

THE COLUMNS

VASSAR-WARNER HOME'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

A LETTER FROM ERICKA VON SALEWS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For 152 years, Vassar-Warner Home has provided a safe environment for more than 2,000 Hudson Valley seniors -- allowing them to remain as independent as possible and treating them with dignity, respect and compassion.

The columns of our front facade, which this newsletter is named after, symbolize the strength of both this historic building and the Vassar-Warner family. As the only non-profit Adult Care Facility with an Assisted Living Program in Dutchess County, we must work together, like columns, to give our residents the support that they need.

Our residents make up a culturally, socially and economically diverse community in which the staff, volunteers and trustees seek to provide the highest quality level of care, helping residents to truly feel at home. The Home believes in nurturing both body and spirit, celebrating community and personalizing services to suit individual needs.

Vassar-Warner Home is unique as it offers a home to some of the poorest residents of the Hudson Valley, never refusing services when their income no longer covers the cost. This would not be possible without the ongoing support of the Vassar-Warner Home Foundation, an independent private foundation that supports the highly sought-after work provided by the Home. Due to the high demand for our services, however, the Vassar-Warner Home Foundation is not as strong as it once was. After many years of unwavering support, the Home is slowly losing its constituency of long-time supporters.

In an effort to lessen the burden on the Home's supporting foundation and help fill the gap for low-income residents who would otherwise have very limited living options available to them, we are asking you, our community, to join us in supporting the continuation of our services. We invite you to reflect on the ways that Vassar-Warner Home has benefitted you, your loved ones or your community and consider how you may be able to provide additional strength in its time of need.

Vassar-Warner Home needs your support now more than ever.
Please click the button below to make a contribution.

Hugs,

Ericka Von Salews

[Donate Now](#)

MENTAL HEALTH MEMO: TOO OLD FOR THERAPY? THINK AGAIN.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), **one in five adults experiences mental illness each year** in the United States. Conditions include depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder, among many others. According to NAMI, **people with depression have a 40 percent higher risk of developing cardiovascular and metabolic diseases** than the general population, and **people with serious mental illness are nearly twice as likely to develop these conditions.**

People with mental health conditions often find psychotherapy, otherwise known as "talk therapy," to be a helpful resource. Many variations of therapy exist, and factors like someone's personal situation and insurance coverage may determine their overall treatment plan. According to Mental Health America, talking with a therapist or counselor can help you deal with thoughts, behaviors, symptoms, stresses, goals, past experiences, and other areas that can promote recovery. While discussing personal matters with a therapist can be challenging, it provides the opportunity for an emotional release in a supportive environment.

Some of the primary benefits of talk therapy include: feeling stronger in the face of challenges; changing behaviors; examining ways of thinking that affect how you feel; healing pains from the past; building relationship skills; determining goals; strengthening self-confidence; handling strong emotions like fear, grief or anger and enhancing problem solving skills.



While talk therapy boasts many benefits, barriers such as access, availability, clinician workforce limitations, ageism, and stigma often prevent older adults from receiving the care they need. For some, the false belief that mental health decline is a normal part of aging fuels existing hesitations about pursuing therapy later in life. **A study** published by the National Library of Medicine found that **major depression affects 1 to 10 percent of people aged 60 and above** and **as many as 90 percent do not receive proper treatment.**

In a recent **AARP article**, geriatric psychiatrist, Daniel Plotkin, said: "Nearly 20 percent of our older-adult population suffers from one or more mental health and/or substance use conditions, but mental health services account for less than 4 percent of Medicare expenditures."

Despite existing barriers, therapy can serve as a helpful tool for anyone, no matter their age or mental health status. While it can take time to find the right therapist for you, most will offer free consultations and telehealth sessions for those who cannot meet in person.

