

## Many Hands Make Superior Work

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Colonie Senior Service Centers has been fortunate to have the best professional maintenance team an organization could hope for.

From the onset, our priority was to keep our residents as well as our staff safe. In that regard, we realized continual cleaning and disinfecting seven days a week with extended hours was paramount.

With 396 apartments in three residential structures, the task initially seemed overwhelming. However, under the leadership of our two maintenance supervisors, Ben Bond and Harry Hindenlang, along with their team, they created an enhanced cleaning schedule and made sure tasks were completed. Floors in the common areas were mopped and vacuumed daily. Door handles, push bars and elevator buttons were disinfected on the hour. Masks and gloved hands were a requirement. The entire team made sure everyone was kept safe.

With the building closed to visitors for a time, our maintenance team pitched in delivering groceries, prescriptions, packages, mail and newspapers directly to the front doors of resident apartments. They escorted essential workers and visitors to individual apartments, and kept an eye out to make sure rules and regulations were being followed. Everyone in the maintenance department, realizing the severity of the situation we found ourselves, truly showed a level of leadership that we all can be proud of.

The future? Moving forward, as we begin to open our buildings to visitors and envision what socially distant events will look like, maintenance once again plays an incredibly important role. Our maintenance team, although not always in the forefront, are the framework of CSSC. We could not survive or thrive without them.

As we continue to navigate this new and ever-changing landscape, know that your Colonie Senior Service Centers and our fabulous maintenance team are here for you.





## Message from the Executive Director



### Diversity and Growth – Six Degrees of Separation during the Disruption

Happy July 4th! Can you believe it is July? I hope this issue of “Senior Connections” finds you well.

I am sure everyone would agree that this is a challenging time and the last three months have changed each one of us, as well as our perspectives. Throughout the pandemic, I have experienced several “Smallbany” occurrences that have pricked my conscious.

For example, I struggled with writing this month’s military remembrance article. Helena is from the same small village as my mother’s family. The only difference is my grandparents left Poland in the very beginning of the twentieth century and did not experience the direct tragedies of WW II. I have visited that part of Poland a few times and it is still very rural and desolate. I shudder when I think of what those Polish villagers went through, having to select a family member to be taken to Germany. Additionally, my father was on the management team for Ford Motor Company in Green Island and oversaw the radiator department. Although my father passed when I was young, I am sure he must have known Helena’s husband Cazimir. It is a small world indeed.

Another example: when Mario Cuomo was New York’s Governor back in the 1990s, I was recruited

to serve on the training team for the NYS MLK, Jr. Commission and Institute for Nonviolence. It was an unbelievable chapter in my life and allowed me to work with some incredible people. We designed and implemented a curriculum using the writings and teachings of MLK, Jr. to combat bigotry, racism, hatred and violence (non-violently of course). Through my work, I met such individuals as Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, Andrew Young, Bernard Lafayette, Jr. and Pete Seeger, and traveled throughout the Eastern United States visiting the Highlander Folk School in New Market, Tennessee and Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. When the pandemic hit and CSSC began to offer “Grab and Go” lunches, I was unexpectedly reconnected with a colleague from my MLK, Jr. days, an incredible human being with a beautiful baritone voice. He was receiving our lunches and it brought me joy to reconnect and know what CSSC was doing was truly helping someone I think so dearly of and who had done so much to help so many others in the past.

This virus has been so incredibly unfair; often choosing the most vulnerable as its victims. As we begin to slowly and carefully reopen some of our community programs, I cannot be more proud of our CSSC TEAM. This vulnerability is always on our minds and everything we do is done thoughtfully, with your health and well-being in mind. Daily, I am in awe of my co-workers and what they are willing to do to keep seniors healthy and connected.

Until we meet again, be well.

– Diane Conroy-LaCivita



## A Story of Survival

Helena Kujbida has been a resident in the State of Tarnopol, Poland, on a farm in a small village with her family. She went to school up until the fourth grade. After the end of her formal studies, she found a job as a seamstress. A fancy pillowcase complete with a floral design was a charge for a student to continue their education.

Helena’s life abruptly changed when the war broke out and required that one person in the family would have to work for the German war effort. Her sister would be the one to go, insisting that she could not be drafted. Helena would volunteer and travel to Germany to allow that to happen. Helena’s mother and most certainly would need to be drafted at the age of 14, volunteered to go.

By train, she and the other Polish women were forced to work in a textile mill. The mill was a brick structure, which was very cold with bunk beds and uncomfortable. Helena vividly remembers the prisoners would pile all their rags on top of them to attempt to stay warm. Food was minimal, mostly potato soup being served and bread. It was food. Helena commented that the Leftovers went to the prisoners.

Eventually the Red Cross took over the Polish Division of the Air Force. Helena was assigned tasks suited for females at the time. At the Officers’ Club, Helena met a fellow Pole, who was responsible for low-flying bombers.

After the war, she attempted to find a word from them since leaving Poland. The Germans had resettled her father and brother who were in the United States. Listening to Radio Free Europe, she discovered their whereabouts. That her brother had been killed.

