We started January of 2020 with such high hopes looking forward to another successful year. We gleefully went along with our very successful annual Warmth of Winter event, RSVP Volunteer Opportunity Fair, cooking demonstrations and monthly sacred space visits. We interviewed veterans and pet owners for our monthly newsletter.

International Women’s Day was organized in early March in recognition of the hundredth anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave women the right to vote.

Then in mid-March, everything came to an abrupt halt realizing we were in the midst of a pandemic. We re-engineered ourselves overnight to meet the needs of seniors throughout the community.

We listened more. We cleaned more. We attempted to keep everyone safe and remembered.

We collaborated with government, other non-profits, businesses and corporations. Over 37,000 hot meals and over 70,000 pounds of groceries were delivered to seniors' homes.

August led us to sponsoring a sold-out Pop-up BBQ. In September, we held a successful abridged Beltrone Golf Classic and subsequently turned Chefs in Motion into a drive-thru event.

We held a successful drive-thru Veterans’ Recognition Luncheon.

We have introduced Local Bounty Baskets and a Drive-Thru Pie/Cake Sale, along with a Holiday Raffle. Santa Claus will be visiting virtually and we will once again be lighting a holiday tree.

We look forward to 2021 in hopes of returning to a sense of normalcy where we can again come together to eat, socialize, learn and celebrate.

Colonie Senior Service Centers wishes you the happiest and healthiest of holiday seasons. We are here for you.
Message from the Executive Director

Happy December!

Sunday, December 6, St. Nicholas Day
Monday, December 7, National Pearl Harbor Day of Remembrance
Thursday, December 10, Chanukah
Monday, December 21, Winter Solstice
Friday, December 25, Christmas
Saturday, December 26, Kwanzaa
Thursday, December 31, New Year’s Eve

The month of December has so many observances and holidays. Many we know. Many we may not realize, such as National Cookie Day (December 4), National Horse Day (December 13), National Crossword Puzzle Day (December 21) and National Call a Friend Day (December 28).

As a kid growing up in the 1970s, I can vividly remember the excitement that came over me when it was my turn to leaf through the newly arrived Sears Roebuck Catalog. There were always pages and pages of toys. I would take my time reviewing each and every page very carefully, dog-earring the pages that I found something that interested me. I wanted to make sure Santa was aware of what I was hoping for under the tree. How I miss those catalogs.

I have so many wonderful memories from this time of the year. It is funny though, the memories are not about the toys that were opened Christmas morning but more about the festive celebrations and the large extended family gatherings.

All of us at CSSC realize what a challenging time 2020 has been. It has been an unprecedented, uncertain time for all of us. As we try to find our footing and figure out how to adjust, please know we are dedicated as ever to ensuring our seniors are cared for and remembered.

I want to extend to everyone a happy and healthy holiday season. We look forward to 2021 hoping we can begin to resume many of the wonderful programs and services that CSSC is known for.

“Every morning, you have a new opportunity to become a happier version of yourself.”

– 518 Great-Spread of Positivity & Happiness

Be well,
– Diane Conroy-LaCivita

Let Us Introduce the 2020 Colonie Senior Spirit Awardees

Colonie Senior Service Centers (CSSC) was proud to present the 2020 Colonie Senior Spirit Awards during our Virtual Founders’ Celebration, on October 29th. While this year’s event was held virtually, due to these challenging times, we felt it was important to recognize the wonderful Colonie Senior Spirit Awardees, as they have a significant impact on our community’s seniors and their families. The Colonie Senior Spirit Award is given to those individuals and businesses in our community who reflect the commitment, vision and leadership exemplified by CSSC’s Founders to help seniors remain active, healthy, and independent.

The Marion T. Lamar Health & Wellness Spirit Award is 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. This year’s award goes to the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York. The Regional Food Bank has been and continues to be a tremendous support to Colonie seniors. This year alone, they have provided over 70,000 pounds of nutritious food to CSSC to distribute to seniors, with the goal to keep seniors in our community healthy and physically well throughout the pandemic.

