



Village to Village Network

The **Villages Healthy Aging Ambassadors Group** officially launched in February of 2024. The Rutgers University Hub for Aging Collaboration in partnership with Village to Village Network launched this new, nationwide group to collaboratively design and implement a series of virtual events on healthy aging research with Villages.

The Ambassadors Group is a key component of the broader **[“Engaging Villages as Key Partners for Healthy Aging Research”](#)** project. The Ambassadors Group was formed after months of one-on-one conversations with interested Village members across the United States. The organizers’ goal was to intentionally balance diversity across individual backgrounds, organizational contexts, and geographic representation. **We are thrilled that Downtowner Ellen Berfond is serving on this national committee.**

The Ambassadors will meet approximately twice a month through May 2024. **Together, they will explore best-practices for participatory research and current topics in patient-centered health outcomes, with a particular focus on Villages and interventions for healthy aging.**

The group will channel these insights into designing and implementing six Virtual Summits during the summer months of 2024. These six summits will be regionally oriented to engage Villagers across the United States in a national conversation on how healthy aging research can strengthen the Village movement, including the types of metrics that matter to Villages and future research directions for the movement to pursue.

The national conversation on healthy aging research the Ambassadors Group seeks to cultivate is vital to strengthening and expanding the Village movement.

UPCOMING EVENTS

03/11 - Solo Agers

03/12- Tuesday Bowling & Beverages

03/13- Healthy Buddy Training Sessions

03/14 - RRTA 101: You Don’t Have to Park a Bus

03/19 - A Woman’s Wealth

03/20- Progressice Education in Lanc

03/21 - RRRTA to Lititz: Celebrate St. Patrick’s Four Days Later

3/26- BIC Independent Writing Session

3/27- Happy Hour at the Imperial

3/28- Downtown Gardeners: Spring Fever-seed

04/01- Morning Walks

04/03- Wednesday Evening Trivia at Southern Market Lancaster

Go to our **[Event Calendar](#)** for details and to register.

Progressive Education in Lancaster

BY MARY CAE WILLIAMS

On February 20, a group of Downtowners visited **Lancaster Friends School**, located in the Lancaster Friends Meetinghouse on Tulane Terrace. We enjoyed listening to Andrea Carty, Head of School, give us some history of the founding of the school and a good sense of their mission and beliefs. Afterward, we briefly toured the school. On our way to observe a session with the 7th and 8th graders, we spoke to a group of Kindergartners who were returning to their classroom after lunch. Several of them were dressed in old-fashioned clothes including some graying hair. It turned out to be the 100th Day of School, which some of them celebrated by dressing up as 100-year-olds. There was some good-natured joshing between Downtowners and the Kindergartners about who was older. At least one young man spoke up clearly, "I am NOT old. I am young!"

From there we stepped into the Middle School classroom where the 7th and 8th graders were preparing for an upcoming visit to their legislators' offices. We watched and listened as each of them practiced what they wanted to share with their governmental representatives during the visit. The students and their teacher were relaxed, articulate, and confident, even as they discovered ways they could improve or polish their presentations.

The school opened its doors in the Fall of 2021, in the midst of all the uncertainty that surrounded dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. In their third year of operation, they are serving a student body of just over 30 students. The core focus of the school is teaching students not only the academic disciplines of reading, writing, math, and general knowledge but also what some call the softer disciplines of peace, integrity, community, equity, and stewardship and sustainability. Lancaster Friends School is committed to nurturing young people in the understanding and capacity required to grow into adults who can make positive contributions to their communities and the world.

From the beginning, the founders decided that students would be supported financially to whatever degree their families needed. This has been an ambitious goal and has enabled this very small school to build a community that is diverse in terms of racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds as well as families' economic circumstances. The youngest students practice the school's philosophy through their kind and accepting interactions with one another. The older students, as seen in their practice for direct legislative advocacy, begin to turn those early lessons into real-life actions, taking their beliefs and passions out into the larger society.

For a more in-depth description of the many fascinating ways this very new and tiny school is living up to its time-honored and very large vision and mission check out their website:

<https://www.lancasterfriends.org/about-us>

Your Medicare: Resource Committee

BY MARY DOYLE

Are you caught up in the maze of Medicare decisions of understanding health coverage and finding doctors and other health care providers? Whether you are new to Lancaster or seeking health care for a new diagnosis, sometimes we would like to have a medical GPS.

