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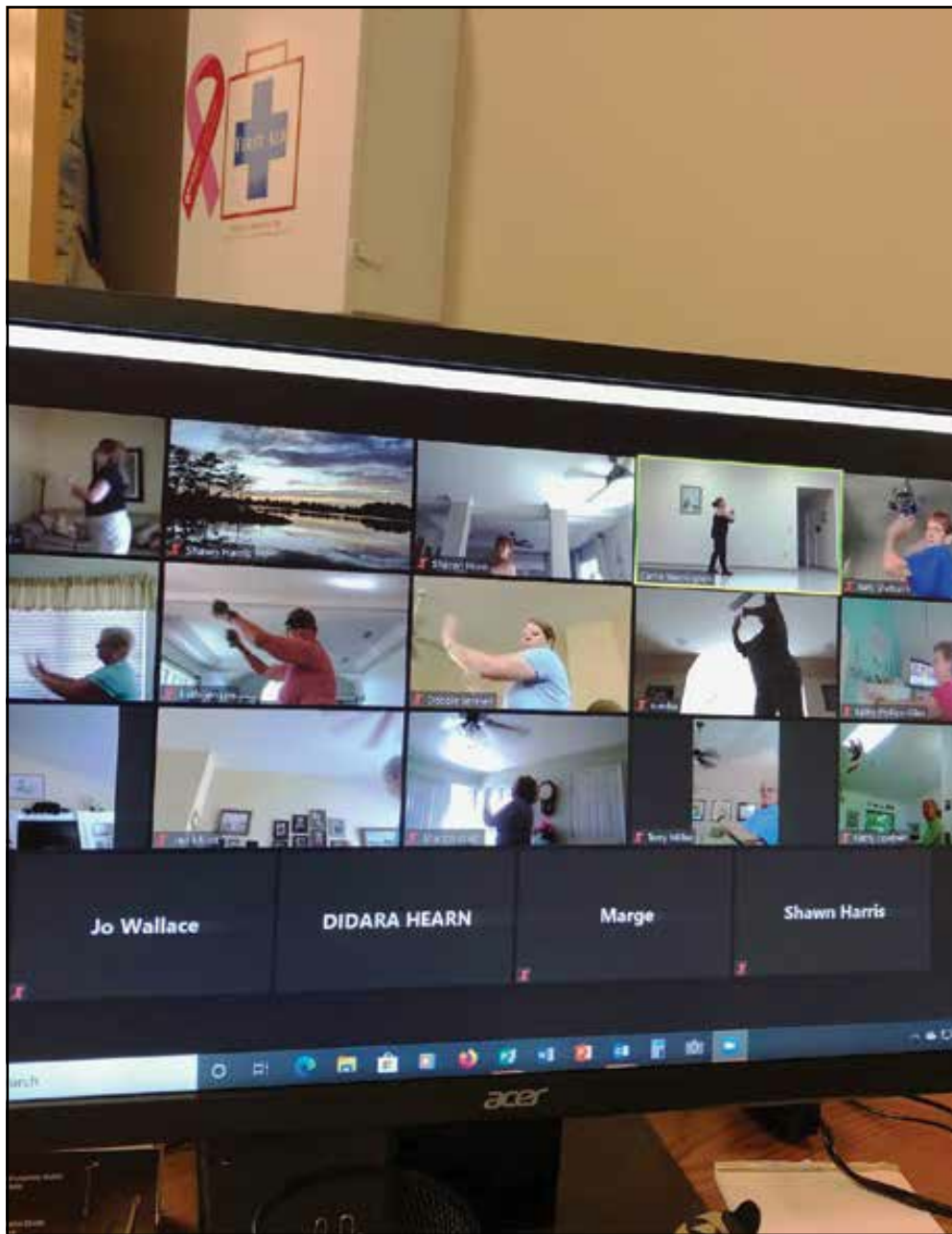
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ON THE COVER

Finding Ways Forward



The new face of CHEER since March has been virtual activity programs and socialization over the computer. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Zoom application has been instrumental in providing physical and emotional stimulation for seniors. See story, page 5.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CHEER, INC.,
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CHEERful Living

This magazine is published quarterly by the Delaware State News in partnership with CHEER.

To support healthy and active lifestyles for seniors in Sussex County.

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The CEO's Perspective...



By Kenneth Bock
CEO, CHEER

I am always humbled by the way good people step up to any challenge, even in the most difficult of times. I am also grateful to be part of an organization of good people who continue to serve the needs of our senior citizens during this COVID-19 pandemic period. None of us have seen anything like the last six months of COVID in our lifetimes, and I hope that when this is over, none of us will ever experience anything like it again. We will never forget that 2020 was the year COVID stopped economies, isolated us in our homes, caused us to wear masks in public, created unprecedented demands for hand sanitizer, and took far too many people far too soon.

