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Wednesday, March 25, 2020 » MEDIANEWS GROUP

SENIOR LIFE

'Stay home, stay calm and stay safe'

Health care professionals may conduct virtual visits, Department of Aging sets mandates for senior centers, releases information packet on government resources prior to crisis

By Jen Samuel
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@jenpoetess on Twitter

KENNETT SQUARE » On March 18, during a press conference by the Health Department for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, State Health Secretary Rachel Levine advised citizens to continue to wash their hands as one key tool to combat Corona.

"Stay home, stay calm and stay safe," Levine said.

East Bradford resident Mary Sue Boyle is concerned. She said she is worried for senior citizens in Chester County in self-isolation and the depression that can arise from that.

Boyle sits on the Advisory Council to the Department of Aging, composed of independent Chester County citizens who run senior centers and advocates of the senior citizen community and church congregation members.

"We want people to not feel afraid to reach out and ask for help," Boyle said of the senior citizen community. Like many on the council, Boyle is an independent voice working as a volunteer trying to assist those in need to ensure the quality of life for seniors.

"Many are in self-isolation," Boyle said of senior citizens in Chester County. "Many are alone. Many are

not being tended to by their families. They watch the news and they see empty shelves. Their fear is they may go without food. They may become depressed by the news, trying to stay healthy, trying to stay self-isolated."

There are no grocery stores delivering food, materials and prescriptions to senior citizens for fee or without fees. For many living on social security checks alone, that equates to a hardship.

Boyle recommends that people call their neighbors who are senior citizens and also talk to them through windows. "Just to say, 'Hey, how are you doing? Do you need anything?'"

Boyle said she hopes this can bring the community together in a positive spirit to help one another.

"You can reach out to a senior," Murphy said. "Stand six feet apart. Find out what their phone number is and then schedule a time to reach out to them, just to check on them. And provide your phone number as well, in case they're feeling a little bit anxious, they can reach out on you."

More waves

There is more waving happening as people in Pennsylvania conduct a new normal, the notion of 'social' distancing.

Assisted living facilities suspended visitations from the public at nursing homes across the commonwealth.

And although long-term facilities for senior citizens are taking precautions to combat coronavirus by limiting visitations to residents, many are still finding ways to check in.

Jenner's Pond resident James Chester's family, including his daughter Kady Wolfington, granddaughter Madison Wolfington and son-in-law Tom Schindler visited him on March 18. His family stood on the grass and waved and smiled, while the community saw him through the glass.

"We're being very vigilant," said Barbara Croyle, executive director of Jenner's Pond. She called the crisis a very fluid situation.

Jenner's Pond Retirement Community, in Penn Township, and Friends Home in Kennett Square Borough, have family visits daily to check in on their loved ones, waving, 'Hello' through the windows. Both establishments are located in Chester County.

"We've just been staying amongst ourselves," said Christine McDonald, executive director of the Friends Home. "Our residents are able to be a part of the group activities within our

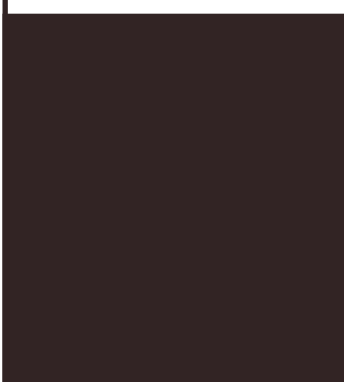


SUBMITTED PHOTO

Jenner's Pond resident James Chester communicates to his family on Wednesday morning in Penn Township through a window. Showing how much they care are, from left his daughter Kady Wolfington, his granddaughter Madison Wolfington and his son-in-law Tom Schindler. Retirement communities like Jenner's Pond, a Simpson Senior Services community, are taking precautions during the national crisis by limiting visitations.



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Crisis

FROM PAGE 1

home here.”

She said there’s been no visitors to see family members inside the facility since the crisis began.

“And that’s been tough,” she said.

Telemedicine sessions Senior centers

Announced Wednesday by Sec. Boockvar of the Pennsylvania Department of State, health care professionals licensed under any of the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA) licensing boards may now offer services to patients via telemedicine — live virtual sessions — during the coronavirus emergency.

“Telemedicine provides health care professionals flexibility to continue treating their patients while following best practices on social distancing as outlined by the Department of Health,” Boockvar said.

This new rule applies to 15 state boards:

- Chiropractic
- Dentistry
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Optometry
- Pharmacy
- Podiatry
- Psychology
- Osteopathic Medicine
- Nursing Home Administrators
- Occupational Therapy Education and Licensure
- Physical Therapy
- Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors
- Examiners in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
- Veterinary Medicine.

Additionally, the Pennsylvania Department of State said it is working with the governor’s office, the Department of Health and Department of Human Services to identify regulations and requirements eligible for suspension to give medical providers and facilities the flexibility they need

to respond to the crisis.

The Pennsylvania Department of State added that Gov. Tom Wolf granted its suspension request to allow licensed practitioners in other states to provide services to Pennsylvanians via the use of telemedicine, without obtaining a Pennsylvania license, for the duration of the emergency.

Earlier in March, the Pennsylvania Department of Aging released COVID-19 guidance to the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) pertaining to operations of more than 500 affiliated senior community centers operating statewide.

“We will continue to engage with them to meet their informational needs, receive input and offer guidance,” said Aging Sec. Robert Torres.

Although senior centers have closed to the public across the commonwealth, and many have shut down, they are still calling registered members to check in. Further, some remain open to prepare and offer congregate meals via drive up and curbside services. A central activity at many centers is the offering of congregate meals.

Services should include:

- Offering meals as a take-out meal that participants can pick up;
- Packaging and delivering meals to participants’ homes;
- Offering shelf-stable, frozen and grab-and-go meals;
- Enrolling participants in the OPTIONS Program for in-home meal service.

“Participants are to be offered an alternative means to receive a meal and be provided information ... if they need additional assistance or services,” said Torres. “We are committed to ensuring that the delivery of services to older adults, particularly in the vital area of meals, continues unabated,” he said, adding it was key to protect the health and safety of others including senior

center staff.

In other news, Torres released the 2020 Benefits and Rights for Older Pennsylvanians, the commonwealth’s “premier guide for information and resources” serving older adults on the state, county and local levels. It was printed in February.

“Many older Pennsylvanians are unaware of what’s available to them as they continue to age in their community and their home,” Torres said. “The Department of Aging is proud to offer this free guide to all older Pennsylvanians as a way to assist them in living happy, healthy lives.”

