CSSC Is in the Business of Supporting Seniors Today, Tomorrow and Through the Decades

As we start to return to some level of normalcy, it feels like a good time to reflect and look to the future on how Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. (CSSC) will continue to provide services to our community's seniors and their families for decades to come. For the last four decades, CSSC has been there for seniors, in our community, with services that include transportation, senior dining, Bright Horizons Adult Day Services, life-long learning, social, health and wellness programs, volunteer opportunities and so much more. CSSC's business is to provide support and services to seniors and their families, and it never seemed more critical than last year as we faced the COVID-19 pandemic. CSSC never closed our doors and never stopped doing business. We pivoted our programs, worked diligently to get over 1,200 Capital Region seniors vaccinated, and we are still delivering thousands of pounds of food to seniors who face food insecurity. All of our efforts were to keep our senior community safe in uncertain times. Our success came because we worked collaboratively with local businesses, community leaders, community volunteers, and supporters who not only joined us, they invested in CSSC. Their investment allows us to be successful today, tomorrow and for upcoming decades.

The business community supports CSSC with donations, sponsorships of programs and special events in order to provide vital senior programming. Many individuals and families across the Capital Region invest in CSSC by making monetary donations, often monthly or annually. Others work with their financial planners to gift stocks to the organization, showing their support of CSSC, while managing their financial security and tax benefits. CSSC is very fortunate to have community members who chose to remember and support CSSC by making a bequest to CSSC as part of their estate.

To those who have invested in CSSC and our work to support seniors and their families, we can never say thank you enough. If you would like to become an investor in the business of providing services with the services they need so they may age in place in the community they choose, please contact Laurie Miedema, CSSC Development Director at 518-459-2857, ext. 304, or at Lmiedema@colonieseniors.org.

Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. looks forward to being in the business of providing services where seniors thrive in their community, with dedicated supporters like you.
Message from the Executive Director

Happy June!
National Best Friend Day – June 8
Flag Day – June 14
Father’s Day – June 20
Summer Solstice – June 21

Small is Wonderful
For the past twenty-three years, we have lived on the same street moving there three days before giving birth to my son Louis. I honestly never imagined myself living in a suburban setting. As a young single person, I had envisioned myself living in a large urban center surrounded by public parks, history and art museums, as well as other cultural outlets. Nevertheless, here we are. Our street is small with only ten homes and interestingly enough named after a twenty-six day World War I battle which completes our family or how taking walks puts things in a better perspective. He is always waving and smiling. I often say to my husband how I wish I were more like this particular neighbor whose glass is always half full. I try to connect with one another face-to-face even on a small street in the middle of suburbia is beautiful. Be well!

–Diane Conroy-LoCicota

Let’s Have a Conversation – Older Women Leading Extraordinary Lives
With tremendous support from Humanities New York, CSSC will tape a thirty-minute personal interview twice a month with area women representing all walks of life. Their perspectives are real. We will delve into their life story. Some may talk about a long successful career while others may speak on a new exciting hobby or interest. Our aim is to provide hope to women who are aging to show side effects of growth for such things as love, compassion, bravery, humility and creativity.

June’s Conversations are as follows:
Thursday, June 3 – Carol Whittaker, Public Health Professional and Educator
Thursday, June 17 – Christina Meier, Esq.

These conversations may be viewed on CSSC’s Facebook page and YouTube channel any time after 2 p.m. on the day of the event.

Welcome New Employees

James Kelly
James has been named CSSC’s Director of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and Volunteer Coordinator. Jim brings extensive experience to his position having spent nineteen years with St. Peter’s Health Partners, most recently as Manager of Activities and Volunteer Services. He is also a New York State licensed occupational therapy assistant. When not working, Jim spends time with his family, works in the yard, and coaches Colonie Little League Baseball. Jim and his wife have a six-year-old son.

Hellen Lavender
Hellen recently joined CSSC as an Administrative Assistant for King Thel and Sheehy Manor. Hellen was employed by Occupational and Environmental Health Center as a Program Assistant for the past twenty-three years. In her spare time, Hellen enjoys reading, crafts, genealogy, and spending time with her spouse, daughters and granddaughter.

Fe’Lee Reyes
Fe’Lee also recently joined the CSSC team as an Administrative Assistant for The Beltrone Living Center. Fe’ previously worked at Living Resources for ten years where she served as Assistant Manager. Fe’ has many interests: spending time outside, music, meeting people, and spending time with her children and grandchildren.

Welcome James, Hellen and Fe’Lee!

Drug Take Back Event at The Beltrone Living Center
Too often, unused prescription drugs find their way into the wrong hands, which is dangerous and often tragic. That is why NYS Assemblyman and Pharmacist John McDonald, owner of Mann’s Pharmacy in Cohoes, and Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. are teaming up to offer a medication take back event at The Beltrone Living Center.

Clean out your medicine cabinets and bring your expired or unwanted medications with you on Tuesday, June 15, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. John McDonald will be on site to take those medications from you so that they are properly disposed of and he will also be our luncheon speaker on this very subject.

Defensive Driving Classes at The Beltrone Living Center
Roger Dames, CSSC’s Driver Fitness Coordinator, will conduct Defensive Driving Classes in June and July as follows:
Wednesday, June 9, 2021, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Wednesday, June 23 and Thursday June 24, 2021, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
NOTE: This is a two-part class; must attend both nights.
Wednesday, July 14, 2021, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Wednesday, July 28, 2021, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Classes will be held 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.

Regrowth Through Volunteering
Spring has sprung, and now it is your time. This past year we have all been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and as our communities begin to reopen safely, the need for volunteer service is present. The benefits of volunteering are endless, including an increase in socialization, prevention of loneliness and a strengthening of our communities.