But throughout this entire pandemic, we also need to remember that many good people left their homes, donned their masks, and went out to help serve those who needed assistance. From the very first day of the pandemic shut-

down, CHEER staff and volunteers were roaming the isles of grocery stores purchasing shelf stable food stock. Others were searching the internet for personal protective equipment and sanitizing supplies. Still others were figuring out what we could do differently to stay in contact and serve our CHEER members and other senior citizens throughout our county. Bad things happened to be sure, but thanks to the commitment and dedication of a lot of volunteers, CHEER staff, and our public and private sector partners, businesses and private citizens, a lot of good things happened for a lot of people who really needed something good to happen.

Since the government-ordered shutdown first began on March 13th, CHEER has continued to provide locally prepared meals that have been delivered to the homes of seniors daily. The friendly greeting and meal hand off at the front door has had to be replaced with a socially distance meal left in a plastic bag on the door knob, but it was still delivered by someone who cares and backed up that care with their commitment of time and action. Many new friends came to CHEER to volunteer for their first time during this COVID

crisis while many of our longer term volunteers kept right on serving their people. We even delivered extra meals so that no one would be without food if supplies became more limited or quarantine restrictions further limited our ability to serve. Federal, State, County and local officials all lent their support helping to get supplies and make sure that our seniors were not left alone or hungry. Week after week, these volunteers have been there delivering CHEER to seniors confined to their homes during this pandemic.

As we begin re-opening CHEER senior activity centers, I want to offer a special thank you for all who helped to support and sustain CHEER as we helped to support and sustain our most special citizens throughout Sussex. We look forward to the day when we can all join together in CHEER activity centers. Beyond that, we look forward to the day we can share a smile without being behind a mask and offer a warm hand shake without having to maintain a six-foot social distance. But, until that day comes, know that we will be here, as we have been for the past 49 years, caring for the needs of our most special citizens.

Thank you. Stay healthy and be well.

CHEER, Inc. STAFF

Kenneth Bock,
Chief Executive Officer

Beckett Wheatley,
Chief Operating Officer

Deborah Crum,
Finance Director

Lasandra Baynard,
Support Services Director

Ken Moore,
Employee Benefits and
Donor Analyst

Carolyn O'Neal,
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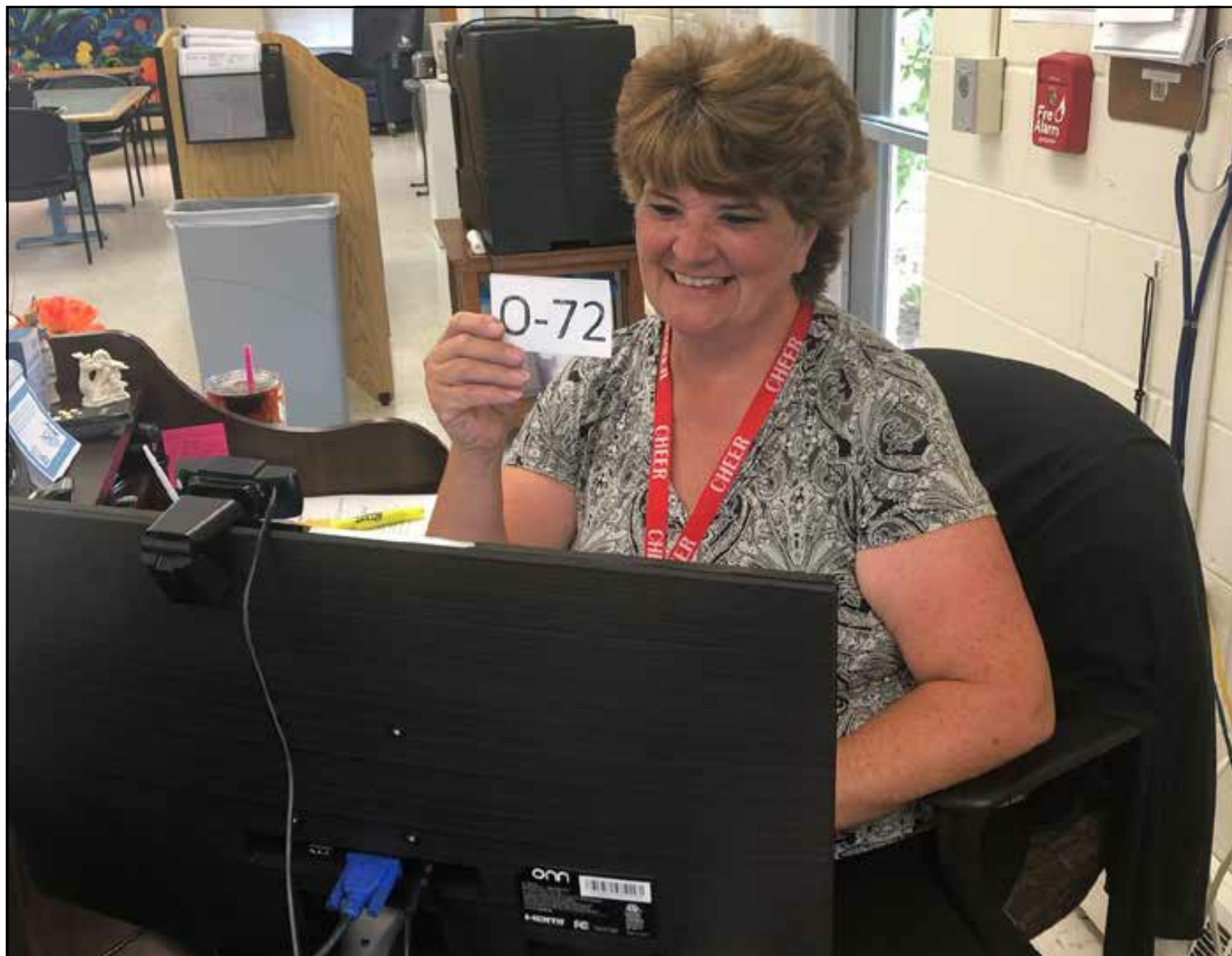
Genny Hines,
Transportation Director

