Seniors Speak: "How are you making the most of the pandemic?"

"In the words of singer & songwriter, John Prine... 'Plant a little garden, eat a lotta peaches,' plant a garden and you will always have something to look forward to, something to do, you get to see something grow." – Bill

"Every day I get up, I ask myself, so what are you going to do today? I'm always working on accomplishing something. Right now I am making a Christmas scarf." – Ida
Some may say the Council on Aging is just jumping on the bandwagon. The truth is that Black residents of Chatham have made a significant difference in the life of the Council throughout our long and proud history. In fact, the Council was established as a nonprofit organization on July 8, 1974, by Mattie Paige, Lacy D. Marsh and Charlie Baldwin (all of whom were Black Americans).

Joining Paige, Marsh and Baldwin on the Council’s first Board of Directors were Paul Alston, Lillie Lee, Novia Jordan, Clementine Strowd, John Cooper, Mary Lindley, Billie Rogers, Marietta Subart, Ben Wimberly, R.G. Bryant, Earl Dark, Laura Lee, and Minter Hadley. Lacy Marsh, a respected teacher at J.S Waters, was the Council’s first Board president.

This dedicated group of community leaders established a mission that we still strive to achieve each and every day:

“to promote the independence and dignity of our older adults and to help them remain healthy, secure and involved at home and in the community as long as possible.”

During the course of these many years, the success of the Council has depended on a close-knit family of people of various backgrounds and persuasions—staff, volunteers, donors, partners and participants. But we should never lose sight of our roots.
Resolution of the Chatham County Council on Aging Board of Directors

Whereas, management and the Board of Directors of the Chatham County Council on Aging have reflected on the events of this past week, following the global outrage to the senseless and inhumane murder of George Floyd; and

Whereas, we have been touched by the expressions of anger, sorrow, dismay and shame shared by state, regional and local leaders of the nonprofit community—in these eloquent and powerful words:

“As we have seen an outpouring of response to the killing of George Floyd, I have watched the news stories with a heavy heart. It is difficult to find words that fully capture the anger and pain that I feel and that we see reflected in our communities…. I cannot release from my mind the picture of a white police officer with his knee on a black man’s neck, with hands in his pocket, in public view with other police officers looking on with an expectation of impunity…. This was not an isolated incident; it stings all the more because it’s happened so many times before…. [W]e have made progress, but the forces that deprive Black lives the belief that they matter are persistent… We need our collective White, Brown, Black voices to join together to say out loud that we are committed to anti-racism. And we need our actions to demonstrate that commitment… We need to hold ourselves accountable for how policies and practices are enacted in the organizations we lead and in the communities we serve.”

– Jeanne Canina Tedrow, President and CEO, North Carolina Center for Nonprofits

“There is a deadly virus lurking in our community, and our nation…. At Triangle Community Foundation, we’ve spent this time trying to figure out how to best support these communities and the nonprofits that provide services for them, to do what we can to mitigate the impact of COVID–19. But, even in the midst of this pandemic, we know that there exists an even more deadly virus: racism…. To negate someone’s humanity for simply being a person of color is wrong, it’s against what we purport to stand for in America, and it needs to stop…. It’s up to all of us.”

– Lori O’Keefe, President and CEO, Triangle Community Foundation

“To be effective as a nonprofit and social services community – a community in which many of us benefit from race and class advantages – we must strive to show up for racial justice every day, especially right now. I imagine many of us are exploring the best ways we can show up in our professional and personal lives; I invite you to share those explorations with your peers and colleagues.”

– Hilary Pollan, Community Partners Analyst, Chatham County Manager’s Office; and

Whereas, as the Professional Gerontologists Code of Ethics mandates Respect for People’s Rights, Dignity, and Diversity (Principle D) and Social and Advocacy Responsibilities (Principle E); and

Whereas, as UNC-Greensboro Graduate Gerontology Program Coordinator Elise Eifert reminds us, “Aging begins at birth and is influenced by many things, including racism, over the life course. If we want people to have the opportunity to live long, successful lives, we must do the work to create a society that fights against social injustice and truly becomes anti-racist.”

Now, therefore, we, the Board of Directors of the Chatham County Council on Aging, do hereby unanimously reaffirm the following belief, expressed in our bylaws:

There shall be no discrimination as to eligibility for services because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, national origin or sexual orientation.

And equally important, we call on all residents of Chatham County to advocate and support realization of what is envisioned in the 2018–2023 Aging Plan for Chatham:

Our vision is a Chatham County that offers older adults, and all residents, a safe, affordable, accessible, and inclusive community that promotes wellness, presents and respects choices, values diversity, recognizes and uses people’s strengths, and supports individuals aging in community with dignity.

Adopted, this the fourth day of June 2020.

Larry Ross, President
Boy, does a glass of lemonade sound good!
By Dennis W. Streets, Executive Director - (Be Bold, Claim Old - Age 67)

One of my favorite summer drinks is lemonade. Growing up in Seminole, Florida, my family had a lemon tree in our backyard. I can still remember the smell of those lemons, especially when I would mow over ones that had fallen and were rotting on the ground. Thankfully we didn’t let too many get to that point as we were quick to use the lemons for iced tea and a fresh pitcher of lemonade to enjoy in Florida’s summer heat.

We also had a tangerine tree in the backyard—right near the basketball hoop where I spent most of my free time. I would frequent the fruit on that tree, especially if I wanted to reward myself for making a challenging shot.

I can tell you, though, that I didn’t go to the lemon tree to consume a quick snack. No, those lemons had to be sweetened with sugar and made refreshingly good with ice.

"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade."

That old adage is a call to optimism and a can-do spirit in the face of adversity or misfortune, turning the sour lemons of our circumstances into something as sweet as lemonade.

So what does the saying have to do with our Council on Aging?

The winter issue of our newsletter included a piece I wrote, titled “Envisioning a Bright Future.” When I wrote the article in early December, I couldn’t foresee what we would face in the coming months. Our spring newsletter on "Making Your Mark!" reported on the mark COVID-19 had begun to make on the Council and the decisive actions we had taken to protect and support Chatham seniors, their families, and our volunteers and staff in the face of a pandemic.

Would I change the title of my winter article—in hindsight?

No, I would not. In fact, my confidence in the Council on Aging and our community has never been stronger.

On July 8th, we will begin our 46th year as a nonprofit dedicated to promoting senior wellness and active engagement and in helping our large and growing older population remain living safely in the community. That mission is more important today under COVID-19 than the Council founders could ever have imagined back in 1974.

So where’s the lemonade?

The lemonade we have seen produced from the COVID lemon has come in many forms and from many sources.

Lemonade out of Lemons
I have also witnessed great resiliency among our Council staff—a resiliency only equaled by their dedication and ingenuity. In a very short time, staff not only responded to plan and arrange for the ongoing provision and distribution of meals and a wide assortment of needed supplies—but also created a very impressive online and virtual presence of activities.

