**FOR** **IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Oct. 31, 2018

**CONTACT:**

Angie Doss

Chief External Relations Officer

adoss@sunbeamfamilyservices.org

405.609.2311 (o) | 619.347.4057 (c)

**Applications Due Nov. 1 for Senior Companion Program**

**Program Provides a Sense of Purpose, Connection to Community**

**(OKLAHOMA CITY)** – Sunbeam Family Services is committed to helping Oklahoma’s senior citizens. Applications are due Nov. 1 for the Senior Companion Program. Senior adult volunteers age 55 and over who have a passion and compassion for serving other senior adults are invited to apply.

“The average annual cost of nursing home care in Oklahoma is $51,000,” said Jim Priest, chief external officer of Sunbeam. “With the goal of helping seniors stay in their home for as long as possible, Senior Companions provide quality, in-home support and companionship to individuals who could not afford nursing home care without government assistance.”

More than 80 volunteers spend quality time each week with other senior adults. The volunteers give back in their own community while developing a nurturing, supportive companionship with another senior adult who may be homebound due to illness or age.

Some of this support may include: light housekeeping, errands, doctor’s appointments, playing games and talking with the senior. Volunteers receive monthly trainings that focus on a variety of subjects, including: home safety, caregiver tips and diabetes.

Senior Companion Lavonne Sealy shared the program brought her back to life. After learning about the Senior Companion Program at her local Senior Center, Sealy knew this opportunity was for her and signed up. She met Mary Ellen, an 88 year old woman with dementia, and her daughter Beverly. Since they were from the same community, Lavonne put in a request to become Mary Ellen’s companion and it has been a win-win for everyone.

“We got more out of it than we asked for with Lavonne,” said Beverly. “Lavonne’s help reaches beyond my mom. It has helped my brothers and me. We all see the success and we also feel like we’ve gained an aunt.”

The Senior Companion Program is open to volunteers 55+ who can serve between 15 and 40 hours per week. Sunbeam provides training before the volunteer meets with his or her match, as well as monthly trainings. The program offers a tax-free, hourly stipend and mileage reimbursement to help cover costs to income-eligible individuals. Volunteers must be pass a health screening and background checks.

To become a Senior Companion volunteer, or to learn more about how to request a Senior Companion for a loved one, call **Marien Breckenridge at 405-609-8930 or visit sunbeamfamilyservices.org/companion. Applications are due Nov. 5 and orientation begins Nov. 13.**

Sunbeam helps children, families and seniors learn, grow, heal and thrive. The nonprofit’s mission is to provide people of all ages with help, hope, and the opportunity to succeed through Early Childhood, Foster Care, Counseling and Senior Services. For more information visit sunbeamfamilyservices.org or call 405-528-7721.

###

About Sunbeam Family Services

Founded in 1907, Sunbeam Family Services is one of Oklahoma’s longest serving nonprofits, providing help, hope and the opportunity to succeed to people of all ages and all stages of life in central Oklahoma through early childhood, counseling, foster care and senior services. To learn more, call 405.528.7721, visit sunbeamfamilyservices.org, or follow them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.