Most months, deciding what to put on the cover of “Senior Connections” is the subject of great discussions. The cover often features upcoming programs and annual events, as well as antidotal celebrations and anniversaries. This month the decision was much simpler.

As all of us know, we find ourselves in a surreal time, one of great angst and uncertainty, separation and seclusion. It is as if we are in a bad dream that we cannot seem to wake from.

As news broke that New York State would be shut down, all of us at Colonie Senior Service Centers (CSSC) realized that we could not walk away. Our business is to help seniors stay active, healthy and independent, enabling seniors to “age-in-place” in an age-friendly community. We deal in human commodity and we take that purpose very seriously.

Just taking our three buildings into account, The Beltrone Living Center, Sheehy Manor and King Thiel Senior Community, we own and operate 396 independent senior apartments with approximately 500 residents, not to mention all the seniors in the greater community who rely on us for transportation, adult day services, wellness activities, nutritious meals and assistance with home maintenance.

With the onset of COVID-19 in mid-March and after several subsequent government mandates, most of our normal programs are shuttered.

Per a tremendous “can-do” attitude, CSSC re-engineered itself overnight to meet the needs of seniors throughout the community. At the direction of the NYSOFA and ACOFA, we have been tasked with delivering hot meals to shut-ins; quarantined or self-quarantined seniors throughout the community under a new initiative entitled “Grab and Go.” Currently, we have several teams made up of staff and volunteers who are delivering hundreds of delicious mid-day meals seven days a week, all prepared by the talented chefs of Mazzone’s.

In addition, CSSC staff and volunteers are making hundreds of grocery and pharmacy runs for any senior who asks. We are making tens of thousands of reassurances phone calls to promote connectivity during quarantine. We want seniors to know we are thinking about them. CSSC Board President Russ Ward, who is a member of the Mendelssohn Club of Albany, along with his lovely wife Marjorie, are making singing birthday phone calls to seniors. The list goes on-and-on.

This is a moment of pride for Colonie Senior Service Centers. CSSC PROUD. When others played it safe, we had the courage to show up and we had the skill and professionalism to make a difference.

Until we meet again at community lunch or a class, please keep yourself well; and do not hesitate to reach out should you need our assistance.

Stay positive! We are here to support you!
‘Tis the gift to be simple
In 1848, the Shakers wrote a beautiful ‘a cappella’ dancing song entitled “Simple Gifts.” For the Shakers, the song was both a tutorial for dancing as well as an instruction for life; in essence, to live life simply and appreciatively.

The words to “Simple Gifts” go as follows:
‘Tis the gift to be simple
‘Tis the gift to be free
‘Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be
And when we find ourselves in the place just right
It will be in the valley of love and delight
When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend, we will not be ashamed
To turn, turn, will be our delight
‘Til by turning, turning, we come round right

At the time of my marriage in 1988, I was the Executive Director of the historic Watervliet Shaker site, “Wisdom’s Valley”, and I used “Simple Gifts” in my wedding ceremony.

Now, in 1944, composer Aaron Copland took the melody of “Simple Gifts” and transformed it into a beautiful orchestral piece entitled “Appalachian Springs,” which achieved widespread and enduring popularity as an orchestral suite.

Hearing either “Simple Gifts” or “Appalachian Springs” has always brought me enjoyment and comfort.

In all the craziness of the COVID-19 pandemic, symphonies worldwide have been performing compositions via the internet on such apps as Zoom. And wouldn’t you know it, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra has recently released an incredible YouTube video showing all the musicians individually but jointly performing “Appalachian Springs” from the safety of their own individual homes. Over the past several weeks, I have listened to that rendition every day in the car as I drive to work, seven days a week. During this time of uncertainty, that beautiful musical piece provides me strength and peace to carry on.

Please stay well.
– Diane Conroy-LaCivita

“So long as the human spirit thrives on this planet, music in some living form will accompany and sustain it and give it expressive meaning.”
– Aaron Copland

A Proud Story of Military Service
William McCormick has been a resident of The Beltrone Living Center since October 2016. Born in Poughkeepsie in 1935, Bill grew up in the mid-Hudson region of New York State.