Our staff members have taken on this responsibility largely without the benefit of our greatest resource—our large corps of volunteers without whom our Council could not effectively operate during “normal” times. Early on we made the difficult decision to limit involvement of our volunteers—as most of our volunteers are seniors themselves and in the group considered at greatest COVID risk.

But what we have seen are new sources of lifeblood. For example, a group of UNC medical students, whose classes had been canceled, stepped forward and have been a steady partner in our outreach to homebound seniors. They are part of The Rural Senior Service Group started by Kenan Scholars at the UNC School of Medicine to reach out to rural seniors in this time of need. This group of UNC students also created a GoFundMe with donations going towards the purchase and delivery of personal hygiene supplies including toilet paper, paper towels, hand soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and other items to seniors in need. And nearly every week, one of these medical students has traveled to Durham to pick up incontinence supplies at the NC Diaper Bank (another great community partner) for us to provide Chatham seniors.

_Lemonade out of Lemons_  

[www.chathamcoa.org](http://www.chathamcoa.org)
Another example is Sweeties Vegan and Southern Catering of Durham, who prepared hot entrees, which we converted into 833 frozen meals to supplement that large quantity of meals produced by our kitchen staff at the Western Center in Siler City. Because of the large quantity of meals, we had to identify additional means of storage. Two realtors, Yvonne Beal and Lisa Skumpija, donated a new deep freezer. The Chatham County Detention Center and Dry Dock restaurant in Siler City offered freezer space.

And when it came to the delivery of meals—after we decided that we should no longer expose our senior volunteers—our community partners stepped up to assist. These included staff of Public Health, Parks and Recreation, the Sheriff’s Office and other county employees. It also included the Chatham Transit Network and their dedicated drivers.

The masks that I wear everyday were made by volunteers who used to help in our centers most days, pre-COVID. Now they are still making their positive mark (the theme of my spring newsletter article) from the confines of their homes.

Of course, these meals and other supplies don’t come free. They aren’t like the tangerine and lemon trees where I could readily go as a child and get what I wanted, whenever I wanted. The only way we could try to make lemonade from the COVID lemon has been with the financial and material support of many.

The funds that allowed us to purchase shelf-stable meals and the supplements to enrich their nutritional content have come from individual donors, Siler City Rotary, United Way of Chatham, Cardinal Innovations, the Truist Charitable Fund (BB&T), Meals on Wheels America and others.

I could go on and on in identifying and thanking all who have stepped up to sweeten the COVID lemon that all of us were given.

I wish I could have used another proverbial saying—such as “I see light at the end of the tunnel” or “we are rounding the final curve”—but I really don’t know what we face in the near term or distant future. I don’t know how many more waves we might see from COVID–19 or when there might be a vaccine or treatment.

But I do know this…we can still envision a bright future…we are still making our positive mark for Chatham seniors and their families…with your continued encouragement and support.

“Life handed me lemons, so I made lemonade, lemon cake, lemon drops, and I even used the rinds to make lemon art. So, the joke is on you, life, haha!”
— Emilyann Allen, author
Ongoing Services Require Your Ongoing Support
By Dennis Streets, Executive Director and Larry Ross, President, COA Board of Directors

On July 8th, the Chatham County Council on Aging (COA) will celebrate our 46th anniversary as a nonprofit serving Chatham seniors and their families.

With your support, the Council is continuing to serve Chatham seniors and their families in these extraordinary times. Your contributions help us provide food and a wide array of supplies to those who are homebound and sheltering-in-place. These include incontinence supplies; personal hygiene items; pet care; exercise bands and hand weights; reading materials and puzzles; cloth face coverings for essential outings; and much more.

Throughout each week, COA staff members make regular, friendly check-in calls to be sure Chatham seniors are okay and if they require any assistance, as we seek to provide what's needed. As another way to combat isolation and keep seniors active while sheltering-in-place, our Council staff have produced an amazing array of online and virtual activities to keep folks active and engaged. Your support helps keep these supportive calls and activities coming!

Your contributions also help the Council provide in-home personal care and family caregiver respite through state-licensed home care agencies; transportation to medical appointments; and assistance with essential home modifications and repairs. In addition, we are still receiving and loaning assistive equipment—from hospital beds to canes.

All of which to say—we are still working very hard for Chatham’s growing population of seniors. Indicative of our efforts, Meals on Wheels America has asked our Council to be one of three local organizations across the U.S. to present on a national webinar on "Addressing Nutrition and Social Connection Needs of Rural Older Adults During the COVID-19 Emergency."

Our staff, volunteers, and seniors all long for the day when we can resume some semblance of normal operation but our priority remains helping seniors remain safe, well, active and socially engaged to the extent they can.

If you are able, please consider partnering with us through a monthly or one-time contribution. Thank you for supporting our work.

Sincerely,

Dennis W. Streets

Larry Ross

Donate Here
Join us for these exciting and educational online events!

**LISTEN & LEARN-A-THON**

**VOLUME 2 - LIVE! - WEDNESDAY, JULY 8TH AT 2 PM**

An Online Variety Show Series to Benefit The Chatham County Council on Aging

Join us for an afternoon of storytellers, songs, and more!
Free event, donations warmly welcomed!
For more info and to watch live, visit givebutter.com/COA_LL2
or scan the QR code above!

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**JULY 15TH, 16TH & 17TH**

**COUCH TO COUCH CONFERENCE**

An Online Learning & Lecture Series to Benefit The Chatham County Council on Aging

Missing our Senior Education Conference? Don't worry! We've gone virtual!
For more info and to get your tickets, visit givebutter.com/COA_C2C
or scan the QR code above!
Why I Serve
By Latonya N. Brown, Board of Directors

As a young girl, I would ride around with my mother to serve and care for her older adult friends. She instilled public service in me years before I knew the true meaning. Serving others has always been a part of my life and as a young independent woman I grew to understand the importance of public service. Coming from a small town and family that was not college educated pushed me to want more for myself. I knew what I wanted and was willing to do what was necessary to reach my goals.

My faith, core values, work ethic, experience and support system have prepared me for the responsibilities of adulthood. Unlike my adolescent days of doing just enough of what was needed and a little too much of what I wanted, my 30’s have been blessed with reaping the benefits hard work, dedication, compassion / empathy for others, as well as a perspective on life that properly aligns with where I am in my journey. Along the way, thanking all of the people who have provided me with love, knowledge, lessons, skills and understanding.

Bringing my networking skills and knowledge of the aging population to the Chatham County Council on Aging enables me to help older adults and serve more people in the community. I am hoping the experiences in my life, both professional and personal will always display a track record of service. I will always be passionate about helping youth and older adults and I hope to instill the same love for others in my children.