Seniors may call their respective county departments of aging for further assistance, including for information on the crisis and requests for needed household items from food to pet supplies.

Pets source of companionship

“Seniors love their pets,” said Boyle, the Pennsylvania advocate for senior citizens. “Pets are very good companions.”

Some seniors may run out of pet food during this crisis. She encouraged neighbors to ask senior citizens if they need assistance on this end.

On March 14, the West Chester Senior Center handed out supplies for dogs and cats. The county director of Aging Services credited state Sen. Andrew Dinnaman’s Pet Food program that ensured the shelves were fully stocked with dog and cat supplies prior to the crisis impacting Pennsylvania last week.

Many seniors who live alone have dogs as companions from kittens to puppies and from cats to dogs.

“Pets are therapeutic and that’s been proven through studies,” said Sandra Murphy, director of Aging Services for Chester County. “The majority of our seniors do have pets.”

If a senior is running out of pet food, Murphy said



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A senior citizen, Shirley Peters, waves to loved ones, standing outside the Friends Home of Kennett Square Borough, separated this March from ‘social’ contact in wake of the coronavirus pandemic. She waves to her daughters Leslie Bleggi and Holly Peters alongside her son-in-law, Doug Bleggi, Bleggi’s husband on Tuesday evening in southern Chester County.

there is help available.

“They can call us,” Murphy said. When a senior calls requesting help to ensure their animals have enough food during this crisis, the county can put them in touch with Dinnaman’s Pet Food program.

“We’ve seen through trying times before, like Superstorm Sandy, H1N1, and fires — pets come first. Seniors refuse to move unless their pets are taken care of and we support that,” Murphy said.

She added that Dinnaman has been a huge sup-

porter of seniors with pets. The senator’s pet food program is called Henry’s Helping Paws and provides food to the pets of senior citizens. It was launched in March 2016. Meals on Wheels in Chester County is a partner organization.

The program delivers pet food directly to senior centers so that they can keep on caring for their pets, and was named after Dinnaman’s late poodle, Henry, who passed away in 2014.

“I am grateful that Henry’s Helping Paws can continue to provide assistance

to our senior citizens’ pets in this trying and difficult time,” said Dinniman, D-19th, of West Whiteland. “While we fight through this unprecedented period, we are working on providing innovative, safe, and beneficial solutions.”

For more, visit www.pa.gov.

To read an online copy of the 2020 Benefits and Rights for Older Pennsylvanians, visit www.aging.pa.gov/publications/benefits-and-rights.



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SENIOR LIFE

Safety first for seniors

Jenner's Pond, Kennett Friends enact strict protocols to protect residents

By Jen Samuel
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KENNETT SQUARE » Long-term facilities for senior citizens are rising to the occasion to keep their residents safe during the global war against novel coronavirus.

On Thursday, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) announced the implementation of a series of measures to mitigate COVID-19 and protect the health of residents and staff at Pennsylvania's state centers, state hospitals, youth development centers, and youth forestry camps.

All visitors are currently prohibited from all state center and state hospital campuses, youth development centers, and youth forestry camps, the department said. The policy shall remain in place until guidance from public-health professionals changes. Exceptions include visits of medical necessity, visits by probation departments or legal counsel, as well as family and clergy visits approved by the facility director. Residents of state hospitals maintain their rights to attorney consultations. Any visitor permitted must undergo a health screening upon arrival prior to entry.

"The Wolf administration is committed to serving vulnerable populations every day, and that commitment will not waiver in the face of an emergency," said DHS Secretary Teresa Miller.

Two of these establishments are the Friends Home in Kennett Square



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Karen Smyser, Montessori facilitator, and resident Agnes Sheehan work on a puzzle together in the bistro of Friends Home in Kennett Square earlier this week.

Borough and Jenner's Pond Retirement Community in Penn Township.

Friends Home

Friends Home, on State Street in downtown Kennett Square was established 122 years ago in 1898.

Starting on March 3, Friends Home implemented extensive procedures for cleaning. On March 10, all outside trips are canceled, all inside entertainment is postponed, and all visitations are suspended, according to Christine McDonald, executive director, on March 17.

Whilst Friends Home in Kennett is self-sufficient, one item that is scarce is an emergency supply of masks, McDonald said.

"We've just been staying amongst ourselves," McDonald said. "Our residents are able to be a part of the group activities within our home here, but, we don't have anybody from the outside coming in ... And that's been tough."

Everyone can still dine together during meals and take part in the existing programs. There is also in-house entertainment with musical performances by a

staff member.

Family members are connecting with loved ones with virtual meetings via FaceTime.

The home is setting up times for residents to visit with family members through the windows of the facility's outside patio.

The historic assisted living facility has 20 senior citizen residents in its nursing home, 37 under personal care and two individuals live in independent apartments.

Friends Home in Kennett invited children to send letters.

"It would be great for some of the kids home from school to send notes that we can distribute so people here can get some mail," McDonald said. "That would be nice."

Residents can still sit together on the outside porch sans any visitors. "We're trying to get out and use our outside space as much as possible," she said.

Jenner's Pond

Founded in 1998, Jenner's Pond Retirement Community in Penn Township facility recently celebrated its 20th anniversary.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Residents at Friends Home in Kennett Square enjoy activities while keeping safe and healthy, including Larry Parrish and Bob Barnett sitting on the porch watching happenings from afar on State Street.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

From left, Peg Sanders, Jack Degener and Sally Jacks playing Wii in the activities room at the Friends Home in downtown Kennett Square.

"Our population is vulnerable," said Barbara Croyle, executive director of Jenner's Pond. She called the crisis a very fluid situation.

Jenner's Pond comprises of three parts: independent

living; assisted living which includes memory care and a skilled and rehabilitation unit. It is home to 350 independent residents; 55 people are residents of assisted living; 25 people live in the skilled community.

The facility stopped allowing visitors earlier in March.

"We have apartments and cottages," Croyle said regarding the people who are independent living residents of Jenner's Pond. "If



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Safety

FROM PAGE 3

you are in the cottage, we can't keep you from having visitors. We strongly suggest that you do not have visitors.

She said, "There are no visitors allowed in the apartments because of the number of people who are in that communal area."

When cottage residents come into the dining area shared with apartment residents, they are first screened, meaning their temperatures are taken and answering a few questions including inquiries on recent foreign travel.

"We're being very vigilant," Croyle said.

