planning and zoning department. It is best to contact them before you start the business, not after. They will be glad to tell you about the requirements for a home-based business.”

And stressed Philip Yocom, picking a Seniors Helping Seniors franchise as a home-based business is confirmed by ongoing market research—medical advances and healthier lifestyles are increasing average life expectancy. “Finally, having a home based business creates a very different environment which helps to create the Seniors Helping Seniors own loving, caring, compassionate culture.”

In 2009’s *The Franchise Handbook*, “Fueled by Demographics, Elder Care Franchises Are Hot,” author Michael J. McDermott wrote, “As William Novelli, CEO of AARP and author of ‘50+: Giving Meaning and Purpose to the Best Time of Your Life,’ put it, ‘Boomers want to live well and they want to live comfortably and they want to live in familiar surroundings.’”

“That means that millions of them are likely to choose to ‘age in place,’ and that they will be avid consumers of the products and services provided by thousands of franchises in the elder care industry.”

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