To be part of the regrowth in your community, call Jim Kelly at 518-459-2857, ext. 308, today to learn about the volunteer opportunities through the RSVP Program with Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc.

Very Special Donation
Thank you Debora Mitchell and students from Albany Academy for Girls for your recent donation to CSSC’s Senior Dining Program of one hundred beautifully-decorated lunch bags.

Your creativity and generosity are greatly appreciated.

Debora Mitchell, MS English Teacher and Advisor for the Albany Academy for Girls with beautifully-decorated lunch bags that the students created.
A Woman of Distinction – Ellen Werner

Ellen Werner has lived at King Thiel Senior Community since May 2017 when the structure originally opened. Fortunately, she was able to secure the last available one bedroom apartment. Born April 419 in Albany to George and Julia Werner, Ellen was the middle of three girls. Her oldest sister, Julie, became a religious sister of Mercy and just celebrated her eightieth birthday. Ellen referred to her mom and dad as “good parents” who enjoyed taking the family on outings such as New York City excursions, local boat rides and bus trips. Originally, the family lived on West Street in Albany and subsequently moved to Washington Avenue.

Up until the eighth grade, Ellen attended Blessed Sacrament School in Albany and went on to attend St. John’s Academy in rotterdam. After graduating from high school, Ellen enrolled in a three-year program at St. Peter’s School of Nursing where she obtained her RN License, graduating in 1963. She stayed on at St. Peter’s Hospital for a couple of years working in pediatrics.

As Ellen mentioned several times during our interview, “I wanted to learn something different.” Her craving for learning brought her to SUNY at Buffalo where she graduated with an undergraduate degree in nursing in 1969 and then went on to attend Syracuse University obtaining a Master’s Degree in Nursing Education.

A lifelong learner, Ellen ultimately worked in sixteen hospitals in eight states throughout her nursing career, building med-surg nursing, continuing education teaching and quality assurance. She worked in operating rooms and hospice. Additionally, she added, “I did a good share of staff nursing. I liked to be at the bedside.”

In 2004, Ellen decided to retire, commenting, “Personally, I have gotten a good career out of nursing. It is a 24/7 job.” When asked what advice she would give to someone thinking about a nursing career, she commented, “There are a lot of opportunities, more opportunities if you are part-time. Now, there are a lot more positions to go higher up.”

Ellen is pleased that hospice is now recognized as truly a need that needs to be managed, not always the case. Additionally, Ellen mentioned, “I thank God every day that I am at King Thiel.” In her spare time, Ellen likes to cook, do needlework and tackle jigsaw puzzles. She talks on the phone frequently keeping in touch with her many co-workers from her incredible nursing career.

We are thrilled to have Ellen as part of our CSSC community.

Board President’s Message

I would like to take a moment to extend a big “Thank You” to our fabulous board members.

Stating the obvious, 2020 was an extremely difficult year. Our board members’ commitment to improving the lives of seniors in our community remained constant to not only survive the COVID-19 pandemic, but in many ways thrive. Although each member’s contribution was extremely important, I am excited to announce that Nancy O’Connor is the recipient of this year’s award.

Nancy Sheehy Award. Nancy went above and beyond in serving seniors in the community and carrying out the mission of our organization. Thank you Nancy!

Christina W. Meier, Esq.
CSSC Board President

Umbrella of Colonie

If you are a member of Umbrella of Colonie and are in need of smoke detectors, we can help. The American Red Cross has recently given us a generous donation of smoke detectors, which are available for installation.

If you are not a member of Umbrella and are interested in learning about the program, please call Sharon Herald 518-459-7152.

Seeking Nominations for the 2021 Colonie Senior Spirit Awards

Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc. (CSSC) is looking for that special person or organization who supports our senior community. Do you know someone who has been supportive of seniors in our community, especially during this past year of uncertainty?

CSSC, an independent non-profit 501c(3), is currently accepting nominations for the 2021 Colonie Senior Spirit Awards. 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 thus allowing them to age in place in the community that they choose.

Nominations may 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 wwwicolonieseniors.org.

Nomination forms are available online at, colonieseniors.org, or by contacting Laurie Miedema at 518-459-2857, ext. 304, or by email at Lmiedema@colonieseniors.org.

The deadline for nominations is midnight on August 31, 2021.
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

Community Relations
Jessica Flynn, Director
jflynn@colonieseniors.org
518-704-4267

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
akoening@colonieseniors.org
518-459-2857, ext. 306

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

RSVP and Volunteer Coordinator
James Kelly, Director
jkelly@colonieseniors.org
518-459-2857, ext. 308

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

Transportation Services
Danette Groat, Director
dgroat@colonieseniors.org
518-459-2857, ext. 301
To Schedule a Ride: 518-459-6064

Umbrella of Colonie
Sharon Herald, Coordinator
sherald@colonieseniors.org
518-459-2857, ext. 311

The Beltrone Living Center
Debbie McClune, Site Manager
dmcllune@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
mdiuseppe@colonieseniors.org
518-459-2857, ext. 337

Open House at The Beltrone Living Center
Consider living in one of the premier independent senior (55+) living communities in the Capital Region – The Beltrone Living Center. It is our pleasure to invite you to our

Open House on Saturday, June 5, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
The Beltrone Living Center is located in the heart of Colonie just off Wolf Road adjacent to The Crossings of Colonie and offers many amenities:

• Great restaurants and shopping nearby
• A variety of floor plans
• Pet-friendly and smoke-free community
• Twenty-four-hour security intercom system
• Emergency call buttons in each apartment
• Transportation services onsite

Come in and see why it is "Better at Beltrone!"