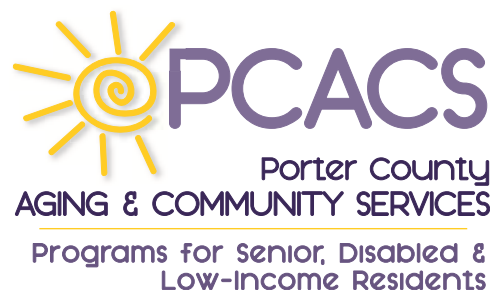


Porter County Aging & Community Services Inc.
1005 Campbell St.
Valparaiso, IN 46385

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IN MEMORY

One of PCACS' loved and well-respected bus drivers, Kenny Thompson, passed away on Aug. 11, 2011. He was part of the team from February 2007 through April 2011. He is survived by his wife, Louise; children Deborah Thompson-Shelley and Daniel Thompson; and sisters Lynda Kleine, Joyce Gourley and Karen Matuszak as well as numerous cousins, nieces and nephews. He is missed by the staff and his riders.



For more information on the services provided by PCACS, contact:
Bruce Lindner, executive director,
via phone at 464-9736 or
via e-mail at bhlindner@frontier.com.



PCACS is proud to be a member agency of the United Way of Porter County.



Fall issue

NEWSLETTER



New faces at PCACS

AmeriCorps member coordinates emergency, energy programs

Jeannie Smith has joined the Porter County Aging and Community Services' team as coordinator of the Emergency and Energy Assistance programs. Jeannie is a part of the AmeriCorps program, which is coordinated by the United Way of Porter County through a grant from the office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives.



Jeannie Smith

Jeannie has worked as an AmeriCorps member for two years and has worked at area schools. She brings bookkeeping skills to her role and she is a Notary.

She also is certified with Purdue Extension's Benefit Bank program, which can assist individuals with food stamp eligibility and voter registration and assist parents and students in filing FAFSA forms. She also knows a little sign language.

Jeannie said being an AmeriCorps member has helped her develop connections.

"I have been able to do a lot of networking and get to know quite a few different people. It has been very helpful to me," she said.

"I like meeting and talking to people. This has brought me out of my shell a little."

"With Jeannie's help, we will be able to better assist the community through these two key programs," said PCACS Executive Director Bruce Lindner.

"Additionally, we are honored to support and showcase the AmeriCorps program as so many organizations and schools benefit from this program."

AmeriCorps offers opportunities for individuals to develop skills while working with organizations and schools to improve the community.

Members can work full or part time and may receive a modest living allowance while serving. Upon completion, they can earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award, which pays for college or graduate school or to pay back qualified student loans.

"The program allows non-profits and schools to provide services that otherwise would not happen due to fiscal challenges and staff commitments," said Program Director Deb Townsend.

For more information on AmeriCorps, contact Townsend at 464-3583 at Porter County United Way.

PCACS welcomes new board member

Terrence Jent, executive director of Miller's Senior Living Community of Portage, has recently joined the Porter County Aging and Community Services Board.



Terrence Jent

"Jent brings a different perspective to the board as the youngest member and through his experience in the health care world," Lindner said.

"All of the board members are looking forward to working with Terrence and incorporating his expertise into our mission to serve the community."

"I think a younger person's perspective can help the organization prepare for the challenges we face as the baby boomers enter retirement," Terrence said.

"Having worked in other business arenas, I feel that I bring a strong financial background to the board. Ideally, my financial savvy, along with that of the other board members, can keep the organization financially healthy and adaptive to the changing political and socio-economical factors that impact the services offered by PCACS."

ElderStyle reveals strategic plan

The ElderStyle Initiative Task Force recently unveiled its strategic plan to help address the needs of Valparaiso's growing senior population.

In order to best serve the senior community, the five-year plan highlights four priorities that the initiative seeks to address.

1. Inventory of resources and resource development

The task force looks to ensure resources are not only available and well-coordinated but also effectively utilized to fulfill needs as they arise today and in the future.

2. Community engagement

The plan highlights the importance of fostering community connections by incorporating activities across generations that provide life-long learning opportunities. It emphasizes avoiding a one-size-fits all approach to engagement and the growth and development of opportunities.