That technology does not exist, however there are some **valuable resources to help you navigate online information to find providers**. However, before we delve into that list of resources, let's talk about the discussions and resources within our Downtowners Community.

Monthly your Resource Committee reviews the most recent Downtowners Community discussions of requests and referrals for services. It has come to our attention that recently there have been several requests for medical providers. Once again, Downtowners have responded with recommendations based on their own experiences. We recognize that our community augments the referrals of our own personal network of family and friends.

To further assist with healthcare requests, we would like to share some online resources.

Medicare: <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/>

The official Medicare website is more comprehensive than the Medicare & You book and has a very user-friendly search engine to assist you in finding more information on any Medicare topic. In addition, you can find a list of providers in our area. Currently ratings for most physicians are not included. However, there are both Medicare and patient ratings for most groups practices.

To navigate the website:

- **For Physicians** – you can run a side-by-side comparison for as many as three (3) physicians with details of education, hospital affiliations, Board certification, and specialties.
- With a filter of zip code, you can search for **Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Home Health, Hospice, and Dialysis** facilities. Note that all these facilities and services are rated by Medicare and some healthcare types include patient ratings. The ratings vary within our local community. So, if you are assisting a family member or friend, you can use this tool to assist with decision making.

Local large Medical Groups: The local large **Hospital Groups** include listings of their physicians with details about education, board certification, special interests, and their patient ratings.

Penn Medicine: <https://www.pennmedicine.org/providers>

UPMC: <https://www.upmc.com/providers>

WellSpan: <https://www.wellspan.org/provider-search/results/>

PennState Health: <https://www.pennstatehealth.org/doctors>

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Your Medicare (continued)

BY MARY DOYLE

WebMD: <https://doctor.webmd.com>

WebMD has a search engine where you can filter by specialty and zip code. The physician information is comprehensive and includes details such as patient ratings, hospital affiliations, insurance plans and more.

Medicare Advantage Plans: Every Medicare Advantage plan has a provider listing on their website. For those in a HMO, you will want to confirm that your doctor is in the plan's network to ensure coverage. Another option is to call your plan's customer service number to request a list of physicians in our area.

PA MEDI: For Medicare questions and issues, you can get unbiased, confidential, and free Medicare counseling at the Lancaster County Office of Aging. Phone: 717 299-7979

Lancaster Downtowners Resource Committee recognizes that requests for referrals for healthcare providers are often during stressful times. Therefore, we will continue to discuss and evaluate how we can facilitate and support these requests. Look for more information soon.



The City of Lancaster, in partnership with local agencies and residents, is conducting the Healthy Lives Healthy Lancaster study to better understand the needs and concerns of our community and work toward a healthy Lancaster for all.

[TAKE SURVEY HERE](#)

Your voice matters and we want to hear from you. Please take a few minutes to share your input through this survey. The survey is open to all Lancaster City residents aged 18 or older. Encourage your family, friends, neighbors, and others to share their voice!

Our research partner, Build Community, will oversee this survey to ensure all responses are confidential. Results will be shared in a final public report in Fall 2024. If you have questions about the survey or study, please contact healthylancaster@cityoflancasterpa.gov.



Collage Art and Play

presented by Mimi Shapiro

Wednesday, April 10, 5:30-7:30 pm

First Floor - Conexión at Landis Place on King

This presentation is sponsored by Pathways Institute for Lifelong Learning® at Landis Communities, and it is free to anyone who has not participated in a Pathways Institute class before.

Collage is an experimental process of visual journaling and a form of self-discovery, choosing materials, themes, and compositions to art-recycle the mementos you have saved. Together we will learn a few simple techniques using written exercises and images. With simple tools like scissors and glue sticks you can follow your own creative instincts, see the artwork develop, and create a new magic reality! Come with memorabilia and supplies for your own collage – ticket stubs, stamps, bits of ribbons, magazines, scissors, glue sticks, colored pencils or markers, special paper or journal – or use those provided. (\$8 materials fee.)



Instructor Mimi Shapiro is a graphic designer, fine artist and poet who believes that you can learn from real life. She has taught in many classrooms, even aboard cruise ships, working with people of all ages. With humor, enthusiasm, and personal anecdotes, Mimi invites others to join her in learning the collage creative process and have some fun at the same time.

