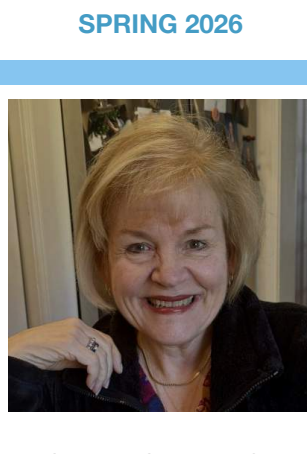
SOUTH
COASTAL
VILLAGE
VOLUNTEERS

Helping Older Adults Live Independently

SPRING 2026



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Claudia Thayne

Spring Greetings!

Spring is a time of optimism for me. Despite a cold, sometimes harsh, winter, warmer days encourage my daffodils to sprout and burst into a beautiful sunshine yellow. Birds have returned, and their chorus begins early in the morning. This makes me happy, as I am an early riser and enjoy being greeted by their songs.

Spring also is a time of affirmation. As long as there are good people like you who want to donate their time and friendship to our members, I'm encouraged and determined. Our wonderful volunteers are the "secret sauce" of SCVV's success these past six years.

To give perspective, we now have 90 members–48 of whom requested services in March. We have 170 active volunteers and in March, 69 provided a total of 253 services, contributing 602.5 hours of their time. This is outstanding! We will celebrate our volunteers on April 30 at 3:00 p.m. and thank them for all they do. Volunteers: *Rsvp here.*

Not surprising, transportation is our most requested "ask," followed by home services. We are seeing an increase in requests for respite visits to give family caregivers a break for about 90 minutes. Volunteers step in to provide nonmedical companionship for seniors with special needs. We have a small group of volunteers who really feel comfortable visiting members who may have a disability or are recovering from a serious illness. We would like to grow this team.

SCVV is planning a workshop for volunteers who are interested in learning more about respite visits. We have talented and experienced specialists who have offered to conduct the sessions. A date and time are not yet set, but I'd like to know who is interested in being on a team of respite volunteers. It is likely that this will be a local, offsite workshop. If you are interested, please reach out to me at *chair@SouthCoastalVillageVolunteers.org* and let me know. Personally, I find keeping someone company to be rewarding. Like most volunteers, helping others gives me a sense of accomplishment. It is purposeful and good.

On another positive note, our Lunch and Learns, held the second Thursday of the month, are gaining traction. The first, on February 12, homed in on emergency preparedness for Delaware residents. In March Chesapeake Hearing's Dr. Hannah Wilson presented "Total-Body Health Begins with Better Hearing Health." In April Karen Holstein provided information about Blue Zones, where older adults live to be more than 100, and outlined their common attributes—including nutrition, exercise, engagement, and lifestyles—that contribute to longevity. (See the three stories below for more details on these programs.)

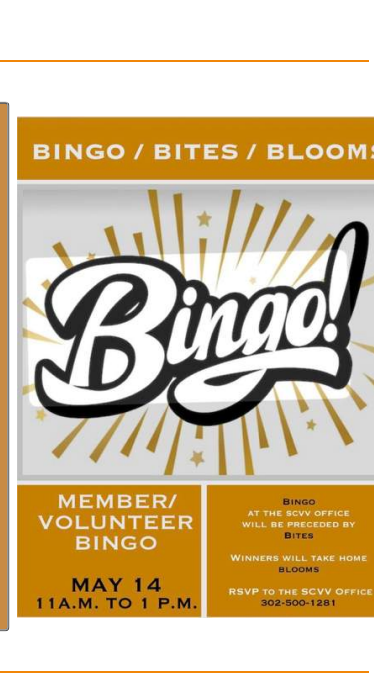
Our next Lunch and Learn is May 14 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. We'll be playing Bingo and enjoying easy-to-eat finger foods, savory dips, and hearty grazing snacks between rounds. *(See the poster below.)* Join us in the fun! Call SCVV at 302-500-1281 if you need a ride.

Enjoy the warmer days ahead!

In This Issue

Scroll Down to Read These Stories

Grief Support Visits Now Offered
Meeting Daughters of the British Empire
Book Club Babes
Spreading the Word at the Addy Sea
VFW Hosts SCVV Representatives
Dine & Donate at Northeast Seafood
Development Team Report
Member Spotlight: The Boylstons
Volunteer Spotlight: Len Caro
Get Ready for an Emergency
Better Hearing Matters
Healthy Living: The Blue Zones
Preventing Financial Scams
Fallproofing Your Home


BINGO / BITES / BLOOMS
Bingo!
MEMBER/ VOLUNTEER BINGO
MAY 14
11A.M. TO 1 P.M.
Bingo at the SCVV office will be preceded by Bites
Winners will take home blooms
RSVP to the SCVV office 302-500-1281

Grief Support Visits Now Offered

Chris Powers, Membership Coordinator

"Grief is the price we pay for love." — *Queen Elizabeth II*

No one escapes loss and grief. Grief is often unexpected and certainly unwanted. It can feel overwhelming, and it can be easy to believe that it is something with which we are stuck. It does not have to be that way. Grief is a process, and maybe the most important part of the process is to have our grief witnessed—having someone to talk to.

