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Message from Carolyn Rourke, Board Chair

Dear LOWLINC Community: It is appropriate that this issue of *NewsLinc* celebrates our volunteers as we begin to emerge from the recent disruptions in services caused by the coronavirus health crisis. In the time we have been living in this emergency and as our in-person social activities were cancelled, volunteers have made nearly 200 phone calls a month to members to engage in friendly conversations. They have driven to the store to collect and deliver needed groceries and prescriptions and picked up mail and hauled trash to save members from going out. LOWLINC volunteers have indeed continued to be the bedrock upon which our organization stands. We are beginning to resume services slowly, steadily, and safely, including most importantly, transportation



to medical appointments, with our actions based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and directives from the Office of the Governor, as well as the Lake of the Woods Association reopening strategy.

Volunteers are stepping up in one other important area as we realign our operations. We no longer are using a single paid coordinator to take members' calls and schedule service requests, but rather now have a team of volunteers performing that service. Service delivery to members remains the same. We have made this change to redefine our paid position to become an Operations Manager for LOWLINC, who will have more overall responsibility for running the organization, as directed by the LOWLINC Board of Directors. We are hoping to fill this position by the fall. This is an important change for LOWLINC as we celebrate our fifth year of operation and one that is in keeping with the evolution of organizations like ours.

Please enjoy reading the rest of this *NewsLinc*, which recognizes the immense contributions of our volunteers and brings you other interesting and informational news.



Art of Wine Fundraiser, Sunday afternoon, September 27

LOWLINC's largest annual fundraiser may look a bit different this year, but planning is under way for a festive, safe event on Sunday, September 27, noon to 4 pm. Because we don't know what state and local guidelines will be in place for social gatherings in September, a 15-member committee, chaired by Cheryl Brown, is planning two scenarios for the 2020 Art of Wine event. The first and most likely option at this point is to have an event at Sweetbriar Park, similar to those in the past, with wine

tasting and food options. However, if guidelines and safety concerns prohibit such a gathering, the committee is planning a more virtual event with pre-ordered wine pick-up and food options, with opportunities to picnic. Six local wineries have committed to participate; a local food truck and our own Clubhouse will provide crab cakes, ribs and other fare; and 25 local business sponsors are supporting the event. Please mark your calendars for September 27; tickets (\$15) go on sale August 15.

Volunteers in the Spotlight: Three of LOWLINC's Longest-Serving Volunteers

by Mary Jane Oldham

In this issue of *NewsLinc*, we profile three volunteers who joined LOWLINC in late 2015, before we even opened our doors. Since that time, the number of LOWLINC volunteers has grown to 100. Each of our volunteers brings a special gift of time and dedication to our organization, and we had planned to honor and celebrate them during National Volunteer Week, April 19-25.

The plan was to kick off with a reception at the Clubhouse on Sunday and end the week with an open house event at the Community Center for all LOW service volunteers. These plans quickly came to a halt with the Covid-19 emergency. Despite the need to curtail some of our services and activities, LOWLINC volunteers have been able to safely continue serving our members. Their services include assistance with online grocery shopping, pick-up of groceries and prescriptions, daily and weekly phone calls, mail and trash pick-up, dog walking and friendly visits via phone. Thanks go to all our volunteers for all they do! Now, we invite you to meet three of our longest-serving volunteers: Marilyn Davis, Ann Hatfield, and Jean McLallen.

Marilyn Davis

After Marilyn retired from 25 years at the U.S. Postal Service and a few years at FEMA, she moved to Lake of the Woods from Falls Church and proceeded to make plans for her mother to move in with her and join LOWLINC as one of its first members. As often happens, those plans changed, and her mom never moved — but Marilyn joined LOWLINC as one of the first volunteers.



Marilyn was part of the Communications Committee when its members were involved with planning, design, and layout of the first brochures, flyers, cards, and other written communications for LOWLINC. Marilyn is still an active member of the Communications Committee, responsible for the layout of this *NewsLinc*

quarterly newsletter.

Marilyn served as manager for the LOW Players for a few years and would often appear on stage to introduce the play. She is delighted when she provides a LOWLINC member with transportation and is recognized. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, she provided transportation on a regular basis and delighted in the many stories members shared with her.

Calligraphy is one of Marilyn's many interests, and she was awarded a scholarship from the Washington Calligraphy Guild with the stipulation that she conduct her own class. She taught the class to six LOWLINC members and hopes to soon offer a class in Zentangle, which is doodling of patterns.

