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A Wealth of Generosity

Since the start of the novel coronavirus pandemic, our nation, local communities, and individuals have faced historic and enormous challenges. As COVID-19 swept

across Pennsylvania, our donors demonstrated a wealth of generosity challenges presented before us.

For this special issue of At Liberty, we

F he board of The Friends of Paul's Run appreciates all the different services being provided to the community at no additional expense during the COVID-19 pandemic. We felt that it was our responsibility to financially support these services, which have been so important for the safety of the community. On a personal level, Paul's Run provides wonderful care

to residents. I saw that in how they treated my mother as a resident. Now as a volunteer at the community, I am proud to be a part of that promise of safety, care, and empowerment. As you hear throughout the community, Paul's Run is simply the best!

~ Norm Barbieri

66 ur mother had been living in a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) for 10 years when she developed dementia. We found that the CCRC was not able to provide the activities and social opportunities that she needed. Despite our best efforts she was becoming more and more withdrawn. Several professionals we consulted recommended a move to a memory care unit and when we visited the unit at The Hearth, we knew that this was a place where our mother could be happy and thrive. And indeed, she did. She blossomed with the care and attention of the wonderful Hearth staff.

But shortly after she moved to The Hearth COVID-19 became a part of our lives. We saw the many precautions that The Hearth was taking to keep the residents and staff safe and we knew how frightened everyone was. Our parents had taught us that in times like these everyone had to pitch in and help and a donation to the COVID-19 **Response Fund seemed** like the best way to help.

~ The Elias Family

he West Philadelphia

Senior Community Center (WPSCC) provides a vibrant environment for older adults to engage in activities that stimulate the mind, body, and spirit. When I first went to the Center, I could feel the warmth extended through the friendships that the members shared. The virus hit everyone hard in one way or another. I wasn't traveling as much and staying home. With a little extra to give, I knew that I wanted to make sure the Center could fulfill its mission to help older adults throughout West Philly. In addition to wonderful activities, the Center is a source of hope for those who struggle under trying circumstances. It was important for me to make sure their mission was sustained. Thanks to the Center, seniors in West Philadelphia have access to resources, friendship, and hope.

~ Veronica Suber, WPCSS

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Greetings from the President



Now More Than Ever

At Liberty Lutheran, we are dedicated to a mission to faithfully accompany individuals and families who are facing life-changing situations through an empowering approach that honors their choices and well-being. Over the past several months, we have all been confronted with significant obstacles and challenges presented by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

At the onset of the crisis, Liberty Lutheran created and implemented proactive strategies to limit the risk of the virus within our communities. We took steps even before guidance was issued from the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). What's more, we continue to go above and beyond and have reduced the threat of the virus within our family of services.

Your generosity has made a significant impact on our ability to overcome these extraordinary times. Within this issue you will read stories from the people whose lives you have impacted as well as the heroes who are on the frontlines.

Now more than ever, your support matters. As we adapt to a new normal, our family of services remains ever vigilant of the challenges that lie on the path ahead. Your continued connection with Liberty is at the heart of our ability to provide compassionate care and vibrant experiences, and you remain a guiding light for those in search of hope.

As we walk with others during their life journeys, we do so faithfully and live out a vision that is inspired by God's grace, calling upon us to be a world-class organization that enriches and empowers the lives of others. You make all the difference in this pursuit.

Thank you for your continued support for Liberty Lutheran and our family of services. Together, we will continue to provide resources and peace-of-mind to those we serve and care for.

Luanne B. Tishet

Luanne B. Fisher, PhD President and CEO, Liberty Lutheran

Liberty Briefs

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The Hearth at Drexel





Above: Nancy dresses up for her daughter's Zoom wedding and enjoys a glass of wine in celebration.