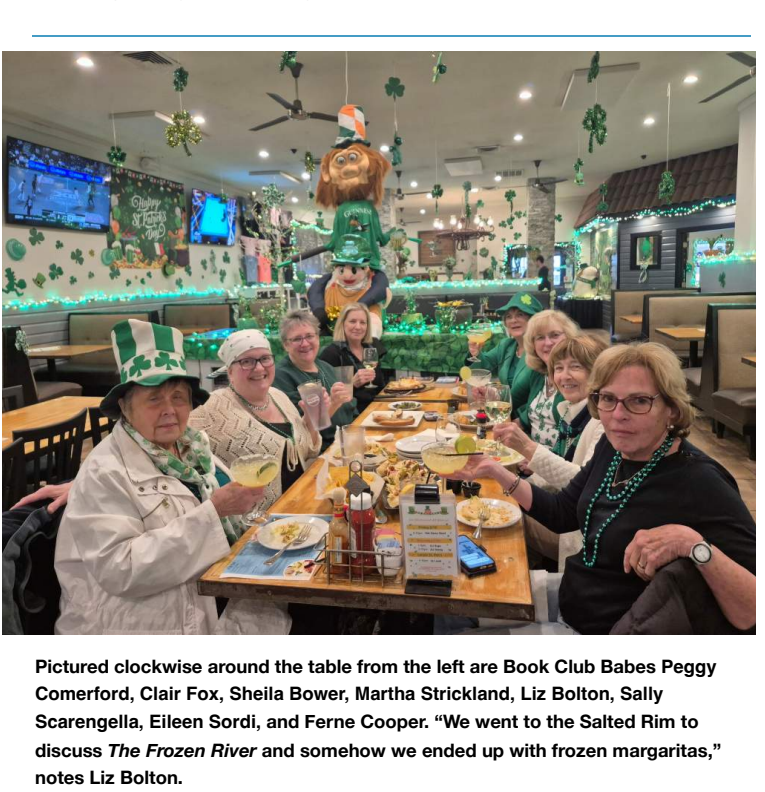
The South Coastal Village Volunteers is proud to now offer members a compassionate visit, with an emphasis on processing grief. SCVV volunteer Maureen Flaherty is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Certified Grief Educator. To schedule a private compassionate visit with Maureen in your home, please call the SCVV office at 302-500-1281. Our staff will assist you in arranging a convenient time.

Thank you, Maureen, for generously sharing your talent and kindness with our members and for supporting them through difficult times.

SCVV Meets Daughters of the British Empire

Liz Bolton, Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator

Romas Laskauskas and Liz Bolton of SCVV (front left and center) met with the Daughters of the British Empire on March 28 to introduce them to the South Coastal Village Volunteers. "They were interested in the SCVV mission because DBE has had a longstanding history of helping seniors from the early 1900s," said Liz. She and Romas explained the services that SCVV provides to members. "They all agreed that these types of services are needed by seniors," she added. "And they were gracious enough to donate $100 to SCVV."



Pictured clockwise around the table from the left are Book Club Babes Peggy Comerford, Clair Fox, Sheila Bower, Martha Strickland, Liz Bolton, Sally Scarengella, Eileen Sordi, and Ferne Cooper. "We went to the Salted Rim to discuss *The Frozen River* and somehow we ended up with frozen margaritas," notes Liz Bolton.

Book Club Babes: *The Frozen River*

Liz Bolton, Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator

The SCVV Book Club Babes met on March 28 to discuss *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon. The main character is an experienced midwife who is asked to look at a man who was found dead in a frozen river. After she gives her assessment on how this person died, a doctor comes in and discounts her assessment. Because the midwife is a woman, her knowledge and experience did not count.

A long discussion ensued among club members about how centuries ago, women were not able to become professionals in fields such as medicine, business, law, and the military—barriers that are foreign to us now. In the Cherokee nation, however, a woman's status is different. Women own their land and are in charge of everything related to the family. If a Cherokee woman wants to get rid of her husband, all she would have to do is put his belongings outside the teepee. "Hit the road, Jack!"

The April book discussion was *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. In May we will read *This Tender Land* by William Kent Krueger. June's book selection is *The French Gardener* by Santa Montefiore. The book club that month will be meeting at a local farm, where we will be given an educational tour of the herb and vegetable garden and enjoy a tea party.

The book club will meet again in September. Come and join these wonderful discussions and field trips with the SCVV Book Club Babes. Contact *Lizbeachbum50@gmail.com* if you are interested.

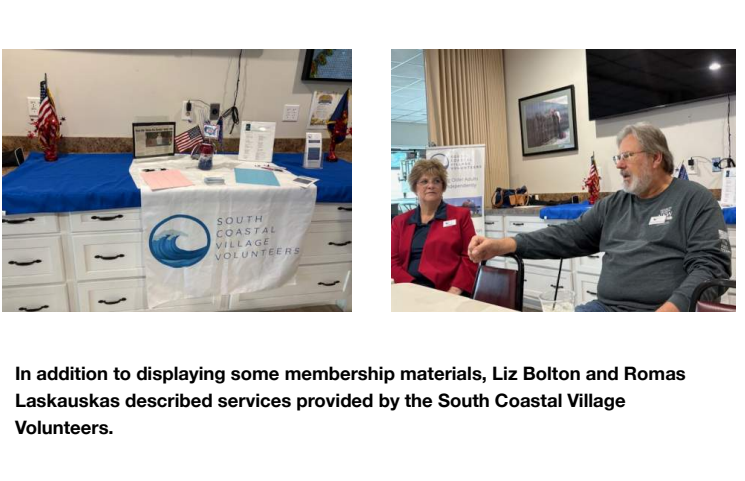
Spreading the Word at the Addy Sea

On April 12 the South Coastal Village Volunteers had an information table at the Addy Sea for its annual event to benefit the Bethany Beach Volunteer Fire Department. Liz Bolton and Dottie Schmidt represented SCVV on the oceanfront lawn, where they distributed rack cards and told attendees what we do. Local businesses welcomed visitors with delicious food and entertaining music. A number of SCVV volunteers were present to enjoy the afternoon. We thank the Addy Sea for including us in this 2026 benefit.