MISSION STATEMENT

**CHEER's mission is
"to promote and maintain
the highest quality of life
and independence by
developing and providing
services that meet the
continuing needs of senior
citizens 50 and over."**

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Virtual Programming Helps Combat Loneliness for Seniors



Nurse Dawn Tomeski calls out numbers during a virtual Bingo game. Bingo sessions are offered 15 times a week by CHEER.

By Carolyn M. O'Neal

Community Relations

The new “norm.” What is it? Does anybody really know?

For over five months, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed everyone's life. Seven out of 10 (72%) people say the coronavirus pandemic is disrupting their lives, (Kirzinger et al., 2020); and almost half (45%) say the pandemic has had a negative impact on

their mental health, (Panchal et al., 2020).

According to Dr. Judith E. Pierson, a clinical psychologist who recently gave a virtual presentation to members of the Marketing and Admissions Professionals of Delaware (MAPS), social isolation, even before the pandemic, was known to be very detrimental. Research suggests loneliness increases the risk

for depression, lowers the immune system and raises blood pressure, (Miller, 2014). Connection, however, improves recovery from illnesses and increases longevity, (Ornish, 1999). For seniors, loneliness can be as large of a health risk as obesity, smoking, or alcoholism. Lonely seniors have a 59% higher risk of physical and mental decline. Lonely seniors also have a 64% higher

risk of dementia, (Welbi, date unknown).

“Those of us with elderly parents or relatives are likely experiencing a heightened worry about everything from their health to their food supply to whether they will stay safe by staying home,” said Dr. Pierson. “We may want to visit, and they may want to see their grandchildren, but you

See Virtual • Page 6



Lori Roe of Ocean View teaches one of the many yoga classes offered by CHEER through Zoom virtual programming.

Virtual

Continued From Page 5

worry you will expose them to the coronavirus.”

According to Dr. Pierson, most of us when faced with challenges take some comfort in knowing they are time limited. “Not knowing how long this pandemic might last, and if it might return, as well as how long we might have to isolate ourselves, makes it especially anxiety-provoking,” she advised.

CHEER recognizes the dangers loneliness can have for senior citizens. Research by the National Council on Aging indicates older adults who participate in senior center programs delay the onset of chronic disease and enjoy measurable improvements in physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, and overall life satisfaction. Many of CHEER’s members depend on the socialization they receive at the activity centers to make their day worth living. That is why when the emergency order came from the Governor to shut down all senior centers, CHEER immediately instituted programs and procedures to ensure the mental and physical well-being of its senior members. Wellness telephone calls went out two-to-three times a week to be sure the seniors were healthy and find out if they needed anything. Nutritious meals continued to be served either by Meals-on-Wheels volunteers or grab-and-go at the center’s door. A mini grocery delivery service was be-

gun for those who had no way to get to the grocery store, or were afraid of the dangers of physical exposure to other people. All these efforts contributed to the physical well-being of the seniors.

Just important, however, is the emotional and mental well-being of seniors. For decades, we have known how important it is for older adults to participate in brain-stimulating activities. Answering this challenge during COVID-19, CHEER turned to virtual programming to better the lives of its senior citizens by reducing loneliness and improving their mental health without needing to leave the comfort of their homes. CHEER recognized that virtual programming can be an outlet for seniors to socialize and engage in activities they perhaps haven’t been able to do in years due to the aging process. Staying connected with our friends brings meaning and joy to our daily lives. For older adults with limited mobility, they may feel cut off from those valuable social interactions.

Enter the age of ZOOM. Zoom is a video-conferencing application that allows several users to join at once. You can host live programming through your computer, and have your seniors watch and interact from the safety of their homes. Zoom offers free, 40-minute calls for up to 100 attendees. It allows its users to interact and takes only a few clicks to set up. It also provides flexibility of sharing

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SCA data source: American Heart Association, "Heart Cardiovascular Resuscitation (CPR)" (2012)

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PulsePoint

See Virtual • Page 7



Painting instructor Marina Borovok demonstrates technique via Zoom conferencing during a virtual class hosted by the Ocean View CHEER activity center.

Virtual

Continued From Page 6

your own content with your seniors. Plus it provides the ability for CHEER members from one center to be able to participate and enjoy activities offered by other centers.

With the aid of Zoom, CHEER center directors put their heads together and have developed over 20 programs per week available to seniors at various times of the day. Ranging from Bingo to virtual travel tours, seniors can see and chat with their friends on the computer screen while enjoying the featured program.

