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**Message from the President/
Board Chair**

by John Beisheim



This is my last President's message in NewsLINC, as I will be completing my sixth year on the Board at the end of this year, and under our bylaws a Director must step down. This past year has been an exciting period for growth in LOWLINC, progress in our strategic plan, and a transition to our Executive Director model of operation. We continue to have a solid financial position.

Highlights of progress in each of these three areas include:

- Fourteen percent (14%) growth in membership year to date (2022 over 2021), with a recent surge of new members.
- Growth through partnerships. Our relationships with Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services (RRCS) and the Regional Transportation Collaborative (RTC) have been especially beneficial, including the funding for our blue 14-person minibus, funding a regional transportation study, grants for volunteer recognition and respite for care givers, and strong financial support for our First Annual Walk.
- Substantial expansion of our social events calendar to deal with social isolation. A special note here is the use of the blue minibus, which increases interaction between the participants in the events.
- Development of our Neighborhood Companions program.
- The hiring and transition to our Executive Director, Jeanne Comeau, which, as described in my July NewsLINC column, enhances day-to-day operations and enables the Board to focus on its strategic and governance roles, consistent with growing and maturing villages.

In closing, I want to thank all of our donors, volunteers, and members for their support and confidence in LOWLINC. **It has been a great pleasure to serve as President of LOWLINC for the past year and I look forward to continuing to serve our members in the coming years.**

There are several upcoming leadership opportunities within LOWLINC, and you are invited and encouraged to consider one of them if you have the skills and interest. As we prepare to embark on our eighth year of operations and growth and continue executing our strategic plan to help more of our older adult neighbors live independently in their homes, we have a few Board members completing their terms of service at the end of the year. We are particularly looking for volunteers in the areas of health and wellness and fundraising.

If you're interested in learning more about helping LOWLINC in this way, please contact John Beisheim at 540-604-1484.

From the Executive Director's Desk

by Jeanne Comeau



It's been nearly six months since I joined LOWLINC as the Executive Director. It has been a pleasure getting to know many of you -- our wonderful members, volunteers, and donors!

In this issue, I'd like to recognize LOWLINC's hardworking committees. Committee chairs and members meet regularly to support the organization. They develop and host the many social, outreach, health and wellness, education, and other opportunities offered to members, their guests, and volunteers.

The Member Outreach Committee ensures new members are welcomed through phone calls and an invitation to New Members receptions. This Committee also conducts our important Annual Member Survey. Feedback from the survey allows us to share members' deep appreciation of LOWLINC with our dedicated volunteers. In addition, we are able to use the survey feedback to improve how we serve our members.

The Volunteer Committee welcomes new volunteers and recognizes the contributions that our volunteers make every day. Our friendly and talented volunteers make LOWLINC "go"! This year the Volunteer Committee ensured that LOWLINC was a visible part of the 4th of July parade and that our 1st Annual Walk was a great success. A heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers who enable our members to live independently by providing rides, handyman services, and so much more.

The Social Committee has been busy developing even more fun opportunities for members and volunteers. The Committee's luncheon outings are very popular with a growing group. Members and volunteers have taken the new 14-passenger minibus to visit the Army Museum and Yoder's, to enjoy a fall foliage tour, and to catch a theater performance. The committee hosts ongoing Bingo, game days, and much more.

LOWLINC's Health and Wellness Committee put on another successful Flu Clinic this year, in partnership with Genoa Healthcare. The committee also produced the new LOWLINC Guide for In-Home Support, available on LOWLINC's website.

While I've highlighted the work of several committees, LOWLINC's other active committees--Community Outreach, Communications, Service Providers, and our new Technology Committees--are also busy at work, updating the wide array of services offered to members and volunteers. You will hear more about their work in future issues.

I hope that you enjoy this year's gorgeous fall foliage, the crisp air, and cozy sweaters. My door is always open, so don't hesitate to reach out. I look forward to celebrating the year with you as we move into the holidays.

Warm regards,
Jeanne

Smart Devices To Help Older Adults and Family Members Stay Connected

By Dave Davies

LOWLINC Board Member and Technology Committee Chair

Let's make clear at the outset that LOWLINC does not endorse (or receive subsidies from) companies that deal in technological devices. Also, the tech world is changing so rapidly that we almost hesitate to recommend the "latest and greatest" tech devices.

