

“His Reward”

“And when I came here to Generations Central, I did not expect that would be my answer. That would be the place where I would find home. A place where I could get back into doing what I love doing.” -Steve Maher



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Steve and his wife Marlena moved to Culpeper 10 years ago after two long careers in the education field. When they first moved to the area they found a deep sense of purpose volunteering at their grandchildren’s school, the Lorien Wood School in Vienna, where Steve challenged elementary school students to be better readers, dig into stories, and pay attention to details. Steve’s face still lights up as he recalls engaging with his students and watching stories come alive in their minds.

After 10 years of service at the Lorien Wood School, Steve and Marlena began the search for an opportunity closer to home. Marlena saw an advertisement in the paper for our Stronger Memory program and decided to give it a try. She then encouraged Steve to jump in along with her. Reflecting on his first impression of the class, Steve said it was a “no-brainer” (no pun intended) as he felt that he could easily find his place here.

The purpose of our Stronger Memory program is to give independent aging adults a place to belong and invest in their brain health, using their life experiences, skills, and passions to build a sense of purpose and community. Steve’s story is just one example of how Stronger Memory has fulfilled its purpose.

Steve has brought his passion for teaching and engaging in literature to our program in a Book Club that meets before class each week. Our senior adult students come prepared to dive into our current reading, *Banner in the Sky* by James Ramsey Ullman, and unpack a story of dreams, challenges, and climbing the mountains of life.

Gerry, a weekly book club attendee, said in class recently that she is beginning to read books differently, learning how to look out for meaning and details. Steve noted that this comment is “his reward” stating, “it says to me that we’re having success, that we’re reaching people, that we’re touching people’s lives, that we’re making a difference. When I get feedback like that, it’s like, that is my paycheck right there.”

Our biggest asset at Generations has always been and will always be the people we serve. With each of their own skill sets, interests, and unique histories, our senior adults enrich our programs simply by being present. The essence of our work is to create a space in which each senior adult can shine and find their sense of purpose, no matter where they are in the aging journey. Every day, this brings us one step closer to realizing part of our vision to build a future where age is not a barrier but a bridge. We are grateful to Steve and Marlena for catching this vision, diving into our Stronger Memory program, and bringing their passion and talents with them for our benefit.



Steve shares a story with the class.



Steve and Marlena enjoy a class outing at Windmill Heights.



Steve and Marlena lead the class in a presentation about Japan.

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Steve and Marlena
Maher