



COURTESY OF POLINA TANKILEVITCH

AGING

A LOOK AT

HOLISTIC TRENDS IN AGING

By Courtney Diener-Stokes
For MediaNews Group

As the saying goes, “aging isn’t for the faint of heart,” which is why many of us are willing to put on a brave face and make the effort to explore ways to combat the effects of getting old.

“None of us want to go down without a fight,” said Cindy Boyer, a naturopathic doctor and co-owner with Susanne Fiori of Nature’s Garden Natural Foods and Shoes in Exeter Township. “You do whatever you can to stay as healthy and functional as possible.”

Their business is 45 years old, so many of their customers have aged with the store, which has given Boyer an inside glimpse at the trends in aging from the perspective of natural remedies and what people are asking for.

Acceptance of graying

Covering up gray hair is often a top priority for those on the lower end of the active aging category. Boyer has seen a shift in the acceptance of graying more recently.

“I think that people are starting to move away a little bit from hair color,” she said. “I feel like I’m seeing more and more going au natural and letting it gray.”

Since there are still some who feel younger when they color their hair, Boyer suggested henna-based products as a wonderful solution when it comes to over-the-counter dyes.

“It’s a natural, non-chemical-based hair color solution,” she said, adding that the brand that has the best results among their customers is Light Mountain Natural. “It’s also a great moisturizer for the hair.”

Another kind of hair dye Boyer recommends that uses natural substances is by Naturtint.

“That’s more of a permanent hair color versus the henna that is going to wash out faster,” she said. “It’s ammonia free and a safer product to go with, but not as pure as henna.”

Age-related hair loss

Age-related hair loss can be experienced by both men and women. Boyer offered some solutions that she sees as the safest and healthiest way to help the body naturally grow more hair.

“A product called Hair Renew by Terry Naturally has biotin, a B complex and millet seed oil,” she said of the dietary supplement that comes in a soft gel. “These are the key ingredients that pro-

vide maximum nutrients to support healthy hair growth.”

Younger and plumper skin

Collagen has been the latest buzz word when it comes to rejuvenating aging skin, but Boyer said it’s not the only answer.

“Collagen acts as the rubber band in our joints and ligaments and the rubber band eventually gets saggy and dries out and can break,” she said. “While collagen is all fine and good, you need to bring hyaluronic acid along with the collagen because it helps assist the job to moisturize the collagen so it stays more elastic and more flexible.”

A brand that Nature’s Garden carries that makes hyaluronic acid is called Hyalogic, which comes in many forms, including a topical serum, an ingestible gummy and a liquid that you also ingest, among other forms.

“They also make some collagen products,” Boyer said. “The hyaluronic acid in the serum form helps to plump the skin and get rid of fine lines — it’s a much healthier and safer way than Botox.”

The result of this pairing is a “winning combination,” according to Boyer, that leaves skin looking younger and more plump. Beyond skin, both collagen and the hyaluronic acid offer a health of benefits to other parts of our body.

“It can help our joints, ten-

dons, ligaments, cartilage, and play a huge role in our skin,” she said. “As we age the production of both collagen and hyaluronic acid diminishes, so it’s important we continue to replenish it through supplementation. It’s like motor oil for our joints.”

Time to see results

It might take a little time to see the results of this winning combination if taken on a daily basis, but it will be worth the wait, according to Boyer.

“It will take a month to six weeks to see the effects of the collagen and the hyaluronic acid taken in combination with collagen you will notice more quickly,” she said.

When you look at the whole cosmetic realm, Boyer said it’s not inexpensive. Hyaluronic acid costs \$40 to \$60 per bottle.

“You get what you pay for in a lot of different companies out there,” Boyer said. “Because the serum is concentrated it will last a while.”

Memory loss remedy

Customers in the active aging category often express their needs to Boyer when they come into her store searching for remedies.

“One of the biggest complaints we see here is memory loss,” Boyer said.

She typically recommends they



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There has been a rise in the number of people in the active aging category embracing their grays instead of concealing them with hair color.

take a daily therapeutic dose of ginkgo biloba phytosome.

