



Notes from the President

I want to thank the Board of Directors, Committees, special interest groups and individual members who do so much to support our village mission to engage older adults in meaningful opportunities that build a multi-dimensional support network to stay informed, involved, and independent in their community.

At the January planning meeting of the BOD, three areas of focus were identified for this year. The first is to **pursue grant funding that would support our vision of a vibrant, connected community.** A decision was made to apply for a Lancaster County Community Foundation (LCCF) grant to evaluate expansion of the Village Movement into Lancaster County using a Hub and Spoke Model. We were able to submit a timely grant request and are waiting to hear if it was funded.

The second area of focus is a **standardized approach to development, maintenance and archiving of Policies and Procedures (P&P)** for both the Board and our Committees. Policies represent a statement of values and intentions which guide decision making now and in the future. Procedures are a detailed description of how a task is performed, often step by step. Having a current library of P&P available will support Lancaster Downtowners as we continue to grow and as individuals change roles within our organization. Dick Murphy is Chair of The Policy and Procedure Committee which is currently collecting and reviewing all existing policies and procedures. They will be approved by the Board, archived and made available online. Every three years all P&P will be reviewed to make sure it is current and continues to meet our needs.

The third area of focus is **evaluating the Information Technology (IT) needs and available options** for the Lancaster Downtowners to best serve the entire organization including operations, web site, smart phone app and social media. An ad hoc IT Infrastructure Committee is beginning this process and will recommend to the board IT Infrastructure changes for implementation over the next year.

If you are interested in any of these focus areas, please contact me, **William Stephan, President** or **Melissa Ressler, Executive Director.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

04/13 - Community Meal

04/16 - Behind the Scenes at YWCA

04/17 - Charles DeMuth 101

04/22 - Egyptian Cuisine at Koshary Station

04/23 - BIC Independent Writing Session

04/24 - Bocce at Buchanana

04/25 - Downtown Gardeners

04/25 - Share a Poem

04/26 - Fair District PA

04/28 - Homefileds: Open Farms

04/30 - Happy Hour at the Imperior

05/01 - Wednesday Evening Trivia at Southern Market Lancaster

05/06 - Morning Walks

Go to our Event Calendar for details and to register.

Solvit Academy Visit

BY MARY CAE WILLIAMS

On March 20, a small group of Downtowners completed our three-session visits to progressive schools in Lancaster. We visited Solvit Academy located in the former shoe factory building on the corner of West Lemon and North Prince Streets. The promise of seeing a novel approach to education, in action, was fulfilled magnificently.

The school serves students aged 5-14. There are three groups called studios rather than classrooms. The Spark Studio is for five and six-year-olds. The Exploration Studio includes children aged seven through ten. The Middle School Studio is for eleven through fourteen-year-olds. Mixed aged groupings empower students to be both teachers and learners at every stage of their growth. Student learning is individualized using a combination of hands-on materials and adapted computer software. The adults in the environment serve as guides for each student, who is able to master basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics, while engaging in challenging projects that require observation, comprehension, and critical thinking to complete. Students develop their skills as individuals and apply what they know through actively collaborating with classmates to develop and complete projects.

Student progress is measured through demonstration. When students directly demonstrate that they have mastered a particular skill or completed and responded to a list of reading materials, they earn badges that signify those achievements. Solvit Academy is dedicated to providing an environment and an approach to education that will empower the students to be successful in a future that none of us can truly imagine from here. The methods they use combine up-to-date technology and time-honored hands-on activities for a holistic and comprehensive experience. Students learn at an early age how to manage their time and their efforts to learn what they need to be successful as they grow.

When we visited, we observed a discussion circle in the Exploration Studio. The students were discussing a video that we all watched of a girl about their age presenting her product to a shark tank to encourage them to invest in it. After the video, the students were guided through a series of questions to discuss their responses to the presentation. Their focus was on aspects of entrepreneurship. It was obvious from both the questions asked by the guide and the responses of the students that they were using a clear and well-structured set of concepts as they learned about how businesses work. They voted on several questions like “would your potential profit or the benefit to society be more important to you in deciding to invest in a product?” Students demonstrated comfort in voting for either option and equal comfort in challenging or defending a choice. One student shared that he, “voted that the benefit to society would be more important because if it was a benefit then many people would buy it and you would make a profit anyway.” Sophistication, complexity of thought, seeing the big picture were all on display as we listened to these students aged 7-10.