SECC & The COA: A Win-Win
Did you know that the Chatham County Council on Aging participates in the State Employees Combined Campaign?

By donating through the SECC, you make a powerful difference to a cause that is important to you, while also being part of a larger philanthropic effort with significant impact.

State Employees, simply use our Designation Code 3922 when you donate to the COA through the SECC.
Warm Welcomes and Fond Farewells...

By Staff

Life is always about change and transitions. We wish a fond farewell to Beth Moran who served as the Council's Human Services Specialist for nearly two years. Beth will be truly missed.

We also bid a fond farewell to Jim Hackney, who served on our Board of Directors for nearly a decade, as President, Treasurer and many other roles. Best wishes, Jim!

We offer a warm welcome to Tydelia (Ty) Hunt, who is our new Human Services Specialist. Ms. Hunt is a recent graduate of the Master of Social Work program offered jointly by North Carolina A&T and UNC–Greensboro.

Our Board of Directors also welcomes two new members, Steve Simon and Vivian Green. Mr. Simon retired from IBM, where he held many professional positions. Mr. Simon has continued to share his many skills. This includes serving as President and Chairman of the Board for Judea Reform, the largest synagogue in the Triangle. Ms. Green retired from UNC Hospitals after more than 30 years. She has served as a substitute teacher with Chatham County Schools, and cared for her mother during the last six years of her life (her mother passed at the age of 101).

Round Up at Chatham Marketplace to Support the COA this August!

The Chatham County Council on Aging has been chosen by Chatham Marketplace to be the August beneficiary of their register Round-Up program!

Throughout the month of August, every time you shop at Chatham Marketplace, you can round-up your register total to support the Chatham County Council on Aging. Both in-store and online shoppers can participate.

What a great way to support our Local Co-op Grocer while supporting the Chatham County Council on Aging!

Chatham Marketplace is located in Chatham Mills at 480 Hillsboro Street in Pittsboro. You can also visit them online at www.chathammarketplace.coop.

Lemonade out of Lemons

www.chathamcoa.org
I wanted to share the story of my mom and me... and why our respective self-care improves our mutual mental health.

When I was suddenly faced with being a divorced single mother wondering where I would go and what I would do, it was my mother, Mary McCant's voice that calmed me when she simply said, “Come home.” My mom has always been my biggest supporter and my voice of calm. I was able to have a peace of mind during the time when I had to work multiple jobs to provide for my family. Knowing that my children were not at a babysitter, but at home with the one person who could love them as much as I did allowed me to work and go to school to further my education. When I was in position to move into my own place my mom living with me was a no brainer. She had sacrificed for me when I was in need, so it was easy for me to do the same.

Was it easy? Heck no. We are constantly adjusting how we interact with each other. I had to learn to respect her as my mom but communicate with her as an adult and tell her those things that she did that bothered me so that I was not holding in things that would eventually explode. There was a time where I had to find a way to tell her that she was becoming a negative person, down to the way that she asked questions in the negative. That did not go well at first, but I had to stand my ground and give her examples and eventually we saw the negative characteristics that we both were bringing to the house and we made the necessary changes to ourselves.

I know most people say that they love their mothers and I do, and I truly like her too. That is why when she retired and started to just sit in front of the TV all day, I knew that I had to do something to get the life back in her and the pretty smile back on her face. In order to do that I had to make her mad, and boy was she mad at me. I asked her if she wanted to go to the Chatham County Council on Aging Center and her response was a resounding “NO! I am not going up there with all those old people” ... LOL, did I tell you that she can be funny too? I let it go for a couple of weeks, but she was getting more and more sedentary and I could see her becoming depressed right before my eyes. To protect both of our mental states I made an executive decision to call the Chatham County Council on Aging Center to see if there was a spot for my mom. They had a spot. I told her that they would be picking her up the next day. That night the house was so silent you could hear a pin drop. She was that mad at me. The next day she went to the center and I am pleased to say that she has been going for almost 12 years now. She plays bingo, exercise, sings in the choir, goes on trips, attends plays, attends luncheons, just to name a few things. I guess you can say she is not mad anymore.

My mom living with me and going to the center was one of the ways that her having hydrocephalus was identified. I was able to see the change in her ability to walk and respond to
things and the center called me with their concerns which confirmed what I was seeing. I was able to get her to a neurologist quickly and the fluid drained and she is now back to normal self. I am her health advocate, both mental and physical and I will do it until I don’t need to, or I can’t, but I will have someone primed to step in if for some reason I can no longer do it.

**Impact of COVID-19 (Self-Care together and separate matters!)**

Since we have been living in a pandemic world a few things have changed for us. The Chatham County Council on Aging Center is closed. I am working from home full time; therefore, we are together 24/7. We are not able to be out and with our friends, now phone calls are the method of communication. My mom does not see my granddaughters as much as she used to. We are not able to go to our respective churches in person. So desperate times call for desperate measure, or so I thought. I purchased my mom an iPhone so that she could FaceTime my kids, granddaughters and her sister. What was I thinking!!! My mom is SO not tech savvy. She locked her phone trying to FaceTime and I just made more work for myself, but it is fun watching her attempt it without asking me. We have laughed a lot! I attend church on Facebook Watch, and she attends her service on Zoom. Instead of me retiring to my bedroom after work like I used to, I now spend the evening with my mom so that she has human interaction. We are binge watching Gotham on Netflix. That is a story within itself, but I know that she enjoys our time together and that makes me extremely happy. To ensure that I keep a smile on my face I have had Zoom cocktail parties, and tea parties with my friend, ex coworkers, and cousins. The laughter is the same when you are with people you really like. We are going to get through this TOGETHER.

**Build a Network**

I am an only child so unlike a lot of people I don’t have siblings to share responsibilities with. The care of my mother is solely on me; however, I have been blessed to have amazing children who step in when I need a break. I have wonderful cousins and friends who step in if I need them. The Chatham County Council on Aging Center keeps her entertained, happy and healthy. No one is an island. For us to survive it takes a village. The network you build is your village. How you treat people when you are well may potentially determine the quality and dependability of your village when you are in need. My mom has always made people feel good. Her smile has always welcomed strangers and her hugs have always protected our family. My mom without knowing it laid the foundation for a great village to care for her, with me front and center.

**Lemonade out of Lemons**

www.chathamcoa.org
Helping Homebound Heroes

The Home Depot Foundation and Meals on Wheels America have selected the Chatham County Council on Aging for funding to help Chatham's senior veterans obtain necessary home repairs and modifications for safe and independent living. The Council was one of only 3 new grantees from across the nation chosen for this opportunity.

Through the generosity of The Home Depot Foundation and our partnership with Rebuilding Together of the Triangle and other community partners, the Chatham County Council on Aging will be facilitating these repairs for more than a dozen veteran households in our community—at no cost to the veteran.