A Special Day

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted many families L to find creative ways to stay connected. At The Hearth, many visited their loved ones at windows and communicated over the phone. Virtual video-conference services also grew as necessary resources. For Nancy Partridge, a resident of The Hearth at Drexel, such a resource would help her witness her daughter's wedding. "My daughter got engaged about two years ago," she explains.

Hoping to have a ceremony that her entire family could attend, when the pandemic began, Nancy's daughter knew a typical wedding with everyone in attendance was simply not feasible. "Her fiancé got on the phone with me one day when they came to visit by my window. He said they weren't sure whether to have a wedding because not everyone would be able to come," Nancy recalls.

Nancy knew she would not be able to attend her daughter's wedding in-person, but she encouraged the couple to go ahead and get married. "I said, 'if you two want to get married just go ahead and do it," Nancy laughs. "He asked me for my blessing and I said, 'Of course you have my blessing to get married."

Proposing the idea to have the wedding on Zoom so that family and friends could virtually join in the celebration, the entire family agreed to the idea. Nancy's daughter, Alicia and her fiancé, David, began planning their virtual wedding.

4 At Liberty

Married in a church, the organist from the wedding gave Nancy's daughter an extensive list of songs. "My daughter showed me the list and asked me to help her choose a song for the ceremony. I wasn't familiar with many of them so I called Pastor G to see if she would help me." Pastor Ghislaine Cotnoir, director of pastoral care at The Hearth and Artman, was happy to assist.

Pastor G helped Nancy look up the various song choices on YouTube. "While Pastor G was helping me she said, 'If you're going to be a part of this Zoom wedding you have to get dressed up," Nancy laughs. "So I did." Nancy wore one of her nicest outfits and even poured a glass of wine to celebrate the occasion.

With elaborate decorations, flowers, and music, Nancy's grandsons walked their mother down the aisle, and her granddaughter preceded them as Maid of Honor. Happy to see the entire ceremony, Nancy felt grateful to be connected with her family on this very special day.

"I think as a parent you really just want your children to be happy," Nancy reflects. "I wish them to be blessed with a long and happy life together," Nancy says. Wishing her loved ones a lifetime of happiness and health, Nancy feels lucky for where she is today and she looks forward to continuous connection with family and friends at The Hearth.

Profile

LEADING LIBERTY WITH HENRY EBNER, personal care administrator at Artman

O: How does Liberty Lutheran compare to other organizations, and what impact does that make for the people we serve?

A: Artman is a special place. When I interview a potential employee, I usually tell them that I have been a nurse for 24 years with the last 7 years with Artman as the personal care administrator. During our conversation, one of the first things I share is that Liberty Lutheran is the best organization that I ever worked for. Liberty and the people who work within its family of services genuinely care about each resident and staff member.

This has been especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic. Liberty's placed the health and well-being of both staff and residents among its highest priorities. They spared no expense and made investments to keep people safe with appropriate PPE and extra resources. Even though this time is stressful and complicated, employees, residents, and families all appreciate Liberty Lutheran's proactive approach.

Q: How do you see the work that you do inspiring others in the community?

A: As the saying says, "There is no I in team." At Artman, we have a great management team that works together and I am only one part of it. While I have an open-door policy for anyone within our community, you can often find me walking throughout the community to talk to each resident and to connect with my colleagues where they are working.

I think when staff or residents see management on the floor helping with care, giving out medications, or just having a conversation with them, they know we care. There has always been an "all hands on deck" mentality at Artman.

The pandemic has highlighted that spirit. Over the past several months, I have enjoyed helping some of the larger households with meal deliveries to rooms because it helped the staff out and also allowed me to see the residents and chat with them for a minute to see how they are doing. I hope I inspire others but I know that the staff and the residents inspire me to do what I do.

O: Tell me about an experience you had here, that your role impacted the residents and families?

to my role as a personal care

A: Every person regardless of their role or department has been impacted by the pandemic. In addition

administrator, I found myself taking on new responsibilities as a communicator. Our residents and their families were eager for information. We continue to provide updates on weekly zoom calls and through written communications. This also allowed us to answer any questions from the families and helped to address their concerns.