“When you bind the ginkgo biloba to that lipid you increase the absorption of that herb,” she said, referring to the phytosome. “The outcome is better memory recall, better retention and increasing memory capacity.”

Caffeine-free energy boost

A normal part of aging is the loss of energy. While many might tend to fuel up on caffeine, it’s not a good solution for everyone.

“With caffeine you are driving up heart rate and blood pressure,” she said.

Boyer shared some alternatives such as PQQ-10, which is a natural product that helps to increase energy, among other benefits.

“It acts like a dimmer switch on our brain in helping to reduce chronic degenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, and it really helps in regards to helping people to recall better and protects the mitochondria — the energy in our cells,” she said.

Red ginseng is another option Boyer recommends that is beneficial for energy that you can use daily.

“It helps support our normal circadian rhythms, and it helps us

When it comes to aging, we don’t want to go down without a fight, and there are many safe and natural avenues we can take to combat getting old.

to be better focused with better energy and stamina,” she said. “It is also an adaptogen, so it helps our body process stress and increases stamina and endurance.”

Importance of omega-3s

Boyer said one thing that goes hand in hand with aging is fish oil to get your omega-3s.

“Omega-3s are essential fatty acids that are good at helping us stay more lubricated in our joints and help lower cholesterol, brain function and heart health,” she said.

Boyer said flaxseed oil is a good alternative to fish oil for vegetarians.

“It will provide you with omega-3, 6 and 9,” she said.

Boyer stressed the importance of omega-3s in our diet, particularly as we age.

“Omega-3s are essential fatty acids, which means they are essential,” she said. “Our body requires omega-3s in every cell to function, and we don’t produce it, so you have to supplement or consume it.”

The importance of omega-3s becomes more obvious to people as they get older.

“The consequences of not getting enough is that you are going to age more rapidly and you will go from a grape to a raisin very quickly and have faster mental decline among other things,” Boyer said.

Holistic vs. mainstream products

Regardless of the avenues you choose to take to combat aging, Boyer said it’s best to go the preventative route.

“It’s better to be proactive than reactive,” she said. “These chronic conditions didn’t happen overnight, and there isn’t a magic pill that’s going to make them go away overnight.”

HOLISTIC » PAGE 3



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SPOT OF T



Thanks for the memories, on Memorial Day and every day

By Terry Alburger

Nearly two decades ago when I started working here at Brittany Pointe, I had no clue as to the wonders which awaited me. I signed on because, frankly, I needed the money and benefits. I had a vague memory that years earlier, my dad, after researching retirement communities, decided that Brittany Pointe was the best one for himself and my mom. That was good enough for me. I had no idea of the treasure I would find here.

No, not physical treasure, it was more than that. In those days we still had many residents who had been involved in World War II in one way or another. Some served, others cared for families while the spouses were away, and still others had family members in all branches of the service. I confess I did not know too much about WWII, nor did I realize the depths of sacrifice that had been made by so many during that time. No, I had no inkling of what lay ahead for me. I had taken a job working

with “old people” to make ends meet. But each day, more and more, I learned so much from this group, members of “The Greatest Generation.” Little by little I got to know them as individuals, not as a demographic. I got to hear their stories, and the stories of their families. I became fascinated. That quiet little old man over there? He was a Carrier Attack Pilot on an aircraft carrier, serving two tours in WWII and also Korea, and reached the rank of Captain. One day he was being honored by Fox News during a special D-Day commemoration ceremony, and I watched as he was interviewed. He was a humble man, dignified and well-spoken. The host asked why he was hesitant to talk about his great achievements and experiences during the war. I’ll never forget his reply: “A lot of my friends never made it back. It’s hard to talk about.” He was not alone in that sentiment. Other WWII veterans stumbled over

their words when talking about friends or family members who did not make it back home. I think of his statement often, especially around Memorial Day weekend. Yes, those who made it back are heroes, and we can never thank them enough for what they did, the sacrifices they made. But Memorial Day weekend is a time to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We remember their bravery, and the part they played in creating a better world for us. One needs only to take a glimpse of Arlington National Cemetery (to name one of many resting places) to know that we have many, many heroes to thank. It is indeed humbling. Memories are funny things. They can make you laugh and cry at the same time. It’s always good to think about the happy memories, especially memories of those who are no longer with us. The more we celebrate our loved ones, the more they are alive within each of us.