VFW Hosts SCVV Representatives

SCVV outreach partners Liz Bolton and Romas Laskauskas spoke to a small group at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7234 in Ocean View on April 19 to promote the South Coastal Village Volunteers. Romas started by thanking them for all they do, saying, "You can never thank volunteers enough."

Liz then explained SCVV's goal to keep seniors in their homes as long as possible, detailing the Village's policies that make volunteering so flexible. She spoke of the loneliness experienced by many older people and how important volunteers are to helping our members lead meaningful and happy lives.



In addition to displaying some membership materials, Liz Bolton and Romas Laskauskas described services provided by the South Coastal Village Volunteers.

Romas addressed membership, its affordability, and its value. He enumerated the wide variety of services available to members and related some anecdotes illustrating how important the volunteers can become to members. Everyone was moved when Romas said that he had been asked to deliver the eulogy at the funeral of a member with whom he had become close and that he would speak again at the burial ceremony to follow.

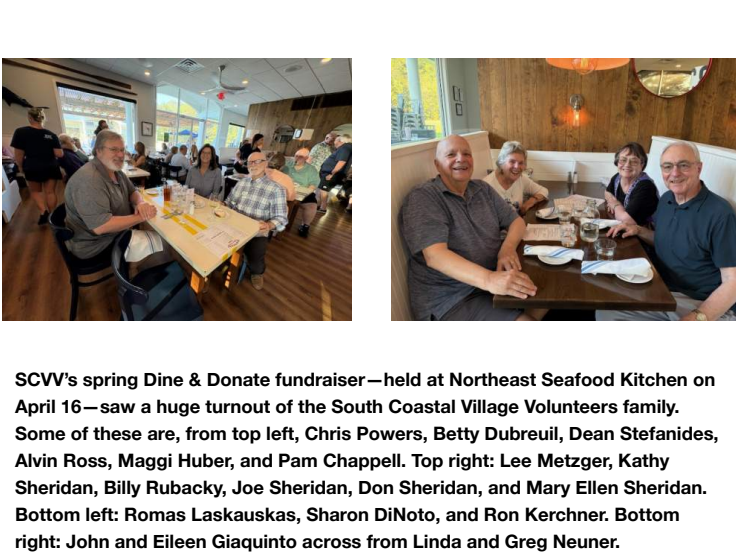
The presentation served to create a relationship between SCVV and the VFW, with an invitation for Liz and Romas to return to speak to more VFW members. A collaboration between the two organizations will be of benefit to both. We are grateful to the VFW for its interest in the work of the South Coastal Village Volunteers.

SCVV Joins Project Safe Neighborhoods

ENERGIZE DELAWARE
Benefits of Home Energy Checkup and Counseling
SCHEDULE NOW
Inspiring sustainable energy solutions

Ocean View is now participating in a Delaware program called Project Safe Neighborhoods. SCVV and local houses of worship are providing information about the program, part of a nonprofit group called Help Initiative Delaware, under the leadership of Executive Director Charles Kistler (*ckistler@helpinitiativede.org*, 302-236-7773) and Chief Operating Officer Bether Rojas (*Brojas@helpinitiativede.org*, 302-841-3546). The program includes home energy audits, assessment of exterior lighting, and enrollment in health and safety programs for Delawareans.

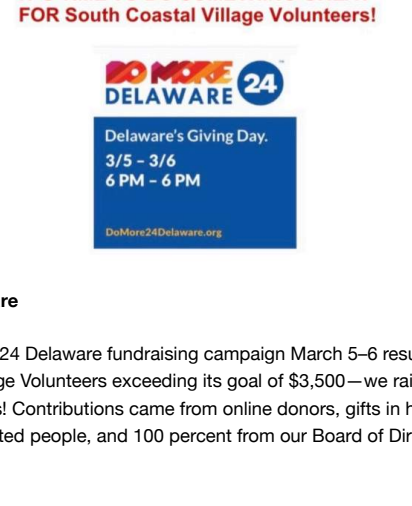
Dine & Donate Fills Northeast Seafood



SCVV's spring Dine & Donate fundraiser—held at Northeast Seafood Kitchen on April 16—saw a huge turnout of the South Coastal Village Volunteers family. Some of these are, from top left, Chris Powers, Betty Dubreuil, Dean Stefanides, Alvin Ross, Maggi Huber, and Pam Chappell. Top right: Lee Metzger, Kathy Sheridan, Billy Rubacky, Joe Sheridan, Don Sheridan, and Mary Ellen Sheridan. Bottom left: Romas Laskauskas, Sharon DiNoto, and Ron Kerchner. Bottom right: John and Eileen Giaquinto across from Linda and Greg Neuner.

The Development Team

Ferne Cooper, Kathy Green, Kathy Jankowski, Kathy Johnson, and Diane Smith



IT'S TIME TO DO SOMETHING GREAT
FOR South Coastal Village Volunteers!

DO MORE 24 DELAWARE
Delaware's Giving Day.
3/5 - 3/6
6 PM - 6 PM
DoMore24Delaware.org

DoMore24 Delaware

This year's DoMore24 Delaware fundraising campaign March 5–6 resulted in the South Coastal Village Volunteers exceeding its goal of $3,500—we raised a total of $4,758 in donations! Contributions came from online donors, gifts in honor of and in memory of designated people, and 100 percent from our Board of Directors' challenge.

