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.

Many Hands Make Superior Work
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 “Small Albany” 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 family’s mother. 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

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  Ronald & Margaret Lansing
Joanne Fitzgibbon  Kathleen LeRoux
Marbry & Stephen Gansle  Helen McCumber
Mary Goss  Barbara Oliver
Michael Hoblock  Cindy Pettit
Katherine Hughes  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.

A Story of Survival and Remembrance

Helena Kujbida has been a resident in the State of Tarnopol, Poland since May 1, 2015. Born in the State of Tarnopol, Poland on January 20, 1927, Helena grew up on a small farm in a small village with her five siblings. She attended school up until the fourth grade then worked in a textile factory making felts for paper. Leftovers went to the prisoners.

The bombers.

Unfortunately when Helena was seven months pregnant with her second child, Cazimir unexpectedly passed away. She moved to Watervliet and found employment at Behr-Manning. She raised her two children alone. When asked if she held resentment against her captors and the obstacles she had to overcome, she responded, “Unfortunately, war is ugly.”

After the war, she attempted to get in touch with her family. (She had not heard of her formal studies, she fondly remembers a required school project of making potato soup being served and how horrible it was. However it was consumed, try to stay warm. Food was also scarce as well. She remembers thin, burnt thin blanket. Helena vividly remembers the cold nights where she and the other prisoners were forced to work in a textile factory making felts for paper. By train, she and the other Poles traveled to Germany. Seven days a week, she had to work in a textile factory making felts for paper. At the Officers’ Club, Helena met and subsequently married her husband, Cazimir, a fellow Pole, who was an engineer, was hired by the Ford Motor Company in Green Island. He is originally settling in Cohoes, New York.

Eventually the Red Cross took Helena and her family back to Poland. After the war, she attended college for a student to continue his/her education beyond the fourth grade. When the prisoners discovered their whereabouts. She eventually was reunited and learned that her father and brother who were fighting in the war). It was not until a family friend listening to Radio Free Europe heard that she was looking for her family that Helena’s life abruptly changed in 1941 when German forces arrived in her village. (The average Polish student was only required to complete four years of school to allow that to happen. Helena’s youngest sister was six years of age at the time and is pleased with what they have been able to accomplish.

A cousin in Catskill, NY sponsored her as a student to continue her education beyond the fourth grade.

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Colonel 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 18th 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 efforts to identify and strengthen the existing network of services for seniors and their families.

**Building a Senior Community Award** – presented to an individual or organization for their efforts to promote independence and self-reliance for seniors by developing and enhancing services and caregiver support for seniors and their families.

**Colonie Senior Spirit awards** are presented to outstanding individuals and organizations located in the Capital Region who provide seniors with support services and caregiver support 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.

Nomination forms are available online at the Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. website www.colonieseniors.org. or by contacting Laurie Miedema at 518-459-2857 ext. 304, 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!
Tribute Corner
(3/1/2020 – 05/31/2020)

In Memory of Dorothy Bullock
Audrey Evans

In Memory of Mary Ditonno
William H. Schmitt, Jr.
Ann Urbanski

In Memory of Margaret Ferguson
Ida A. Peterson

In Memory of Robert Lewis
Leslie Bramah
Walter Davis
Paul Fahn
John M. Hanrahan
Tom Husser
Mark Lewis

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@colonieservices.org