For details and to learn if you qualify, please contact:

David Kennedy, Chatham County Veterans Service Officer
919-545-8334 — David.Kennedy@chathamnc.org

Dennis Streets, Wynne Fields or David Mallard at the Chatham County Council on Aging
919-542-4512 — 919-742-3975

A Place for Your Planned Gift

The Chatham County Council on Aging has partnered with the Triangle Community Foundation to create a non-endowed agency fund. This non-profit agency fund is set up to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Council. If you would like to learn more, please contact Lacee Monte at 919-542-4512 or lacee.monte@chathamcoa.org

Have you completed your 2020 Census? Every Person Counts!

Did you know that the data from the Census helps determine how much federal and state funding our County and the Council receives? If you and your families are not counted, we could miss out on important resources and opportunities for Chatham. Completing the Census is part of our civic duty to support Chatham County. If you haven't yet participated, call 844-330-2020.

For more info visit Chatham County's 2020 Census site: https://www.chathamnc.org/residents/2020-census
COVID-19 and Mental Health
By Anna Stormzand, Chatham County Public Health Department

We prefer predictability but we have been thrown into abnormal times. The current COVID-19 crisis, coupled with the uncertainty and physical distancing, has many of us whirling in a myriad of thoughts and feelings. Experiencing stress, isolation, and loneliness can cause many of us to feel anxious, withdrawn, helpless, and even numb. However these feeling can be magnified for the 1 in 5 individuals who live with underlying behavioral health conditions like schizophrenia, anxiety, depression, bipolar depression, PTSD, and substance use disorders.

Understandably, anxiety can spike during these times with the constant coronavirus media coverage and uncertainty we are facing. Yet for the estimated 40 million Americans with underlying anxiety disorders, these events can trigger feelings of fear and lack of control. Social seclusion and loneliness can lead to depression. Chances are, you or someone you know has been directly or indirectly adversely affected by this crisis. Remember: Not all wounds are visible.

All this is why it is incredibly important to check in on others right now. Reach out to your neighbor, friend, co-worker, or family member, whether they live next door or across the country. Give them a phone call, send a text or email, or put a letter in the mail...anything to show them that you care about how they are doing. Remember: Just because we can’t be close to each other physically doesn’t mean we can’t stay in touch with each other at all.

To be healthy as a whole, our mentality plays a very vital role. Our first priority and goal should be to improve the well-being of those in our care and community.

The coronavirus can be a wake-up call for every human being to spread kindness and support. The key to a better tomorrow and a better world is to take steps together with genuine, heartfelt, empathetic understanding, unbiased awareness and a courageous willingness to openly talk about conditions of mental health. So exercise your heart and reach out to serve others. Check on others and offer support and encouragement to be positive and enjoy the simple things. You may be surprised by the joy felt in this sense of purpose. This pandemic will surely change who we are and how we think. However, we will not only suffer to survive but flourish to thrive. YOU are NOT alone.

Please visit https://www.chathamnc.org/mentalhealth and www.chathamnc.org/recovery for a list of local mental health and substance use disorder providers and resources. All providers listed accept Medicaid and/or have a sliding scale for individuals qualifying for their services.

Lemonade out of Lemons

www.chathamcoa.org
Telehealth therapy or counseling, through your phone or video-based services, are also being offered by many providers right now to help accommodate everyone’s changing needs. Other resources across North Carolina and the country are listed below. Most of these services are free of charge and available to anyone.

Another webpage, www.chathamnc.org/coronavirushelp or www.chathamnc.org/coronavirusayuda, has a number of resources to help members of the Chatham community with things like mental health, food and nutrition, and other supports.

Please also check out these resources:

- **Know that you are not alone**: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Call 1-800-273-TALK/1-888-628-9454 (Ayuda en Espanol).
- **Crisis Text Line**: Text TALK to 741741 for free 24/7 crisis support through text messaging.
- **Counseling for health care professionals and essential workers**: Hope4Healers Helpline Call 919-226-2002 24/7 for mental health and resilience support for health care professionals, emergency medical specialists, first responders, childcare, other staff who work in health care settings and their families who are experiencing stress from being on the front lines of the state’s COVID-19 response. A licensed mental health professional will follow-up.
- **Hope4NC Helpline**: 1-855-587-3463 connects all North Carolinians with a real person for additional mental health and resilience support 24 hours per day, seven days a week.
- **The Hope Line**: A toll-free line has been established for older adults experiencing isolation. Call 1-866-578-4673.
- **Cardinal Innovations**: Call **ASK (**275) to connect individuals who may be experiencing a mental health crisis to the right help. A representative will respond within seconds 24/7.
- **Daymark**: Chatham's local provider. Call 919-663-2955. Daymark is located at 1105 East Cardinal Street, Siler City, NC 27344.
- **Get addiction support**: SAMHSA’s National Helpline 1-800-662-HELP (4357) is a free, confidential, 24/7 treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.
- **Support for LGBTQ community**: If you are an LGBT elder or care for one, call the free SAGE Hotline, toll-free, at 877–360–LGBT (5428). Help provided 24/7 (in English and Spanish).
- **Get help with domestic violence**: Chatham County offers an around-the-clock crisis phone line for victims of sexual assault or domestic violence. Call (919) 545–STOP (7867). The National Domestic Violence Hotline has trained counselors available by phone 24 hours a day at 1-800–799–SAFE (7233) and by chat at www.thehotline.org.

Lemonade out of Lemons  
www.chathamcoa.org
Advice from Seniors to Seniors
by COA's Senior Participants

This was an unusual year for Chatham County's graduating high school seniors due to the impact of COVID-19 on traditional senior year events and festivities, so we asked our seniors if they had any words of wisdom for recent grads. Here is some of the advice that they offered. Share this with youth you know.

"Vote! America is depending on our youth to vote." - Bill

"[I'd tell seniors] to look to their future, study and work hard & sometime you will have a great job. [I'd also tell them] to love one another and stop this racism." - Ida

"Treat people the way you want to be treated. If someone doesn't treat you well, think to yourself, 'Well, they missed out on something good.'" - Susan

"Something I wish someone had told me, what you do with your future is important, something you will carry with you the rest of your life - be smart, considerate of others, respect others. Otherwise you will miss out on relationships and friendships." - Rosemary

"Get a job you like and you'll never work a day in your life." - Darrell

Seniors Speak: "How are you making the most of the pandemic?"