She said the residents have been "wonderful." She added, "They understand the need for caution." Small group activities are still allowed, but no outside entertainers are presently allowed into the community.

Like the Friends Home in Kennett, Jenner's Pond is self-sufficient.

"We don't need any money," Croyle said. "Compassion and prayers would be fine."

She said, "We're being abundantly cautious."

Communal dining is still happening, but Jenner's Pond is staggering the number of people who eat together and separating the tables. Normally, the residents like to enjoy meals together in large groups.

She said the U.S. Post Office will no longer deliver correspondence to residential mailboxes. Now the mailman drops off the mail and Jenner's Pond staff is required to distribute them.

Family members are communicating through a variety of sources, including via SKYPE, FaceTime, telephone and looking through the window at a 'social' distance.

Although loved ones presently cannot visit members of the senior citizen community in-person at assisted living facilities



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Performing Arts Associate Brenten Megee shares his talents for residents while under isolation from outside entertainment at the Friends Home of Kennett Square earlier this week.

across Pennsylvania, that isn't stopping many of them from going the extra mile to show much they care.

Jenner's Pond resident James Chester saw his family through a window on Wednesday morning. He

was inside his room seated as they stood, with smiles on their faces, outside on the grass. Chester's visitors included daughter Kady Wolfington, granddaughter Madison Wolfington and son-in-law Tom Schindler.

"We do have a lot of family members who hang outside their windows," Croyle said. "It's a very stressful time for family members." As much as possible, Jenner's Pond is trying to communicate with family members by phone several times a week to let them know everyone is okay.

"We do want the families to know that they are not forgotten," she said.

To lighten the mood, Jenner's Pond is bringing special treats to seniors including surprise ice cream deliveries.

Jenner's Pond is home to many veterans. Croyle said the average age of residents is 84. One Jenner's Pond resident is 100.

To help others, Jenner's Pond has a food recovery program and earlier this week sent items to the Divine Sent Food Cupboard in Oxford.

Chester County

"There are 23 long-term care facilities in Chester County," said Chester County Commissioner Josh Maxwell on Tuesday. The largest facility, with 275 beds, is Pocopson Home, which the county owns.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, nearly 10 thousand people in Chester County were 85 or older. More than 20,000 people were 75 to 84 years old. Nearly 35,000 people were 65 to 74 years old. Almost 30,000 people were 60 to 64 years old.

This represents 20 percent of the total population in Chester County.

On Wednesday afternoon during a press conference by the Pennsylvania Health Department, Dr. Rachel Levine advised citizens to continue to wash their hands as one key tool to combat Corona.

"Stay home, stay calm and stay safe," Levine said.

All independent residents at both assisted living facilities, from the apartments of Friends Home in Kennett to the cottages of Jenner's Pond Retirement Community, can travel freely. Both establishments provide meals to these independent residents so those self-isolating are not wanting for food.

Another commonality for both retirement communities is the lack of face masks. They have them, but not abundant stockpiles which might become necessary if this emergency worsens.

"I have been in touch

with federal and state government to advocate for facilities in our community that are experiencing a shortage of personal protective equipment, like masks and gowns," said U.S. Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, D-6th, of West Chester. "HHS (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) and manufacturers need to be working to meet the demand ideally 'yesterday' to protect our most vulnerable communities, including seniors and those health care workers on the front lines of this crisis. Minutes and hours matter."

On Thursday, Houlahan said, "In Congress, I helped pass the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which included protections for our frontline workers and \$2.2 billion in public health funding for prevention, preparedness and response."

Notes of kindness

The community is invited to compose notes of kindness and compassion to senior citizens living in self-isolation at Friends Home in Kennett and at Jenner's Pond in Penn.

To write to senior citizens, students can mail letters to the following addresses:

Friends Home in Kennett, 147 West State Street, Kennett Square, PA 19348.

Jenner's Pond Retirement Community has three addresses depending on where the residents live.

To reach those who are assisted living residents, write to the Ruston Residence at Jenner's Pond, 2000 Greenbriar Lane, West Grove, PA 19390.

To those skilled living residents, write to the Preston Residence, 2000 Greenbriar Lane, West Grove, PA 19390.

To those living independently but alone, write to Jenner's Pond, 2000 Greenbriar Lane, West Grove, PA 19390.

For help with food and supplies, and information on the crisis, call Chester County Aging Services at 610-344-6350.



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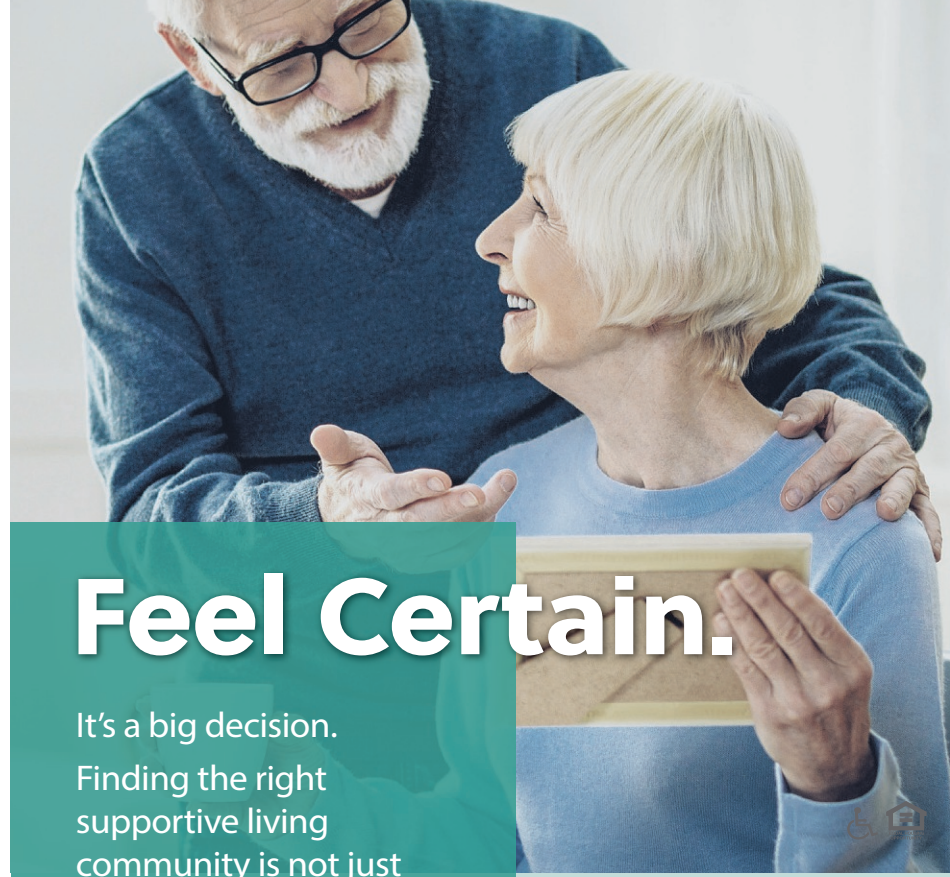
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SENIOR LIFE

Improve the Literacy Skills of Students with Half an Hour of Your Time

One of the greatest challenges facing local public schools is equipping students with the reading skills they will need to succeed academically.