Register at ThePathwaysInstitute.org/lancaster-county or call 717-381-3577
Location: Landis Place on King, 239 W. King Street, Lancaster PA 17603

Cymbeline by Shakespeare

BY MARY CAE WILLIAMS

On February 18, just over a dozen Downtowners were registered to attend the matinee performance of **Cymbeline** at **West Art**. West Art is an up-and-coming venue located on the southwest corner of the College Avenue/W. Lemon St./Buchanan Avenue intersection. Skilled and talented design work by Downtowner, **John Whiting**, had transformed the former sanctuary (West Art is housed in a desanctified church) into a mysterious collection of buildings, balconies, a throne room, a cave entrance, and generally eerie elements. A pre-show drumbeat set the tone for an opening monologue that Downtowner, **Molly McKitterick** delivered with a scream that could curdle blood.

One of Shakespeare's later pieces and less well known than many, this story draws on ideas that go back as far as The Decameron by Boccaccio. Program notes provided by the Director, Jeremiah Miller, proved invaluable to a full understanding of what was a captivating and engaging performance even without them. Costuming was based on 17th century fashions, which gave the Director the opportunity to show male characters with and without their fancy, curled wigs... adding to the sense of "something unpleasant" lurking beneath some of the characters' facades. All in all, this was a feast for the senses and a reminder that what is truly noble cannot be determined by the "fangled" fashions that we use to cover ourselves. After the show, several Downtowners stayed behind to discuss the production with Molly, whose performance was outstanding. Some commented that they had not expected to be as moved as they were by the ending.

More than one confessed to having tears in their eyes at the end. Thanks to all who made this Shakespearian adventure possible: actors, designers, technicians and even those board members who may be seen here and there throughout, including Downtowners, **Sharon Stephan** and **Mary Cae Williams**.

Although the language of Shakespeare is frequently cited as an obstacle to enjoying his works, there is often enough drama, pathos, spookiness, and just plain understanding of the human condition to keep us returning for more.

Welcome to Downtowners' Newest Members

Barbara B, Elyse L, Gail S

Happy Birthday to these Downtowners in April!

Richard W, Sam W, Gary L, Andrew C, Victoria P, Deborah G, Angie P, Lina E, Judson M, Kathleen W, Donald C, Judith R, Judith R, Jim S, Roberta S, Erna R, Lori S, Mathew F, Bill H

Music Column

BY JEFF LAWERNECE

This month begins a new column dedicated to all things musical in Lancaster. I will highlight a variety of musical topics, with emphasis on live concerts. I also plan on expanding my observations to include music-based movies, plays, books and other related things. My wife and I retired to downtown Lancaster in October 2022, and we've quickly learned that this city has a lot to offer in the areas of arts, food, history, etc. On the musical side of things, I've discovered several exciting venues that delight the music lover in me. I plan on expanding my exposure to such places throughout the greater Lancaster area and highlight them in the coming months.

To kick things off, I'll start with **Zoetropolis**, which I'm sure is a favorite place for many Downtowners. This is a great small venue to watch movies, music, improv, story slam and other performances, with its comfortable seating, food/drink and funky vibes. My recent musical experiences include the excellent Talking Heads concert movie **Stop Making Sense**; the moving Joan Baez documentary **I am Noise**; and the local band **Ogham Stones**, featuring their unique takes on traditional Irish music, which was paired with a wonderful documentary on Irish pubs.

While I thoroughly enjoyed all of the above offerings, my favorite so far has been the excellent bluegrass/old-time Appalachian musical trio of **Trischka, Molsky, and Daves**, featuring legendary five-string banjo player Tony Trischka, accomplished fiddler Bruce Molsky and the eclectic acoustic guitar of Michael Daves. These truly virtuoso musicians performed as a tight ensemble, with just the right touch of humor and storytelling. The performance was augmented by the venue's excellent acoustics and spot on mix. This truly enjoyable evening is hopefully a foretelling of future events at this fine establishment.

Foodie: Round Up of 4 Restaurants

BY ANDY BERFOND

If someone would tell you that some of the best restaurants in our city were operated by the **Vescor Hospitality Group**, you might not recognize the name. But once you hear the names of those restaurants, you'll most probably get a smile on your face and think, of course they're the best, especially if you've been to any or all of them and had a memorable experience.