"I'm always doing arts and crafts and thinking about doing paper mache. I'm also teaching my dog new tricks. Right now I'm teaching her how to find my phone. She can bring to me different toys by name but she doesn't put them away." - Susan

"For me this has been a blessing. I'm thanking God because my concern is for my husband. The Council on Aging has been great and keeping me busy. I'm also taking a new online class for the next 12 weeks at Boston College." - Rosemary

"Been going out early if I have to go out. Staying home. Busy cooking 3 times per day. Wearing a mask around others, etc. Call[ing] friends and participat[ing] in [the COA's] Small Group Calls." - Hazel

"I have enjoyed doing things on my own timeline instead of having a fixed schedule. [I] continue to do crossword puzzles to stimulate my brain." - Juliana

Lemonade out of Lemons

www.chathamcoa.org
MaryLou writes, "I started the group because all but two [of us] are totally isolated from other human beings [due to COVID-19]. We meet in park at least once a week, weather permitting. There are 3 rules: wear a mask, bring your chair, and bring a brown bag lunch. I made each one their own personalized face mask. We all use the Senior Center services and also attend same church."

Editor's Note: While our centers are currently closed to the public, we are still encouraging seniors and their families to practice the 3 Ws! Wear a cloth face covering, Wait 6 feet apart, and Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer!

If you leave home, know your Ws!

If you leave home, know your Ws!

Lemonade out of Lemons

www.chathamcoa.org
Food Program Recipients Receive Additional Benefits Due to COVID-19
By Jennie Kristiansen - Director, Chatham County Department of Social Services

When COVID-19 began impacting North Carolina, the Department of Health and Human Services quickly appealed to the United States Department of Agriculture for additional flexibility in serving individuals and families across the state. For seniors who receive Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) or Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, many received additional funds to purchase food during the past three months. These additional benefits were specifically for seniors who had not been receiving what is called the “maximum allotment” for their household size.

“We were very appreciative that NC was so proactive in applying for waivers which helped us provide some additional benefits during this very difficult time. I would encourage any seniors who are having difficulty making ends meet and affording food to contact our office about benefits that may be available to them,” said Karen VonCannon, who oversees the FNS program at Chatham County Department of Social Services.

Nutrition and access to food plays an important role in keeping people healthy and well and a goal of the Department of Social Services is to make sure that everyone who is eligible can get connected with this important benefit program. Food can now also be purchased online using SNAP benefits through Walmart and Amazon.com.

For more information about Food and Nutrition Services, please call the Department of Social Services at 919-542-2759 or email askdss@chathamnc.org.

For questions related to Medicare and long-term care insurance, call NC SHIIP toll-free at 1-855-408-1212
How Older Adults Can Get Ready for Hurricane Season
by Colby W. Sawyer, MPA - Chatham County Emergency Management Specialist

For families across the eastern seaboard, the start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season means another year of planning and preparing for what they will do if a tropical system comes our way. This fact is true in both the coastal and inland counties, as we have seen our fair share of tropical storm damage here in Chatham County over the years. While disasters and emergencies can (and do) affect anybody, our older adults are some of the most vulnerable when disaster comes our way.

Jeff Jackson, the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the National Preparedness Directorate within FEMA, said, “Being prepared for a disaster is important at every age... This is especially true for older adults who may rely on the availability of health care services, accessible transportation, special diets, medications, mobility devices, access to power, communications and other vital resources.” By evaluating your personal needs and taking steps to ensure that they are met, you and your loved ones can be better prepared. The three critical elements of disaster preparedness are 1) Build a Kit, 2) Make a Plan, and 3) Stay Informed.

Build a Kit

Everyone should assemble an Emergency Kit for you, your family, and your pets. Your Emergency Kit is a container, or collection of containers, with items your family and pets may need in or after an emergency. Think first about the basics for survival – food, water, clean air, and any life-sustaining items you require. These are items such as non-perishable food and water (1 gallon per person per day), a first-aid kit, flashlight with extra batteries, and any food or supplies needed for your pets or service animals. For older adults, if you take medicine or use a medical treatment daily, be sure you have what you need on hand to make it on your own for at least a week. Keep a copy of your prescriptions as well as dosage or treatment information. If it is not possible to have a week-long supply of medicines and supplies, keep as much as possible on hand and talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you should do to prepare. If you use eyeglasses, hearing aids and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries, and oxygen, be sure you always have extras in your home.

For more information about building an emergency kit, please visit READYCHATHAM.ORG and follow the link for “Build A Kit.”

Lemonade out of Lemons  www.chathamcoa.org
Make a Plan

Take stock of the risks in your community, eliminate threats whenever possible, identify your own needs and the needs of your dependents, and develop and share your emergency plans with family members. First, develop a Family Emergency Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations. Consider a plan where each family member calls, or e-mails, the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency. Second, consider your Personal Support Network. If you believe that you are going to need some assistance during a disaster, ask your family, friends, and other trusted people to be a part of your plan. Make sure that everyone in the group knows and understands your plan and that your plan includes people who would not be impacted by the same disaster that you are experiencing. Consider ensuring that some family members or trusted friends have an extra key to your house and know where your emergency kit and vital information are kept. If the members of your network do not know how to operate any special equipment you might use (such as oxygen machines or wheelchairs), teach them before the disaster strikes.

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

No matter what the circumstances are, it is tough to decide if you should stay in your home or evacuate to another location when disaster is about to, or already has, struck. Making this decision is even more complicated currently due to the threats of COVID-19, especially for older adults or those with pre-existing medical conditions which place them into a high-risk category. By building an emergency kit to get you through a few days during a disaster and working through your family and support networks, it may be safer for you to stay at home and shelter-in-place instead of coming to a congregate, or group, shelter. If you can’t stay in your home during a disaster, consider going to stay with a family member or friend. Another option would be to get a hotel room at a facility that has a generator or other means of staying open and providing services during a disaster.

Stay Informed

Staying informed about threats and hazards comes from a combination of trusted local news sources, having a reliable means to receive emergency alerts and notifications, and sharing information with family, friends, and neighbors. It is crucial to be prepared to adapt this information to your personal circumstances and make every effort to follow instructions received from authorities. Sign up to receive emergency alerts and information from Chatham County authorities via the CodeRED System at READYCHATHAM.ORG and follow the link for “ALERT Chatham.” If you will need additional help during a disaster due to vision/hearing difficulties, problems getting around on your own, or other special needs, the county also maintains a private, confidential registry/contact list with specific information about any additional help you might need during an emergency. This can be found at READYCHATHAM.ORG and following the link for “SAFE Chatham.” You can also register by phone at 919-545-8163, Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm.
COA Medical Transportation Updates
by Sigi Markworth

Our Medical Transportation Program continues to operate on a restricted schedule to provide critical rides. This includes rides to the pharmacy and dental appointments. If you have an urgent need to see a healthcare professional, we recommend that you call your healthcare provider first for his/her guidance. If you need to be seen in person, call Sigi Markworth, Medical Transportation at 919-542-4512 ext. 222.

Chatham Transit has added the following requirements:

- Please wear a face covering (a mask, or anything covering your mouth and nose, e.g., a bandana)
- Let us know if your healthcare provider requires you to wait in the car/van before entering for your appointment.