If you or someone you love is considering therapy, here are some resources to get started:

- Ask your **primary care doctor** or **neurologist** for a referral.
- Check out The American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry's **List of Geriatric Psychiatrists**.
- Psychology Today's **Find a Therapist** online tool.
- **APA's Psychologist Locator**.
- **ZenCare Therapist Database**.
- Private insurers, Medicare, and Medicaid all have **lists of in-network providers**.

MARCH ACTIVITY LINEUP

3/23, 2 PM
Music Therapy with Christina

3/24, 3:30 PM
DIY Fuzzy Cuddly Kittens

3/28, 2:30 PM
March Birthday Party

3/31, 4 PM
Make a Pom-Pom Wreath

TOP TIPS TO KEEP YOUR SPACE TIDY

Warmer weather will be here before you know it and, for many people, spring means a fresh start. Deep cleaning, purging unneeded or outdated items, and getting organized are some of the ways spring cleaning can be embraced, but let's admit – it can be overwhelming to figure out where to begin.

Shows like Netflix's "The Home Edit" and "Tidying Up with Marie Kondo" depict wild transformations of messy spaces into gloriously color-coded, organized, and simplified havens. From overflowing closets to cluttered living areas, the focal points of these shows are often familiar to viewers struggling to keep their own spaces in order. The experts recommend systems, routines, mantras, and organizing products to help their clients transform their space, and viewers watch in awe, hoping that they, too, can achieve such pristine organization in their own living environments.

Though it's not always easy, maintaining a clean space can have a tremendous impact on your well-being. Clutter has been linked to stress and anxiety, and can hinder productivity, mental clarity, and overall happiness. The good news is that you don't need the assistance of reality show hosts or organizing professionals to make a difference in your environment. Small steps can equate to significant changes, such as:

Follow the "Three Pile Rule." Take stock of your belongings and divide them into three piles: keep, donate, and toss. Don't overlook outdated papers, expired cosmetics, medications, and duplicate or "just in case" items that can be replaced quickly and cheaply if needed in the future.

Determine what you love, need, and use regularly, then donate or toss the rest. You can use this technique to organize a closet, drawer, bin, or entire space, but don't bite off more than you can chew in one sitting. Try chipping away at clutter a little bit at a time to avoid burnout.



Simplify Décor. Consider reducing the number of tchotchkes you have on display to create space for what makes you happiest. Prioritize sentimental items, like a few framed photographs, a couple of favorite books, and other decorative items that mean something special to you. Another perk of simplifying? With less clutter, it's much easier to dust and clean around your favorite items to keep your space sparkling.

Group Similar Items Together. Whether you're organizing socks, vinyl records, important documents, or seasonal clothing – grouping together like objects can help you store, find, and purge. If you're taking stock of what you have in order to sort similar items together, you may realize you have duplicates or too many of one thing. This can help you decide what to donate or toss, and create more space for your favorite belongings.

Give it a Home. To make it easier to locate what you need, designate homes for your possessions. Having a system makes it easier to maintain a clean and organized space and can save you time when you're wondering where you put something. Choose the most accessible spots for items you use the most, and store away lesser used things for when you need them.

Organize Regularly. Instead of waiting to do an annual "spring cleaning," add organizing to your regular routine. Tackling small projects on a regular basis will reduce overwhelm and may even boost your motivation for other things. Admiral William H. McRaven authored the book "Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life... and Maybe the World," in which he suggests that minor tasks like making your bed in the morning can lead to a domino effect that may change the world. While this may seem far-fetched to some, accomplishing goals of any size can stimulate pride, happiness, and a sense of accomplishment, and that sounds like a win!

COMBATting ISOLATION: FIVE WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED

Finding ways to meaningfully connect with others can be challenging in this day and age, but pursuing and nurturing companionship has undeniable benefits that can improve your overall health and well-being. These benefits include longer life expectancy, improved quality of life, boosted mood, and even the potential for improved cognitive function (National Institutes of Health, 2019).