DoMore24 is a unique twenty-four-hour giving event that showcases the vital work of nonprofit organizations serving our state. Equally important, DM24's goal is to ignite a culture of community-wide giving and to allow everyone the opportunity to be a philanthropist.

Since our inception five years ago, SCVV has prided itself on being the bridge between isolation and independence for seniors in our area. The generosity of our donors during this year's DoMore24 enables us to grow our reach, expand our wellness programs, introduce new services, enhance our communications tools, provide much-needed respite for hardworking caregivers, and ensure that subsidized memberships are always available.

SCVV extends our heartfelt thanks to our donors whose support keeps us a vital community resource and enables us to continue to make a positive impact in our area.

Seaside Plumbing Donation

SCVV was chosen by Seaside Plumbing, Inc., as the company's charity for March. We thank them for their extremely generous donation of $4,527. This was the third time that Seaside Plumbing has made us their beneficiary, for which we remain grateful to them. If you have occasion to call on Seaside for work at your home, please thank them for their support of SCVV.

Seaside PLUMBING
SeasidePlumbingInc.com
"In a Sea of Ordinary, Choose Extraordinary!"

Dine & Donate

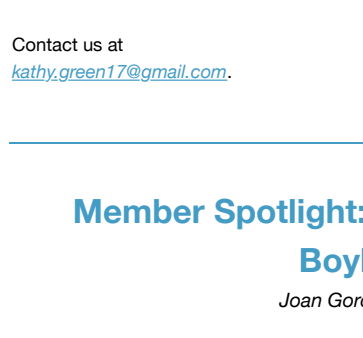
On April 16 diners enjoyed an evening out at Northeast Seafood Kitchen in Ocean View while supporting SCVV *(see photographs from this event directly above this column).* Northeast (SoDel Concepts) is donating a portion of the evening to SCVV. Thank you to Northeast and to all those who dined with us that evening.

Save the Dates

October 1: A fun and musical evening is in the planning for our annual fall event at Cripple Creek Golf and Country Club. Watch for more information to come. We hope to see you there.

October 14: Our next Dine & Donate will be at Fins in Bethany Beach. Gather your family and friends and join us for a fun evening out.

Want to sign up?



Contact us at
kathy.green17@gmail.com.

The South Coastal Village Volunteers Development Team is looking for fun-loving, creative people who are interested in helping us with fundraising events and party planning, including photography, graphic design, and general fundraising activities.

If you have skills or interest in these areas, enjoy working on social events, and prefer behind-the-scenes volunteering, let us know. We want to hear from you!

Member Spotlight: John and Caroline Boylston

Joan Gordon, Editor

John Boylston and his fifty-six-year-old daughter, Caroline, who has Down's Syndrome, moved to Delaware from Maine last fall after a serious automobile accident. John had been the sole caretaker for Caroline for thirty-two years, but injuries from the accident made it impossible for him to continue by himself. They thus moved into the stunningly futuristic home in Ocean View of John's daughter Tracey (who designed the home) and became members of the South Coastal Village Volunteers. The two joined especially for assistance with transportation, as John cannot drive at present.

Caroline and John Boylston at home.

After growing up in New York, John was graduated from the Merchant Marine Academy. He sailed on tankers for a few years, then went on to graduate school at the University of Michigan to become a naval architect. In order to learn the crews' needs, John sailed with them to get their input to incorporate into his designs. In all he designed a hundred ships and also managed their construction. One of his specialties was designing container ships. John prided himself on delivering them all on budget and on time. For his work, John and Caroline lived in many far-flung places—from New Jersey, Maryland, and California to Japan and New Zealand.

Programs for Caroline, who is a talented artist, were John's motivation in deciding to move to Brunswick, Maine, when he retired in 2006. She has been part of a number of programs for artists with disabilities, including engaging one-on-one with established artists. Caroline works in acrylics, loves bright colors, likes painting small blocks of wood, and favors themes of flowers. For seven years she participated in winter programs in Invercargill, New Zealand, where she was featured in a local newspaper and on television. In Maine one of her designs was chosen for packaging for La Nef Chocolate, a company that makes limited-production specialty bars. Caroline has exhibited in several cities and is represented by a gallery in Boston.

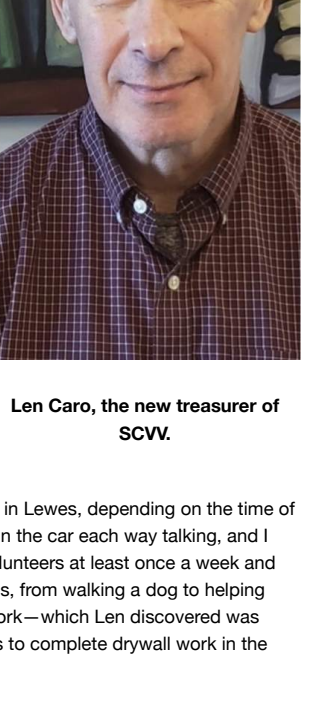
While father and daughter were in Maine, John served on the board of directors of Independence Association, an organization dedicated to art for disabled people that manages the Spindleworks Arts Center in Brunswick.

In Delaware Caroline has been working with a local artist on weekends so that she can continue to grow in her artistic abilities. A studio next to the Boylstons' home provides a convenient setting for her painting.

While John regrets that they had to leave Maine, he reflects his positive attitude in remarking that they are safer now with the help of Caroline's sisters and other aid such as SCVV. As they've made Delaware their home, the two can now better manage their needs.