Take care, stay safe, and let us know if we can help.

Chatham Aging Navigator Tool Sheets Now Available

Several years ago, members of the CAST (Chatham Advocacy for Seniors Team) developed the idea of creating topical fact sheets that would be useful to older adults, family caregivers, and the Council’s staff, volunteers and community partners. The CAST, who included Matt Alexander, Anne Kissel, Rebecca Blalock and Ed Regan, coined the term “Chatham Aging Navigator” (CAN) to describe these proposed tool sheets.

Several different individuals and groups tackled the creation of these tools: UNC-Chapel Hill nursing students, County employees (as part of their Chatham Leadership Academy experience), a UNC Public Health Capstone team and our volunteer Community Ambassadors. While some of the resources listed in the tool sheets are affected by COVID-19, they still offer an important starting place in finding assistance. Topics covered in the first ten of the planned tool sheets are listed below and they downloaded on our website at: https://chathamcoa.org/chatham-aging-navigator.

- What to Do When You’re Feeling Isolated
- Preventing Social Isolation and Loneliness
- Transportation Options
- Preventing Falls and Fractures
- What Is Available to Help Me Eat a Good Meal?
- Exercise and Staying Active
- How to Be Prepared for an Emergency
- Financial Exploitation among Older Adults
- Coping with an Alzheimer’s or Other Dementia Diagnosis
- What to Do When You Feel You Can No Longer Care for Your Loved One at Home.

Lemonade out of Lemons
If you're like me, you've probably been working through some of your own bookshelves, rereading old favorites, but if you need some new reads, let's talk about some ways to get books while the library is still closed. [Editors note: As of press time, the Chatham County Library is still closed to the public, but is now offering curbside pickup. Call your local branch for details.] If you're seeing this online, then you have access to the ebooks and audiobooks from your public library. They have instructions on their websites for downloading the Libby, Overdrive and Hoopla programs for those. You can use those on a computer or on a phone.

If you moved from another county and you still have your old library card, you could try signing up on both libraries and see if it gives you more options. I'm lucky enough to still be able to use the Hoopla account from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg library, which has a higher limit on how many you can check out per month.

Also, Amazon will run Kindle daily deals, dropping the price on an ebook to 99 cents to help sales, and when I see those on good mysteries, I'll share them on the ObserverMysteries Facebook page, so keep an eye out for those. (And let me know if YOU see them and I don't!) Amazon also has free books and Kindle Unlimited, if your budget can handle $11 a month, and you can strike gold there. They have quite a bit of Blake Crouch, a writer with North Carolina roots who writes spooky stuff like the Wayward Pines trilogy. But it's not best-sellers or anything. If you don't have a Kindle, you can read these on your phone with the Kindle app, or on a computer with Kindle Cloud Reader.

Now, if you still like the feel of a print book, try paperbackswap.com, where you list books you have to give away, and you build up credits by mailing books to other people. So your only cost there is for postage when you send someone a book. The books you get are free! And the website creates a mailing label for you to print, so you pay postage there online and can just put the book in your mailbox. No trip to the Post Office needed.

So that's a few ways to get hold of books on a budget. Now, what does ObserverMysteries recommend? I would normally list a lot of new releases, but those are going to have long wait lists, so let's talk about some current writers whose books I always look forward to, but who will have good backlists and you might be able to get them without waiting. I'm not going to talk about the old classics, but that could be a list for another day. These are ones who are newer, that you might not know yet.

I have to start with Louise Penny, just because at one time she would be the one name I would give people who were looking for a new writer, and now she's the one name people tell ME when they find out I review mysteries. “Oh – do you know about Louise Penny?” I mean everyone. And for good reason. She's created this Canadian village full of people you wish were your friends. This village has great characters, a used bookstore, and a bistro with amazing food, and she creates so much urgency. There's so much emotional energy in the situations. I don't know how she does that but you care so deeply about what happens. So if you're not already reading her, start!
My second top pick is always Thomas Perry’s *Jane Whitefield* series. Jane Whitefield is a woman in Upstate New York, with Seneca blood, who helps people disappear. The details of how people can drop out of sight are just fascinating to me, but also there’s this wonderful ongoing theme of how people underestimate this woman and how she gets the best of them. One friend of mine called this series “literary crack.” Give it a try. The first book in the series is *Vanishing Act*. Looks like there’s lots of Thomas Perry available on Overdrive. His other books are also great.

Another top favorite of mine is Laura Lippman. Every book of hers that I’ve picked up has been a great read, but particularly her recent book *Sunburn* won some awards. But there’s no bad Laura Lippman, so just dive in. I saw a few of hers on Overdrive.

A fun series from Lisa Lutz is the *Spellman Files*, about a family of private detectives that seem to spy on each other as much as on their subjects. This is just fun, so if you need something light, check this out. The first one is available as an audiobook on Overdrive, and I found the fifth one on Kindle Unlimited.

Nevada Barr’s *Anna Pigeon* series, about a park ranger, has another good female protagonist – lots on Overdrive.

Michael Connelly is another longtime favorite. He started as a newspaper reporter, so he’s got the advantages of knowing how weird real life can get, and being able to write tight and keep things moving. If you haven’t read *The Lincoln Lawyer*, that’s a great example. He keeps a lot of balls in the air and they just come together in this breathtaking way at the end. He also has the *Bosch* series, also a series I pick up when I see them. Lots of Michael Connelly on Overdrive.

One of my other favorites, unfortunately, has nothing on Chatham County Library Overdrive, Julia Spencer-Fleming, who writes a series about an Episcopal priest and a police chief in Upstate New York, one of the great strung-out love affairs – I think they eventually get together after many, many books of secret longing, but then it’s “the course of true love never did run smooth” so she keeps things up in the air. Nothing on Overdrive, but there are a few on paperbackswap.

Another one I always pick up is Sophie Hannah. She writes these really good standalones focusing more on character than on plot. Like a successor to Ruth Rendell, if you like her. I saw 10 titles on Overdrive but some are an Agatha Christie series she writes, which I have not tried.
Another one I always looks out for is Lisa Unger, if you don't mind it sliding over into supernatural – she has some characters with “second sight.” She has created this town called *The Hollows* where things get weird, kind of like Stephen King with *Castle Rock*. There are some Lisa Unger titles in Overdrive.

Try Peter Robinson for police procedurals with a boomer point of view. Old hippies, fallout from things that happened in the 60s. I found some on Overdrive.