In 2017, only 1/3 of Philadelphia third graders tested proficient in reading compared to nearly 2/3 of students throughout the state. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, national statistics show that 60% of fourth graders are not proficient readers. Grade level reading is a key indicator of a student's likelihood of graduating from high school. Students who don't read well by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

RSVP has partnered with United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey to recruit volunteers for Vello, a new Virtual Reading Program. United Way's Vello program, presented by Wells Fargo, is an innovative one-on-one virtual guided reading program that pairs volunteer teams with 1st to 3rd classrooms in Philadelphia and Norristown. This virtual program helps children learn to read proficiently by 4th grade through weekly guided reading sessions with volunteers and by empowering teachers, parents and caregivers with literacy tools to support youth success.

Together, students and volunteers are able to read e-books using simple screen sharing and audio. Using a computer, tablet or smart phone with internet access, volunteers can meet weekly for a 30-minute guided reading session from anywhere, making the virtual meeting simple and convenient.

With many area schools closed indefinitely due to the Coronavirus outbreak, this valuable program al-



Chris Major from United Way and Michele Moll from RSVP visit classrooms at Gotwals Elementary to present new books and read to eager students.

lows children to continue to have access to books from home ensuring they continue to practice their reading skills. It is also a critical time for recruiting volunteers, as Vello currently offers guided reading in the classrooms but is actively working with schools to identify ways to match volunteers with students during school closures.

During the first several weeks of the program's launch, RSVP volunteers added this 30-minute opportunity to their week in order to help local students read with more confidence. Typically, students learn to read by 3rd grade by decoding letters and words until they achieve fluency. By 4th grade, the educational focus is on reading to gather information and students are expected to apply their reading skills. If students haven't mastered the learn-to-read phase, they will most likely

lag behind. By allowing the student to read aloud, the volunteer provides a safe way of exploring sounds and words as well as a window to review what has just been read by asking: What does that mean? What do you think might happen next? Or Something like that happened to me once! Making connections and predictions helps stimulate curiosity so students become familiar with ideas, concepts and storylines.

Teachers have selected several books on the student's grade level that each student can select from. Students can choose from 50,000 titles and have access to the library from home and during summer break.

"As the America Reads Program Coordinator at RSVP" said Marion Silver, "I was curious about online tutoring. I have had four sessions with the same 1st grade stu-

dent. He picks the book he wants to read and we discuss what he thinks the book will be about, based on the title. Then he begins to read and I encourage him to sound out words. He is getting more comfortable with reading, with me, and with using the technology, so that's a good start. I plan to stay with him until the end of the school year."

Laurie Rosard, a volunteer and team recruitment captain at UW said, "we know there are lots of professionals, others in our community who are ready and willing to raise their hands to make a difference - but barriers like commuting and hectic schedules can make it nearly impossible to volunteer. Vello makes it easy!"

Not all students learn at the same pace and teachers struggle to cover large amounts of materials in a short amount of time. Volunteers play a crucial role

in supporting teachers by coaching and encouraging students to read to develop fluency and comprehension skills. Studies show that a student who struggles with reading in 1st grade will have a 90% chance of struggling when they're in 4th grade. This critical window can position students for long-term academic and career success.

There is more to reading than seeing a word on a page. Students must know the different sounds of spoken language and be able to connect those sounds to letters in order to decode and make meaning out of printed letters or words.

During Read Across America week, the Vello Program launched in seven elementary schools throughout Philadelphia and the suburbs. Gotwals Elementary School in Norristown was the first school to match virtual reading mentors with students. Employees from Arkema and Dow Chemical joined volunteer teams from RSVP, Main Line Chamber of Commerce, VIPKid, United Way and Women United to celebrate launch of the program by reading with students plus distributing over 500 books for children's home libraries and resources for families. [link to photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/phillysjunited/albums/72157713372683761>].

Ms. Jeanette Fernandez, Gotwals Elementary School principal boasted "I am so thankful for the volunteers and the business partners. We can only change a child's life and provide them with the gift of reading if we work together. Our partnership means opening new doors and new windows to the world of literacy for children who otherwise will

not have this opportunity."

To encourage reading over the coming summer months, a grant from United Way of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey will ensure that each student at Gotwals Elementary will receive five books for their home libraries. "Chris Major, Corporate Giving Officer at UW and local Team Lead of the Vello Program said "Beyond providing virtual volunteers, 21st century literacy tools, access to 50,000 e-book library to support youth success - United Way's Impact Fund supports book distributions that include resources for families, like United Way 2-1-1 Help Line, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), and Comcast Internet Essentials. When we connect families to literacy supports and financial stability resources, we empower them to help their children thrive."

Elementary schools in Philadelphia where the program is active include: B.B. Comegys, Henry A. Brown, James G. Blaine, John S. Jenks, Kennedy C. Crossan, John B. Kelly and Mary McLeod Bethune.

RSVP currently provides 50 virtual reading volunteers for classrooms in Philadelphia and Norristown but more volunteers are needed when schools are back in session. "This is a perfect opportunity for corporate employees who want to actively volunteer but can't take the time to travel from work" said Michele Moll, RSVP's Executive Director. "Any person who believes literacy is important can make a huge difference with just 30 minutes."

For information on this program, contact Marguerite Cuning, RSVP's Senior Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer123@rsvpinc.org or 610-834-1040 x.123. Visit www.rsvpinc.org/virtual-literacy.



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SENIOR LIFE

Spot of T - What a Difference a Day Makes

By Terry Alburger
Life Engagement Coordinator,
Brittany Pointe Estates

What a difference a day makes. Each day we wake up to new updates and mandates and changes. Each day the numbers rise. How many more presumptive positive cases, how many more self-quarantined, how many have passed away. Each day. Each hour. Each minute. Things change. Events have been canceled; life has drastically changed. Yes, what a difference a day makes.