The Mary E. Brizzell Building a Senior Community Spirit Award is presented to an individual or organization for their efforts to identify and strengthen the existing network of services for seniors and their families. This year we are proud to present the award to Richard E. Rowlands, Esq. of Rowland, LeBrou & Griesmer, PLLC. Rick Rowlands has been a tireless supporter and advisor to CSSC, investing his time and talents to the organization for over thirty years. His depth of institutional knowledge is so incredibly appreciated especially during these trying times.
The Fred G. Field Transportation Spirit Award is presented to an individual or organization for their efforts to promote independence and self-reliance for seniors by developing and expanding senior transportation options. This year’s awardee is Carrie Ward of the Capital District Transportation Committee. Carrie has been instrumental in providing resources, guidance and support to CSSC as we have expanded our transportation fleet, as well as the inclusion of technology to provide seniors with efficient and reliable transportation services in the Capital Region.

The Ann Marie Sheehy Bright Horizons Spirit Award is 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. This year’s winner is Allen R. Wolf. Al is a tireless supporter and volunteer with Bright Horizons and has been doing this for over ten years. He has a tremendous relationship with staff and members of Bright Horizons, and is missed by all during the closure of the program due to the COVID pandemic.

The Joseph R. Simon Senior Housing Spirit Award is presented to an individual or organization for their vision and leadership in developing housing options for seniors. Andrea Crisafulli and Crisafulli Bros. have made a strong commitment to seniors and Colonie Senior Service Centers over the years, by generously supporting both CSSC’s annual Warmth of Winter event as well as our Umbrella of Colonie Home Maintenance Program. Through their generous efforts they assist seniors in staying and maintaining their homes, thus allowing them to age in place. We are very proud to award the Joseph R. Simon Senior Housing Spirit Award to such a worthy person and organization.

CSSC congratulates all of our winners, as they are most deserving of these awards. To watch the 19th Virtual Founders Celebration go to the CSSC on Film page at www.colonieseniors.org.

The 19th Annual Virtual Founders’ Celebration was generously sponsored by BBL Construction, CDPHP, and Haylor Freyer & Coon. The support of these companies throughout the year has allowed us to continue to provide vital services to seniors and their families throughout the Capital Region.

If you would like to join the Colonie Senior Spirit Awardees and our sponsors in supporting seniors in our community, especially as we enter the winter season, you may make a donation to Colonie Senior Service Centers by using the enclosed envelope or by “Making a Gift” at www.colonieseniors.org. Your support is very much appreciated and will allow CSSC to continue to provide vital services in our community to thousands of seniors during these difficult times.

Special thank you to Goldstein Auto Group for selecting us for Subaru “Share the Love” event.

Share the Love event runs November 19, 2020 to January 4, 2021.

Your path to healthy. active. independent. lifestyle . . .
A Proud Story of Military Service

Joseph G. Orsini and his late wife Lillian moved into The Beltrone Living Center in November 2002. Born in Rome, New York, on June 5, 1923, Joe was the sixth of seven children (six boys and one girl). At the age of two, Joe’s family moved to Albany hoping for a better life. His dad had worked in a foundry in Rome and was able to get a job with the railroad.

Joe attended St. John’s Academy and St. John’s Church, where he served as an altar boy. Additionally, he played high school football for four years. Upon graduation, Joe was drafted into the U.S. Army. He was sent to Fort McClellan in Alabama for infantry basic training. Joe remembered, “I wanted to be a gunner in the Air Force. I was drafted so you cannot ask for what you want. I was told machine gunners do not last long. I would be a machine gunner. I would not be flying though, I would be walking.” At the time, he had one brother serving in the Air Force, one in the Navy and one in the Army.

