

Aging Network Volunteer Spotlight

Volunteer Who Served Country Now Serving Community

Lieutenant Colonel Steve Kesler, USAF, retired, served our nation for 23 years in tours that took him to places such as Vietnam, Korea and Thailand. Today, he serves locally across a six-county area as a volunteer with the Southeast Tennessee State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). “God has been good to me,” said Steve. “I need to do something that keeps me busy. I can’t see myself just not doing anything, given my experience.”



Steve’s work experience not only includes the military, but he was also previously on staff at the Southeast Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability. Upon his retirement, Steve was “promoted” to volunteer where he now serves the disabled and elderly populations across Southeast Tennessee by providing one-on-one Medicare counseling sessions.

While Steve has provided one-on-one guidance on Medicare benefits to hundreds of residents from all socio-economic backgrounds, the majority of his clients have incomes at or below the federal poverty line. Thanks to Steve’s information and guidance, these consumers are successful in achieving substantial financial savings, particularly in regard to their Medicare prescription drug costs. Just as important, he helps reduce their anxiety over medical insurance concerns and provides them with peace of mind by helping them navigate complicated benefits and systems. It is this, the honor of educating and empowering his fellow Tennesseans, that gives Steve pride in his work and keeps him traveling across Southeastern Tennessee at age 72.

In his role as volunteer, Steve has found that he receives many personal benefits. “From what I do, I feel a sense of purpose,” said Steve. “Most importantly, I obtain a sense of great satisfaction from just helping people.”

Steve's life of service and commitment to older Americans and those with disabilities in need are an inspiration to the staff and volunteers alike at the Southeast Tennessee SHIP.