



HILL HOUSE – SENIOR RESIDENCE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2022

HILL HOUSE HAPPENINGS – SPRING 2022

Every once in a while, I find it helpful to revisit and review important things I'm involved with in my life. Participating on the Board of Directors of a congregate senior housing program, Hill House, is one of those important things. What is so important about senior congregate housing, anyway?

The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development defines it as a program that "...prevents premature and unnecessary institutionalization of frail elderly, non-elderly disabled, and temporarily disabled persons; provides a variety of innovative approaches for the delivery of meals and non-medical supportive services while making use of existing service programs; fills gaps in existing service systems; and ensures availability of funding for meals and other programs necessary for independent living." With the usual concise government language, this pretty much describes the "what" of congregate housing.

What is missing from this definition is the "so what?" of congregate senior housing that is so important to me.

Our residents are people who have contributed to our community throughout their lives, establishing homes, raising families, working in their careers and building our community. But they are at a point in their lives when their self-sufficiency and their ability to continue to contribute needs a bit of help in the form of the services

defined by HUD. That combination of services has the effect of impacting the lives of congregate housing residents in many significant ways. Studies show that residents are happier, show more independence and live longer and healthier lives than seniors who are isolated and do not have congregate housing's support structure. That alone should be reason enough to support congregate senior housing. But, as those TV commercials trumpet, "Wait, there's more!"



When those services are made available, we see a flowering of talents and abilities in residents that continues to enrich their lives and the life of our entire community. Our residents raise money to buy holiday gifts for clients of the Town Department of Human Services. Some of our residents have gone to local schools to share their life experiences with school children whose own grandparents aren't within a day's journey. They've even enhanced their own self-sufficiency by raising half the cost of a new bus when the old one was no longer adequate.

In short, Hill House's congregate housing model provides the kind of place where people are supported in living their lives to the fullest; securely, meaningfully, as integral parts of the community they continue to build. That's why I'm involved.

~ Sam Deibler, *President*

HILL HOUSE RESIDENTS GIVING TO OTHERS

by *Carole McIvor*

Friendship and caring are the heart and soul of Hill House residents. Their projects include:

1. Recently the HH residents collected \$506 to donate to the World Central Kitchen Charity, which provides food for those struggling in Ukraine.

2. The HH residents kindly share with the family of a deceased resident a beautiful sympathy card and a \$50 donation to the resident's favorite charity.

3. Seniors for Seniors: The residents are assembling gift bags of toiletries to be given to needy seniors in the Greenwich community.

Seniors Helping Seniors – Christmas in July

by Jeanette H. Clonan

For several years, Hill House residents have organized a Holiday Giving Program at Christmas time. Initially the program was implemented by placing “Giving Trees” in the community. With the advent of COVID, CVS gift cards were purchased through donations obtained from GoFundMe. This past Christmas, funds raised were distributed to “in need” seniors in Greenwich, as identified by the Town of Greenwich Human Services Department. Inspired by the success of that effort, Hill House resident Marilyn Machi came up with an idea for an additional program that, as she said, “Would let these same senior recipients know that they’re thought of not just at the holidays but year ‘round.”

A post-Christmas survey was conducted among the gift card recipients asking them to specify what products would be most useful to them in the future. Toilet paper topped the list with shampoo, deodorant, hand lotion and soaps following suit.

At a residents’ meeting, Marilyn pitched her proposal to her Hill House neighbors. She had scoured the Dollar Store and was delighted to find that an assortment of five or more personal items could be purchased for just one dollar each – meaning each \$5.00 donated would provide a bag of at least five personal necessities. Marilyn asked the residents to consider donating \$20.00 to the program, at a rate of \$5 per month over four months. Each \$20 gift would fill four gift bags! Residents of Hill House and other volunteers would assemble the gift bags and work with the Human Services Department’s social workers to handle the distribution of the bags in July. Not surprisingly,



the residents in attendance responded enthusiastically to Marilyn’s “Christmas in July” plan.

To date, almost half of the residents of the sixty-one HH units already have stepped up to support the program. Marilyn’s goal is to assemble 200 gift bags through the generosity of at least 50 of the residential units. HH’s program director Lisa Crowley praised Marilyn and her cohorts. “It’s remarkable,” Lisa said about the formation of the project. “The residents recognized that outreach to less fortunate seniors in town shouldn’t be confined to the holidays. By contributing their time and a modest donation, they have created another resident-driven Hill House program where Seniors are Helping Seniors.”

Hill House Award to the Board



There are so many good things about Hill House that it would be difficult to list them all. However, the Hill House Board easily comes to mind when we count our blessings.

The Board continues to support the Hill House community and continues to act as a team with us, for which we are most grateful. In January we presented the members of the Board of Hill House Senior Residence with a plaque with the inscription “Our lives are enriched by your wondrous deeds and dedication to our home, Hill House.” This is resident, Ann Faragassos’s “right on” perspective, shared by the Hill House residents. Thank you to the Board for your continued support!

Joan Anderson

President

Hill House Resident Association

Garden Club of Old Greenwich Winter & Spring Programs

by Beth Eaton

The Garden Club of Old Greenwich brought some Winter cheer on February 25th in the form of Amaryllis Bulbs for our friends to grow in their apartments. Lisa procured a group of containers and we brought along the bulbs, soil and helping hands to pot them up. Some quick info on Amaryllis. As with all bulbs, the flower has already formed inside the bulb; it just needs water to send out roots and sunlight to start growing. Basically, you are mimicking outdoors growing conditions. It will take several weeks for the leaves and flower stalk to emerge, and several more weeks for blooming; the amount of sunlight determines the growing schedule.



Evelyn Fiore's 104th Birthday

by Christina McIntyre

March 8th was Evelyn Fiore Day in Greenwich. On Evelyn's 104th birthday, First Selectman Fred Camillo presented her with a plaque and made the proclamation.

Evelyn's daughter Allison and many Hill House residents were in attendance. There was a large birthday cake and purple balloons (purple being Evelyn's favorite color).

Evelyn has had a most interesting life. She worked for a company called Photoplay. She wrote a version of her life story called *Mugable Mary*. Ava Gardner gave her a makeup lesson and she had a drink with Frank Sinatra at the Stork Club.

After Evelyn and Sal were married, they lived briefly in Georgia; but she has spent much of her life in Connecticut and we are so happy that she is now part of our Hill House family. She has quite a remarkable life story!



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Thank You!

The Hill House Residents' Annual Art Show

by Judy Gordon

Exciting news!! The Hill House Residents Annual Art show is scheduled for early June. Resident artists are enthusiastically preparing for the event and hoping health and safety conditions will allow visitors to enjoy the show.

The number of residents participating in the arts program has increased as new project ideas are explored. Button art is one such endeavor, and photography is another. A newer resident Maureen Van Deusen, who is a watercolorist has been working with fellow residents who are interested in exploring that medium, and paintings using acrylics continue to be created by the talented residents with the help of their wonderful instructor, Lucie Andres.

The exhibit will be installed on the Bridge, a meaningful connection between the old and new building and a bright space for attractive and easy viewing of the art works. Stay tuned for details.





St. Patrick's Day
Valentine's Day
Christmas Dinner

*Collage created by
Kathy DiGiovanna*



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All pictures courtesy of Lisa Crowley.

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