But, there are many things that have not changed. Your family is still your family, your friends are still your friends. You are still loved, and, God willing, you are still healthy. The sun is still shining during this very mild spring season. You can still sit outside and feel the warmth, listen to the birds sing. Flowers are beginning to bloom, trees are beginning to bud so there is beauty all around. You likely have new-found time on your hands. Take advantage and enjoy a bit of nature.

And, what of that new-found time? Speaking for myself, I have long been trying to find some spare time to do things like spring cleaning, catch up on projects, and get some down time. With so much canceled, I have found that time. I implore you, don't sit in front of the TV watching the news, or with your devices in hand to get the very latest on the COVID-19 crisis. Whether or not you watch it, I promise you, it will run its course. If you want to watch TV, watch old episodes of your favorite shows. Watch a



movie. There will be time to watch the news later. Limit it. YOU have the control to filter what you let into your world, through your electronic devices.

Here are just a few things that have NOT been canceled:

- Your ability to read, and the chance to catch up on some reading.
- The list of Spring cleaning items awaiting your attention. After all, we are just about in Spring.
- Craft projects you could finish up or even projects you can begin. Find new hobbies.
- Home repairs to which you could attend.
- Phone calls to friends and family, just to catch up and check in. Especially remember to check in on elderly members of your family or circle of friends.
- Letters and cards you can write. A hand-written card is always a pick-me-up for the recipient.
- Music - listening to it, playing an instrument, singing, dancing. Music is

always good for what ails you and many times can transport you to another, perhaps a happier, place and time.

▪ The love of your family. Family time is important and can do a lot to lift your spirits.

I know this is a scary time. I wish I could say none of you will be affected by this virus. None of us knows what is in store, we can only do our very best to get through this difficult time unscathed. But I can encourage you to stay optimistic, and not to succumb to the panic and fear that seems to have gripped the world. I know it is not easy, and I cannot for one second tell you that I am not very concerned. But my father always used to tell me to face adversity head-on, with calm and intelligence. This seems like timely advice and I'm doing my best to do just that. Working at a retirement community, it is my job to pass that positivity to the residents. That and caution. And that is what I recommend to you.

Remember not to isolate yourself. With tech-

nology, no matter what, you are in touch with those who love you, even if you are self-quarantining. Face-time, Skype, text messaging, phone calls... you are never truly alone. None of us is truly alone. We are all in this together. With a short time of interruption and inconvenience of our everyday lives, we can work together to eradicate the Coronavirus. Please take the advice of those who are experts in this field and adhere to their recommendations. As my dad said, the sun will rise again tomorrow and the flowers will continue to bloom. We will be OK. We're in this together.

About Brittany Pointe Estates

Brittany Pointe Estates is a gracious Lansdale retirement community that reflects the charm of the region of France for which it is named. Situated in northern Montgomery County, residents of Brittany Pointe Estates senior living community enjoy an abundance of shopping opportunities, cultural offerings, theaters, gourmet restaurants, and beautiful parks that are nearby. Many of the nation's top hospitals and health care providers are less than an hour away in Center City Philadelphia and the surrounding areas. It is located at 1001 S. Valley Forge Road, Lansdale, PA 19446 and you can call 267-657-3106 for information.

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SENIOR LIFE

How Do You Stay Healthy?

In honor of National Nutrition Month, Wellington at Hershey's Mill asks residents how they stay healthy. Here's what they had to say:

Dorothy Cann was born in West Chester and lived in Marshalton for 61 years with her late husband, Harry Cann, Jr. Dorothy has been a lifelong member of the Holy Trinity Church in West Chester where she taught Sunday school and was a member of the Altar Guild. Dorothy was also the Co-Chairman of the "First Christmas Stocking" program. She graduated from West Chester High School (known today as Henderson B. Reed High School) and went on to graduate from the West Chester Teachers College. In her junior year of college, Dorothy was the representative for the "Laurel Blossom Princess" in the Poconos. After college, Dorothy went on to teach 4th grade in Lower South Hampton. She taught 1st aid for women during WWII at West Chester High School, was the 3rd president of the junior new century club of West Chester, and a member of the golf and country club here and in Palm Air, Florida. Dorothy was a den mother and assistant leader of the girl scouts in Marshalton. She taught Sunday school and adult classes at Marshalton Methodist Church. She always enjoyed the outdoors, gardening, golf, swimming, and bird watching. Dorothy has 2 sons, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren also. She will be 104 in June and is still going strong at Wellington!



Adam Rogers



Elaine Berkowitz



Dorothy Cann



Joan Praplaski

around the sun!
Joan Praplaski was a PhysEd and Health major at the Trenton State Teachers College (known today as the Graduate College of New Jersey). Joan is a firm believer that physical and men-

tal health go hand in hand. You must eat healthy, exercise, and think healthy too! Joan loves the daily activities at Wellington, there are activities and fitness classes for everyone. The instructors of our fitness classes offer mod-

erations for every level. Joan says, "you can be really physically fit or just starting to exercise and find a class that suits your needs here at Wellington." Joan also likes the

variation, we offer Tai-Chi, Yoga, and aquatic classes, so there is something for everyone!
Adam Rogers stays fit and healthy by watching his diet