When asked if she held resentment, she responded that she had to overcome, she responded.

A cousin in Catskill, NY sponsored her. Originally settling in Cohoes, NY, she was hired by the Ford Motor Company credited with inventing a standard. Unfortunately when Helena was a child, Cazimir unexpectedly found employment at Behr-Mann and is pleased with what the company has become.

An avid seamstress, Helena is a member of CSSC is honored to have Helena.

Words cannot express our sincere appreciation to those listed below for their monetary support over the last month. During these uncertain times, it is wonderful to know that so many in the community realize and support the efforts of Colonie Senior Service Centers.

## THANK YOU!

Betsy Feldstein  
Joanne Fitzgibbon  
Marbry & Stephen Gansle  
Mary Goss  
Michael Hoblock  
Katherine Hughes

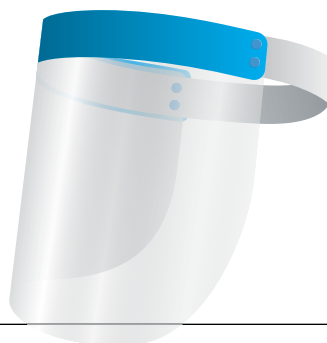
Ronald & Margaret Lansing  
Kathleen LeRoux  
Helen McCumber  
Barbara Oliver  
Cindy Pettit  
Bert Schirmer

Joseph Sorrentino  
Gerald & Linda Thompson  
Arlene Vadney  
Melissa Von Dollen



## Special Thank You!

CSSC would like to thank Dr. Mabel MP Cheng, MD and Dr. Nicole Lemanski, MD for their donation of Medical Face Shields.





## Survival and Remembrance

resident of Sheehy Manor since May 1, 2015. Born on January 20, 1927, Helena grew up on a small farm with her mother, father and five siblings. She attended school and learned to sew, knit and crochet as part of her life. Helena remembers a required school project of making a doll with a lacy fringe. (At the time, there was a monetary reward for his/her education beyond the fourth grade.)

Helena was born in 1941 when German forces arrived in her village. She was the only child from every family to be chosen to travel to Germany. Initially, it was decided that Helena's older brother would go, but after the young woman emotionally declined, she was chosen. It was decided that Helena's mother would go to Germany. Helena explained that she could not leave her youngest sister who was six years of age at the time to be with her mother. It was at this point that Helena, to be the one to go on behalf of her family.

Helena traveled to Germany. Seven days a week, she worked in a factory making felts for paper. Next to the factory was used as a dormitory complete with wooden straw mattresses. Each captive was given one blanket to cover the cold nights where she and the other captives slept on top of themselves in an area where food was also scarce as well. She remembers thin, burnt food and how horrible it was. However it was consumed, she said, "The Germans had first choice of everything. The captives were left with the scraps."

After the war, Helena was recruited to join the British Army. She was sent to England. As a Private, she did various jobs: cooking meals, housekeeping and office work. Helena met and subsequently married her husband who was a pilot in the Air Force. She explained that he was on observation flights to help pinpoint targets for the British Army.

Helena wanted to get in touch with her family. (She had not heard from home in 1941.) Helena was unaware that her family had moved west to the German border (absent her brother who was fighting in the war). It was not until a family friend told her that she was looking for her family that Helena was able to find them. She eventually was reunited and learned that her brother and a younger sister had passed from illness.

Helena's fight against her captors and the obstacles she faced, "Unfortunately, war is ugly."

Helena sponsored Helena and Cazimir to come to the US. Helena's husband, who was a mechanical engineer at Ford Motor Company in Green Island. He is now a state-of-the-art valve for a car radiator.

Helena was seven months pregnant with her second child when her husband passed away. She moved to Watervliet and then to Manning. She raised her two children alone and they have been able to accomplish.

Helena considers sewing a beloved hobby. Helena is one of our residents.

## Colonie Senior Service Centers is Seeking Nominations for the Colonie Senior Spirit Award

Do you know someone who has been supportive of seniors in our community, especially during these stressful times?

The Colonie Senior Spirit awards are presented to outstanding individuals and organizations located in the Capital Region who provide seniors with support services or who have advocated on their behalf which results in seniors remaining independent and allowing them to age in place in the community which they choose. The Colonie Spirit Award winners will be honored at CSSC's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Founders Celebration Breakfast, on October 29, 2020, at The Beltrone Living Center, in Colonie.

Nominees can be nominated for one of the following criteria:

**Transportation Award** – presented to an individual or organization for their efforts to promote independence and self-reliance for seniors by developing and expanding senior transportation options.

**Bright Horizons Award** – presented to an individual or organization for their commitment and achievement in providing and enhancing access to adult day services and caregiver support for seniors and their families.

**Senior Dining Award** – presented to an individual or organization for their dedication and efforts to help seniors maintain their health through good nutrition.

**Health & Wellness Award** – presented to an individual or organization for their commitment and dedication in developing opportunities for seniors to maintain and enhance their physical and intellectual talents.

**Senior Housing Award** – presented to an individual or organization for their vision and leadership in developing housing options for seniors.