The happier the memories, the more we feel their love. I truly hope you enjoyed this past Memorial Day weekend (and every day). Perhaps you had get-togethers with your loved ones, barbecues, celebrations, even perhaps a mini-vacation to the beach — all wonderful ways to enjoy life, a life of freedom that was forged by many brave souls who came before us. As you remember the fun you may have had, I just hope you will toss a quiet “thank you” to those who made it all possible. And never forget or take for granted or misconstrue the freedoms for which they fought. And never take a moment for granted. In this topsyturvy world, anything can happen. Hug your family members tight and remind them that you love them. One of my favorite quotes is “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Now more than ever, that is true. Though this quote is often attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, there is actually no

Flags adorn the graves at Arlington National Cemetery. written documentation to support that. However, the sentiment is quite in keeping with his teachings and writings. In any case, this seems a very fitting time to adhere to this philosophy. Do you want kindness in your world? Be kind. Do you want a loving environment? Give love. Do you long for understanding? Do your best to understand others, embracing the differences between you. Do you want peace? Connect with your fellow human beings with compassion. The more than unites us, the less that can divide us. Memories — we cling to them every day, not just on Memorial Day. May we treasure them always and hold them dear. Never forget those who provided them. And do the best to live each moment to the fullest. Remember, some day you will be a memory to someone else. Make it a good one!



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FUNDRAISER

White Horse Village residents go purple with a purpose for Walk to End Alzheimer's

MediaNews Group

White Horse Village will host its third annual Walk to End Alzheimer's event on Tuesday, June 14, at 11 a.m. The nonprofit senior living community raised more than \$40,000 at its first two walks and was recognized as Rookie of the Year for 2020 and Top Continuing Care Retirement Community Award for 2021.

Open to the public, the walk is a community-wide weeklong celebration wholeheartedly supported by residents and team members who have volunteered countless hours to organize activities, including decorating, costume and exercise contests, in addition to many raffles.

White Horse Village welcomes a new special guest at this year's walk, Viton, a two-time world champion white horse owned by a local resident, Mindy Tatz Chernoff of The Resonant Horse. Chernoff is an equine specialist, TEDx speaker and author of "From Muck to Magnificence, How Cleaning Horse



A Walk to End Alzheimer's sign from a White Horse Village community walk in 2021.

Stalls Can Lead to an Astonishing Life."

Back by popular demand, DJ Malcolm Poindexter III, KYW Newsradio traffic reporter, will get toes tapping and hands clapping with a motivating Walk to End Alzheimer's playlist. Losing his father to Alzheimer's, as well as having a mother with advanced dementia, has created a personal connection for Poindexter III to the White Horse Village event. "This event means a lot to me. Hopefully, we

will raise more funds for research and development to help combat this horrible disease," commented Poindexter III.

Residents at White Horse Village are also able to participate in other less traditional ways, such as logging time in the swimming pool, working out on the elliptical machine, walking on the treadmill, as well as time working out on other exercise equipment in the active living community's Wellness Center.

"We have found ways to make sure everyone can participate, even if they can't physically make the walk," explained Wellness Manager Adam Klepfer. "There are very few residents who don't know of someone who has been affected by this disease. The outpouring of support from our community is humbling and inspiring."

"The passion and involvement of so many White Horse Village participants in the Walk to End Alzheimer's is really inspiring," said Alaina Schukraft, Walk Manager, Alzheimer's Association Delaware Valley Chapter. "Community events like the White Horse Village Walk really fuel awareness of the Association and our support

services while raising critical funds that help drive Alzheimer's disease research and our mission forward. We would not be able to help and support those impacted by this disease without the dedication of partners and volunteers like these."