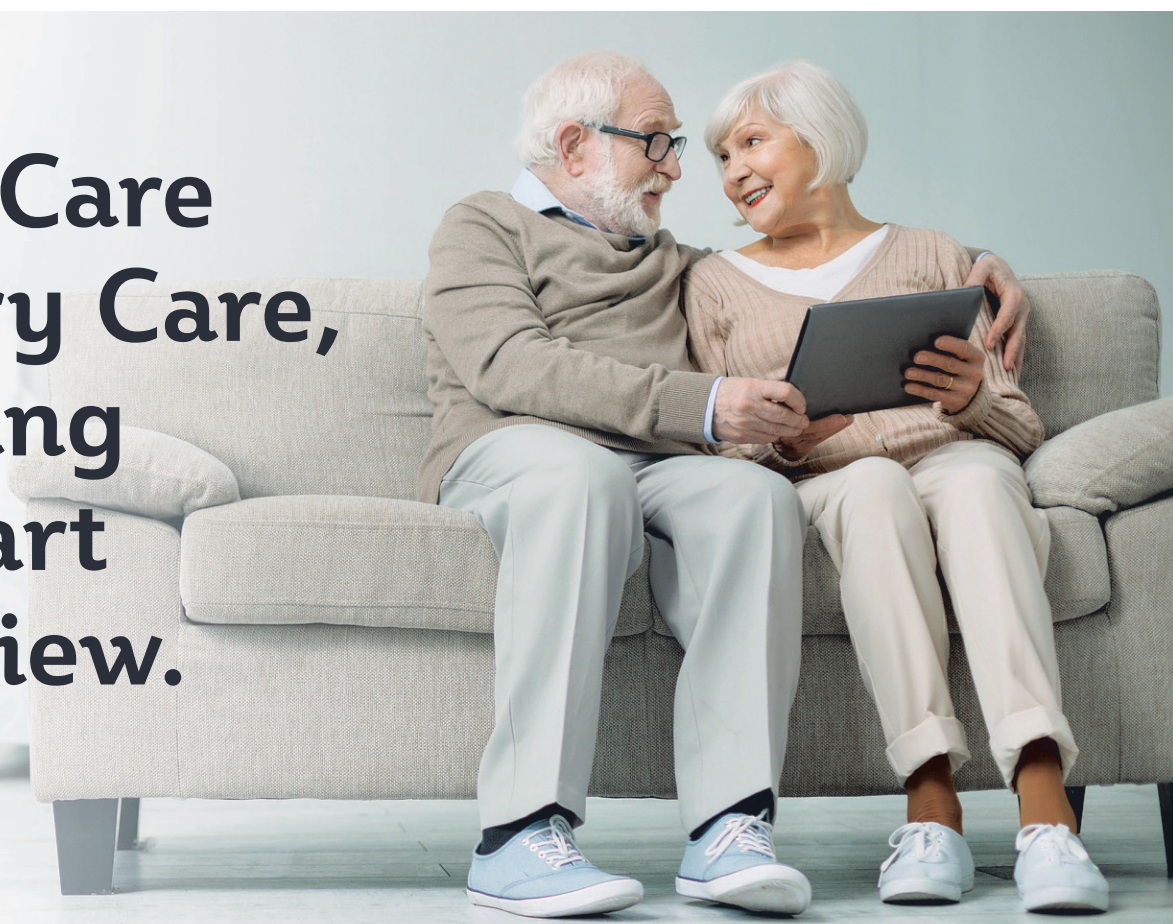
and exercising every day! He exercises on his own seven days a week in his apartment and takes advantage of our exercise programs as well. Adam attributes his health to not eating fried foods, getting regular adjustments at the chiropractor, and using exercise equipment in our fitness center. Adam does a lot of volunteering. He likes to play the piano at Wellington and Paoli Memorial Hospital, and he also volunteers at the Bryn Mawr Rehab Pharmacy. He is on the Wellington Movie Committee as well. He has lived at Wellington for six years and is 80 years old. Adam plans to join the Wellington Theatre Committee this spring!

Elaine Berkowitz has been a resident of Wellington for 12 years. She is 93 and still staying active. Elaine has always loved exercising; she has been a positive influence on her family, many of whom have followed her footsteps in making exercise a part of their daily routine. Elaine likes the exercise programs Wellington offers, like Stretch & Strength, Balance Class, and Yoga. She has tried to watch her diet but admits to sometimes eating the cake! Elaine worked until she came to Wellington and has always tried to stay as active as she could. She's had to limit her exercise this past year but still does all she can and likes that she can still participate in the exercise programs doing her own modifications. Elaine says we have the best instructors she's ever had!

Wellington at Hershey's Mills is located at 1361 Boot Road, West Chester, PA 19380.

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SENIOR LIFE

Your Medicare Minute - Ask Lu

How do I Navigate Medicare if I am 65 and Still Working?

If you or your spouse is actively employed with employer sponsored healthcare and there are more than 20 employees, you do not need to enroll in Medicare at this time. If you are not covered by a Health Savings Account at work, you may enroll in Medicare A (hospital coverage) for no additional cost if you have worked at least 40 quarters (10 years) in your lifetime.

You are eligible for the Prescription Part D coverage with your enrollment in Part A.

You can delay Medicare part B medical coverage (which has a premium) until you should decide to retire and stop working. Your employer will have to sign a late enrollment form for you, verifying that you were actively employed with employer sponsored healthcare since the time you were age 65. This will prevent you from receiving any "late enrollment penalty."

Don't hesitate to contact me should you have additional questions or concerns!

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SENIOR LIFE

Effective March 17, 2020, Social Security Offices Will Only Offer Phone Service

** Online Services Remain Available **

All local Social Security offices will be closed to the public for in-person service starting Tuesday, March 17, 2020. This decision protects the population we serve—older Americans and people with underlying medical conditions—and our employees during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, we are still able to provide critical services.

Our secure and convenient online services remain available at www.socialsecurity.gov. Local offices will also continue to provide critical services over the phone. We are working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and local governments, and other experts to monitor COVID-19 and will let you

know as soon as we can resume in-person service.

If you need help from Social Security:

- First, please use our secure and convenient online services available at www.socialsecurity.gov/online-services. You can apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits online, check the status of an application or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas), print a benefit verification letter, and much more - from anywhere and from any of your devices. We also have a wealth of information to answer most of your Social Security questions online, without having to speak with a Social Security representative in person or by phone. Please visit our online Frequently Asked Questions at www.socialsecurity.gov/ask.

- If you cannot conduct your Social Security business online, please check our online field office locator for specific information about how to directly contact your local office. Your local office still will be able to provide critical services to help you apply for benefits, answer your questions, and provide other services over the phone.

- If you already have an in-office appointment scheduled, we will call you to handle your appointment over the phone instead. If you have a hearing scheduled, we will call you to discuss alternatives for continuing with your hearing, including offering a telephonic hearing. Our call may come from a PRIVATE number and not from a U.S. Government phone. Please remember that our employees will not threaten

you or ask for any form of payment.

If you cannot complete your Social Security business online, please call our National 800 Number at

1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778). Our National 800 Number has many automated service options you can use without waiting to speak with a telephone rep-

resentative. A list of automated telephone services is available online at www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/contact/phone.html.



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SENIOR LIFE

Q&A with Maris Grove Fitness Manager

John O'Donnell, LAT, ATC, brings his expertise in athletic training and senior fitness to his role at the senior living community.