With that disclaimer out of the way, let's explore a couple of interesting devices that can help connect older adults and their family members or helpful neighbors. One of LOWLINC's highest priorities is to enable members to continue to live independently in their own homes. At the same time, we realize that communication between members and those concerned for them - adult children, supportive neighbors, etc. - is essential to ensuring the safety and well-being of our members.

Many of you have heard of "Alexa." Alexa is actually one of the words used to activate the Amazon Echo group of devices. (There are other words you can use; some users who have a family member named Alexa have had to make this change to avoid unintentionally activating the device repeatedly.)

The simplest of these devices is the **Echo Dot**, a smart speaker that can do an amazing number of things. The Dot can play music, audiobooks, and podcasts; set alarms and reminders; check the weather and news; call individuals for you; tell you a joke; look up interesting facts; and other functions.

One of the great features is the shopping list. You add things to the shopping list as you think of them. If multiple people reside in the home, each can add items to a common list that can then be retrieved by whoever is doing the shopping. For homebound members, they can add items to the list, their adult children can place their order online, and a LOWLINC volunteer could pick up the groceries for them.

With the purchase of additional devices, you can use voice controls to control Echo functionality and other compatible smart home technology (smart plugs, light bulbs, etc.).

Alexa Guard is free in the Alexa app and allows you to get mobile alerts if your Echo device detects the sound of a smoke alarm or glass breaking while you're away. If you subscribe to Guard Plus for a fee, Alexa Guard will provide even more help protecting your home, like an Emergency Helpline you can call with just your voice and more.

Depending on the version you choose, you can purchase a Dot for between \$18 and \$60. The higher priced versions have premium sound, a clock display, and the ability to control other smart devices in your home.

The Dot is surprisingly easy to use. It does require an Internet connection (usually WiFi) and an Amazon account, but a free Amazon account will work just fine. (Some members may already have Amazon prime accounts which cost \$100 per year. Prime account holders get additional features like ad-free Amazon music, Prime Video, two free audiobooks that the Dot will read to you, and shopping discounts.)



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Stay Connected *(continued from page 3)*

Echo Show is an amazing device that combines video and audio, plus all the features of the Dot. It allows you to get recipes, set timers, and create a shopping list. Users can video chat with family and friends. Adult children or caregivers can check in and see their loved one anywhere in the range of the device. The 10-inch screen actually follows your movement. The Show also allows you to remotely monitor the house while you're away. You can use the home screen as a digital frame, sharing your favorites with friends and family, and even take photos. Like the Dot, an Internet connection and an Amazon account are necessary.

For LOWLINC members, our technology volunteers will be happy to help you connect and activate your devices.

Either of these devices would make wonderful holiday gifts. Suggest them to your family who are always looking for the perfect gift – for you!

**Tips & News Briefs****Walking is Healthy**

We've all been told that walking is good for your health, but two recent studies reveal some compelling statistics showing us just how good it can be. In a study published in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine in September 2022, researchers found that for every 2,000 steps you take each day, your risk for premature death may fall by 8 to 11 percent. Along with the results from a related study (JAMA Neurology, September 2022), the researchers also found that walking more, accumulating up to roughly 10,000 steps a day, was linked to a reduction in the occurrence of cardiovascular disease (including heart disease, stroke, and heart failure), 13 different types of cancer, and dementia. Both studies involved about 78,000 participants, all middle aged and older, who wore a device on their wrist to measure physical activity and whose health was monitored for a median of seven years.

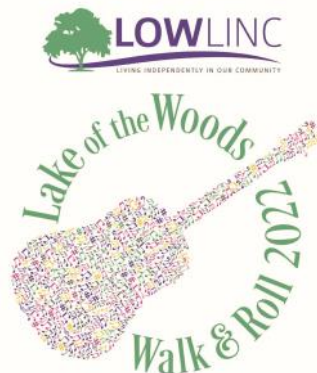
Taking 10,000 steps a day (roughly four to five miles, depending on a person's stride) has become a common health and fitness goal, as you're probably aware from the FitBit and other wearable devices' and mobile apps' promotional materials and advertising. For many of us though, that sounds pretty daunting, especially if we are not walking regularly or using some kind of device to count our steps.

