

## ACAP History and Benchmarks

ACAP (Adult Children of Aging Parents) was founded in 2009 to support adult-child caregivers. Evolving from a personal need when Frances S. Hall's 89-year-old mother moved to North Carolina from her home in Alabama and realized the adjustment was more difficult than she anticipated, Frances was at a loss as to how to best help. Beginning as a support group that quickly became an educational program for faculty and staff at Lenoir-Rhyne University where Frances was on staff at the time, a groundswell soon emerged in Hickory, NC, requesting that ACAP be offered in a location and at a time conducive for others to attend. ACAP, as a community-based program, was launched in March 2012. Beginning with eight attendees, the program quickly swelled to more than 40 attendees regularly.

Jane M. Everson, PhD, a long-distance caregiver for her parents, began attending ACAP programs and found them to be meaningful. Bringing a different skill set, Jane encouraged a focus group/think tank to be convened, engaging 12 Hickory community leaders. With the group's strong affirmation of the value of ACAP, Jane joined Frances in envisioning, planning for, and creating needed structures for ACAP's growth. Following are benchmarks for each year of ACAP:

### 2010

- Adult Children of Aging Parents (ACAP) began as a monthly support group and subsequent lunch-and-learn for faculty and staff at Lenoir-Rhyne University.

### 2012

- ACAP programming began for the community of Hickory, NC.
- Seven ACAP programs were offered in Hickory. The original plan was to offer a support group each month and an educational program every other month. In March, the educational program began with 8 attendees. The support group had a commensurate number. However, between March and July, the monthly support group attendance dwindled whereas the bi-monthly educational programs grew. Deciding to end the support group and offer educational programs monthly, the September program had 45 attendees.

### 2013

- Twelve ACAP programs were offered in Hickory, with typical monthly attendance of 30-40.
- ACAPcommunity became a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.
- In preparation to expand ACAP beyond Hickory, NC, ACAP conducted an extensive review of literature and programs for adult-child caregivers, developed a program curriculum, conducted a national validation of programs via caregivers and professionals across the US, and convened a national advisory board to review the curriculum.
- New types of programming were explored: caregiver's yoga retreat, playful painting, and a labyrinth walk, participation in the community's annual Alzheimer's walk, and professional photography session for adult-children and their aging parents.
- ACAP conducted its first program participant demographic and impact survey.

### 2014

- Twelve ACAP programs were offered for the Hickory community.
- Program sponsorships were initiated.
- Audio podcasts began with 11 being recorded and distributed.

- ACAP Hickory received two small grants, supporting the launch of an ACAP support group and a media campaign aimed at encouraging ethnic diversity among participants.

## 2015

- ACAP Centre County (PA) was established as ACAP's second chapter.
- 20 programs (total) were offered by ACAP chapters in NC and PA.
- Seven podcasts were recorded.
- The first annual ACAP conference was conducted through ACAP Hickory in partnership with the Northwest (NC) Area Health Education Center (NWAHEC), based in Winston-Salem, NC.

## 2016

- Four podcasts were recorded and distributed.
- 24 programs (total) were offered via two chapters.
- The second annual ACAP Hickory conference was offered in collaboration with Hickory-region Area Agency on Aging and Catawba Regional Hospice.
- The founder's 96-year-old mother, the incentive and impetus for the creation of ACAP, declined and died in September.

## 2017

- ACAPcommunity curriculum was copyrighted.
- "ACAPcommunity" applied for trademark.
- The third annual ACAP Hickory conference was conducted in partnership with Area Agency on Aging and Catawba Regional Hospice.
- 24 ACAP programs (total) were offered via two chapters.
- Five podcasts were produced.

## 2018

- ACAP Winston-Salem, NC, the third chapter, was launched.
- 28 ACAP programs (total) were provided by three chapters.
- ACAP Hickory conducted an annual conference.
- One podcast was produced.
- The ACAP Hickory Leadership Team was established, prompted by the executive director's husband's leukemia diagnosis (death in 2019).

## 2019

- ACAP launched its fourth local chapter in Statesville, NC.
- 40 ACAP programs (total) were provided by four chapters.
- ACAP Hickory and ACAP Centre County conducted one-day conferences.
- One podcast was produced.

## 2020

- ACAP Guilford County, NC, was launched as ACAP's fifth chapter.
- Due to COVID-19, in-person programs were suspended and ACAP chapters began collaborating, offering 1-2 programs per month via Zoom and Facebook Live.
- 20 virtual ACAP programs (total) were provided by five chapters.

- Chapters also collaborated to offer a symposium, featuring Teepa Snow, dementia educator, as speaker. A total of 500 people (maximum capacity) from across the US and two countries registered for the symposium, and 470+ attended.
- Five podcasts were recorded.
- Podcast sponsorship was established.
- ACAPcommunity and United Church Homes and Services formed a collaborative partnership to begin January 1, 2021.
- Conversations began to establish 3-4 new local chapters (NC and TX) in 2021.

## 2021

- The partnership between ACAP and EveryAge (formerly United Church Homes and Services) began, providing funding for a part-time executive director and part-time contract project manager.
- The ACAPcommunity Board of Directors engaged an outside consultant and developed a strategic plan.
- ACAP updated its curriculum with the assistance of a national panel of terminal-degreed gerontology educators and practitioners.
- 19 ACAP programs were offered virtually due to safety concerns from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; changed to Restream as the program broadcast platform, allowing programs to be video-recorded automatically and posted onto the ACAP website and YouTube channel.
- 2021 ACAP Symposium garnered 921 registrations, 571 attendees, and 137 additional views of the symposium video afterwards. Of these, 695 were first-time ACAP participants. Registrants were from 38 states, the Virgin Islands, and 10 attendees from 9 areas in 2 countries. Due to popular demand, Teepa Snow returned as speaker for a second year.

## 2022

- Plans to resume in-person programs in March 2022 were changed to July due to ongoing COVID concerns.
- The decision was made to offer hybrid/integrated programs when in-person events resumed.
- ACAPcommunity began collaborative digital marketing, hiring contract specialists to oversee its website, email, and social media.
- ACAPcommunity Board of Directors adopted a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statement, confirming the organization's commitment to engage and serve all adult-children of aging parents.
- An ACAP presentation was given at the Southern Gerontological Society annual conference in April.
- ACAP Cape Fear, the sixth chapter, launched in September in Wilmington, NC.
- 2022 ACAP Symposium had 535 registrations from 34 states and 5 provinces in Canada. Attendees were 60% caregivers and 40% professionals. This year, three speakers shared their expertise on coping with caregiver stress and burnout.

## 2023

- ACAP Atlanta, the seventh chapter, launched in Atlanta, GA.
- ACAPcommunity received the Southern Gerontological Society's annual media award for *The Caregiver Community*, ACAP's monthly podcasts.

- Frances Hall recorded a 60-second ACAP public service announcement (PSA) for Older Americans Month via AARP.
- Frances Hall was featured in Dr. Corinne Auman's book Keenagers: Telling a New Story about Aging.

In the years since ACAP's inception as a community-based program, 12,000-15,000 adult-children of aging parents, other family members, and professionals have benefitted from attending ACAP programs and accessing ACAP resources, and more than 400 volunteers have provided key leadership as ACAPcommunity Board of Directors, chapter Leadership Teams, program presenters, and sponsors.