"I miss touching and hugging people," Maria (pronounced Mariah) Webb of Milton said about the pandemic restrictions. "But I like being able to participate and be active with the Bridge and Yoga programs on Zoom."

Having moved to Sussex

County in 2014 from New Jersey, Maria joined CHEER in 2016 after suddenly becoming a widow. "I was so happy to have CHEER where I didn't have to eat by myself all the time," she said.

Maria also participates in the virtual Book Club hosted by CHEER's Harbor Lights Center in Lewes. The group is presently reading Michelle Obama's autobiography, *Becoming*. "We listen to her (Michelle Obama) doing the actual reading and then we discuss the chapters over the phone," Maria explained. "I've always been an activist. I have marched for a variety of rights and CHEER gives me diversity in my life now that I am officially old," she laughed.

Janet Pomrinca is a proud member of Carrie's Zoomettes, a group of participants in Carrie Warrington's Zumba classes hosted by CHEER's

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See Virtual • Page 8

Virtual

Continued From Page 7

Long Neck activity center. Janet retired to the Baywood community 10 years ago and has been a CHEER member for five years. She describes the virtual classes as different from what she was used to, but it didn't take long for her to adjust.

"In a room together, you get energy from the people there," Janet described. "But I am happy to be able to still have a way to do it (Zumba) two mornings a week. It's great exercise. I missed it and the people. I also made many new friends in the virtual classes."

Janet believes that without the Zoom classes, the original Long Neck group would have gone in different directions doing their own thing. But she believes that the virtual class has helped the group maintain continuity and connection. "If this pandemic is ever over, I think we will still maintain our group."

A retired physician from Pennsylvania, 82-year-old David Lawrence likes to keep both his body and mind active. He became a member of Ocean View CHEER 10 years



Shown is a mirage of the artwork done by participants in the virtual painting class.

ago and enjoys participating in various classes offered at the center. His favorite, however, is painting class. Dr. Lawrence started taking painting classes with Marina Borovok almost eight years ago. He credits CHEER's offering of the Zoom class as another venue to continue under her guidance. "I appreciate art and people's talent to do art," he said.

According to Dr. Lawrence, Marina who is a secondary and college teacher uses the CHEER classes to help her develop her school curriculum. "Zoom teachers need

to be more organized with step-by-step details," told Dr. Lawrence. He explained that Marina emails assignments and supply lists to her CHEER students prior to their two-and-a-half-hour long weekly class.

"I compliment CHEER for doing virtual programming. I see it as a way for attendees to be able to continue learning after the pandemic if they don't have transportation (to attend in person)," said Dr. Lawrence. "It is great to socialize on-line and it is an opportunity to learn new

skills. CHEER really does keep people active and using their minds to keep sharp (mentally)."

The most popular virtual program is the ever popular Bingo. Hosted by the Sand Hill Adult Day Center, participation in the event has grown from one hour-long offering three mornings a week at 10 a.m. to three hour-long offerings every day of the week, Monday through Friday, at 10 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Members from all seven CHEER activity centers play the games together.

Norma Hall from the Roxana center usually enters three times with her home Bingo cards. "I really miss CHEER and I always enjoyed Bingo," Ms. Norma said. "It's fun and I wouldn't have anything else to do if it weren't for this (virtual game)."

Asked if she liked the virtual programs, Ms. Norma didn't hesitate in saying, "Yes I do, especially the pictorial Bingo. The questions they ask really make you think."

Staying connected with others not only improves emotional well-being, it also is the best predictor of longevity and avoidance of all the major

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CHEERful
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Virtual

Continued From Page 8

diseases from heart disease to cancer to lung problems. Providing on-line activity and entertainment allows seniors to stay healthy without the risk in-person socialization can bring.

Dr. Pierson urges everyone during the pandemic to shift your focus from the things you can't control to the things you can control. Following all the safety procedures such as washing your hands often, wearing a mask in public, and staying at home are some of the ways to exert control. She also encourages people to reduce boredom and monotony by taking advantage of free classes, programs, e-books, and virtual programming. For a complete list of virtual programming offered by CHEER, check out the accompanying box for details.

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VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING CALENDAR

Members need to call hosting center 24 hours in advance to register
(Offerings are subject to change)