It is difficult to capture the amazing experience our little group had when we visited Solvit Academy. For a much more thorough sense of what this fine school offers its students check out their website

<https://www.solvitacademy.com/>

Oh, and not to neglect the Middle School Studio, we visited it briefly and discovered that they will be offering products they have developed at the Children’s Business Fair on April 20 at Clipper Stadium. It is open to the public and promises to be another fine way to get a sense of what Solvit Academy is about.

At Solvit Academy, each student is on an individual Hero’s Journey that begins in childhood and culminates when they go out into the world as adults...or does it continue through all the ages and stages of adulthood, too?

Your Medicare: Resource Committee

BY MARY DOYLE

Scams are everywhere. They are impacting individuals, businesses, and even Medicare.

As you may have heard, there is a fraudulent billing scam which is estimated to have a cost of more than **\$2 Billion** to Medicare! It appears that a ring of at least 10 companies has been billing Medicare for urinary catheters. These catheters were not ordered. Bottom line, it is a very expensive scam.

CBS 2, A New York station ran a news story on one of the scammer operations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ku2gX-sz7F4>

This fraudulent billing involves the data of more than **400,000** patients. But why is this story important to you?

It is important because your Medicare number and personal information can be used for nefarious reasons. Always protect it. Once the scammers obtain your personal information, monthly billing to Medicare will begin for medically unnecessary urinary catheters or other DME (Durable Medical Equipment).

Here are some best practices to protect your Medicare number.

- **Do not respond** to any phone calls, texts or emails which request your Medicare number. They may be offering free gifts or services. Just hang up.
- Review your Medicare Summary Notices (MSN) or claims statements. If you see any charges for services or items which you have not used – call Medicare immediately.
- Guard your Medicare card like it's a credit card.

If you suspect that your Medicare number has been compromised, call Medicare. Medicare will issue you a new number. **Medicare:** 1-800-633-4227.

Locally you can contact the PA agencies:

Pennsylvania Senior Medicare Patrol: For assistance with Medicare fraud. 1-800-356-3606

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

The March 2024 AARP Bulletin featured a article on advancements in Alzheimer's treatment and prevention. [See the full article here](#), and read on for an excerpted reminder about what you might include in your daily routines to take care of your brain and your body.

- Keep blood pressure and blood sugar levels healthy.
- Get regular exercise.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Take a multivitamin. Take care of your ears and your eyes.
- Pamper your mental health.
- Put yourself on a regular sleep schedule.

People aged 65 years and older who received 1 dose of any updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna or Novavax) should receive 1 additional dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine at least 4 months after the previous updated dose. For more information go to [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Nahual Maya Restaurant

BY ANDY BERFOND

Recently opened on Gallery Row in Lancaster is the Nahual Maya Restaurant, a cozy space that has been home to several other food related businesses over the years. This family owned and operated restaurant specializes in Latin American Cuisine featuring dishes from Guatemala, El Salvador and Panama, all prepared with fresh ingredients in an open kitchen in front of the restaurant.

My first visit was during their opening weekend, when Ellen and I were enjoying a walk around town on a nice day, and we happened to pass by and heard upbeat Latin American music coming from a small speaker in the front of their store. We decided to try it for an early dinner, and we were warmly welcomed and seated in the small and colorfully decorated 22 seat dining room.

After ordering a very good beef empanada and accompanying bean and cheese pupusa, we observed members of multiple generations of the family working hard to be assured their guests were having a memorable dining experience.

Several weeks later, we had out of town guests staying with us and we returned for dinner. I was happy to see their dining room full as soon as our party of five was seated, and once again we experienced abundantly good food with attentive service, and as we left, they thanked us for returning.