While the benefits of human connection are undeniable, the pandemic led to increased seclusion for many, causing an alarming increase in loneliness and social isolation. According to the NIH, negative side effects of these conditions can include high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, weakened immune function, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, dementia, and, in some severe cases, death.

If you find yourself feeling lonely or socially isolated, or if you are just craving more interaction with others, here are five opportunities to consider:

Call or Meet Up With a Friend or Loved One.

You can connect on the phone, through video calling services like Zoom or face-to-face if distance and schedules allow. If you enjoy each other's company, perhaps you can connect every week or month!

Participate in Exercise or Health Programming.

Enrolling in an exercise class, joining a gym, or simply getting outside when it's nice can lead to opportunities for socialization. The more you show up, the more familiar you'll become with those around you and vice versa. Plus, you're sure to see other health benefits from working out regularly!

Follow Your Passions.

Do you like to read? Consider joining or starting a monthly book club. Are you interested in a sport, game, or craft? Search for groups or individuals near you who are passionate about the same activity.

Not only will you have the chance to lean into something you're passionate about, but you'll also have a chance to create lasting bonds with others who share that passion.

Learn or Lean Into Technology to Bridge Gaps.

Social media can have its ups and downs, but staying in touch with family and friends is a significant benefit for many users, especially when geographical distance keeps them apart. Facebook and other social networking sites aside, you can leverage the web to learn about events and opportunities in your community, and technologies like Zoom allow you to mingle with friends virtually. As long as you practice internet safety, maintain a healthy amount of screen time, and ask for help from others, if needed, technology can be a great tool to increase connection.

Volunteer Your Time.

Find a local organization or cause that you are passionate about and see if they are looking for volunteers. Local Chamber of Commerce directories or websites like VolunteerMatch.org can be helpful search tools. Nonprofits often seek out committee and board members, day-of-event volunteers, and office volunteers to support their operations and grow their impact. Seek out something that will land you in a group setting and then make a point to socialize with the other volunteers and staff. You never know whom you may meet!

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Residents

3/3 Barbara Lake 3/23 Dorothy Pitti
 3/5 Kaye Merrihaw 3/27 Clifton Allen
 3/15 Helen Crose 3/27 Grete Licis
 3/19 Donna O'Neill

Staff

3/18 Lucy Cannella



RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: JOAN MCGRATH



Born in Pennsylvania, Joan has been a resident of Poughkeepsie since the age of twelve. Her greatest achievements include her career at Central Hudson, where she worked in customer service for nearly forty years, and her successful marriage, which resulted in one son. In her free time, Joan enjoys knitting, reading, or spending time with her cat, Lucy. Joan also enjoys bowling, golfing, and shopping.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: LORI ALLEN



Lori Allen is a lifelong resident of Poughkeepsie, NY, and a longstanding member of the Vassar-Warner Home family -- her grandfather lived in Vassar-Warner's original men's home on Main Street. Lori has built her career over the last thirty years, working as a cook, dietary aid, dining room supervisor, and more. She was named one of New York State's Top 50 Workers in Service for her dedication and care. A lover of all animals - but mostly otters, ravens, and elephants - Lori enjoys spending time in nature, walking scenic trails, or fishing. In her spare time, Lori also enjoys reading, watching TV, or listening to music, especially Earth Wind & Fire.

COLUMNS CORNER: WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND TOWN

3/23, 10 AM Kingston Winter Farmers Market | 272 Wall St. Kingston, NY

3/27, 9 AM Virtual Gentle Yoga with Kathy Carey | To register contact, Sue Wixon at **914-523-8400** or email swixon@pinehillcommunitycenter.org. | For more info.: pinehillcommunitycenter.org

3/29, 5 PM Virtual Meditation | To register contact, Sue Wixon at **914-523-8400** or email swixon@pinehillcommunitycenter.org. | For more info.: pinehillcommunitycenter.org



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Effective October 2022

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Effective October 2022

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* = Community Member + = Staff Member
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