The month of March is National Athletic Training Month, which spreads awareness about the vital work of athletic trainers. With more than 25 years of experience as a member of the National Athletic Trainers Association, Fitness Manager John O'Donnell is a valuable member of the fitness staff at Maris Grove, an Erickson Living developed and managed senior living community in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania.

John spoke recently about his career as an Athletic Trainer and his role at Maris Grove.

How do you bring your expertise in athletic training and senior fitness to your role at Maris Grove? In my role as Fitness Manager at Maris Grove, I incorporate my education as an Athletic Trainer with my 20 years of experience working in the Senior Fitness field. Unlike in a traditional athletic training role, the individuals that I work with are not preparing for an athletic event. Instead, their focus is improving or maintaining their overall physical ability and may include improving gait, bal-

ance, strength, and endurance.

The theme for this year's National Athletic Training Month is "AT's Impact Health Care through Action." What does this mean to you?

This theme connects well with my role at Maris Grove. Our fitness staff partners with our onsite Medical Center, Outpatient Rehabilitation, and Continuing Care Neighborhood to provide a continuum of care for Maris Grove residents. By working together, we can provide residents with outstanding health care right on campus.

What sports did you play growing up? Football, Wrestling, Track (Pole Vault), and Rugby.

What is the best part of your job at Maris Grove? The overall feeling of family and being a part of a great vibrant community.

What type of classes and fitness programs do you offer on campus? Group exercise classes include Chair Yoga, Water Aerobics, Mat Yoga, Pilates, Fitness to the Beat, Men's Exercise Group, Circuit Training, and Balance & Mobility. We also offer Fitness Programs, including Independent Exercise and Fitness Plus - which is a group exercise program that is guided by



John O'Donnell, LAT, ATC, brings his expertise in athletic training and senior fitness to his role as Fitness Manager at Maris Grove.

a staff member who sets up equipment for residents, records exercises, and makes adjustments to routines as needed. Also, we offer Personal Training.

What's the most popular fitness class or activity? Chair Yoga is our most popular Group Exercise class, with sometimes

over 40 residents participating. Overall, the majority of Maris Grove residents exercise independently in our 3 Fitness facilities and Aquatic Center.

What do you like to do for fun? I enjoy spending time with family and friends, staying active, watching sports, and enjoying new

and delicious foods.

For more information on Maris Grove, visit www.marisgrovecommunity.com.

About Maris Grove: Maris Grove, one of 20 continuing care retirement communities developed and managed by Erickson

Living®, is situated on a scenic 87-acre campus in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania. The community is located in Delaware County and is home to more than 1,600 residents. Additional information about Maris Grove can be found at MarisGrove.com.

SENIOR LIFE

RSVP Mobilizes Volunteers to Assist Nonprofit Agencies in Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties

RSVP improves the lives of vulnerable populations in the community with programs focusing on education and wellness all of which utilize a dedicated pool of 1,200 volunteers.

During the current COVID-19 health crisis, RSVP is recruiting additional volunteers, age 18 and older, and mobilizing them to meet the evolving needs of area nonprofit agencies through-

out Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties. Nonprofits are encouraged to reach out to RSVP and communicate their pressing needs so that RSVP can mobilize volunteers to meet

growing needs of community residents during the Coronavirus outbreak.

Nonprofits should share their immediate volunteer needs to RSVP by visiting www.rsvpmc.org. RSVP will continue to coordinate the volunteer outreach effort as new needs emerge in our

communities.

RSVP is a multiservice nonprofit organization responding to community needs through volunteerism. RSVP's Volunteer Impact Programs focus on the needs of vulnerable populations (such as disadvantaged preschool children, at-

risk youth, the elderly, those with low literacy skills and veterans) and by providing support to regional nonprofit organizations. RSVP is always recruiting additional volunteers to participate in outreach programs that serve our area.

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SENIOR LIFE

White Horse Village kicks off an industry-leading, whole-person wellness program

Wellness University offers well-being baccalaureate degrees in seven focus areas. Newtown Square — White Horse Village, a thirty-year-old active senior living community located on 96 acres, kicks-off the second year of Wellness University, a lifelong learning program to improve wellness knowledge and practices, and enrich life experiences for residents. Developed internally by White Horse Village Wellness and Healthcare team members, Wellness University's College of the Whole-Person offers degrees in seven dimensions of wellness, including emotional, environmental, intellectual, physical, social, spiritual and vocational. Semesters include approximately 20 course offerings, featuring lectures, workshops, activities and excursions. "At White Horse Village, wellness goes beyond the fitness center," says Todd Canfield, Wellness Manager and LeadingAgePA Fellow in Leadership. "We broaden wellness to include the whole person, including body, mind and spirit. Our team works collaboratively to educate residents on a full range of topics and encourage optimal health for a longer, fuller life." Wellness University offers three semesters per year—

spring, summer and fall. The spring semester runs March 16 through May 22 and includes courses such as: @TX Body; The Cognitive Action Plan™ 10 Building Blocks for Better Brain Health™ by Kevin Jameson, founder of Dementia Society of America;

- Introduction to Mindfulness by Cindy Flores, Licensed Professional Counselor;
- The Cultural and Spiritual Life of the Lenape "Grandfather" Tribe by Dick Gilbert, a.k.a. Quiet Thunder;
- Chinese Medicine: A Healing Journey Through the Meridians by Liz Warner, certified in Qigong and Tai Chi for Health, Tai Chi Easy, Integral Qigong, and Medical Qigong; and
- Eat Your Way to Wellness by Dr. Esther Estes, retired physician and former pharmaceutical executive.

Wellness University participants earn bachelor's degrees with 30 credits in one dimension and a master's degrees with 30 credits in all seven dimensions. The program is offered at no cost to residents and their guests/family members, priority club members, Springton Lake Village residents and team members. White Horse Village Situated on 96 acres in southeastern Pennsylvania, White Horse



Todd Canfield, White Horse Village Wellness Manager, leads a resident in stretching exercises.

Village is a CARF-accredited active senior living community offering independent residences and a full range of healthcare ser-

vices. The community intentionally creates opportunities for extraordinary living in a vibrant, diverse community through per-

sonal growth, connectedness, and relationships. As a nonprofit organization, White Horse Village reinvests earnings back into

the organization to further the mission and vision. For more information, please visit www.whitehorsevillage.com.