White Horse Village offers a full range of senior living options and healthcare services, including Four Seasons Memory Care, a specialized facility that cares for individuals with cognitive changes. Residents benefit from structured programming available in the neighborhood environment. Life enrichment and nursing teams maximize independence and offer person-centered care in a therapeutic

setting. White Horse Village utilizes "Pathways to Engagement," a therapeutic program that uses a holistic, multidisciplinary approach to support and engage residents and their loved ones in meaningful and goal-directed activities.

The Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's is the world's largest event to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support and research. Since 1989, the Alzheimer's Association mobilized millions of Americans in the Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk; now the Alzheimer's Association is continuing to lead the way with the Walk to End Alzheimer's. Together, we can end Alzheimer's.

HEALTH

7 hours of sleep is ideal for middle-age and elderly people, study finds

By Joseph Wilkinson
Tribune News Service

Don't sleep on this study. Middle-age and older people should sleep seven hours each night for ideal rest and recovery, according to a study.

The research, published in Nature Aging, studied nearly 500,000 people between the ages of 38 and 73.

"While we can't say conclusively that too little or too much sleep causes cognitive problems, our analysis looking at individuals over a longer period of time appears to support this idea," co-author Jianfeng Feng said in a statement.

Researchers found that



TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Researchers found that people who got exactly seven hours of sleep on a consistent basis saw better mental health, better memory, increased ability to pay attention and fewer symptoms of depression.

people who got exactly seven hours of sleep on a consistent basis saw better mental health, better memory, increased ability to pay

attention and fewer symptoms of depression.

Previous studies have also suggested that seven hours is the ideal amount of sleep.

The latest study was conducted using the U.K.'s Biobank program and completed by researchers from the U.K. and China. It relied on participants reporting their own nights of sleep.

While the negative effects of sleep deprivation have been extensively studied, the researchers were confused by the downside of extra sleep.

"We don't really understand why sleeping longer would be a problem," co-author Barbara Sahakian told *The Guardian*.

Holistic

FROM PAGE 1

Boyer said the biggest issues with not taking the holistic route are the side effects you might experience.

"The effects of mainstream practices have a consequence of them being foreign and toxic to our body," she said. "Alternatively you can use some very natural products, some of which our body requires to function properly."

Nutrition for body and soul

Beyond products and

supplements that can help us age more gracefully, there is a wellness component that also needs attention and is based on how a person lives their everyday life.

"Their primary 'food' is how they live their lives when it comes to career, relationship, spiritual practice and exercise," said Cara Graver, a holistic life coach based in Chester Springs, Chester County.

Through her business, What's on Your Plate?, Graver helps people navigate changes in their lives by being able to clearly know what they are and come up with strategies for meeting their needs.

As people begin to age,

they might find themselves struggling in various areas.

"You notice yourself changing, you notice your ability to do things and your stamina, your hearing and eyesight changing, so you might find yourself having different needs than you're used to having and being kind of bummed out by that," she said. "It's time to ask yourself what you really need."

Graver explained it's about looking at all the facets of nourishment through a different lens.

"You could lament your losses, but you can also say, 'things are changing now and are different,'" she said. "Your wellness is dependent on your attitude."

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PROMOTING SENIOR WELLNESS



ADOBE STOCK PHOTO

Social engagement is an important part of a holistic approach to wellness for seniors.

Holistic approach helps seniors age successfully

By Jennifer Singley
The Hickman

The phrase “successful aging” is nothing new; it is a message we repeatedly hear through a variety of channels in the healthcare realm, mainstream media and beyond. And while the precise definition of what makes aging “successful” or not invariably depends on who you ask, at its roots it refers not to discovering the so-called fountain of youth or how to ward off wrinkles and gray hairs, but rather to aging in a way that allows us to continue to live a lifestyle that is both important to us and reflects our values. As such, a holistic approach to aging moves beyond addressing solely the medical needs of seniors and integrates the follow-

ing key components that contribute to overall health:

Socialization

According to a report by the Administration for Community Living’s Administration on Aging, over a quarter of older adults in the United States live alone. While living alone does not necessarily equate to loneliness, many seniors who are living alone are at risk of experiencing the negative effects of social isolation, including increased risk of anxiety, depression, heart disease, stroke, and risk of developing dementia. A more holistic approach to aging involves incorporating social contact where possible, such as with visiting health care professionals, community medi-

cal appointments, moving closer to family, or perhaps even moving to a retirement community that offers opportunities for social engagement.