I've also been able to help in ways like taking a resident for appointments, making sure residents got their gifts from their loved ones, and helping staff understand infection control protocols and practices. I think most importantly, just being available to help out in any way has made a huge impact on both staff and residents.

Liberty Briefs

The Village at Penn State





Above: Members of the University Women's Club Cycling Group cheer for Jerry as he completes his 800th lap.

Cycling for a Cause: A Birthday Worth Celebrating

D irthdays are the perfect time for celebration. For Dresident at The Village at Penn State, Jerry Gross, his 83rd birthday was a festive event for the entire community, especially those in need. Dedicating his birthday to a deserving cause, Jerry set out to raise money for the Centre County YMCA's anti-hunger campaign.

"I was inspired by a 100 year-old World War II veteran that I saw on the news," Jerry explains. This veteran celebrated his 100th birthday by walking 100 laps around his property to raise money for charity. "I thought, well that seemed pretty easy and I wondered what I could do."

Jerry has always been an active person and greatly enjoys activities like jogging, hiking, and cycling. Several years ago when Jerry experienced difficulties with his hip and knees both jogging and hiking became quite painful. It was then that Jerry chose to step up his cycling adventures. "Biking, because it is low-impact, was a good way for me to stay active," he reflects.

As Jerry tried to think of ways he could raise money for the YMCA, he knew cycling would be the perfect activity.

"My 83rd birthday was coming up, and 83 laps seemed far too modest," he explains. "We decided on 830 and thought if we can raise one dollar per lap that will be 830 dollars."

Tremendously exceeding his initial goal, Jerry began his cycling fundraiser in April and successfully completed his 830 laps before his birthday on June 27th. Raising over 5,000 dollars for the Centre County YMCA, Jerry was thrilled with the fundraiser's success and was happy to support this cause for families in need of food amidst COVID-19.

As Jerry's fundraiser provided tremendous support to the YMCA, he couldn't have completed his goal without the financial and moral support of residents and staff from around The Village. "I was amazed that in the midst of a pandemic someone had so much compassion for others," says Director of Resident Services, Kim McGinnis. "It was truly inspiring."

To celebrate his last three laps, residents and staff at The Village gathered together safely at a distance. With champagne, cupcakes, and a birthday cake, the socially distant group cheered Jerry on as he crossed the finish line. Even with their masks on, you could hear their spirit throughout the community.

"It meant a lot when residents would cheer me on as I did my laps. I think what I did contributed to good spirits through this pandemic," Jerry reflects. Lifting spirits and morale, Jerry's cycling for a cause certainly brought hope to this community. When asked what he'll do for his 84th birthday, Jerry says he's unsure, but perhaps another cycling event for charity is in his future.

Liberty Heroes

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

by Fred Hopke, Chairman

How we respond to catastrophe tells a great deal about us. The coronavirus pandemic has been unique in its prolonged impact on our world, the people we serve, their families, and those who help our family of services thrive.

When this crisis started, Liberty responded threatened the safety and security of our residents, and news reports about the devastating impact of this pandemic upon senior care communities were alarming. So, when the board met in the spring

What the board learned was not only impressive, it inspired hope. Our family of services scrambled to procure personal protective equipment, secure our communities and protect the safety and health of our staff and residents. We communicated regularly with residents, families, and co-workers. A special COVID-19 task force met daily on conference calls for updates and to make adjustments.

Our other services were also affected. The staff at the

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West Philadelphia Senior Community Center moved from providing daily lunches at the Center to delivering meals and groceries to older adults in the neighborhood. Lutheran Congregational Services and its disaster response program provided churches and local ministries valuable information and supplies from state and local emergency management agencies.

