

# Companis

Creating healthy communities  
by fostering skilled volunteer service

Companis Worker Jennifer EagleSpeaker

## Walking Boldly Together

Borne of urgency and fueled by compassion, Companis advances social justice through the ever-radical idea of supporting people who show up for one another, soulfully offering their professional talents, personal encouragement and caring hearts in volunteer service to their neighbors. And the result?

**Companis volunteer and stipend-supported placements have served 163 nonprofits over the past quarter century. From September 2018 to September 2019, Companis partnered with 39 area agencies, and made 88 placements of 62 Companis Workers, professionals whose talents help create healthy communities for all.**

So, where did we start? A man looked around his Chicago community in 1983, and asked himself, “What’s going on?” He watched in disbelief what was happening to his neighbors: Central American refugees fleeing civil war who were denied asylum and basic rights; a deadly virus – not yet known as HIV/AIDS – fueled such fear that its victims and families were abandoned and isolated. So much was wrong that Craig Darling was inspired to launch the Esther Davis Center to bridge the gaps that exclude people from healthy community.

His idea flourished. Craig was recruited to bring his model to Seattle. In 1994, welcomed and nurtured by the caring congregation at Seattle First Baptist Church, Companis was born. Our Latin name, which means “to share bread together” in hospitality, undergirds our values of inclusion, service, relationship, compassion and reflection.

It’s through our values we look around our community today and ask ourselves, “What’s going on?” We see poverty, illness and exclusion. We see entire communities targeted because of fear and ignorance. We see our own government perpetuating and instigating injustices.

The themes are strikingly similar to the time of our founding: exclusion of ‘the other,’ ethnic and religious intolerance, widening gaps in access to health care and rampant economic disparity, to name a few. That’s why in 2019 you’ll find Companis Workers in refugee advocacy services, shelters and homelessness prevention agencies, health and wellness centers, LGBTQ advocacy, and more!

**Every day of the year, a Companis Worker is engaging their heart, mind and hands to make our community healthier and stronger.**

And here’s the Companis magic: to sustain their service, our reflection-based support program offers nurture and inspiration. “Companis emphasizes that we’re more than just workers doing a job,” says Heidi Toppel, placed as business manager with Diverse Harmony, the nation’s first queer-straight alliance youth chorus. “Indeed, Companis makes sure its volunteers know that everything we do matters.”

So, what’s needed? You. You are needed. Your heart. Your skills. Your ‘showing up.’ Whether it be for a yearlong placement, or for an exciting project, let’s talk about your interests. To apply, visit our new website, [Companis.org](http://Companis.org), where you’ll find our volunteer and nonprofit partner application forms. We’d love to welcome you, or the agency you serve, to be part the Companis community. Thank you for your part in Companis’ 25 years of success, and for walking boldly with us into our next quarter century.

– *Gary Davis*, Executive Director

**25**  
**YEARS**

...of fostering skilled volunteer service

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Peter & Shirley Shafer

Peter & Shirley Shafer attended Companis Sunday at Seattle First Baptist Church in 2018 and were inspired to be part of the Companis community and mission. They have been placed this past year at **Minds Matter Seattle** as consultants. After extensive research within the organization, they are now implementing a plan to offer education and support to the mentors/tutors working with high-achieving, low income High School students to work towards college entry. Peter & Shirley are grateful for the opportunity to use all they have learned and experienced in their lives to make a difference in the lives of these high school students and their mentors/instructors.



Shea Deines

Shea Deines is in a place that makes them happy, that challenges them, and that adds perspective to life as they attend the University of Washington. As the Operations Assistant at **Ingersoll Gender Center**, Shea greets those who arrive in the office, ready to share information and a friendly smile, and tackles projects for the organization. Shea came to Companis to specifically fill this need at Ingersoll, and we were happy to be part of that process. As a student in Community Psychology, Shea has a passion for working to strengthen the lives of folks in marginalized communities. Shea is happy to be making a difference in a community that is home to them.



Cynthia Hunter

Cynthia Hunter will tell you with excitement that she is energized because she gets to work with young people at **Byrd Barr Place**. Cynthia is placed as an Office Assistant in their Energy Assistance Program. Cynthia is our third placement at Byrd Barr – a partnership we are honored to continue. Cynthia came to Companis through our relationship with the Evergreen Association of Baptist Churches. She heard Rita Hibbard make a presentation and was inspired to apply to be a Companis volunteer. Cynthia has extensive experience in all areas of Business Management, so brings a great deal of expertise to this new program at Byrd Barr. From deep within her heart, Cynthia states: "I am so grateful for the opportunity to give back to my community."

### Who are Companis Workers?

Companis Workers are doctors, nurses, teachers, journalists, bookkeepers, lawyers, social workers, therapists, job coaches, business mentors, chefs, human resource officers, technology experts, students, and more.