Program	Day	Time	Call Hosting Center at:
Bingo	Ev. Mon-Fri.	10 a.m.	Adult Day Ctr. – 302-854-2882
		11 a.m.	Adult Day Ctr. – 302-854-2882
		1 p.m.	Adult Day Ctr. – 302-854-2882
Yoga	Ev. Mon.	9 a.m.	Ocean View – 302-539-2671
	Ev. Mo.&We.	10:30 a.m.	Milton – 302-684-4819
Bible Study	Ev. Mon.	10 a.m.	Greenwood – 302-349-5237
	Thurs.	11:30 a.m.	Roxana – 302-732-3662
Trivia Music & Movies	Ev. Mon.	2 p.m.	Greenwood – 302-349-5237
Membership Meeting	4th Mon.	11 a.m.	Roxana – 302-732-3662
Zumba	Ev. Mon.-Fri.	8 a.m.	Milton – 302-684-4819
	Ev. Tu & Th	9 a.m.	Long Neck – 302-945-3551
Chair Yoga	Ev. Tues.	1 p.m.	Ocean View -302-539-2671
	Ev. Tues.	1 p.m.	Long Neck – 302-945-3551
	Ev. Thurs.	1 p.m.	Greenwood – 302-349-5237
Virtual Tech Hour	Ev. Tues.	1 p.m.	Lewes – 302-645-9239
Movie Trivia	Ev. Tues.	11 a.m.	Milton – 302-684-4819
Meditation	Tues. 8/11	1 p.m.	Roxana – 302-732-3662
Texercise	Ev. Tu,We,Fr	10 a.m.	Long Neck – 302-945-3551
Catching Up with Crissy	Ev. Wed.	9 a.m.	Lewes – 302-645-9239
Painting w/Marina	Ev. Wed.	10:30 a.m.	Roxana – 302-732-3662
That Was the Year Trivia	Ev. Wed.	11 a.m.	Greenwood – 302-349-5237
Virtual Trip	Ev. Wed.	1:30 p.m.	Lewes – 302-645-9239
Ken's Korner	2nd Wed.	10 a.m.	Georgetown – 302-515-3040
Meditation in Motion	Ev. Thurs.	9 a.m.	Ocean View – 302-539-2671
Virtual Travel Tour	Ev. Thurs.	11 a.m.	Milton – 302-684-4819
Book Club	Ev. Thurs.	12 p.m.	Lewes – 302-645-9239
Alzheimer's Support Group	1st Thurs.	6 p.m.	Ocean View – 302-539-2671
Morning Chat	Ev. Fri.	10 a.m.	Greenwood – 302-349-5237



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Volunteer Heroes of the Quarter

Volunteers are very valuable to the success of CHEER's programs. However, this has never been more prevalent than during the COVID-19 pandemic when several places were shut down. Without our volunteers, seniors would not have regularly received their homebound meals and get wellness calls to be sure they were okay. CHEER is fortunate to have dozens of faithful volunteers who picked up the slack when it is needed. The following are just seven who received recognition in this issue. Please don't feel slighted if you are not named. This will be an ongoing feature of the magazine and maybe the next issue will name you. Be assured that every volunteer is greatly appreciated by CHEER.

GEORGETOWN – Ronald

and Susan Troats deliver routes 2A and 2B in Georgetown. They are a married couple who have been delivering Meals on



Larry & Vicki Cannon

Wheels since September 2018.

GREENWOOD – Larry and Vicki Cannon are a husband and wife team who deliver meals out of the Greenwood center faithfully every Tuesday. They are all smiles behind the

masks.

LEWES – This center was closed in March at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully it will be open again soon so that a Hero of the Quar-



Leolga Wright

ter can be honored in our next edition.

LONG NECK – Leolga Wright volunteers at Long Neck Mondays through Fridays working to get meals for our homebound clients prepared to go out the door. Her favorite part about volunteering is being able to give back to the

rides along to help her. Joyce delivers to between 15-20 homebound clients. She is very dedicated to the homebound clients and is very thoughtful, enthusiastic and kind to them.

OCEAN VIEW – Kathy Di-Sabatino has been in the Ocean View kitchen every Tuesday since March and she continues to drive MOWs Rt. 2 three times a month. She is fun to be around and always brings in produce to share from her garden. She visits members regularly on her own and brings her Mom to CHEER to keep her active and involved.



Greg Gries

ROXANA – Greg Gries was recruited to CHEER by his wife Ann, who is the hair stylist at the CHEER Community Center. He assists with all things at Roxana since being furloughed at his job due to COVID-19. He not only has helped with kitchen duties, but also doing repairs at the facility and printed out manuals for our equipment. Greg has also volunteered for CHEER several other times helping his wife oversee special events at the CHEER Community Center on nights and weekends, as well as volunteering to help at the recent Farmers to Families food distribution.



Joyce Snyder

residents of Oak Orchard and Sussex County.

MILTON – Joyce Snyder has been driving two routes per week in the Milton area since COVID-19 temporarily closed the center. Her husband often

Sand Hill Salon

AND BARBER SHOP

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Thank You

to the many volunteers who helped make
CHEER's Farmers to Families Food Box
distribution on June 6 a success!