This glimpse into how our communities and services have all been impacted showed us just how hard it's been. We heard about the struggles challenges, and sorrows. There has been weariness and wondering if and when it will all be over. Isolation and loneliness were commonly felt by our residents. But we also heard about successes experienced by staff and residents alike.

We know that the plans that were put in place helped us prevail. But, a plan is only as good as the people who carry it out. Day after day, our extraordinary staff took extra steps to implement strategies that helped keep our residents safe. And our donors gave generously

to ensure that our staff had everything that they needed.

Toward the end of our board meeting, we asked ourselves, "What have we learned in the early stages of the pandemic about Liberty?" Right out of the box, the first board member to respond said this, "I am not surprised. It is what we have come to expect of Liberty." Another board member, reflecting upon what we discovered, responded to the question saying, quietly, "This is why I am so proud to be involved with Liberty."

Some people have called our staff and our donors "heroes." We prefer saints - not in the sense of being perfect - but as those persons who have a bent toward God. who lean in and listen to the voice of God calling, or directing, or summoning to service.

It is true, times of adversity reveal who we are. I am overjoyed to share that these trying times have revealed that Liberty, and the people who make it, exemplify compassion, ingenuity, care, selflessness, and a forward-thinking approach that is hard to rival.

FALL 2020 7



Not all superheroes wear capes.

Liberty is grateful for all of the care and compassion each one of you provide each other and the people that we serve throughout these challenging times.































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Paul's Run

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Bingo with Friends, Families, and Neighbors

Desident at Paul's Run, Belle Magerman, has always R enjoyed the community's abundant list of diverse activities. Among her favorites is BINGO. Looking forward to BINGO each week, Belle enjoys this activity not just for the energy of the game, but for the friends and neighbors she spends time with while there.

"BINGO is a time for all of us to get together," Belle says. "We talk and socialize with people and friends." Paul's Run BINGO games are highly popular among residents and are always a well-attended event. When COVID-19 began, Paul's Run staff knew their typical BINGO sessions wouldn't be safe for residents in the community. Demonstrating their tremendous creativity and flexibility, Paul's Run staff proactively developed safety precautions so that residents could enjoy this cherished event amidst the pandemic.

Seating just two residents per table to ensure social distancing, and limiting attendance, residents now sign up ahead of time for BINGO sessions each week. Creating a worry-free game, Paul's Run staff provide residents with their own marker that they keep in individual plastic bags. They also use disposable BINGO boards that are recycled after each use and ensure proper hand sanitization before playing.

"The staff here have done so much to keep residents safe," Belle affirms. "They've made it very easy for us. They've distanced out the furniture, they're constantly cleaning, they make sure we're wearing our masks. We all do our part," she explains.



Above: Belle smiles as she enjoys BINGO safely through COVID-19.

Applying their creativity to more than just BINGO, the entire Paul's Run team has ensured resident engagement throughout the community in numerous ways. Lifting spirits with outdoor entertainers, spreading joy with socially distanced music lessons, leading diverse exercise classes to maintain active lifestyles, and delivering special treats to residents' doors, the opportunities for fulfillment at Paul's Run are abundant.

"Resident engagement is so important," says Erin Samsel, director of community life. "Through all of this, we really just want to get residents back to their routines and we want to make sure that they have some sort of companionship," she reflects. As residents spend time with friends and catch up with one another, this significant time for socialization is incredibly rewarding and evermore essential through these challenging times.

"What has really kept me going through this pandemic is connection," Belle reflects. "That's what I enjoy most. Just being with people and talking to them." Ensuring connections with creativity and enthusiasm, Paul's Run residents feel comfort in knowing there will always be a friend nearby.

Liberty Briefs

Wpscc

Supporting Members like Family with the WPSCC

For Suedell Cirthwithen, a member at the West **Philadelphia Senior Community Center.**

the Center's support through **COVID-19** continues to be a remarkable blessing. Suedell

has been an active member of the Center for years. Full of many talents, she says one of her greatest gifts is singing, and she greatly enjoys her role as director of the Center's choir.