Spirituality

Spiritual well-being refers to what gives our lives importance. For some, spiritual well-being is tied to religious beliefs and practices; for others it is more of a feeling of connectedness — to nature, music, art, social causes — or even connectedness through meditation. Seniors who have spiritual well-being report feeling less stress and its accompanying ill effects; they recognize the aspects of life that are beyond their control and are surrounded by others who

help shoulder one another’s burdens. A holistic approach to aging recognizes the significance of spiritual connectedness in living not just a meaningful life, but also a healthy life.

Movement

The benefits of physical activity are overwhelmingly positive. Moderate exercise triggers the release of endorphins, commonly known as the “feel good” hormones. Increased levels of endorphins are associated with lower anxiety and depression, better sleep and, in turn, more energy and less stress. Furthermore, regular physical activity strengthens the immune system, improves heart health, strengthens muscles and bones (which

protects against injury in case of a fall) and simultaneously presents an opportunity for socialization. A holistic approach to aging incorporates daily movement for the physical and mental benefits it offers.

When it comes to aging and the many changes that come with it, there is no single way to ensure the best quality of life for every person. However, by viewing aging through a holistic lens — one that includes the overlapping aspects of socialization, spirituality and movement and the vital roles they play in physical and mental health — we can best equip the seniors in our lives (and ourselves, for that matter) to age in a way that is both meaningful and fulfilling to them as individuals.

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READING FIRE DEPARTMENT

'A way of life'

Fire chief calls it a career after four decades

By Steven Henshaw
shenshaw@readingeagle.com

William I. Stoudt Jr. never envisioned holding the highest rank with the Reading Fire Department, but circumstances eight years ago obliged him to throw his hat in the ring.

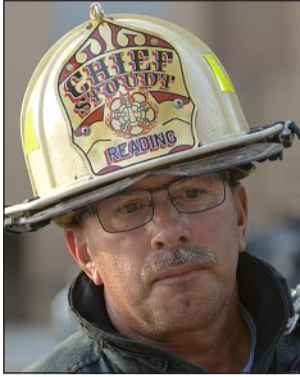
"I never looked or even thought that I would get to this rank," Stoudt said in an interview a little more than a week before the end of his 34-year career with the department, serving as chief for that final eight. "I always did have expectations at the time of being a deputy chief, but never the chief. But a lot of changes were going on, a lot of instability."

Although Stoudt hadn't longed coveted the position and the inherent administrative responsibilities, the chief's hat and helmet sure seemed a proper fit for the Reading native.

Stoudt said he stepped up in 2014 because the department needed some stability after a succession of several chiefs following the retirement of William H. Rehr III in 2011 after 13 years at the helm.

After being appointed by then-Mayor Vaughn Spencer and confirmed by City Council, Stoudt told the Reading Eagle he aimed to strike a balance between the needs of the city administration and the rank-and-file firefighters.

"My No. 1 job is to make sure that the officers and firefighters in the field have the tools they need to perform their duties and that they can go home safe at the end of their shifts to their families," he said in the 2014 interview.



Reading Fire Chief William I. Stoudt Jr.

'Reading for retirement'

Eight years later, Stoudt, 60, said he felt it was time to call it a career. His last day was Friday.

"I think I'm ready for retirement," he said in an interview where it all began, the former Liberty Volunteer Fire Company at Fifth and Laurel streets, now the Reading Area Firefighters Museum. "It's been a great ride. I've been blessed with everything I've been able to do, and everything I've been part of."

"To be part of this, from being a kid all the way to the top spot, you know, it's been a blessing. I got to work with, crawl down the hallways with, some of the greatest firefighters in the world."