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Conaway, Joe
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Ewell, Shelly
Gardenhire, Maryann

Greene, Robin
Gries, Ann
Gries, Greg
Infussi, Joyce
Jordan, Megan
Koopman, Walter
Leister, Katie & Violet
McGuinness, Kathy
Mitchell, Ralph
Monfiletto, Carmel
Moore, Ken
Mutch, Kevin
Newnom, Patsy

O'Neal, Carolyn
Orta, Tammy
Roell, Sheila
Smith, Fran
Smith, Jim
Spires, Gary
Tunnell, Cristina
Varrato, Nick
Walls, Elizabeth
Wheatley, Beckett
Wheatley, Bob
Wilcox, Kevin
Wright, Leolga

DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS

Allen, Scott
Anderson, Debbie
Boyles, Linda & Bill
Bradshaw, Sue
Britland, Terry & Ron
Cardano, Cece
Carney, Becky
Cassidy, Cindy
Crum, Debbie & Clay
Cunning, Lois
DeFranco, Anthony & Elizabeth
Derosé, Bob
Ditolve, Debbie & Richard
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Elizabeth Walls, Volunteer Director



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CHEER Administrative Offices
Adams State Social Service Bldg.
546 South Bedford St., Georgetown
Or CHEER Community Center
20520 Sand Hill Rd., Georgetown

CHEER, Inc. was one of eight organizations serving the Eastern Shore beach areas that were recipients of the philanthropic efforts by associates of Keller Williams Realty in Lewes. Associates were given the option to either contribute with monetary donations, gift cards, or grocery items. Over \$3,000 worth of donations were delivered to the CHEER Community Center in Georgetown on National Philanthropy Day, or "RED Day" (Renew, Energize, Donate), Thursday, May 14. The donation will be used to subsidize CHEER's Essential Grocery Shopping program to help senior citizens obtain life-sustaining groceries during the COVID-19 self-quarantine executive order.

National Philanthropy Day is a special day set aside on the second Thursday of May

to recognize the great contributions of philanthropy—and those people active in the philanthropic community—to the enrichment of our world. NPD was originally conceived of and organized by Douglas Freeman in the 1980s, and the first official events were held in 1986 after President Reagan signed the official NPD proclamation. The day provides an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of giving and all that it has made possible. NPD celebrates the endless daily contributions individuals and organizations across the world make to countless causes and missions.

Delivering the donations to CHEER were Keller Williams associates, left to right: Emily Williams, Frank Hornstein, Scarlett Stout, Mark Henckel and Brigit Taylor.



Chris Sabin



Pat McClure



Joan Wolf

Parking Lot Party

Since COVID-19 has closed all CHEER centers, it has been hard for seniors to see and enjoy their friends. To combat the lack of companionship amongst its membership, CHEER started having Parking Lot Parties at its centers. A tailgate lunch is served to the seniors who comply with social distancing while enjoying the entertainment and sunshine. Photos show participates at the first parties hosted by Pelican Cove in Long Neck, Coastal Leisure at Ocean View, and at Milton. More photos on page 22.



Susan Sheehan



Marie Hogsten with Dale Teat



Nancy Borreggine



Owner Tom Bradshaw accepts his Best in Show trophy at the CHEER Car-Truck-Bike Show from Susan Dubb of Meals on Wheels Delaware and CHEER Board Vice President Walt Koopman.



Owner Eugene Nichols of Seaford receives his Sussex County Best in Show trophy from Susan Dubb and Walt Koopman. The award was sponsored by the Sussex County Council.



Meals on Wheels Delaware sponsored the trophy for Best Vintage Truck at the CHEER Car-Truck-Bike Show. Receiving the award from MOW Development Director Susan Dubb is owner Tanya Meade for her 1941 Dodge pickup. Looking on is CHEER Board Vice President Walter Koopman.

CHEER CAR SHOW DRIVES INTO TOWN

The 10th annual CHEER Car-Truck-Bike Show went on as planned on August 1 despite some changes necessitated by safety precautions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, some vehicles had to be turned away from the CHEER Community Center parking lot when the maximum allowable number of entrants was reached in order to comply to social distancing guidelines. CHEER apologizes to anyone who could not join the event and, hopefully, next year the gate will be open for all to drive through. Another major difference this year was the offering of a barbecue picnic instead of the traditional champagne brunch. However, the delicious chicken and ribs seemed to satisfy everyone's appetite. Winners at CHEER's 2020 show were:

Best in Show Overall – 1941 Willys Coupe owned by Tom Bradshaw

Best in Show, Sussex County – 1969 Chevy C-10 Pickup owned by Eugene Nichols, Seaford. Award sponsored by Sussex County Council.

Best Vintage Truck – 1941 Dodge, owned by Tanya Meade. Award sponsored by Meals on Wheels Delaware.

Best Vintage Car – 1931 Ford Tudor Sedan, owned by Steve Brasure of Laurel

Best Bike – 1951 Harley Davidson, owned by Larry Collette

Oldest Vehicle – 1929 Ford, owned by Gino Jamison of Millsboro

Most Unusual Vehicle – 1955 Fire Truck, owned by David Davis of Georgetown

The Fred Whitmere Memorial Trophy, donated by Crown Trophies, was presented to Levin Clark for his continued support of vintage vehicles and being a good friend to CHEER.

The following received Honorable Mention slate plaques:

1959 Corvette owned by Steve Wilkerson, Laurel; 1936 Hotchkiss owned by Robert Katz; 1967 Shelby GT 500 owned by Bob Clayton of Georgetown; 1957 Thunderbird owned by Deke Rosinski; 1946 Chevy owned by Fred Cody; and 1930 Model A truck, owned by Levin Clark.



This vintage produce truck was on display at the CHEER Car-Truck-Bike Show on August 1.