"The Center gives me the opportunity to be social. I've become a part of anything that goes on. Whether it's a play, a musical, or devotionals, I'm a part of it. I've become great friends with everyone here." When Suedell first heard that COVID-19 forced the WPSCC to temporarily close, she was heartbroken.

"It felt like losing a family," Suedell says saddened. "That's what the Center is. It's family." When Suedell realized she wouldn't be able to visit the Center, she feared not having that family there for her. "I thought to myself, what do I do now? Where do I go from here? In this house no one is here, but me," she reflects.

"Many of our members don't feel comfortable leaving their homes," Rose Richardson, executive director of WPSCC, shares. "After conversations with the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) and Liberty's leadership, we created a contactless meal delivery program that makes deliveries on Mondays and Thursdays," Rose explains.

With each meal delivered frozen, most members live in communities where they may not have the space to store seven frozen meals at one time. The Center strategically makes



Thankful for the Center's support, the WPSCC calmed members' initial worries as they proactively developed programs and services to support their members at home. One crucial service for members has been the Center's meal delivery program.

two deliveries each week to suit each member's unique circumstances. In keeping up with meal deliveries and providing food security for members, The Center has been fortunate to have additional support from Easter Outreach Volunteers.

With tremendous dedication from the Center's staff, the entire team has come together to deliver meals and ensure members don't go hungry. "It's wonderful knowing that people would go out of their way to make sure I get food every day," says Suedell. "I wave by my door, and I'll shout, 'Hi Ms. Rose!' because she's often the one in the car. Oh, yes, everyone on staff helps deliver from the Center, and that's a blessing, a real blessing," she affirms.

Throughout the pandemic, The Center has provided 240 weekly deliveries of meals and groceries. The WPSCC also provides a grab and go lunch program with 340 lunches picked up by community members weekly. As the WPSCC supports their members like family, older adults throughout the West Philadelphia community know they will never feel alone.

Liberty Briefs

Lutheran Congregational Services





Liberty Briefs

Lutheran Congregational Services

They also experienced an incredible outpouring of support. Pastor Tricia Neale, executive director of Feast of Justice, says "The community that has gathered around feeding ministries has been an enormous source of support. On any given week, 25-35 percent of our volunteers are new to us since the pandemic began. This, combined with the increased volume and coordination from suppliers has been invaluable."

As circumstances around COVID-19 continue to evolve, all four ministries will continue to help those affected, and they will continue to require support. Pastor Neale adds, "There is no way that we could have done this as an island, but working together, we have been able to meet the need."

Feeding Ministries: Helping In Every Season

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. — Isaiah 58:10

The economic and social impact of COVID-19 has become an evolving challenge L facing increasingly vulnerable populations due to large-scale unemployment and financial uncertainty. Julia Menzo, director of community outreach and leader in disaster response, knew from experience that the need would be great.

By early March, she began mobilizing to help those most in need. Thanks to a \$30,000 grant from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) Disaster Response, and with the help of the ELCA Synod offices in both northeast and southeast Pennsylvania, Lutheran Congregational Services was able to support four community food pantries in feeding their neighbors during the pandemic:

- · Feast of Justice in Northeast Philadelphia
- Hope's Table and Café Esperanza in Reading
- The Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities and
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Food Pantry in Dingmans Ferry

Since the start of the pandemic, all four ministries saw the need in their communities dramatically increase. Pastor Mary Wolfe of Hope's Table and Café Esperanza shared, "the food pantry went from serving an average of 200 families twice each month, to serving 350 families twice each week. This change happened very quickly."

Above: Val, a volunteer at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Food Pantry, Dingmans Ferry.

Opposite page

Top rov Left: Hope's Table Volunteers.

Right: Volunteers with Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities.

Bottom row Left: Pastor Neale, Abby Nedby-Drayton, and Pastor Sandra *Brown, coordinating food* distribution at Feast of Justice.