Volunteer Spotlight: Len Caro

David A. Sellers



Len Caro, the new treasurer of SCVV.

Len Caro has a long history of community service, so we are pleased that he has added treasurer of the South Coastal Village Volunteers to his list.

When Len lived in Baltimore several years ago, he worked from home. That was close to Moveable Feast, whose mission is to improve the health of Marylanders experiencing food insecurity and chronic illness. It prepares and delivers medically tailored meals and provides nutrition education, as well as offering other services to people with chronic illness. Len started delivering food once a week to people in need throughout the city.

It was this experience that sparked his interest in community service and attracted Len to SCVV shortly after he and his wife, Lauren, moved to the area in 2021. He believes in SCVV's mission of helping aging adults, particularly providing important socialization to people who otherwise might be isolated.

"If I'm taking someone to a doctor's appointment in Lewes, depending on the time of year, we are spending thirty to forty-five minutes in the car each way talking, and I think that's good for both of us," says Len. He volunteers at least once a week and has taken on the usual assortment of assignments, from walking a dog to helping someone whose entertainment system did not work—which Len discovered was because a repairman had unplugged all the cords to complete drywall work in the home.

Len and Lauren live in the Bayside community in Selbyville. He volunteers there at the Freeman Arts Pavilion, which is largely what attracted them to the community. "Frankly, when we decided we wanted to move to coastal Delaware, we found it hard to distinguish one community from another. When we read the list of shows at Freeman, there were so many we would enjoy that it made the choice an easy pick." Len helps with parking at the music and art facility, which he describes as "a thirty-minute adrenaline rush" after a performance has ended. He also volunteers as an usher because he enjoys being with people having a good time.

Chess was an activity Len enjoyed in high school, then picked it up again at Bayside. This year he taught a class in beginning chess at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). "Chess is an intense mental exercise with a socialization aspect as well."

Len grew up in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was graduated from Montgomery Blair High School (Class of 1974). He played trombone for several school-based music ensembles, local music groups (including churches and the Montgomery County Youth Symphony), and the Harlequin Dinner Theater in Rockville. He attended the University of Maryland, where he was the sports editor for the yearbook. "This gave me the added benefit of a parking pass right in the middle of campus," Len says with a wink and a smile.

After college he started a job as an operational financial manager for a government contractor and moved to California, living in San Diego and Los Angeles. A promotion and the desire to be closer to his parents brought Len back East, living in Northern Virginia. He met Lauren at work, where she was the executive assistant to the division general manager and he was the financial manager.

They found that they both had a love of Broadway shows. On their first date they went to see the popular musical Movin' Out at the National Theatre in Washington. Now the Playbill™ from the show is framed and hangs on the wall of their home. "We go to New York once a year to take in some Broadway shows and have seen roughly twenty-five over the years, plus an equal number of touring productions in D.C., Baltimore, and other locations, not to mention countless local community theater and school productions," Len relates. "Our current favorite is Operation Mincemeat, a truly amazing production."

Baseball, particularly the Baltimore Orioles, is another passion they share. The couple are beginning the tenth year into what they expect will be an eleven-year project to see the Orioles play in every Major League ballpark. "We love how baseball is a multigenerational sport and how cities really embrace their hometown teams," notes Len. "Plus, we are able to visit corners of America that are not usually on people's travel bingo card," he adds.

While they live in Selbyville year-round, Len and Lauren keep a small condo in Baltimore to be near his stepdaughter, her husband, and their grandchildren, who live in Towson. With an eighteen-month-old grandson and a four-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter, "It's like a hurricane when they come to visit. We love every minute of it, particularly over the summer when they stay longer and enjoy being outdoors." Len has a daughter from a prior marriage who lives in Denver and a son in Seattle, rounding out the family.

Hearing about the interesting and full life that Len leads, it is a double pleasure that he has taken on the role of treasurer for SCVV.

David A. Sellers is an assistant director for public affairs in the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts in Washington, D.C. He spends time at the beach and in the D.C. area.

How to Get Ready for an Emergency

Joan Gordon, Editor

In recent months many local organizations and towns have been paying a great deal of attention to being prepared for an emergency. Because the South Coastal Village Volunteers deals with older members of our community and we live in a coastal area that is prone to flooding and susceptible to storms, we especially need to be vigilant.

The blizzard we experienced February 22–23 was another wake-up call for the importance of preparedness.

At the first meeting in SCVV's Lunch and Learn series on February 12, Danielle Swallow, a coastal-hazards specialist with DE Sea Grant (*www.deseagrant.org*) posed questions for seniors to ask themselves, such as:

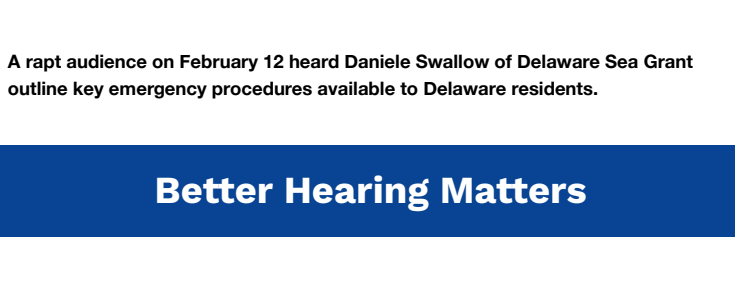
. Can I evacuate on my own?
. Can I shelter in place for three days?
. Am I dependent on others for transportation or life-sustaining care?
. Do I have pets or dependents?
. Can I stay connected to family and friends?