Ann Hatfield

After her husband's death in 2013, Ann knew that she needed to continue sharing her gift for caring, understanding, and supporting others. Ann heard about the plan for LOWLINC and knew that she was meant to be involved. She attended some of the early information sessions and was among the first LOWLINC volunteers. Ann has made daily phone calls to check on members; provided home visits to members; and driven members to doctor appointments, shopping trips, beauty salons, and social events. She is currently a valuable member of the Volunteer Committee and initiated the yearly Spring Planting Program, where volunteers work with members to pot plants and brighten yards with flowers.

Cont'd on page 3

Ann Hatfield *(cont'd from page 2)*

Ann moved from Herndon, Virginia, to Lake of the Woods with her husband in 2005 after retiring as a clinical coordinator at Reston Hospital. She says, "We moved to LOW because my son researched builders who specialized in all one-level homes, and now I feel it was a godsend." Ann's green thumb and love of gardening steered her to join the LOW Garden Club. She feels fortunate that she lives close to her son in Springfield, a daughter in Vienna, and another daughter in Richmond. Ann says she enjoys volunteering with LOWLINC, gardening, watching the many birds in her yard, and cooking for others.

**Jean McLallen**

"Phenomenal" and "fantastic" are the words Jean McLallen uses to describe LOWLINC. She says some of the best friends she has ever made were through volunteerism and that her many LOWLINC friends are a perfect example.

In 2015, Jean was excited to hear about the plan for LOWLINC, and she attended the first meetings, where she immediately signed up to volunteer. Her first services were outside maintenance, which included watering plants while a member was away and resetting a security camera when a vacationing member reported it. She then made home visits for a few members and eventually became the primary volunteer providing check-in calls for another member. Jean and the member spoke almost daily. The

conversation often included remarks about the adorable chipmunk the member's neighbor had living in her yard and how much the member enjoyed watching him dash around. Before this member passed away, she moved to an assisted living facility, where Jean brought her a stuffed chipmunk to sit in her window. Jean has now expanded her LOWLINC volunteering to local transportation requests.

Jean and her husband, who passed away earlier this year, built their "Tree House" in 2000 and moved here permanently after she retired as director of finance at the Arlington Free Clinic in 2006. She enjoys visiting with her two sons and four grandchildren even as she stays busy with LOWLINC and Lioness.

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Volunteering and Benefits to Health by Emily T. Slunt

What calls us to volunteer? Does volunteering reflect a call to care? Is volunteering an outcome of gratefulness? We often hear about giving back. Volunteers have choices and often are moved by the impact they have on an individual or community. One LOWLINC volunteer said that volunteering “made her heart feel good.” Another volunteer explained that volunteering “expanded her network of friends and acquaintances.” Through relationships with others, one realizes the potential and possibilities in oneself. Whatever may call us as volunteers, an outcome of the call may be better health.

A growing body of research supports an association between volunteering and mental and physical health benefits. Studies have linked volunteering with greater self-esteem, fewer symptoms of depression, less social isolation, enhanced social networks, slower cognitive decline, increased strength and energy, lower blood pressure, and fewer physical limitations. Volunteering can help get you thinking, as well as moving. Considering these health benefits associated with volunteering, we have incentives to promote and engage in volunteerism, not only to meet individual or community needs, but also to contribute to our own healthier lives.

Volunteering may give a sense of purpose, a sense of “contributing to the greater social good.” Volunteers often work within organizations like LOWLINC that are focused on a social mission and are committed to service activities. Nancy Morrow-Howell, MSW, PhD, director of the Harvey A. Friedman Center for Aging and a professor of social policy at Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, linked volunteering to better mental health, having less social isolation with fewer depressive symptoms, and a slower decline in cognition. Just being with people and working together can reduce stress. It’s the human connection that improves mood and reduces stress and anxiety, particularly as one reflects upon the meaning of the time spent together.

A 2013 analysis of a national Health and Retirement Study correlated volunteerism with participants’ blood pressure. Individuals who volunteered a minimum of 200 hours in a specified 12-month period had a 40 percent lower risk of having high blood pressure four years later than those who had volunteered less. It is believed that volunteerism contributes to the promotion of health in retirement with improved physical, social, and cognitive activity.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency responsible for national volunteer and service initiatives, reported on volunteers with Senior Corps, a group for low-income, at-risk Americans 55 and older. The Senior Corps program provided older adults with the opportunity to serve their community. Findings showed that Senior Corps volunteers who were provided a small stipend to cover expenses while serving in the Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companion Program reported improvements in health and feeling less depressed and less socially isolated.¹ The volunteers themselves benefited from their service.