An article in the news soon after Nahual Maya opened reported this is the family's second restaurant, continuing to still operate one at home in Guatemala. They look forward to serving their Lancaster neighbors and are another example of why passionate chefs of multiple ethnicities are motivated to share the foods of their homelands right here in the city for us to sample and enjoy.



Bus to Lititz

BY MARY CAE WILLIAMS

On March 21, nineteen Downtowners were signed up to ride the RRTA bus to Lititz for a lunch (and shopping?) outing. A few of those were unable to join the trip for various, last-minute reasons. One rider realized that they had “double-scheduled” and simply rode the bus on its entire loop, in order to fulfill both commitments. Because there were so many folks planning to take this ride, the organizers called for volunteers to take an earlier bus. They did not want to overwhelm the driver or the regular passengers. One of the regular drivers had been forewarned by Tana when she took a “test ride” in advance of the event. The other driver is reported to have said, “What’s happening?” or words to that effect when the stream of 8 or so “new riders” mounted the steps and found their seats.

Tana commented on her experience, “We had fun. The ride was relaxing. On the ride to Lititz, there was a gentleman who joked with the bus driver—he called the bus “Love Bus” since we all got on. He said we should have a stewardess serve us coffee and tea. He asked the bus driver if she was going to stop at Stauffer’s so we could all run in and get coffee. It was cold so our group just had lunch at Bull’s Head. The conversation was good. The (early) morning group was more adventurous and hit the shops. The ride home was pleasant. All and all a good experience.”

Mary, who rode the later bus shared her experience with this writer. She felt that it was a great demonstration of the idea that taking the bus could be nearly as efficient as driving in one’s own vehicle. The trip took just a little over half an hour and that included several stops along the way. The driver was very friendly, humorous, and helpful. The Apps used by riders worked well and the bus was on time. When the bus reached its stop in Lititz, Downtowners Rod and Henry were there to help with suggestions of places to eat. Mary and Wade had checked out a few menus, because some suggested spots had been listed in the emails that went out to members as part of trip planning. With many folks being mindful of various nutritional concerns, this was helpful for them as they planned their visit to Lititz.

Mary and Wade extended their bus riding experience by using the bus to go from their home to the Queen Street Station. The system makes such a transfer easy and without additional cost to paying customers. Remember, seniors who are eligible for Medicare can get a pass that allows them to ride for free at all times.

Several people who joined this outing commented that the “regular riders” were friendly and, also, interested in this new group getting on the bus.

In summary, this was a “very nice outing.”

Stay tuned for more outings like this in the coming weeks and months. Remember, you don’t have park (or drive) a bus. Just sit back and enjoy the scenery.

Welcome to Downtowners' Newest Members

Douglas O, Charles R, Judy R

Happy Birthday to these Downtowners in May!

John K, Frank A, Mary H, Edward C, Thomas S, Dorothy H, Eva H, Judy R.

Mona Sauder Interview

BY MARY CAE

During the month of April, Mona Sauder is serving as our Just One Call Coordinator. This work might best be described as a volunteer who gets a stipend. Our Downtowner community relies on the JOC Coordinator to facilitate requests for volunteer support across many different “domains.” The Coordinator connects volunteer drivers with members who need a ride; volunteer gardeners with members who need help in the garden; volunteer workers with members who need help to move a piece of furniture or wash some windows. And these are just a few of the tasks our Coordinator is able to find volunteers to complete for our members.

Mona started in the position in February of this year. She is a relatively new resident and member of Downtowners. She moved here in 2017 and became a Downtowner member in May of that same year. Before joining our community, Mona followed a life path that took many interesting turns.

Just out of high school, she took a job in a factory. The head of the company, observing her work, quickly recruited her to become his secretary. A few years later, Mona went to college to become a teacher. She taught first grade, and then moved on to high school. She taught in the commercial department at the high school level. Shorthand was one of the subjects she taught.

After 20 years of teaching, Mona decided to pursue a Master of Divinity. After earning her degree, she worked at a local church for 6 years. From there, she became a chaplain for hospice. Service to others has been a consistent theme of Mona’s adult life.