Belvedere Inn could be considered their flagship restaurant, with Crazy Shirley's upstairs, occupying a beautiful old, historic building on West Queen Street.

Just up the block on the corner of West Lemon and North Prince Streets, is **401 Prime** in the equally historic Press Building Condominium Building where an elevated dining experience awaits you in both the lounge and dining rooms.

They are also next door neighbors to **Central Market** inside of the **Hager Building Condominium Building**, with **C'est La Vie Bistro** upstairs and **Josephine's** on the lower level. Both the Belvedere Inn and Josephine's recently made the news for earning the distinction of being *one of the top 100 most romantic restaurants in the US* for 2024, according to the popular open table reservation service.

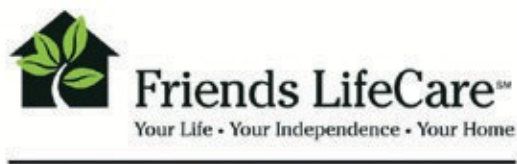
As of this writing I've tried all of them, and my overall experience confirms my belief that the management of Vescor has mastered the art of fine dining with attentive service and deliciously creative cuisine in warm and welcoming, tastefully decorated spaces.

I've already shared in the past about the great Happy Hour at 401 Prime, but if you go, be sure to get there when it starts at 4 pm because it fills up fast. Since moving to Lancaster almost 10 years ago, Belvedere Inn has been our go to place for a special occasion, and it's where we elected to dine out with friends this past New Years Eve.

C'est La Vie also offers a great happy hour where I recently enjoyed a delicious wood fired pizza with a cocktail. Then not to long ago, we dined at Josephine's with our friends for dinner, and not only was our dinner delicious but the presentation was nothing less than "Art on a plate,"

I can't help but wonder if this successful hospitality group with deep roots in the community, might come up with still another fine dining concept to add to their presence in the city. See you around town.





Jay Hilliard presents the FLC program to interested participants.



A Valuable CONVERSATION

It's never too early to start considering your retirement.

When you envision the new chapter

care may not even cross your mind, but most people will eventually need some form of care as they grow older.

The partnership between Landis Communities and Friends Life Care has been a vital resource for many older adults who desire to age in the comfort of their own home. Friends Life Care has approximately 2,500 members, with 50 of them also a part of Landis Communities. Care Coordination is provided by Friends Life Care and in-home care is provided by Landis Communities through Landis at Home.

Friends Life Care, based in Blue Bell, PA, has a Quaker background and a mission that aligns with that of Landis Communities. The partnership was a natural fit and according to Carol Barbour, former CEO of Friends Life Care, their staff have always demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment for the program and the member experience.

"It's exciting to expand the number of people we reach through the partnership," Carol said. "We help people maintain their independence and delay the need for care in a nursing home or other facility."

Jay Hilliard, Plan Counselor, presents the program to interested parties via seminars, webinars, and one-on-one consultation. "There are a number of Landis Communities employees who have joined the program. I think that says a lot!" Jay exclaimed with a smile.

Landis Communities Director of Operations Dot Hartman and her husband are among those members.

Dot notes, "We don't plan to slow down in the years ahead, but being members of Friends Life Care ensures we can have peace of mind for the unexpected. It is also good to know that our children won't have to be responsible for planning for our future needs. FLC membership provides long-term care insurance along with the benefit of the Care Coordinator, which will help us stay healthy and in our own home as long as possible!"

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SmartLife Info Session

Tuesday, April 2 @ 10:00am

This in-person session at the **Meadia Heights Golf Club: 402 Golf Rd, Lancaster, PA 17602**

Registration: [Click here to sign-up for this free event.](#)

Enjoy the benefits of a senior-living community wherever you call home.

Downsize and Optimize

[The Ultimate Roadmap and Planner](#) to optimize your experience downsizing, provided by Townstead at **Homestead Village**.

As you embark on a journey to discover the right place for your next chapter, choosing where you'll plant your roots and the lifestyle in which you'll thrive are chief among your first decisions. Townstead Apartments at Homestead Village are just minutes from downtown Lancaster. Here you'll not only enjoy ample, newly upgraded amenities and a full calendar of events and programs, but also easy access to all Lancaster has to offer.