We often experience joy in giving a meaningful gift, and that includes our gift of time through volunteering. Does helping others also help yourself? It is meaningful to a volunteer when he or she connects with a simple phone call and the member says, “It’s nice to know someone cares.” According to one source, “this might explain why some volunteers get a ‘helper’s high’— they feel stronger, more energetic and more motivated after helping others even in the smallest ways.”² There is definitely evidence to suggest that helping others has a positive impact on the health of the volunteer.

¹Corporation for National and Community Service/Senior Corps. Volunteering helps keep seniors healthy, new study suggests. Washington, DC (February 5, 2019).

²Stoddard, G. What we get from giving. *Men’s Health*. 2009; 24(6): 108-115.



Members' Corner by Mary-Jane Atwater

With this issue's theme of volunteers, we are pleased to profile several members who have embraced volunteering and shared their talents with organizations both here at LOW and elsewhere. Thank you for the gift of your service!

Bud and Cheryl Lewis

Cheryl and Bud are relative newcomers to the Lake, having moved here from Chesapeake, Virginia, in November 2018. They became aware of LOW through their daughter-in-law's mother and friends from college, who all lived here. Bud's Army service took him to Germany, Vietnam, and Laos early in his career, and he worked in computers and computer engineering both in the Army and, after a first retirement, at several defense contractors. Cheryl worked as a manager at Telco Communications. Since moving to the lake, Cheryl and Bud have become active participants in a number of groups and organizations. Bud sings in the LOW Church choir, and they attend Bible studies. They also are members of the Impaired Vision and Ladies Cancer Support groups. Bud joined the Vets Club and Civil War Study Group. Bud and Cheryl are pleased to live closer to their five children, three of whom live in Northern Virginia, one in Pennsylvania, and one in Delaware. They are proud grandparents of ten, ranging from teens to young adults.

Martha Sukites

"The best part of LOW is its volunteer heart," says Martha, who goes on to say: "I was born to volunteer, and giving back through church and political work came naturally to me as the granddaughter of a pastor." Martha met her husband, Vince, in Brooklyn, New York, after Vince returned from Army service as a military police officer in Germany during the Korean War. They raised their son and daughter in Holbrook, Long Island. Vince worked for 40 years with the telephone company in New York City, commuting 67 miles each way by train. Martha worked as a reporter for the local weekly newspaper, the *Long Island Advance*, where she also wrote, edited, and managed ad sales for the annual Holiday Handbook. "That was my baby," she says proudly. When they retired and moved to LOW 28 years ago, Vince became involved in the Lions, serving as president from 2000-2001, while Martha became first president of the LOW DAR, Susannah Chandler Chapter. Martha also embarked on a second career as the volunteer coordinator for Hospice of the Rapidan (now Hospice of the Piedmont). For six years, she trained and managed 125 volunteers and wrote the newsletter. Now, Martha says it's time for others to volunteer, and she has been pleased to receive services from LOWLINC's caring volunteers. (Note: Vince passed away on June 28 as we were preparing this issue for publication. We send our condolences to Martha and the Sukites family.)

Ed and Jean Bunting

Six years ago, when Jean and Ed decided to move from Pennsylvania to be closer to family, their Reston-based daughter suggested they find a retirement village. But after she came with Jean and Ed to look at LOW, she commented that her parents didn't belong in a retirement village after all. LOW was the right place for them and their new home. Jean and Ed enjoy the people here and became involved in the LOW Church and AARP. Both are willing volunteers. Ed served as a caller for AARP's Woods Cares until recently, and he occasionally takes a neighbor grocery shopping. As former career educators, Jean and Ed jumped into teaching Sunday School at the LOW Church soon after they moved here. "The best part was the kids," says Jean of their third and fourth grade students, plus they got to know young families. Jean and Ed enjoy the LOW Players and both sang in the chorus in the Back to Broadway production. They both love to read, which isn't surprising for two former teachers. Ed was an elementary school teacher, principal, and administrator in Pennsylvania, and Jean taught high school home economics and preschool. Toward the end of her career, she worked with low-income and special needs children in their homes as part of an early childhood intervention program. The Buntings have two adult children, their daughter in Reston and a son in Indianapolis, as well as six grandchildren.