**Building a Senior Community Award** – presented to an individual or organization for their efforts to identify and strengthen the existing network of services for seniors and their families.

To nominate a deserving individual, business or organization submit a Colonie Spirit Award nomination form to Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. Attn: Laurie Miedema, Development Director, 6 Winners Circle, Albany, NY 12205 or at [www.colonieseniors.org](http://www.colonieseniors.org).

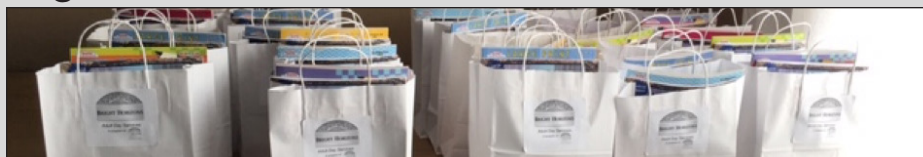
Nomination forms are available online at the Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. website [www.colonieseniors.org](http://www.colonieseniors.org). or by contacting Laurie Miedema at 518-459-2857 ext. 304, [Lmiedema@colonieseniors.org](mailto:Lmiedema@colonieseniors.org).



## Mini Car Show

Special thank you to CSSC Board Member Eric King for holding a car show for our Beltrone Residents on Tuesday, June 16, 2020.

## Bright Horizon Visits



Bright Horizons connects with their members by conducting "social distancing" visits. Members of our staff are traveling throughout our Capital Region communities delivering goody bags filled with program activities that members and their caregivers can do at home. Bright Horizons also sent out information about the Alzheimer's Association caregiver support groups hosted by phone, and the Bright Horizons Caregiver Lending Library supported by the Community Impact Grant through the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region. Since many of our senior members miss the socialization and camaraderie in our Adult Day Social Program we thought it would be nice to bring our program on the road to them. The smiles and gratitude of our members and their caregivers were well worth the trip!

## CSSC Mission Statement

*The mission of Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. (CSSC) is to provide comprehensive services to those in our community who are in or approaching their mature years, and to provide support and services to their families and caregivers.*

*Through these services, CSSC strives to ensure the physical, mental, emotional and financial well-being of our participants, improve the quality of life, and to enhance the structure and stability of our community as a whole.*

## Directory

### Executive Director

Diane Conroy-LaCivita  
dconroylacivita@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 305

### Administrative Operations and HR

Carol Ripley, Director  
cripley@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 310

### Bright Horizons

Susan Napierski, Director  
snapierski@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 322  
Colonie 518-459-7967  
Latham 518-244-5206

### Development

Laurie Miedema, Director  
lmiedema@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 304

### Driver Fitness Center

Roger Dames, Coordinator  
rdames@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 326

### Finance

Andrew C. Koenig, CPA, Director  
akoenig@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 306

### Lifelong Wellness

Caroline Barrett, Director  
cbarrett@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 327

### RSVP and Volunteer Coordinator

Marisa Geraghty, Director  
mgeraghty@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 308

### Tool Box

Leonard G. St. Gelais, Coordinator  
lstgelais@colonieseniors.org  
518-608-4758

### Transportation Services

Don Anderson, Director  
danderson@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 301  
To Schedule a Ride: 518-459-6064

### Umbrella of Colonie

Nicole Brammer, Director  
nbrammer@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 311

### The Beltrone Living Center

Debbie McClune, Site Manager  
dmccclune@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2711

### King Thiel Senior Community and Sheehy Manor

Aimee Richardson, Site Manager  
arichardson@colonieseniors.org  
King Thiel: 518-429-6292  
Sheehy Manor: 518-782-2350

### Media and Communications

Michael DiGiuseppe, Specialist  
mdigiuseppe@colonieseniors.org  
518-459-2857, ext. 337



Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc.  
6 Winners Circle  
Albany, NY 12205

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Albany, N.Y.  
Permit No. 74

## Tribute Corner

(3/1/2020 – 05/31/2020)

### In Memory of Dorothy Bullock

Audrey Evans

### In Memory of Mary Ditunno

William H. Schmitt, Jr.  
Ann Urbanski

### In Memory of Margaret Ferguson

Ida A. Peterson

### In Memory of Robert Lewis

Leslie Bramah  
Walter Davis  
Paul Fahr

John M. Hanrahan  
Tom Husser  
Mark Lewis

### In Memory of Noreen Nardacci

Carol Sheffer  
Spring Meadow/  
Brookwood HOA  
Tammy and  
Alan Troskowski

### In Memory of Janice McGrath

Bob Kraus  
Maryanne McCandless  
Palisades Community  
Foundation  
Maxine Scherz  
Shari VanderGast

### In Memory of Grace Schmitt

William H. Schmitt, Jr.



## Save the Date!

## Golf Tournament is Rescheduled



## Monday, September 28, 2020 Schuyler Meadows Club

For more information visit  
www.colonieseniors.org or contact  
Laurie Miedema, Development Director  
at Colonie Senior Service Centers for more  
information at 518-459-2857 ext. 304  
or at lmiedema@colonieseniors.org