3. Build environment

The task force sees the need to help keep older adults in their own homes. Goals include promoting community designs that address seniors' needs and building partnerships that promote affordable housing.

4. Strengthening the "safety net" for older adults

Plan goals include providing affordable and accessible options for seniors across the age continuum and making sure seniors are aware of what resources are available. With an eye on low-income and/or isolated individuals, the group looks for the best way to collect, update and release resource information.

The task force is in the process of implementing strategies and working toward goals included in the plan.

"The identification of strategies and outlining of goals are key steps toward fulfilling the needs of our senior population," said PCACS Executive Director Bruce Lindner. "Now, ElderStyle will focus on how best to put these ideas into place."

Launched to bring awareness of services available to seniors in Valparaiso, the ElderStyle Initiative looks to put strategies into place that will enrich and enhance the lives of Valparaiso seniors now and in the future.

The initiative has united the city of Valparaiso and Pines Village Retirement Communities along with Valparaiso University, Visiting Nurse Association of Porter County, Porter Health System, PCACS, Village Park Enrichment Center, HealthLinc, YMCA and Northwest Indiana Community Action Corporation.



PCACS eyes NAP tax credit goal

PCACS continues to offer tax credits as part of the Neighborhood Assistance Program. The donations are a way for community members to support PCACS' transportation program while receiving state tax breaks.

Since launching the effort in July, PCACS had received \$10,350 in donations as of the end of October.

"Our goal is \$18,000 in donations, which we would like to have by Dec. 31 of this year," said PCACS Executive Director Bruce Lindner. "If you donate more than \$100, you will receive half that money back on your state taxes."

If the agency reaches its goal by the end of the year, it will receive additional tax credits to help offset transportation costs even more.

The agency faces ever-increasing demands for its transportation services and higher gas prices have put a dent in the fuel budget.

For more information on how donate through the NAP tax credit program, contact PCACS at 464-9736.

Thank you to our Day of Caring volunteers!



Photo provided

PCACS was fortunate to have help for United Way's Day of Caring. Alice's House volunteers painted inside and the Turner family, above, cleared weeds and freshened up the parking lot's stripes. From left are Alec, Ken, Chris and Sarah Turner and Olivia Patterson and in front is Julia Turner.



At left, the Friendship Senior Activity Center group enjoys a game of Bunco. From left are Arlette Sigler, Valeria Parks, Jan Whiting, Doris O'Keefe, Norma Schoup and Marion McDougall. Below, Bob McDougall and Virginia Kallok concentrate on their Bunco game during a recent gathering at Porter County Aging and Community Services.

Friendship through the years

Group creates connections for area seniors

Among the sounds of chatter is a sense of connection and comfort occasionally marked by smiles and the roll of dice.

The Friendship Senior Activity Center group has gathered for one of its weekly events, and as it is Monday, the seniors are busy playing Bunco.

Volunteers have dropped off goodies donated by the Panera Bread in Valparaiso, which is also part of the Monday tradition.

Leading the group is Arlette Sigler who has been at the forefront since she was elected president in 2006, two years after joining the seniors.

She said the gatherings are a way to stay active and remain part of the community as well as provide an avenue for connections.

"We love each other and depend on each other," she said. "We are a happy family."

The Friendship Center group's first get-together was at Lemke Hotel. Over the years, they have gathered at churches, Banta Senior Center and since 1990, at Porter County Aging and Community Services.

Arlette said budget and space constraints have limited their ability to participate in activities.

"We would stuff hearts for hospital patients and make lap robes, afghans and blankets," Arlette said.



But friendship remains the important hallmark of their Bunco Mondays, Bingo Fridays, Game Wednesdays and restaurant trips. While they have lost members over the years, the seniors look to expand and bring meals back to the gatherings.

On this particular Monday, the Bunco game is in full swing for Arlette, vice president Valeria Parks and secretary/treasurer Jan Whiting as well as members Doris O'Keefe, Virginia Kallok, Norma Schoup, Ruth Swelstad and Marion and Bob McDougall.

Marion McDougall has a particularly strong connection to the group, feeling right at home at PCACS' building on Campbell Street.

"I was former executive director of PCACS for 21 years, retiring in 2005," she said. "I enjoy being with people. I worked with seniors so long, now I am one."