From February 1943 through December 1945, Joe served in the 45th Infantry in North Africa, Sicily and mainland Italy. He remembers being “on the seas” the day he turned twenty traveling from the U.S. to North Africa. By the time they landed in North Africa, Joe explained, most of the fighting was over. A Higgins Boat, a landing craft used extensively in amphibious landings in World War II, brought his Division from Africa to a small town in Sicily. From there they traveled to Salerno, Italy, by ship. Joe remembers being on the first ship out of four that were trying to land. He commented, “Did they kick the heck out of us. We were never ready for that war. When we hit the beach, guys couldn’t get off. When I made it to the beach, I had no machine gun, no ammo, and no assistant gunner.”

Joe talks about his assistant gunner with fondness commenting, “Moxley was my assistant gunner. He was a good man. He was older than I was. He was in his twenties.”

Joe went on to explain that throughout his two plus years of service, “The enemy tried to knock me out five times with my machine gun. Each time they failed. Each time they dropped a bomb to knock me out and missed me each time by a foot or foot-and-a-half. I truly believe this was the work of the Lord.”

Joe lovingly remembers his late wife Lillian, whom he refers to as Lil. “My wife and I were in the same class. She always got hundreds. She was the smartest one. Somehow, I was drawn to her. In the sixth grade, I threw snow at her. I always admired her because she was so smart. We went steady. The night before
Bright Horizons – The Word is Gratitude

Gratitude is an affirmation of goodness and the recognition that the source of this goodness often comes from outside of ourselves. Practicing gratitude is a way to remain humble and to create an environment in which you and those around you feel valued and appreciated. A few exercises we can engage in to cultivate gratitude are:

1. **A Gratitude Jar:** Grab a mason jar, decorate it if you wish, and each day write down three things that you are thankful for. Soon the jar will be overflowing with reasons to be thankful. As you reflect on your written words in your gratitude jar, positivity will overcome and turn that bad day around.

2. **The Gratitude Box:** Every family member can write down on scraps of paper completion of prompts such as, “Thank you for . . .”, “What I love about you . . .”, etc.

3. **Gratitude Focused Meditation** relieves stress and creates a more positive mindset. If you would like to try a few gratitude meditation examples, go to positivepsychology.com/gratitude-meditation-happiness.

4. **Gratitude Journal:** The first step is to get into a meditative state by following the foundation for meditation or by leading with a session of mindfulness meditation or concentrative meditation. The next step is for the person to write down three to five things they are grateful for and to take a moment to reflect on each of those things. Keeping a gratitude journal allows a person to reflect back through everything they are grateful for throughout the year.

Sarah and I are grateful for all of our seniors and their caregivers. We enjoy seeing everyone on our virtual program and feel very fortunate that we are able to offer this option during this difficult time. We surely create a lot of positivity during our virtual sessions!

Let us embrace change as an opportunity to spread thankfulness towards others and continue to build lives that have purpose and meaning for ourselves.

If you would like more information about our Bright Horizons program, contact Susan Napierski, Director, at snapierski@colonieseniors.org or call 518-459-2857, ext. 322.

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**Board Member Honored**

The Department of Defense presented CSSC Board Member Jim Morrell and his wife Kathy the Seven Seals Award in a special ceremony in late November. Mr. and Mrs. Morrell received this award for their years of support of both active duty members of the military as well as our veterans.

The Seven Seals Award is presented in recognition of significant individual or organizational achievement, initiative, or support that promotes and supports the ESGR mission, to include the efforts of the more than 4,500 volunteers who carry out ESGR’s mission across the nation on a daily basis.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is the lead U.S. Defense Department program promoting cooperation and understanding between civilian employers and their National Guard and Reserve employees.