Since this is for the Council on Aging, I'll mention some series that star senior citizens. The Buck Schatz series by Daniel Friedman is about a retired cop in Memphis, Tennessee. Nothing in Overdrive, but they are on Kindle. First title: Don't Ever Get Old, nominated for an Edgar Award for Best First Novel. Also the Abe Lieberman mysteries by Stuart M. Kaminsky – nothing on Overdrive – and Walter Mosley's Socrates Fortlow mysteries, about on ex-con who lives in an abandoned building and bags groceries who shares the wisdom of his hard life. He's a character you can't get enough of. Nevada Barr also has an elderly character in a standalone named What Rose Forgot. An elderly woman wakes up under a tree outside, wearing a hospital gown and not able to think clearly. She has escaped from a facility, but come to find out she's not as far gone as they think she is.

And now a couple of writers I love, but that are harder to find, or hard to find cheap, anyway. Jamie Harrison wrote four books about the town of Blue Deer, Montana, in the 90s and early 2000s, and then was not heard from again until *The Widow Nash*, which came out last year. The Blue Deer books remind me of Louise Penny's Three Pines, because of the interplay of the people. They're sadly not available digitally, but I found them on paperbackswap. Here's an interview she did about *The Widow Nash*, which is an excellent story about a woman who sneaks off a train and reinvents herself around the turn of the 20th century. I have waited for almost two decades for a new book from her, so I was thrilled to see this, She has another one coming out in January.

Michael Gruber was recommended to me by the same person who told me about Thomas Perry, and he went on my list of authors to always look for when I find myself in a bookstore. He's really topnotch. He has one series set in Miami and several really good standalones. Nothing on Overdrive but he has one set of books published by regular publishers, and then he went on to self-publish four others, all available on Kindle. I have not tried those yet.
Friday, July 3 – Center Closed in Observance of Independence Day
10:15 AM – Weekly Call with Dennis Streets (CL)

Monday, July 6
9 AM – Tai Chi for Arthritis (Z)
10 AM – Strong & Fit with Jackie (Z)
11:15 AM – Bingo with Joe (Z)

Tuesday, July 7
9 AM – Body Conditioning with Jackie (Z)
11:15 AM – Senior Tar Heel Legislature Update W/Ed Regan (Z)
4 PM – Zumba Gold with Debbie (Z)

Wednesday, July 8
11:15 AM – Legal Aid Outreach For Seniors W/Melany (Z)
2 PM – Listen & Learn-a-Thon (see page 8)

Thursday, July 9
10 AM – Strong & Fit with Jackie (Z)
10 AM – Needlework Small Group Call (GM-Liz)
11:15 AM – Liz’s trip to Denmark through pictures (Z)

Friday, July 10
9 AM – Body Conditioning with Jackie (Z)
10:15 AM – Weekly Call with Dennis Streets & Storytelling from Neriah (CL)

Monday, July 13
9 AM – Tai Chi for Arthritis (Z)
10 AM – Strong & Fit with Jackie (Z)
11:15 AM – Bingo with Joe (Z)

Tuesday, July 14
9 AM – Body Conditioning with Jackie (Z)
11:15 AM – Spill the Beans with Liz (Z)
4 PM – Zumba Gold with Debbie (Z)

Wednesday, July 15
9 AM – NOON – Day One: Couch to Couch Conference (see page 8)

Thursday, July 16
9 AM – NOON – Day Two: Couch to Couch Conference (see page 8)
10 AM – Needlework Small Group Call (GM-Liz)
2 PM – Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) (GM-Liz)

Friday, July 17
9 AM – NOON – Day Three: Couch to Couch Conference (see page 8)
10:15 AM – Weekly Call with Dennis Streets & Musician Pat Stucke (CL)

Monday, July 20
9 AM – Tai Chi for Arthritis (Z)
10 AM – Strong & Fit with Jackie (Z)
11:15 AM – Bingo with Joe (Z)

Tuesday, July 21
9 AM – Body Conditioning with Jackie (Z)
11:15 AM – Senior Tar Heel Legislature Update W/Ed Regan (Z)
4 PM – Zumba Gold with Debbie (Z)

Wednesday, July 22
10 AM – WCSC Senior Games & SilverArts Ceremony
11:15 AM – Woodturning with Alan (Z)

Thursday, July 23
10 AM – Strong & Fit with Jackie (Z)
10 AM – Needlework Small Group Call (GM-Liz)
11:15 AM – Science with Alan (Z)
2 PM – Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) (GM-Liz)

Friday, July 24
9 AM – Body Conditioning with Jackie (Z)
10:15 AM – Weekly Call with Dennis Streets & Music from Gene & Marian (CL)

Monday, July 27
9 AM – Tai Chi for Arthritis (Z)
10 AM – Strong & Fit with Jackie (Z)
11:15 AM – Bingo with Joe (Z)

Tuesday, July 28
9 AM – Body Conditioning with Jackie (Z)
11:15 AM – Fiber 101 – Twin Birch & Teasal (Z)
4 PM – Zumba Gold with Debbie (Z)

Wednesday, July 29
11:15 AM – Music with Krall Daddy & Old Uncle Edd (Z)

Thursday, July 30
10 AM – ECSC Senior Games & Silver Arts Ceremony
2 PM – Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) (GM-Liz)

Friday, July 31
9 AM – Body Conditioning with Jackie (Z)
10:15 AM – Weekly Call with Dennis Streets & Music from Don & Marian (CL)
We must continue to encourage and enable older adults to remain actively engaged in the community. We must recognize that as people age some will experience health, social and economic challenges that require care and support. We must be prepared to assist. We must acknowledge that not all persons experience the same opportunities in life. As UNC–Greensboro Graduate Gerontology Program Coordinator Elise Eifert noted “Aging begins at birth and is influenced by many things, including racism, over the life course. If we want people to have the opportunity to live long, successful lives, we must do the work to create a society that fights against social injustice and truly becomes anti-racist.” All of this should serve as notice that our work is far from complete—it is only beginning. To ride the age wave successfully, we need quality facilities, a strong corps of dedicated staff and volunteers, bold and visionary leadership, and donors willing to make the work of the Council a priority in their giving.

Regardless of what lemons come our way—with these ingredients—we should continue to enjoy a wide variety of treats—which that’s lemon pound cake, lemon bars, lemon meringue pie, or lemonade. We know what it takes…we just need to make it happen for the benefit of Chatham seniors, their families and our entire community.

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While residents aged 60+ composed 19% of Chatham’s population in 1996, by 2018 they were a third of our population (33%). By 2038, it is projected that more than 4 in 10 (41%) of Chatham’s population will be 60 and older.

Those of us who will be 85 or older will represent the fastest growing age group. Between 2018 and 2038, Chatham’s total population is projected to grow by 46%— those 60+ by 83%— and those 85+ by 208%.

What the statistics don’t tell are the implications of such a demographic shift. Are we in the “silver tsunami” that has been used to describe population aging? Critics of this metaphor cite the ageist perceptions that it may tend to reinforce. Or we at a stage of a more mature and experienced society? I’m not sure that today’s youth would agree or credit those of us who are older with creating a more civil, just future for them.