He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1958 as a Private First Class and after basic training was stationed in Germany as a Supply Clerk. This was in the midst of the Cold War, and his work and exact location were kept confidential from his family.

Sixty years later, Bill is now able to share that the work at the time when he was stationed in Germany centered around the United States Army’s Nike Ajax, the world’s first operational surface-to-air missile (SAM), as well as the Nike Hercules Missile, a surface-to-air missile used by U.S. and NATO armed forces for medium- and high-altitude long-range air defense. Although all of this sounds intriguing, Bill commented, “I just went to work each day, nothing really happened.” . . .

From 1960 to 1962, Bill was in the reserves and was finally discharged in 1964.

After leaving the military, Bill married Sheila and they have been married for 56 years. He worked for GE Silicon in Waterford in construction marketing for forty years while residing on Chateau Court in Loudonville. He commented that when he purchased his home of over fifty years back in 1956 the price tag was $17,000, a big difference from today’s housing prices.

Bill, thank you for your service to defend our nation and our freedom.
Thank You, Thank You, Thank You... to all our Super Heroes

(the grocery shoppers, the food delivers, the mask-makers, the cleaners, the birthday singers, the organizers, the advisors, the good neighbors, the medical advisors...)

CSSC so appreciates all your efforts! We would not be able to do what we do without you!

Laurie Allen  Barb Dolan  BJ Hood  Yvonne Livingston  Colleen Severson
Paul Barrett  Ann Finnegan  Margorita Johnson  Marion Lord  Sarah Seyden
Fran Berghela  Janet Fisch  Sue Hazeltin  Linda Marowitz  Theresa Soldani
Martha Bonaparte  Frank Fournier  Elizabeth Inverso  Connie Merriman  Carol Stafford
Sharon Bonaparte  Don Gauvreau  Eileen Jones-Shott  Bebe Morehead  Debbie Sterge
Jean Boys  Suzanne Gauvreau  Patty Fernandez-Smith  Stephanie Motta  Gail Terwilger
Sandy Byron  Seamus Geraghty  Lois Kerr  Sue Moyle  Jerry Thompson
The Collar Family  Diane Gerdon  Joe LaCivita  Diane Murphy  Susan Trainor
Colleen Connelly  Nancy Gerstenberger  Louis LaCivita  Nancy O’Connor  Dr. Sri Tumuluri, MD
Jeanette Cyphers  Linda Gordiman  Pat Lane  Barb Oliver  Eleanor Tunny
Mary Ann Campbell  Ron Gusberti  Dottie LaVoie  Deb Rittano  Marjorie Ward
Faith DiMura  Ora Henkes  Kathy LeRoux  Beverly Russomano  Russ Ward

Dear Colonie Senior Center,

I wanted to take a moment to say, “Thank you.”

The services and opportunities you offer to senior residents are always impressive, but right now- amidst the pandemic- your efforts are so much more.

My father died unexpectedly in autumn 2019, leaving my mother to cope on her own. She is in her late eighties and (now) living alone in her own house in Colonie.

I, of course, tried to prepare for the shutdown that I knew was coming as I- like everyone- watched Coronavirus sweep across the globe. There were remaining questions however: among these... how often and in what way would I manage a food supply for her?

And then... my mother called to say that Colonie Seniors would be delivering daily meals.

I really can’t express the relief this brought me. To know that she has a steady flow of food lifts one of my greatest concerns.

So... Thank You. Thank you for making and delivering those meals which alleviates so many difficulties in an already difficult time. Thank you for stepping up and caring for our seniors (even more than usual). Thank you for looking out for my mother.

Best regards and be well.

Love Letters

Spring Cleaning?
Contact Umbrella of Colonie.
Connecting senior homeowners with reliable handy people who do yard work, light carpentry, cleaning, plumbing, and more, affordably.
Call 518-459-2857 ext. 311.
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.

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Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) – How to Protect Yourself

Know How it Spreads
• There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
• The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
  • The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
    – Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
    – Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
• These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
• Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

Take steps to protect yourself and others

- Clean your hands often
- Stay home if you’re sick
- Wear a facemask
- Avoid close contact (Stay 6 feet apart)
- Stay at home
- Cover coughs & sneezes
- Clean & disinfect

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