*Are you a Companis Worker?*

# JOIN US

[www.companis.org](http://www.companis.org)

# COMPANIS HAS PLACED PROFESSIONALS IN 163 AREA AGENCIES IN THE LAST 25 YEARS

Companis Worker placements in 2018-2019 included:

**27** serving our  
**NEIGHBORS**  
FACING HOMELESSNESS

**21** placed in agencies  
**ASSISTING IMMIGRANTS**  
**AND REFUGEES**

**24** helping secure  
**ACCESS TO**  
medical & mental  
**HEALTH CARE**

**17** advocating for  
**AND SERVING OUR**  
**LGBTQ NEIGHBORS**



Cherry Johnson Photo: Lupe Carlos

Cherry Johnson has a passion for bringing people together to engage in a deepening experience away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. In her placement as the Retreat Coordinator at **Seattle First Baptist Church**, Cherry brings people together thoughtfully, creatively and with joy. As a social worker at Bailey Boushay House for much of her career, Cherry came to understand and appreciate the balance between doing and being. This is the basis for her love of retreat, and why she chose to serve through Companis. Through our Worker Support Program, she can be supported by our community gatherings that actively seek to balance service with reflection.



Tess Selim

Tess Selim is grateful for her placement where she can work alongside people with whom she has much in common. Tess came to Companis with a love of stories and how we share them, wanting an opportunity to be involved in the nonprofit sector of Seattle. With her experience and knowledge in marketing, and her love of word and thought and how we use them, it was a natural fit for her to be placed as the Development & Membership Coordinator at **Folio: The Seattle Athenaeum** located in Pike Place Market. Tess is also serving as a volunteer at TeenTix – an organization that exists to “break down the barriers that prevent teens from accessing art in our community”. Tess has found a way to live out her commitment to community and the arts.



Jennifer EagleSpeaker

Jennifer EagleSpeaker greets all who come for assistance with a big smile because she is excited to be able to give back to her neighbors by serving as the Front Desk Coordinator at **North Helpline**. Jenn was raised being taught that caring for community and earth is the most important thing one can do, and she continues that teaching with her children. Her joy for life, her understanding of vulnerabilities, and her desire for relationships and programs to operate at their best potential is obvious in the way she approaches her work and her friendships. Jenn loves community and wants everyone to have the opportunity to be part of a healthy community.

## Companis honors Wakefield with 2019 Newell Award



Wakefield Photo: Robert Hood // Fred Hutch

With our genus rooted as one early response to the HIV/AIDS crisis, it's with gratitude the Companis Board of Directors honors global HIV/AIDS prevention champion and leader Wakefield with the 2019 Janet G. Newell Award for Community Service.

Wakefield is with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, and serves as the External Relations Director for the HIV Vaccine Trials Network and leads global efforts for stakeholder engagement. He's also the founder of The Legacy Project, a program to increase racial and ethnic population involvement in trials.

Wakefield currently serves on the AVAC: Global HIV Prevention Board and is an HIV-negative health care advocate with over thirty-five years of involvement

in projects that increase community participation in HIV prevention research and ethics. A longtime human rights and HIV activist with nonprofit management, public service on Chicago's Board of Health, as well as global and U.S. advisory groups such as WHO's UNAIDS and the NIH-funded HPTN Ethics Working Group, Wakefield is passionate about implementation of evidence-based strategies to end the epidemic.

Wakefield and Companis go way back to our Chicago roots. He was a supporter of the Esther Davis Center, the precursor to Companis. Wakefield and Companis Founder Craig Darling both were involved in HIV awareness and prevention programs, working to break down stigmas and discrimination.

Thank you, Wakefield, for all you have done and continue to do, on a global basis, to end AIDS.

## Financial Highlights

COMPANIS REVENUE SOURCES	2019
Individual & Major Donors	48%
Agency Donations	30%
Foundations	12%
Seattle First Baptist Church	6%
Corporate Sponsorships	4%
2019 budget is \$635,000	100%

*Your individual donations change lives and are the largest source of support for Companis*

### COMPANIS IS DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO THESE FOUNDATIONS FOR THEIR SUPPORT:

The Stuart & Benjamin Abelson Foundation Trust    Moccasin Lake Foundation  
The Stuart & Jesse Abelson Foundation Trust    M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust  
The John C. and Karyl Kay Hughes Foundation    The Tulalip Foundation

To donate, please visit [www.companis.org/donate](http://www.companis.org/donate)  
For more information on our **planned giving program**, call 206-328-6155

This year, Companis Workers have provided more than **\$1.1 million** in vital community services, extending a helping hand to thousands of our neighbors. **Companis does what would otherwise go undone.**



Joan Benner, LICSW, Former Companis worker    John Benner

### Why We Donate

*We are like many people who want to support the work of nonprofits, but aren't sure which ones to choose. Companis not only matches professionals with agencies that need their skills, but by giving to Companis, we are confident our gift will be used where it is most needed.*

Joan Benner, LICSW, Former Companis worker, and husband John Benner

### Companis Staff & Board

#### Administration

Gary Davis, Executive Director  
Karen Hundrieser, Associate Executive Director  
Abid Bhatti, Business & Administration Director  
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Craig R. J. Darling

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**companis.org**    **206-328-6155**    Contact us at [info@companis.org](mailto:info@companis.org)  
Our address is **1111 Harvard Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98122**