Lt. Jason Batz, who is in charge of the training division, said Stoudt kept his promise of stabilizing the department and paving the way for a smooth transition to the next chief.

Stoudt met with the firefighters in a series of meetings early in his tenure and stated he wanted to get the department back on track, Batz said.

"He wasn't concerned with leaving a legacy," he

said. "He wanted to get us on solid ground where we could be operating in an efficient manner. I think we're set for a very smooth transition to the next chief."

The next chief happens to be Stoudt's cousin James Stoudt, whose selection by Mayor Eddie Moran was approved by City Council last week.

An early start

Formally, Stoudt devoted just over 40 years in the fire service, if you count the volunteer ranks. He began as a volunteer with the Liberties in 1980 following military service in the Air Force.

But he's been around fire stations his entire life and started going to fires before he could drive, pedaling a bicycle.

Stoudt said he had wanted to be a firefighter almost as far back as he spoke his first words.

As a very young child, his home on Pearl Street in south Reading was equipped with a fire bell so his dad, William Sr., a volunteer firefighter and officer with the Liberties, would know there was a fire to go out on.

"I pretty much was bred for this," he said.

As he approached the final week of his career, Stoudt said he was still processing the end.

"I don't think it has sunk in yet, the finality of it," he said.

As he had reflected on his career, fond memories from his earliest days of helping out on fires as a junior firefighter have been rising to the surface.

"We'd go to fires and help wrap up hose," Stoudt recalled. "I'd ride my bike to the fires. Bill Rehr was a second deputy at the time. I



BILL UHRICH — READING EAGLE

After a 34-year career, including the last eight as Reading's fire chief, William I. Stoudt Jr. has retired. Stoudt is sitting on a 1931 engine that was once driven by his father, William Sr., from Liberty Volunteer Fire Company, now the Reading Area Firefighters Museum.

remember he'd tell them to throw my bike on the truck and ride back to the station here. He'd have them bring me back in the truck.

"That was quite an experience at the time."

The volunteer company owned houses on both sides of the fire house.

When Stoudt got out of the Air Force in 1980, he

and his wife, newlyweds took up residence in one of them.

"I was here all the time," he said.

STOUDT » PAGE 6



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Stoudt

FROM PAGE 5

Climbing the ranks

He eventually rose to the rank of captain with Liberty Fire Company before being hired by the Reading Fire Department on June 30, 1988. He's one of two current members of the department from that class of 12 who went through training together.

Stoudt spent the bulk of his career with the rescue company housed the station at Plum and Franklin streets.

He was a driver for three years, beginning in 1990, before being promoted to lieutenant with that company.

As a firefighter, there's no better place to work. Stoudt said. It's centered in a very active area of the downtown, with incidents running the gamut from accidents to shootings and stabbings to structure fires. Sometimes firefighters don't need to be called because the events are unfolding before them as they're sitting out in front of the station.

"I spent 14 years there, the highlight of my career," Stoudt said. "On a rescue, you're part of everything — every vehicle accident, every fire. You were the first officer on building fires. I spent a lot of time with the guys, crawling down hallways."

He was promoted to deputy chief in 2008.

One fire stands out

When asked about memorable fires, Stoudt said they're all memorable, to an extent.

"You know, it's funny," he said, "you go through neighborhoods and say, 'I remember being at something here.'"

But there was one fire more than a quarter-century ago that compares to no other in the city's modern history.

On May 25, 1996, a three-alarm fire in the 1100 block of Moss Street ripped through the four-story brick building that housed the Great Factory Store, part



Fire Chief William Stoudt Jr salutes during the placing of a wreath at the 9/11 tree during the 9/11 Memorial Service held Sunday morning in City Park. Reading Mayor Wally Scott at left.



James Stoudt is Reading's new fire chief.

of the city's fading outlet district.

The three-alarm blaze spread to dozens of homes and required a citywide recall of all off-duty firefighters. Several suburban fire companies were also dispatched

"The biggest fire of anyone in my generation's career is going to the Moss Street in 1996," Stoudt said. "I was off duty that day, and they brought everyone back in. That was one time where we were like, 'Are we going to be able to stop this thing?' Because, I mean, you have that warehouse but also the back of homes all along North Ninth Street."