She emphasized to the twenty attendees how important it is to create a support network—"preparedness buddies"—and to keep them updated with your plans, medication lists, and keys.

The audience learned that SMART911 (*www.smart911.com*) is a resource of great value in being ready for an emergency. By providing information online, individuals can give emergency personnel important tools for offering appropriate assistance. In addition, the website *preparede.org* will give life-saving information on identifying risks, evacuation procedures, and emergency supply kits. Swallow offered to help any members of the audience access these websites and fill out information.

A light luncheon, including home-made tomato soup prepared by SCVV Chair Claudia Thayne, was served following the presentation.

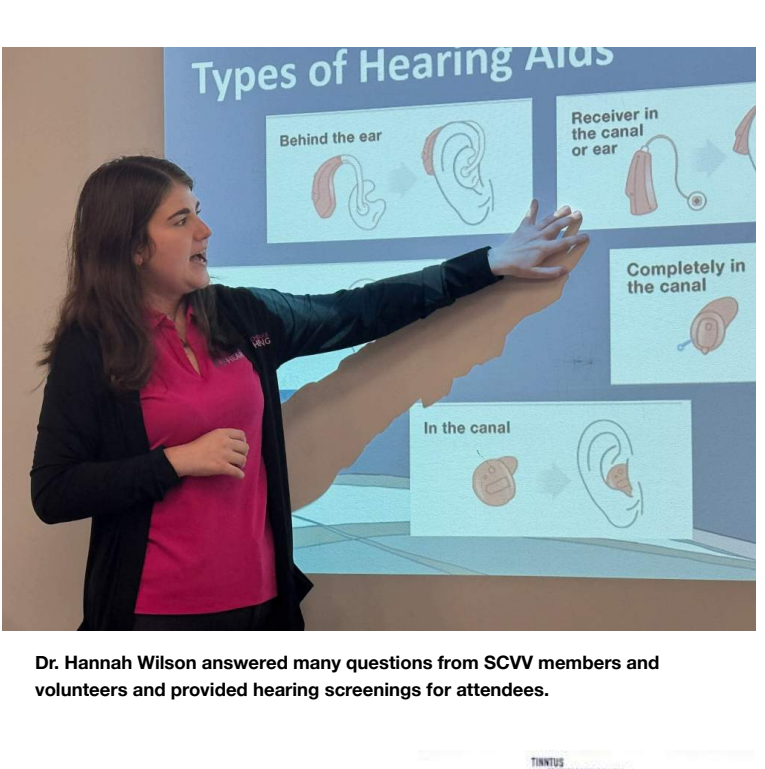
Informative brochures and copies of the slides used in the presentation are available at the SCVV office.



A rapt audience on February 12 heard Daniele Swallow of Delaware Sea Grant outline key emergency procedures available to Delaware residents.

Better Hearing Matters

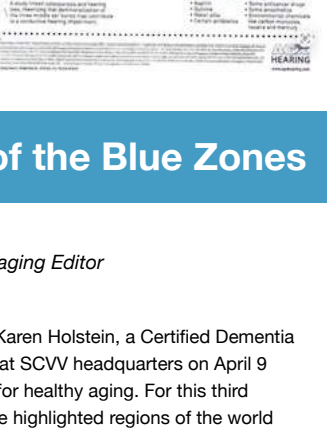
During the March 12 Lunch and Learn series lecture, Dr. Hannah Wilson, a Clinical Audiologist with Chesapeake Hearing (*drwilson@cheshear.com*), confirmed that healthy hearing is an important aspect of total body wellness. Unchecked, hearing loss impacts cognitive function, safety and balance, and emotional well-being.



Dr. Hannah Wilson answered many questions from SCVV members and volunteers and provided hearing screenings for attendees.

Early intervention includes regular (annual) hearing checkups, which can detect issues before they become major problems; embracing technology that includes enabling Bluetooth capabilities and goes well beyond sound amplification; acting sooner rather than later to remain engaged with family, work, and friends and improving your quality of life.

Dr. Wilson also provided a chart (right), *Total-Body Health Begins With Better Hearing Health*, which cites clinical studies of causes of health declines and hearing loss.



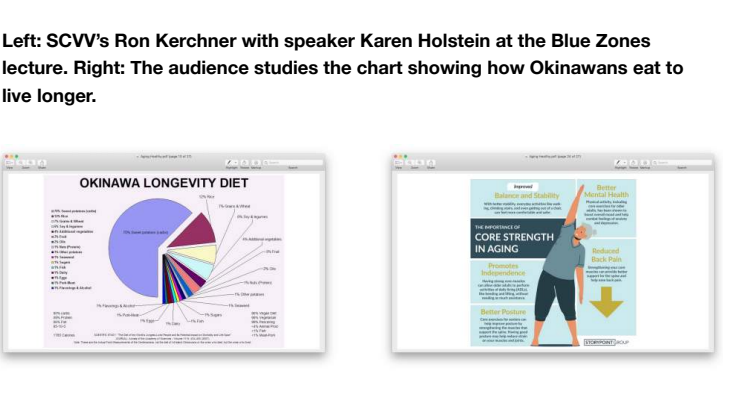
Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones

Diane Maddex, Managing Editor

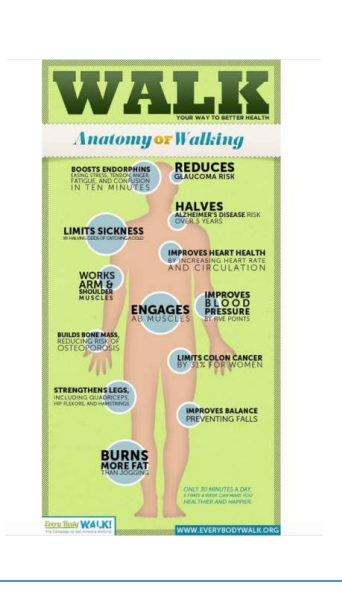
What are Blue Zones? you might ask. Speaker Karen Holstein, a Certified Dementia Practitioner (CDP), engaged an intent audience at SCVV headquarters on April 9 about Blue Zones and other recommendations for healthy aging. For this third gathering in SCVV's Lunch and Learn series, she highlighted regions of the world where people live the longest and remain the healthiest: Okinawa, Japan; Sardinia, Italy; Nicoya, Costa Rica; Ikaria, Greece; and Loma Linda, California. "People in Blue Zones are ten times more likely to reach age 100 than the average American," she related.

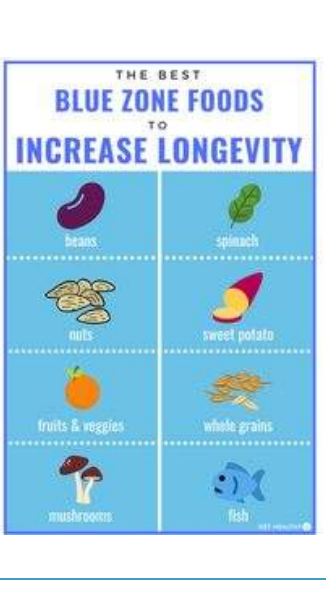
"The world's longest-lived people don't pump iron or run marathons," Holstein noted—suggesting gardening, walking, or manual labor, including kneading one's own bread. "You don't need a gym membership. You need a lifestyle that discourages sitting." Three pillars of senior fitness, she described, are aerobic exercise, strength training, and balance and flexibility. Holstein also outlined the benefits of exercise and described the "80 Percent Rule" of eating. She additionally recommended eating for longevity, knowing your purpose in life, maintaining healthy social connections, motivation to achieve good health, and overcoming common health barriers.

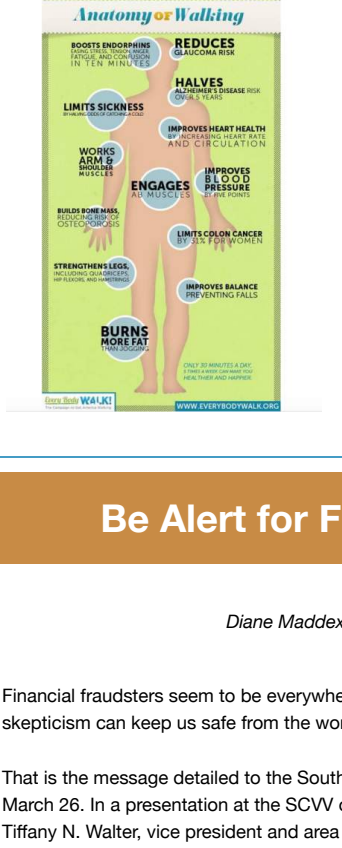
Some of Karen Holstein's pointers are illustrated below for reference. You can contact her at *kholstein@carepatrol.com*.

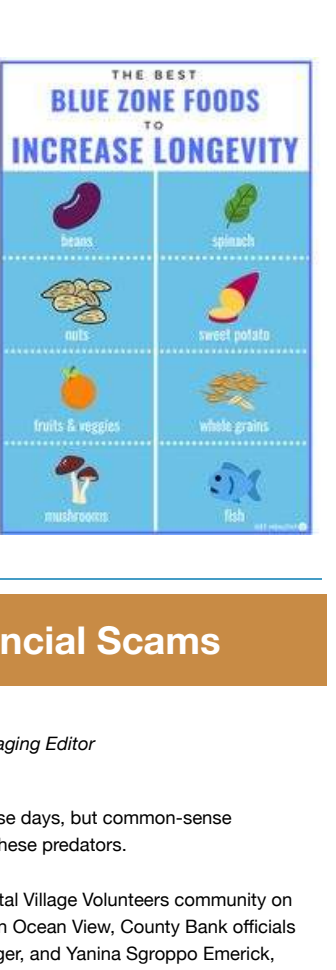


Left: SCVV's Ron Kerchner with speaker Karen Holstein at the Blue Zones lecture. Right: The audience studies the chart showing how Okinawans eat to live longer.









Be Alert for Financial Scams

Diane Maddex, Managing Editor

Financial fraudsters seem to be everywhere these days, but common-sense skepticism can keep us safe from the worst of these predators.

That is the message detailed to the South Coastal Village Volunteers community on March 26. In a presentation at the SCVV office in Ocean View, County Bank officials Tiffany N. Walter, vice president and area manager, and Yanina Sgroppo Emerick, chief compliance officer, led attendees through a litany of current financial scams and defenses that seniors in particular can use to combat these crimes. Also in attendance was Zita Pennypacker, County Bank's local branch manager in Millville.

"A scam is just a trick whose goal is to get money from you as quickly as possible," said Emerick. Scammers are now educated in human behavior and demographics. "These well-versed con artists are highly skilled, appeal to your emotions, insist on secrecy, and don't take no for an answer, leaving their victims vulnerable."

Know the red flags, advised the bank officials, and the range of scams: giveaways, sweetheart proposals, family and government imposters, and other scams involving crypto currency, contractors, charities, and investments. Seniors in particular are targeted because they have life savings and time to invest, often live alone, and are eager to help others. "But don't fall for these scams. Take a minute to think!"