SENIOR LIFE

RSVP Issues an Urgent Call for Volunteers

RSVP improves the lives of vulnerable populations in the community with programs focusing on education and wellness all of which utilize a dedicated pool of 1,200 volunteers. During our current

health crisis, RSVP has partnered with Montgomery County Health and Human Services to be the coordinating agency to mobilize volunteers who are able to assist during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Employees or any community member with a few hours to spare are encouraged to visit www.rsvpmc.org to volunteer their time to assist with local food delivery and food pantry assistance. As new needs

emerge in our communities, RSVP will update the call for volunteers encouraging the public to respond. RSVP is a multiservice nonprofit organization responding to community needs through volun-

teerism. RSVP's Volunteer Impact Programs focus on the needs of vulnerable populations (such as disadvantaged preschool children, at-risk youth, the elderly, those with low literacy skills and veterans)

and by providing support to regional nonprofit organizations. RSVP is always recruiting additional volunteers to participate in outreach programs that serve our area.

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MILESTONE

In Chester, this union stands the test of time

Family, friends help couple celebrate 77 years of marriage

By Colin Ainsworth
MediaNews Group

CHESTER » Among the city's 'round-the-clock wartime industry of February 1943, a young couple set out from Montgomery Street in the Eighth Ward along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks to the house of Elder Thomas Blakely at Fourth and Flower streets. While the minister's house where they were wed under the Commodore Barry Bridge no longer stands, they recently celebrated 77 years of marriage in one of the structures their long-lasting union has helped to build.

New Life Ministries International honored Lawrence and Mildred Robinson's Feb. 22 anniversary with a ceremony follow-

ing the Feb. 23 morning service. Lawrence led the effort in 2000 to renovate the current church building, housed in the former Food Fair market and T-shirt printing shop on West Seventh Street. The couple are the parents of New Life founding pastor Apostle Joyce E. Scott and grandparents of current Pastor Joy D. Scott.

"That whole facility was designed by him," said James Turner, New Life minister and longtime public official. He worked with the electricians, plumbers, everybody. He turned the men into carpenters - we would meet him every evening and he would lay out what we needed to do," he said. The congregation's effort paid off with a new sanctuary in nine months' time and a banquet hall in

another nine months on a limited budget. Robinson had previously helped the rebuilding of their former church, First Pentecostal Holy Church, after a late 1992 fire, and the construction of the neighboring Pentecostal Square senior citizen housing.

The construction knowledge Lawrence Robinson honed in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II was one of many skill sets he learned in a varied career path, one that brought the couple in contact with a host of prominent figures. Their near-eight decades of experience today serve as an example to fellow congregants and the community at large.

"The Robinsons are a great inspiration to every generation in our church,"



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Lawrence and Mildred Robinson stand over a cake presented at New Life Ministries International for their 77th wedding anniversary.



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Laurie Rofini, Chester County Historical Society

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the group? Will there be any free days or afternoons? Will you change seats every day? When you get off the bus, can you leave personal belongings behind? How many people will be on the tour?

With Faith Woodward, Director of Admissions and Marketing at Barclay Friends—to learn more, please call 610-696-5211 or visit our website, <http://bf.kendal.org/>.

said Turner. "They have set a model for the expectations of a good spouse, both male and female. The way Aunt Mildred in the way carries herself; certainly Uncle Lawrence the way he carries himself as a man is critical," he said. The Robinsons' example provides the congregation a "sense of things that people don't normally see today," Turner said. "You don't see family the way they operate, you don't see people working together, and you don't see people making sacrifice the way that they have made sacrifices," he said.

The couple first met during the Christmas season when Lawrence, then an acetylene burner at Sun Shipbuilding, was invited to visit the Montgomery Street home of one of his brothers' fellow workers at Eddystone's General Steel Casting Corporation, Mildred's father. "I was the type of young man that I thought I was the best-dressed guy in town," said Lawrence, prompting him to turn down a cookie from Mildred baker by her sister. "You said you didn't want to mess up your teeth," she said.

"I said 'I'm sorry, I don't have my toothbrush to clean my teeth.' From that moment on, we were in communication with each other," he said. Lawrence soon moved to his brother's newly rented house on Montgomery, a few doors from Mildred and next door to her sister.

"I was working second shift. I couldn't sleep because her and her sister would throw things at my window ... I couldn't get away ... so we got married. That's the story I tell," he

said, laughing.

Following World War II, Lawrence progressed through the area's major industries, moving on to a grueling schedule of studying shoe repair at Edward Bok Vo-Tech in Philadelphia in the morning, a second shift job at a Coatesville mental hospital, and overnight shoe repair work. The hospital work landed him at the Philadelphia V.A. Medical Center, followed by the Defense Contractor Administration Service Region Philadelphia, which entailed long training periods in Maryland on punch card computer programs and other skills. Retiring from the federal government in 1974, he then continued in the funeral business until the 1990s.

With limited formal education in his youth - raised by an aunt and uncle in Chatham, Va., followed by foster parents in Crum Lynne - Robinson attributed his success to studying people, embracing mentors and a steadfast faith in God. "I say these things... because some of them might help some other young man griping about 'I don't have a mom, I don't have a dad,' but be thankful that God sent someone in to lead or to guide. The Bible says 'it is written.' If we read and find information that we need, God will take care of you," he said.

At home, complete with renovations and additions built by Lawrence, the Robinsons played host to a list of prominent figures encountered through his career and volunteerism. Dozens of people from First Pentecostal and later New Life Ministries would

regularly have dinner prepared by Mildred after service. "I think probably every mayor in the city, every police chief, all the people from the governor's office all the way down, have come and talked with Mr. and Mrs. Robinson," Turner said, along with visiting ministers from throughout the world.

Lawrence's connections led to socializing with boxing great Muhammad Ali at the Latin Casino during his years in South Jersey, and singer Ethel Waters during her 1978 historical marker installation in Chester.

Along with photographs of their family, including five children, 18 grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren, the couple's home doubles as a museum of greater Chester history. Photographs - including Ali at the Latin, Martin Luther King III joining members of the family at a commencement exercise, and meetings with federal and military officials - cover walls of rooms, joined by commendations from local, state and federal officials. Binders neatly piled in racks document Lawrence's career and volunteer efforts with religious and government boards.

"We took care of each other, now we need to relax and continue to take care of each other," said Lawrence. "It's been well worth it. Now I can't get her to slow down," Lawrence said, joking with Mildred by his side. "Why do you want to slow me down? I'm old as the hills," she said. "We took care of each other, now we need to relax and continue to take care of each other," he said.



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