*Congratulations Jim and Kathy!*

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**Food Glorious Food . . . December’s Many National Days of Recognition:**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Tuesday, December 8</td>
<td>National Brownie Day</td>
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<td>Wednesday, December 9</td>
<td>National Pastry Day</td>
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<td>Sunday, December 13</td>
<td>Ice Cream Day</td>
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<td>Wednesday, December 16</td>
<td>National Chocolate Covered Anything Day</td>
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<td>Thursday, December 17</td>
<td>National Maple Syrup Day</td>
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<td>Friday, December 18</td>
<td>Bake Cookies Day</td>
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<td>Saturday, December 19</td>
<td>Oatmeal Muffin Day</td>
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<td>Thursday, December 24</td>
<td>National Chocolate Day</td>
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<td>National Egg Nog Day</td>
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<td>Saturday, December 26</td>
<td>National Candy Cane Day</td>
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*“People who love to eat are always the best people.”*  
*– Julia Child*

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**Here Comes Santa Claus (virtually) Ho, Ho, Ho!**

Please join CSSC on Wednesday, December 9, at 6:30 p.m., for a festive, celebratory evening including our annual tree lighting, a visit from St. Nick, as well as, a community sing-along with Rafi, the Singing Jeweler. All of these wonderful festivities will be brought to you via Zoom.

All you have to do is give us a call and we will email the Zoom link to you along with song sheets.

To register, please call Diane at 518-459-2857 ext. 305.
HELP CSSC WIN THE...

HOW TO VOTE

1. Easy! Go to timesunion.com/capitalregiongives
2. Click on the link to vote
3. Find Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. from the nonprofit listing
4. *click* and you’re done
5. One vote per day, per device. Voting ends December 10.

The top 10 nonprofits, by your votes, will each win $10,000 in free advertising from the Times Union. Winners will be announced online and in the paper in December.

Defensive Driving Classes at The Beltrone Living Center

Roger Dames, CSSC’s Driver Fitness Coordinator, will conduct Defensive Driving Classes in December as follows:
Saturday, December 5, 2020
Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Classes will be held from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at The Beltrone Living Center, 6 Winners Circle, Albany, NY. Cost is $25 per person, due before day of class. To reserve your seat, call 518-459-2857, ext. 303.

Thank You to Our Many Supporters in 2020

Holiday Angels

Gifts will be delivered to seniors throughout the community on Saturday, December 5th from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. by Holiday Angels (CSSC and CAP Com Staff).

(Left to Right) Christopher McKenna, President/CEO CapCom FCU, Willis Reed, CapCom FCU Director of Insurance Services, Laurie Miedema, CSSC Development Director, and Diane Conroy-LaCivita, CSSC Executive Director.
Some people make their mark not through grandiose boldness, but through tireless work. Amidst the chaos of the COVID-19 pandemic, it takes special selfless individuals who are in it for the long haul, working behind the scenes, with effective communication and coordination, doing whatever needs to be done to provide the support needed by the seniors throughout the community.

For almost forty years, Colonie Senior Service Centers (CSSC) has concentrated our programs and services and how we can truly benefit older adults throughout our community, providing a network of support and enrichment for both seniors as well as their families.

Since March, CSSC has delivered over 37,000 hot meals to shut-in seniors and over 70,000 pounds of donated shelf-stable groceries to low and middle income seniors. We also made countless reassurance phone calls to promote connectivity, made hundreds of grocery runs for seniors and offered dozens of virtual programs and activities.

Per a tremendous “can-do” attitude, CSSC continues to meet the needs of seniors throughout the community during this time of uncertainty.

Please join our heroes in supporting Capital Region seniors by making a year end gift to Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc.! Online at www.colonieseniors.org by clicking “Make A Gift” or call 518.459.2857 ext. 304 or by using the enclosed envelope in this month's newsletter.
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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Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc.
6 Winners Circle
Albany, NY 12205

A Great Holiday Gift Idea
CSSC’s Local Bounty Baskets
Looking at sending someone special something to wish them a Happy Birthday, a Happy Anniversary, or just to let them know you are thinking about them? Consider having CSSC deliver a Local Bounty Basket to that someone special. Free delivery up to ten miles.

Support the Programs and Services of Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. with a year-end gift!

Online at www.colonieseniors.org
by clicking “Make A Gift”
or by mail at
Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc.
6 Winners Circle
Albany, NY 12205

Reminder! #Giving Tuesday is December 2. Please go to our website and donate to CSSC.