Mona does not remember how she learned about Downtowners, but she recognized it as a good way to meet people in her new home. One of her early enthusiasms was the Annual Auction. She confessed, “I don’t like to be outbid.” The Auction Committee should make sure to find out what Mona might like to bid on.

When asked what drew her to the Coordinator position, Mona shared that she thought a part time position, that she could learn, step-by-step, would be a good way for her to serve fellow Downtowners. For her own part, it would be another way to get to know more of the members. As time goes on, she is hoping to meet more members in person so she can put faces to the names, voices, and emails she knows through her JOC facilitation.

What would Mona like us to know about the Just One Call program? She emphasized that she especially appreciates those members who, if at all possible, give 24 hours’ notice for a request to be filled. That time allowance means she is more likely to find a volunteer to help with the request. JOC works to connect volunteers who are willing and able with members seeking assistance and timely requests improve the success of that effort.

Welcome, Mona, to this second month of your new adventure. Just One Call is an important part of Lancaster Downtowners and we appreciate your willingness to help us keep it going. With your new perspective on this work, we can expect insights that will help us to make the program even better. Thank you.

West Art

BY JEFF LAWRENCE

Churches are sanctuaries for worship, solace and community. The one on Buchanan Avenue near the Franklin and Marshall campus has been re-imagined as a community space featuring music, theatre, comedy, exercise and a whole host of other eclectic activities. I'll dedicate a future column for a deep dive into this exciting venue. For now, I'll focus on the live music I have experienced there.

In November, I had the pleasure of seeing Tommy Prine at West Art. The son of the much beloved late singer/songwriter John Prine, Tommy is touring to promote his new album *This Far South*. This semi-autobiographical debut features strong songwriting, covering the folk/alt-country/rock spectrum. Though stylistically different from his father, the younger Prine pays tribute to his dad on several songs. The show featured a strong band, which really rocked out on the excellent Cash Carter Hill. An encore version of his father's *Clay Pigeons*, featuring opener Jordan Smart, was particularly touching.

Singer-songwriters Sadie Gustafson-Zook and Andrew Pauls came to West Art in mid-March, blending Sadie's beautiful voice with Andrew's stellar guitarwork. They took turns showcasing their own songs along with several popular covers. The night opened with the impressive alt-country/bluegrass band, Vulcans, who displayed fine musicianship and beautiful harmonies. This event was in a smaller room than the Prine show, with beautiful stained-glass windows as a backdrop.

Finally, in late March, Virginia-based The Steel Wheels played their rich combination of folk/bluegrass music to a sold-out West Art crowd. The tight band displayed outstanding musicianship and delivered several numbers featuring their gorgeous four-part harmonies. The songs performed covered their extensive back catalog in addition to their well-crafted new album *Sideways*. Rock romp opener *Featherburn* provided a mix of humor along with their unique band featuring accordion and flute.

If these shows are any indication, this venue will be a go-to place in Lancaster for talented acts across the musical spectrum.

The Steel Wheels (below)



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Landis ADS Golf Outing

Wednesday, June 5th

Fairview Golf Course, Lebanon PA

By supporting the Landis Adult Day Services Golf Outing, you help aging adults who need daytime support and care. Participants enjoy meaningful activities and companionship and are assisted with taking medicines and having nutritious meals. You also help family members work or take a break from caregiving.

[Register Here](#)

Everence: Expand your generosity, while protecting your income

May 9 at 1 p.m. at Landis on King – Light refreshments will be served.

If you long to give generously but want to preserve and protect much-needed income at the same time, join **Everence** in partnership with Landis Communities to learn more about how you can accomplish both goals. During this engaging conversation, you'll discover a range of charitable giving opportunities through these strategies and tools.

Gain an overview of creative and smarter ways to be generous including utilizing qualified charitable distributions, donor advised funds, charitable gift annuities and bequests.

Learn how you can earn income from a charitable gift annuity and about the recent rate increase. Consider giving through your IRA account. Maximize your year-end giving.