Middle: Packing food boxes at Feast of Justice.

Right: Sign at HTLFood Pantry, one of the grant recipients of the LDR grant received here at LCS.







Liberty Briefs

The Manor at York Town



Emotionally Together While Socially Apart

Tt is a bright afternoon at The Manor at York Town that

Ino one could have quite anticipated at the beginning of the year. Award-winning bagpiper, Traci, walks The Manor's grounds, serenading the community with traditional Scottish music while residents take in the sunshine and songs from their apartment balconies. Remaining socially distant has required both staff and seniors to get creative when it comes to activities, but has been a challenge that neither has shied away from.

"Activities have been very limited at this time, particularly during the red and yellow phase," says Robyn Fine, director of community life at The Manor at York Town. "This has led to us offering more activities that residents can enjoy from their rooms like outdoor concerts or FaceTime family visits. By far, though, the most wellreceived has been the thrice-weekly traveling happy hour."

This traveling cart is just as happy as it sounds! Staff members stop by each residents' rooms with an array of beverages and friendly conversation to brighten their day. Happy hour was a beloved pastime of Manor residents previously, and rather than let the tradition be postponed, they went the extra mile and brought the welcoming spirit (and spirits) to them.

"It does make for a nice part of the day," comments



white wine from the traveling cart!

Roberta Huber, a resident at The Manor. "They have done a lot to make sure there are things to do. I still get to exercise every day, and they do everything to make sure we have what we need. The happy hour cart is a chance to chat a bit as well."

In order to help keep residents connected with the world from their apartments, The Manor at York Town staff has not stopped finding new ways to help residents. "When the phones went down during a late afternoon storm, all staff worked together to knock on every door and take dinner orders for the residents. Rain or shine, Manor staff came together to make sure the residents were happy and well fed!" says Robyn.

"It makes a difference, being in a community like this," concludes Roberta. "If I was on my own, I don't suppose I would be able to see anybody. Here, though, I never feel isolated because there is always someone to talk to no matter what is happening."

With the help and creativity that comes from the entire team at The Manor, residents always have options on how to spend their days. This means that social distancing may limit contact, but it does not limit variety as well as the memories made together.

Liberty Briefs

Artman



A Century Celebrated

Solution Nothing in the world could have see his loved ones. "I'm so proud made me happier," says Artman resident Jim Frick, the smile in his tone apparent.

On a bright April afternoon, Jim's family gathered outside his apartment window with signs and kind words to celebrate the newly-crowned centenarian's 100th birthday. Every generation was present, down to the young children excitedly waving handwritten messages in bright colors.

The restrictions of social distancing in the spring limited visitors, but rather than postponing the opportunity to brighten Jim's day, the

wonderful family."

In order to help residents stay connected with their loved ones, Artman's staff members have gone above and beyond to schedule video chats with family members and loved ones outside the community. Pastor Ghislaine Cotnoir has been helping by scheduling weekly video chats with family members.

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Left: Jim serving in the militarv.

Above: Jim's family arrives with hand made signs to wish him a happy 100th birthday!

family worked together with staff to make sure that Jim was able to of them," adds Jim. "I just have a

"He's the most positive person alive, his attitude is just incredible and we're just so happy to do this for him," Chris, Jim's grandson, says.

"While I know that we all agree that in-person visits are deeply missed, we've seen some wonderful virtual visits," Ghislaine comments. "Birthday, anniversary and other events, even a few weddings, have continued to be celebrated. From the perspective of anxious family members, just having that visual connection and hearing their voice makes days of separation more bearable."

Jim may not have been able to cut the cake with his grandchildren, but the memory of filling his windows with well wishes is one that will live with each of them for years to come. Connecting with family members during this season has required plenty of creativity, but the dedication of loved ones and the help of a willing team at Artman to make each resident's day the best it can be will last far beyond the season.

At Liberty newsletter is published by



