

# Volunteer News

ISSUE 35

JAN / FEB 2022



Each snowflake  
is unique...  
Just like our  
volunteers!

★HAPPY★  
BIRTHDAY!

Hailey Evans  
Jan 5

Brenda Joy  
Feb 2

Cardy Sullivan  
Feb 8

Megan McDaniel  
Feb 26

*Happy New Year*

2022

**A New Year, A New Look  
Let your voice be heard in 2022**

This year I would like to put a twist on our newsletter. I want to focus on you, the volunteer. I'm hopeful you all will join me in my excitement to have a newsletter written by volunteers for the volunteers. I want to add a new perspective, gain inspiration and share real-life stories written from the heart. I hope you will consider sharing your stories filled with compassion and diversity.

If you are interested in sharing your words, thoughts or simply come across an interesting article please reach out to me! My hope is to have at least one article written by a volunteer in each bi-monthly newsletter.

Thank you to my first "article" volunteers, Carol Minehart, Martha Bentley and Donna Sample (Spring Newsletter). Thank you for not hesitating when I presented the idea. I'm beyond grateful for your time and talent. You all are true gifts to our program.



**Looking Ahead...**

Please mark your calendars  
& plan on joining us for our  
biggest event, celebrating you!!

The Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon  
will be held the week of April 17th-23rd.  
Specific date & time will be announced.

# Returning from the Fog



Carol Minehardt,  
Volunteer Ombudsman

During the Covid lockdown, many freedoms were lost, and some may fail to return. One trait that prevails among facility residents is that of resilience. Having faced numerous challenges throughout their lives, these individuals have been able to reflect upon past experiences and to use them as resources from which to grow and move forward from the isolation and restrictions of the "Covid incarceration."

In my discussions with these seniors I have learned many things, and that one that prevails is that hope is the carrot which moves them through dark and troubling times. For some it is their faith, others have an inner strength that guides them from one day to the next and brings them through whatever adversity they encounter.

These residents offer thoughts that keep them centered and looking just ahead to better days. During the interim they hold on to truths from their past and that is what allows them to exist one day at a time.

Some of their truths are words of wisdom that I share now:

"Don't count on tomorrow. Live for today."

"Don't put all your effort in just one place."

"Trust."

"Take up for yourself. It is up to you, no one else."

"This too shall pass."

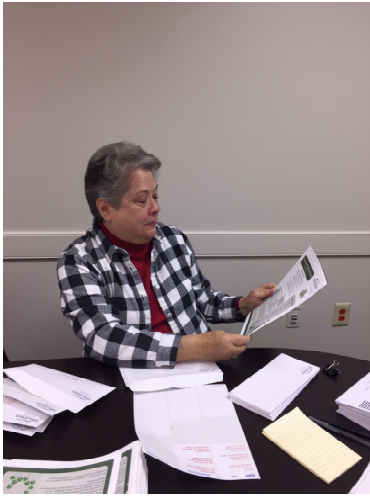
"God helps us in mysterious ways."

"Do it but do it right!"

"Be kind."

Conversing with those who have 'been there' is rewarding. At times the fortitude and wisdom from our residents leaves me astounded. I feel extremely blessed to have the opportunity to listen and hear their truths which are as pertinent today as in past years.

# Shut Up and Listen to the Young'uns!



Martha Bentley,  
Volunteer Ombudsman

As the oldest of four siblings I inherited the responsibility of carrying on. Whether it was Christmas traditions, Grandma's advice, or family lore, I learned our family history, and I have taken my task seriously by telling my children and their cousins many stories!

We come from an interesting family. Through seven generations that we know of, there have been Presbyterian ministers in every generation, so our family has not been very wealthy, extraordinarily talented in the arts, or even notorious criminals, but there is a lot to teach the younger generations about their ancestors. One branch of my family landed in Virginia in 1720. Another arrived in Charleston harbor on a ship propelled by a hurricane. And then there is the branch of the family that has so many people with the same names that no one can keep them straight! As a matter of fact we know generations of Mother's and Dad's families unknowingly crossed paths in North Carolina and Kentucky before they met in Atlanta as college students, creating an interesting family history of paths crossing around the south.

Recently, as I achieved the status of being one of the oldest generation alive, I have learned a new skill of listening to the future. At a recent family reunion I found myself engaged in many conversations among "the cousins", meaning the next generation of the family who are now grown old enough to pass along my stories as well as their own. In some ways I had to bite my tongue to keep from interrupting with my corrections to their memories, but in other moments I learned fascinating facts about their own lives and their memories of growing up! As I listened I learned something of how my siblings interpreted our family stories and passed them down to their children, giving me new insights into my brothers and their opinions. I also learned of some memories that seemed trivial to me at the time, but survive as important events in the family for them to add to the family lore. Finally, I was sometimes shocked to hear what "the cousins" got away with and laughed about as they revealed old escapades with each other!

Sometimes it's better to silently smile and let the conversation roll on around you! You never know what you will learn unless you stop talking and listen, and that explains why we remember our grandparents smiling and nodding because we thought they were dozing off as they patiently listened to our conversations!

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Dear Volunteers,

In this season of giving, I want to thank all of you that give every day to the residents we serve. After almost two years of isolation I know your cards, calls, and now finally, visits, have made so much of a difference to them.

There is a saying, "For every ten that watch, only one comes forward to help." Each one of you has a unique spirit and skill set that makes you an amazing volunteer. Most importantly, you listen to the residents when others don't have the time or patience to. You make them feel seen, heard and important. I think that is a gift that so many people underestimate.

Feeling that you have a purpose and are important to someone is part of the human condition. As we grow older, we tend to feel like we lose that purpose. We may have raised our families or retired from our jobs and now are left wondering what's next. Our seniors that live in long term care facilities experience that even more so.

When residents are able to share their concerns, their stories and their lives with someone, it takes them out of the isolation that being in a long term care facility puts them in. You give them purpose, and in doing so, improve the quality of their life.

So thank you for all that you do as volunteers. Giving of your time and of yourself. You may not see the difference you are making, but it's there.

With Gratitude,  
Jess Winters  
Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman



**A special thank you** to our program supporters who donated items and/or made monetary donations for the Senior Angel Tree Project. It was a success!!

The items delivered were purchased from the wish lists of 39 LTC residents in Greenville County.

In addition to the wish list items, the program provided snacks, activity/coloring books, games, socks, hat/gloves, blankets and toiletry items for each resident.

This year we received additional monetary donations which made it possible to purchase a TV and a karaoke machine for the residents to enjoy at the facility.

Thank you again to all who donated to our project! You helped to brighten the holidays of seniors in our community!!