The Ocean City Jeep Club participated in the annual CHEER Car-Truck-Bike Show featuring a makeshift sleeping tent on the roof of one of the vehicles.



Gino Jamison (left) of Millsboro had the oldest vehicle at the CHEER Car-Truck-Bike Show – a 1929 Ford Truck. He received his trophy from MOW Development Director Susan Dubb and CHEER Vice President Walt Koopman.



Larry Collette (left) accepts his award for Outstanding Bike, a 1951 Harley Davidson, at the CHEER Car-Truck-Bike Show.



Levin Clark was presented with the Fred Whitmere Memorial Award for his continued support of CHEER and vintage vehicles.



Receiving a granite plaque for having the Most Unusual vehicle at the CHEER Car-Truck-Bike show was David Davis of Georgetown for his 1955 fire truck. Making the presentation was State Treasurer Colleen Davis.



This pink Cadillac brought back memories for many visitors at the CHEER Car-Truck-Bike Show.

Buffalo Soldiers Honor CHEER



The Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club of Delaware recently honored several health care agencies that continued to provide ser-

vices to the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. On a beautiful Saturday morning, they cruised throughout Delaware putting up Thank

You signs at the various healthcare facilities. Shortly after noon, they stopped by the Warren L. and Charles C. Allen, Jr. CHEER Communi-

ty Center to put out a sign near the CHEER marquee at the corner of Sand Hill Road and Route 9, east of Georgetown.

Cheer Cancels Fall Events

CHEER has cancelled two major events originally scheduled to take place in September. The annual Trap Pond Fall Festival in Laurel and the popular Senior Beach Day in Rehoboth have been cancelled due to restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trap Pond Fall Festival has taken place at Trap Pond State Park, east of Laurel for decades. It offers a fun day of sun and

picnicking featuring delicious fried chicken. It has always been held on the first Friday in September. Over 200 seniors from throughout Sussex County attend the event each year.

Senior Beach Day in Rehoboth has been happening over 30 years but took a three-year hiatus when the Rehoboth Beach Convention Center was being remodeled. It returned last year with over 800 senior

citizens coming to the event from all over Delaware and surrounding Maryland counties. It was scheduled for the third Tuesday of September.

"CHEER is committed to protecting the health and welfare of senior citizens in Sussex County," explained CHEER CEO Ken Bock. "Both of these events are geared towards senior citizens, the most at-risk population for COVID-19. With

the large number of people who have traditionally attended both events, it would be extremely difficult to control the restrictions needed to ensure a safe environment for all participants."

CHEER is keeping both events on its 2021 calendar and looks forward to sharing the days with everyone.

Puzzle Books Help Entertain Seniors

During Older Americans Month in May, CHEER put out a request for donations of puzzle books for senior citizens. The month's theme of "Make Your Mark" highlighted what everyone can do in the lives of older Americans.

Several individuals made generous donations in recognition of "Older Americans Month," and have continued to give puzzle books in the months following. These donations are distributed to CHEER members to stimulate brain activity as they continue to remain safe at home. They are encouraged to sharpen their wit and their pencil as they seek the words in the puzzles. Over 186 books had been distributed by the end of July.

CHEER thanks everyone who has donated to this cause. It is a generous gesture that anyone can participate in and doesn't cost much. To donate a puzzle book to CHEER, drop them off at any CHEER activity center located around Sussex County.

CHEER Partners with SPCA to Care for Seniors' Furry Companions

CHEER, Inc. teamed up with The Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) to deliver pet food to families associated with CHEER and enrolled in the Meals on Wheels food delivery program. BVSPCA delivered to 40 families associated with CHEER in Sussex County.

"Pet support services are more important than ever during this crisis," said Elizabeth Walls, CHEER Volunteer Program Director. "In the coming months, there will be additional struggles and barriers for seniors in accessing resources and affordable care and supplies for pets."

Mrs. Walls continued, "CHEER is so appreciative and grateful that Brandywine Valley has offered their help and will be providing for our seniors a peace of mind that their pet companions will have enough food to get through the COVID-19 pandemic, and not worrying that their beloved companion will run out of food will be such a relief to them."

While more and more seniors are forced to stay home and self-isolate, it is easier than ever to stress. Seniors will be one of the last groups to integrate back to social interaction since they are in the most vulnerable age group. Their pet's routine is likely to be interrupted simply because family members are now home all day, which may cause them to be stressed as well. Most dogs, cats and other companion animals rely on humans to meet most of their needs. The CHEER/Brandywine Valley SPCA partnership and this generous offer to provide and deliver food is an enormous sigh of relief and stress reduction for CHEER seniors who will no longer have to worry about the food needs of their pet companions.



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Cooking for Sussex Seniors The Plan for Our New Kitchen

By **Kenneth Bock**
CEO, CHEER

For those of you who have been following our *Cooking For Sussex Seniors* project, you will recall that we started a capital campaign in March 2018 to raise funds to construct a new central commercial kitchen for CHEER. This new kitchen would replace a 30-year-old kitchen that is undersized for the needs of a growing and aging senior citizen population. The equipment and appliances are obsolete and, in many cases, we can no longer even find repair parts when things break down; and those break downs are occurring more frequently with each passing month. But as our nutrition and facilities

staff continue to coax that kitchen to life every day producing up to 1,700 meals, better days are coming.