"You hear about the Great Chicago Fire and things like that. That was the one time you've seen its own winds and stuff being generated. If it was going to happen, that was the time."

Stoudt recalled his immediate assignment was to go around in a rescue truck to the various stations to pick up reserve firefighters and transport them to the fire.

The on-duty personnel were already at the scene. The chief at the time, Rehr, was in charge of the entire North Ninth Street side of the block.

"We were assigned to five

homes," Stoudt said. "We were in and out of buildings, trying to stop fire."

After four hours, firefighters finally got the upper hand, but not before 44 homes were damaged.

In the family

The firefighter tradition continues for the Stoudt family.

Two of his sons are involved in the fire service as volunteers.

Christopher Stoudt serves as a deputy with Muhlenberg Township Fire & Rescue, and Joseph Stoudt is a firefighter with Bernville Fire Company, where Joseph's son Dominic is a junior firefighter.

Stoudt said he'll continue to pay attention to what's happening with the Reading Fire Department, but his days of chasing fires are over.

"It wasn't just a job," he said, "it's a way of life."

As it has been for his wife, Lori.

"She's been there for the whole ride," Stoudt said. "Somehow she put up with it all: when I volunteered, leaving the house at dinner. Like when I was on the job through the years, she raised the kids and things like that, when I was working nights."



From left are Reading City Council member Stratton Marmarou and Reading Fire Chief William Stoudt Jr. during the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Reading Fire Department's Ninth and Marion Street Station.

"And she's been there during the tough times, too, when I come home after a bad day."

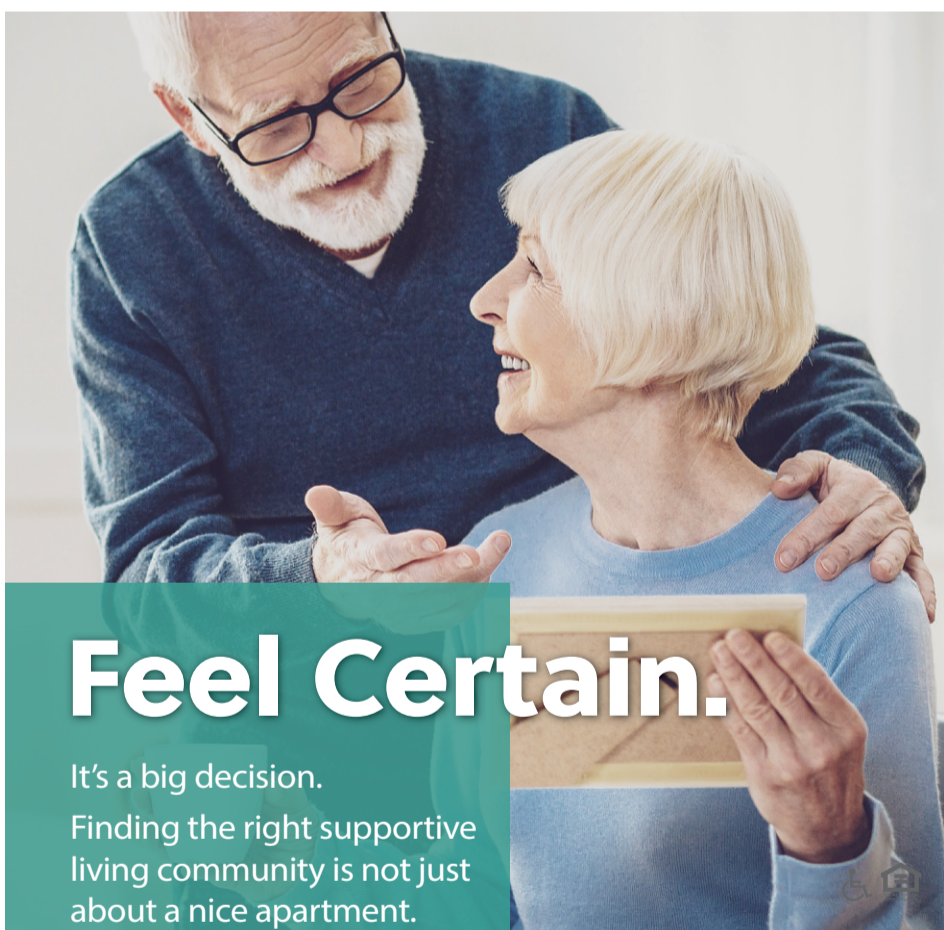
Though he didn't want to dwell on it, he indi-