Gleanings from the LOWLINC Talk Line by Mary-Jane Atwater

When Covid-19 upended the LOWLINC social activities calendar, we implemented two new ways for members to remain connected. The first is our Phone Buddies program, organized by Board member Mary Jane Oldham, in which volunteers reach out to members once a week by phone for a brief check-in or longer conversation. The second new program, conceived and carried out by Board Chair Carolyn Rourke, is our weekly Talk Line for members and volunteers, held Wednesdays at 1:30 pm. The Talk Line evolved from a group conversation by phone to a Zoom videoconference, which enables us to see one another and share photos and other content. The following is a Talk Line sampling.

Travelogue: Expedition to the Falklands and South Georgia Islands.

Mary-Jane Atwater shared photos and videos from her travels to these two remote islands in the South Atlantic.



Pandemic Coping Strategies. From walking each day and gardening to jigsaw puzzles and mystery novels, members and volunteers shared how they are staying busy during the Covid-19 emergency.



Expressive Writing.

Writing clinician Nancy Morgan talked about the health benefits of writing down your thoughts and feelings, and she led us in a fun discussion of the kinds of memories that could trigger this type of expressive writing.



A Virtual Art Show. LOWLINC member and award-winning artist Jennifer Hennessey shared many of her watercolor paintings and charcoal drawings in a virtual art show, which generated discussion about technique and use of color.



Recipes with Just a Few Ingredients: Board Vice Chair Emily Slunt led the group in sharing simple recipes for delicious desserts and other menu items. Here are two:

Pineapple Angel Food Cake – Emily Slunt

1 box of Angel Food Cake Mix 1 20 oz. can crushed pineapple with juice

Combine both ingredients in bowl; mix well. Pour into a greased or sprayed 9 x 13 baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes and then you can remove from pan. Top with fresh fruit or a small can of drained crushed pineapple.



Peanut Butter Cookies - Gerri Colucci

1 c. peanut butter 1-2 T. flour
1 c. sugar 1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla (opt)

Combine all ingredients in bowl; mix well. Shape into 1½-inch balls. Place on greased cookie sheet. Flatten. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Cool on cookie sheet until firm. Remove to wire rack to cool completely. Yield: 1 dozen.

The CARES Act and Charitable Giving by Mary-Jane Atwater

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act of 2020 (CARES Act) is the biggest economic stimulus package ever signed into law. Several provisions of the Act affect retirees and those who make charitable gifts:

- RMDs have been suspended for calendar year 2020 for retirement accounts and inherited retirement accounts, but if you are over 70½, you can still make qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) from your IRA and thereby reduce your Adjusted Gross Income.
- There is a new above-the-line deduction for cash contributions up to \$300. While this is not a big figure, it allows a tax benefit for those who don't itemize, which, according to the Tax Foundation, is over 90 percent of filers.

Upcoming Events



Charity Night at Harry's Alehouse, Monday, August 3, 4-9 pm. Dine in or carry out, and a portion of sales that evening, 4-9 pm, will be donated to LOWLINC.



Art of Wine Fundraiser for LOWLINC, Sunday, September 27, noon to 4 pm. Online ticket sales (\$15) begin August 15. Event to be held rain or shine. Watch for details in *Lake Currents*.

LOWLINC Board:

Jeff Flynn, President
 Carolyn Rourke, Board Chair
 Emily Slunt, Board Vice Chair
 Mary-Jane Atwater, Secretary
 John Beisheim, Treasurer
 Vicky Fleming, Member
 Donalda Lovelace, Member
 Mary Jane Oldham, Member

LOWLINC Committees:

Communications: Co-chairs Mary-Jane Atwater and Carolyn Rourke
 Member Outreach: Co-chairs Joe Sauro and Eileen Appleyard
 Social Activities: Co-chairs Carolyn Rourke and Vicky Fleming
 Volunteers: Chair Mary Jane Oldham

LOWLINC Programs:

Fundraising and Donor Engagement: Lead Mary-Jane Atwater
 Member Intake: Lead Donalda Lovelace

Newsletter:

Mary-Jane Atwater, editor
 Carolyn Rourke: contributing editor
 Marilyn Davis, production and layout
 Elizabeth McGillicuddy, copy editor

LOWLINC (Lake of the Woods, Living Independently in Our Community), is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit fee-based 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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