We have come a very long way in our goal to raise the funds needed to build and equip a new kitchen. We are not there yet and we still need all of the help and support we can get from those who recognize the need and want to see this new kitchen, but we are getting closer to making our goal a reality.

A year ago, we began the engineering and design work for this new kitchen. Today, I can report that all of the design and engineering work is complete, and our construction plans have been approved by

all of the regulatory agencies. By the time you are reading this article, we will have begun advertising for bids from construction contractors. We will open those bids in September, and if we are able to continue receiving donations and financial support, we will break ground on the new kitchen this fall.

Our plan and our hope is that before this time next year, the meals that thousands of Sussex County seniors depend upon will be coming from our brand new kitchen. That new kitchen will be larger and more energy efficient, capable of producing meals for the growing number of seniors attending senior activity centers and also those who depend on home

delivered senior meals. As we look forward to opening this new kitchen in the spring of 2021, I can think of no better way for us to celebrate CHEER's 50 years of service to Sussex County seniors than to establish a kitchen that can provide meals to our seniors for the next 50 years.

We know that as we continue to serve our seniors, we can continue to count on the support of our community and its good people. Please continue to follow our progress toward making the much needed new kitchen a reality. Exciting things are happening thanks to all of you who are helping us Cook for Sussex Seniors. Thank you all.



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State Farm agency partners donate to CHEER Meals on Wheels

Local State Farm agents are finding ways to engage in their neighborhoods and help each other with needs while respecting social distancing and local ordinances. A group of 10 State Farm agents and Sales Executive Kelly Brion teamed to donate \$10,250 to CHEER Inc. and its Meals On Wheels program for seniors. The State Farm Matching Gift Program will send another \$8,750 in assistance, for a total of \$19,000 donated.

Participating State Farm agents are Kim Benton and Chuck Hall, Millsboro; Hunter Emory and Mark Penuel, Georgetown; Tony Milan and Juan Johnson, Dagsboro; Eric Blondin, Rehoboth Beach; Jeanine O'Donnell, Lewes; Ron Krajewski, Milton; and Denis Beam, Ocean View.

"We wanted to make a donation to a nonprofit that impacted as much of our area as possible," said Benton. "Because CHEER has locations in all of our communities across Sussex County, this made perfect sense. The fact they are helping some of the most vulnerable population, our seniors, also meant



SUBMITTED PHOTO - State Farm partners who donated to CHEER Inc. are (l-r) top row Chuck Hall and Kim Benton, Millsboro; Hunter Emory and Mark Penuel, Georgetown; middle row Tony Milan and Juan Johnson, Dagsboro; Ron Krajewski, Milton; and Denise Beam, Ocean View. In the bottom row are Eric Blondin, Rehoboth; Jeanine O'Donnell, Lewes; and Kelly Brion, sales executive.

so much to all of us"

To help foster volunteerism, State Farm also has a website where community volunteers or needs can be

posted, at www.neighborhoodofgood.statefarm.com.

State Farm, like many other organizations, has responded quickly to a rapidly

changing situation, adapting to new ways of working and pulling together to support its members and their customers.



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CHEER Feeds Seniors with USDA Food



Cars line up at CHEER's Community Center in Georgetown to receive one of the USDA's Farmers to Families food boxes that CHEER was distributing to Sussex County's senior citizens.

Traffic was steady Saturday morning, June 6, in the parking lot of the CHEER Community Center in Georgetown as volunteers arrived between 10 a.m. and noon to pick up USDA food boxes that were part of the federal Farmers to Families food distribution program. A semi-trailer truck arrived in Georgetown at 6 a.m. loaded with tons of the boxes that contained meat, produce, cheese products and milk. Dozens of CHEER staff, family members and friends were waiting to volunteer to help sort and pack 300 boxes for delivery. Thirty staff members and over 90 public volunteers ensured that senior citizens

CHEER members in Sussex County will be nutritionally sustained during the COVID-19 quarantine.

The Farmers to Families Food Box Program is a partnership with national, regional and local suppliers to purchase up to \$3 billion in fresh produce, dairy and meat products to supplement citizens who have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. CHEER is an independent non-profit that services the needs of senior citizens in Sussex County. It was the first non-profit in Delaware to take advantage of the Farmers to Families program to aid its senior members.



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Long Neck front desk volunteers Betty Cassell and Joan Price are joined by dining room volunteer Stacey Hanifee as they wait for the seniors to arrive.



It's lunch time in Sand Hill Adult Day Center at CHEER's Community Center in Georgetown.



Greenwood Center Director Fran Smith checks the temperature of Selena Brison as she arrives to set up the Bible study class via Zoom computer virtual programming.



Liz Yates is the first one off the bus at the Greenwood center.

Welcome Home, Seniors Return to CHEER in August



Volunteers Marsha Smith, Steve Fisher, Jim Forlenzo and Rosalie Carney man the Grab-and-Go bagged lunch table at Ocean View.



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