cated by his somber tone and body language that he was referring to the shifts in which lives were lost in a fire.

Good shifts and bad

shifts — they're all behind them now.

"The biggest thing she's looking forward to is not having to iron uniforms," Stoudt said with a laugh.



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HEALTH

A healthy move

Free health fair connects medical students with seniors

By Mike Urban
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There are numerous obstacles for older Latinos in Berks County and nationwide when it comes to getting proper health care, local Latino leaders say.

Language barriers, a lack of money or insurance, and transportation difficulties can prevent them from receiving care.

So the Daniel Torres Hispanic Center is focusing on connecting that population with medical services long term through events like the free health fair it held in Reading on Wednesday.

About 100 seniors attended, some of whom hadn't seen a doctor in years.

The fair was held in the senior center at Christ Episcopal Church, 435 Court St., and presented by the His-

panic Center in partnership with Drexel University College of Medicine at Tower Health in Wyomissing, and Reading Hospital's street medicine team.

"Health equity is a real crisis, and there are seniors who aren't getting the medical attention they need," said Michael Toledo, president and CEO of the Hispanic Center. "So we are committed to breaking down those barriers and helping the underserved."

The Hispanic Center is open to all in the community, he pointed out, not just Latinos.

At the fair were 37 Drexel students and three street-medicine team members who helped the seniors through seven stations to educate them on health and wellness.

The seniors had their eyes, weight, glucose levels

and blood pressure checked, had their feet examined for diabetes-related sores, and received mental health and nutritional guidance.

The fair was the first the medical school has held in Reading since it opened in August, and shows the school's commitment to community service, said Dr. Daniel Schidlow of the college of medicine.

The college hopes to engage in more partnerships and hold more events, giving the students valuable experience and a connection to the community while also helping local people, he said.

"We're putting into reality what the students have come to school to do," he said.

Dr. Eugene York of Tower Health directs the college's Health Advocacy Practicum, a mandatory course that is primarily focused on community engagement experiences, helping students learn firsthand how to identify and address social determinants of health, and the barriers that underserved or disabled patients face to accessing health care or staying healthy.

He, too, spoke of how important such events are for the students and the community.

The event wasn't intended to replace the regular medical care some of the attendees receive, but to supplement it, he said.

Lucy Martinez of Reading, who attended the event, had visited her doctor just a day earlier, but said she knew of other Hispanic Center members who hadn't been to a medical office for some time and appreciated the assistance.

Drexel student Priscilla Lozano of Miami helped organize the school's partici-



MIKE URBAN - READING EAGLE

Drexel University College of Medicine at Tower Health student Paul Scalzo and Reading Hospital street medicine team member Jodylynn Mill, center, examine the feet of Gladis Morales of Reading during Wednesday's free health fair for seniors.

pation and said that some of the seniors she spoke with hadn't been to a doctor in five years or more.

One woman in particular spoke of how she lived alone without insurance,

so she was connected with the street medicine team for follow-up care.

That's the type of problem the Hispanic Center wants to continue to help solve with assistance from

its partners, Toledo said.

"We can't do it alone, but health inequity isn't going away, so we need to keep working together to have a positive impact on wellness in the community," he said.



MIKE URBAN - READING EAGLE

Drexel University College of Medicine at Tower Health student Josh Hancock checks the eyes of Jose Gonzalez of Reading during Wednesday's free health fair for seniors in Reading.

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