Fraud and Scam Advice

. Don't rush into any financial decision
. Assume that insistence on secrecy is a ploy to deceive you
. Be suspicious if asked to send money up front
. Independently confirm all stories, offers, or charities
. Be cautious about clicking on email links

Report Fraud and Scams

Better Business Bureau
bbb.org/scamtracker

Banks Never Ask That
banksneveraskthat.com

Federal Bureau of Investigation

fbi.gov/scams

Federal Trade Commission

consumer.ftc.gov/scams

Elder Fraud Hotline

833-372-8311

Access Credit Reports and Scores

equifax.com
888-378-4329

experian.com 888-397-3742

transunion.com 800-916-8800

Get Help for ID Theft

identitytheft.gov 877-382-4357

idtheftcenter.org 888-400-5530

Tax, Mail, and Online Fraud

www.irs.gov/identity-theft-fraud-scams

www.uspis.gov

www.ic3.gov

www.ssa.gov/fraud

National Do Not Call Registry

www.donotcall.gov

Limit Advertising Mail

www.DMAchoice.org

Health & Wellness Corner

Steps to Fallproof Your Home

CARE Patrol
Your Partner In Senior Care Solutions

To fallproof your home, first look for these three things: 1. Good lighting. 2. No clutter. 3. Easy access to the things you use the most. Let's address specific areas next.

Front Door

Check your front steps. Make sure that they are not broken or uneven. Fix cracks or wobbly steps as soon as possible.

Check the lighting around your front door. Make sure that all entryways are well lit so you can see where you are stepping. Motion-sensor lights eliminate the need to turn on lights and can save energy costs.

Consider installing a grab bar. Putting a grab bar on one side of your door can offer balance, especially when you are carrying bags or the steps are slick.

Kitchen

Replace scatter rugs with rubber-backed rugs. Scatter or area rugs are tripping hazards. If you prefer a mat near the sink or the stove, make sure that it is placed securely on the floor and does not have turned corners or edges. The best rugs have heavy rubber bottoms so they stay in place.

Clean up spills immediately. Kitchen floors can be slippery and dangerous when wet. Keep a hand towel within close reach to help you clean up spills quickly.

Stairs

Keep stairs clutter-free. Give yourself a clear path up and down by making sure that things like shoes and books are not left sitting on steps.

Consider strips of contrasting color to better visualize your stairs. Adding colored tape to the edges of each step will help differentiate monochromatic steps. Make sure to put the contrasting tape on the top and over the edge of each step.

Try to have overhead lighting above the stairs. Light switches at the top and the bottom of the staircase are best, no matter which direction you are going.

Add a second handrail. Most staircases have only one rail, but handrails on both sides will help keep you balanced. It is important to make sure that they are both installed securely.

Hallway

Check your lighting, but don't change the bulbs yourself. Good lighting is key in all areas of the home, but ask your family members, friends, or neighbors when needed. LED bulbs last longer and can save you time and money.

Bedroom

Make sure that the light near the bed is easy to reach. If you have to get up in the night, you know that you are just a click away from better visibility.

Clear the path from your bed to the bathroom. Make sure that it is well lit and clutter free. Place nightlights along the route, some of which have motion sensors.

Consider installing a bed rail. Some railings fit easily between the mattress and the box spring and can provide support. They are also good for when you go from lying to sitting or standing, which might cause dizziness. A rail will keep you steady while your body adjusts.

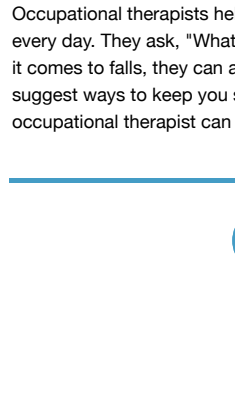
Move the phone within arm's reach of your bed. You might need help in the middle of the night, so having a phone nearby is a safe option.

Bathroom

Add a nonslip rubber mat to the shower or tub. This will help keep you from slipping when stepping on wet surfaces.

Install grab bars by the toilet and the tub. Grab bars provide needed support and balance. Towel racks are not grab bars—but grab bars can be towel racks. Grab bars should be installed by a professional at the correct levels and properly anchored to the walls. Check with the National Association of Home Builders or your local area agency on aging for a list of handymen who can help with installation.

Consider a shower chair and a hand-held shower head. These can help you avoid reaching or straining during your shower.



Install a walk-in bathtub. Walk-in tubs allow you to bathe in a seated or slightly reclined position, greatly reducing your risk of slipping. A walk-in tub-shower combines the low step-in height of a walk-in tub with a built-in shower-head, creating more accessible options for bathing.

Keep in mind three points of contact—no matter what you are doing. If you are maneuvering in and out of your shower or walking up steps, you want to have two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand in contact with something sturdy.

Find an Occupational Therapist for Advice

Occupational therapists help you continue doing the things you want and need to do every day. They ask, "What matters to you?" not "What's the matter with you?" When it comes to falls, they can assess your home environment to identify hazards and suggest ways to keep you safer. Sometimes you need an expert, and that Is where an occupational therapist can help.

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South Coastal Village Volunteers
Celebrating 5 Years
Helping Adults to Live Independently

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302-500-1281

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Village Volunteers and South Coastal Village Volunteers now are separate and independent nonprofit organizations. Whether through joint initiatives, strategic alliances, or co-development efforts, both organizations look forward to working together to drive innovation and mutual growth in helping older adults live independently in southern Delaware.

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