When I look at these numbers, they scream several themes:

- We must do all things possible to encourage healthy aging—shrinking the period of time between morbidity and mortality. In other words, we should strive for healthy long lives.

Aging Wave Continues
By Dennis W. Streets, Executive Director

Since the Council’s Eastern Chatham Senior Center opened its doors in 1996, Chatham County’s population has grown, and with it, the population of our older residents (see table below).
In a saucepan over high heat, bring 2 cups of the water to a boil. Remove from the heat, add the 8 lemon verbena leaves and sugar. Stir until the sugar dissolves. Let steep for 10 minutes. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a pitcher. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Add the remaining 4 cups water and the lemon juice to the lemon verbena syrup and stir well. Fill 6 to 8 tumblers with ice. Divide the lemonade evenly among the glasses. Garnish each glass with lemon verbena leaves and lemon slices and serve.

Serves 6 to 8

Ingredients:
- 6 cups water
- 8 fresh lemon verbena leaves, plus more for garnish (Mint leaves can be substituted for lemon verbena leaves)
- 1/2 cup sugar (Honey can be substituted for sugar, to taste)
- 1 1/4 cups fresh lemon juice
- Ice cubes as needed
- 2 lemons, thinly sliced

Directions:
1. In a saucepan over high heat, bring 2 cups of the water to a boil.
2. Remove from the heat, add the 8 lemon verbena leaves and sugar. Stir until the sugar dissolves.
3. Let steep for 10 minutes.
4. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a pitcher. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
5. Add the remaining 4 cups water and the lemon juice to the lemon verbena syrup and stir well.
6. Fill 6 to 8 tumblers with ice. Divide the lemonade evenly among the glasses.
7. Garnish each glass with lemon verbena leaves and lemon slices and serve.


The theme for Older Americans month this past March was "Make Your Mark," encouraging and celebrating the countless contributions that older adults make to our communities.

Here are a few of the our Eastern Center's seniors making their mark. Our fall newsletter will highlight seniors from our Western Senior.

Juliana was introduced to the Council on Aging fifteen years ago. She thought the people were charming and made her feel so welcome, even though she traveled back and forth to the United Kingdom. When Juliana permanently settled in Pittsboro three years ago, she knew she wanted to be a part of COA and get involved in the area where she lived. She started attending the exercise classes, joining the Eastern Center's Advisory Team and then volunteering in the kitchen. Juliana’s involvement then grew to setting up the Friendly Caller program and hosting the monthly tea parties. Her love of English tea and customs came in handy. Juliana now serves as the Advisory Team Chairperson and is passionate about healthy eating. She is a vegetarian and also started a healthy snack program for people attending the center. She also serves as one of the COA's Community Ambassadors.

Rosemary moved here from Michigan in 2012 and was taking care of her household when she realized she was not entirely fulfilled. Rosemary wanted to give back for the blessings she had received, so in 2015, she got the courage to come up to the center. She then started delivering Meals on Wheels and working in the kitchen. Rosemary soon fell in love with the participants and staff. She then became the AARP president of a local chapter, joined the COA Gospel Choir and started volunteering with the VITA Tax Program and SHIIP. Rosemary joined the Advisory Team as secretary and recently became a COA Ambassador and craft leader with Seniors Helping Seniors. If that wasn’t enough, she started teaching a Chronic Disease Self-Management class. Rosemary she has taken on a lot of roles at COA and is living proof that you can learn new skills and bloom wherever you are planted.

"Make Your Mark!"
Debbie retired March 1, 2016 after 30 years of working in a Healthcare setting. She said to herself, using a quote from Michael McMillian, “You can’t start the next chapter of your life if you keep re-reading the last one.” She decided to seek endeavors within her community as a way of giving back.

Debbie chose to seek volunteer opportunities at the Chatham County Council on Aging. She had experience with preparing her own taxes, so she decided to work with the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) as a greeter processing intake forms and has been doing it four years. Debbie recently became the head Coordinator over the Intake area.

Debbie then began working the registration desk at various Chatham County Council on Aging’s programs such as Healthy Heart and Body Expo, Black History Celebration and Salute to Veterans Day. She also became the Captain of the Senior Cheerleaders at the Eastern Center and Co-Chairperson for the Center’s Advisory Team. Her new chapter of life has been very rewarding, and she has met some of the most heartfelt friends.

Ed and his wife moved to Pittsboro in 2017 from Atlanta Ga. They visited the Eastern Chatham Senior Center where Ed became involved with the "3Gs" (Geezers, Gulpers & Gardeners) who met every Thursday morning (pre-COVID-19) for 90 minutes to have an open discussion on what is going on in our county.

While in Georgia, Ed was a High School Football official for 13 years, so in 2018, he became involved with the Chatham County Senior Games as an official to oversee the Football and Softball Throw and serve on the Steering Committee. In 2019, Ed became a member of the Eastern Center's Advisory Team.

Ernie is 91 and has been coming to the center since 2011 by introduction of his sister-in-law. He started eating lunch with his wife Peggy at the center until she needed more care. Peggy started receiving services at P.A.C.E., moved into Cambridge Assisted Living and then ended up at the Laurels. Ernie dutifully had three meals a day, seven days a week with Peggy and exercised in between. Ernie also joined the "3Gs" (Geezers, Gulpers and Gardeners). He affectionately calls himself the “Geezer” of the group. Peggy unfortunately passed away in 2018. After Ernie’s loss, he started volunteering at P.A.C.E. and Cambridge, participating in exercise classes and working out in our Eastern Center’s fitness room twice a day. He then wanted to contribute more to the COA, so he joined the Center’s Advisory Team to make friends and work with people.
Still Here for Chatham's Seniors After 46 Years of Service

How has the Council impacted you or your family? We'd love to hear from you!

Email Krista Westervelt at krista.westervelt@chathamcoa.org

Serving Chatham Seniors for Over 45 Years

- Assistive Equipment Loan Program
- Caregiver Respite and Support Group
- Chatham County Senior Games & SilverArts
- Congregate Meals
- Diabetic Support Group
- Disaster Preparation
- Emergency Meals
- Family Caregiver Support
- Health Education
- Heat-Relief Fan Distribution
- Hiking Club
- Housing Information
- Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
- Incontinence Supplies
- Information & Options Counseling
- In-Home Aid Service
- Legal Services
- Meals on Wheels & Frozen Meals
- Medical Transportation
- Minor Home Repair
- Reporting Neglect/Abuse/Exploitation
- Senior Center Activities
- Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program-SHIIP
- Telephone Reassurance
- Transportation
- Travelers Club
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Information & Assistance
  - Mental Health
  - Hospice
  - Adult Day Care/Health
  - Rehabilitation Services
  - Medicaid & Medicare A/B
  - Social Security Benefits

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