These new studies, however, found that similar health benefits can be achieved by taking fewer steps. For instance, while walking 10,000 steps a day was found to lower risk of dementia by about 50 percent, for those who walked 3,800 steps daily, the dementia risk was still cut significantly: by 25 percent. Also, walking at a faster-than-normal pace was found to have extra health benefits, too, with intensity amplifying the results. Walking at a faster pace was linked to an even lower risk for dementia, heart disease, cancer, and early death beyond the benefit accrued for the number of daily steps.

LOWLINC has a walking program that meets every Friday from 10:30 to 11:30 am at the Community Center and Sweetbriar Park trail, and we recently held our first annual community-wide walk at the end of September!

Members and Volunteers in the Community

LOWLINC's 1st Annual Walk A Success! On September 25th, 70 members, volunteers, donors, and guests joined together to celebrate LOWLINC and walk together on the Sweetbriar Trail. It was a beautiful afternoon, and we enjoyed live music, food from the grill, friendship, and fun! Special recognition and thanks go out to the many volunteers throughout LOW who made the walk possible. Congratulations to the *Walk and Talk*, *Winers*, and *FitzFam* walk teams who led the way! A huge thank you to our very special sponsors and donors who helped raise more than \$8,800 in support of LOWLINC services and programs. Thanks to their support, we are growing and reaching more older adults in our Lake of the Woods community. We look forward to seeing you at our even bigger and better 2nd Annual Walk in 2023!



Thank You to Our Walk Sponsors:

Rappahannock Rapidan
Community Services
Walter Diercks - Attorney at Law
The Licata Group
CSE Identity Design
The Car Doctor
Lacy's Florist and Flower Cottage
Dollar General
JK Carpets



Volunteer Awards

LOWLINC volunteer **Carolyn Rourke** was surprised with a Regional Volunteer Champion lifetime award at the Regional Transportation Collaborative's annual volunteer recognition dinner and celebration at Old House Vineyards in September. This award is presented to individuals who champion programs, partnerships, and mobility supports for older adults. Also at this event, LOWLINC volunteers **Eileen Appleyard** and **Mary Jane Oldham** received Volunteer Rose awards recognizing their extraordinary service to the community. Congratulations Carolyn, Eileen, and Mary Jane, and **thanks to all our great volunteers** for all you do for LOWLINC and the older adults in LOW and the surrounding area!



Did You Know?

... LOWLINC Can Help Get You to Your Polling Site on Election Day

If you need transportation to get to your polling site, please be sure to call and request a transportation service for Election Day (Tuesday, November 8) the week before. Also, early voting here in Virginia is ongoing through Saturday, November 5. The polling sites here in Lake of the Woods offer curbside voting, too, so you may drive right up and vote without needing to get out of your car and go inside.



... Some Drug Price Relief for Older Adults Is On the Horizon

The recently passed and signed Inflation Reduction Act, as it is known, includes several provisions aimed at lowering prescription drug prices for older adults. These include allowing Medicare to negotiate prices on some of the most critical medicines used by older



adults, and imposing penalties for drug companies that raise their drug prices faster than inflation. Also included are an out-of-pocket annual spending cap of \$2,000 for Medicare Part D prescription plan enrollees (nearly 50 million people) beginning in 2025, more cost-free vaccines for Medicare enrollees beginning in 2024, and, beginning in 2023, a \$35 monthly cap on insulin costs.

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Did You Know? *(Continued from page 6)*

... 2023 Social Security Inflation Adjustment Will Increase Benefits by 8.7 Percent

Approximately 70 million Americans will see an 8.7% increase in their Social Security benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments in 2023. On average, Social Security benefits will increase by more than \$140 per month starting in January. Federal benefit rates increase when the cost of living rises, as measured by the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index (CPI-W). The CPI-W rises when inflation increases, leading to a higher cost-of-living. This change means prices for goods and services, on average, are higher. The Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) helps to offset these higher costs.



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LOWLINC (Lake of the Woods, Living Independently in Our Community) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit fee-based volunteer service organization whose mission is to enable LOW's older residents to remain safely and independently at home. Our operating model is based on the nationwide village model.

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