



Neighbor Notes

November 2017

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Direct from the Director

As Thanksgiving approaches, and we all pause to give thanks for the joys and blessings in our lives, I'm sharing a recent letter that reminds us of the importance of sharing our compassion for others when they are experiencing a time of need. Best Wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving.

- Joe Marmora
Founder & Executive Director

"I desire to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Interfaith Neighbors and Ms. Maura Comer. I have had the pleasure to work with Interfaith first through community involvement and then through the rental assistance program. The circumstances that led to my involvement with the Interfaith rental assistance were a nightmare that no one should have to live. It was an awful experience that included me living in my car and somehow remaining employed. I knew that without meaningful employment the situation would only get worse....I am fully aware of the lack of affordable housing within New Jersey. To make matters more challenging I am disabled and finding a safe accessible place to call home is nearly impossible.

"Maura's professional yet compassionate manner made this awful



Maura Comer
Director, Rental & Mortgage Assistance

time in my life bearable. While the financial assistance was necessary, what was of greater importance was that I felt that Maura really cared. She always responded to email and calls in a timely fashion and never had a negative attitude towards me or my situation. Awful things said and done to me during miserable experience. Maura/Interfaith remained a source of hope, faith and possibilities that in the end resulted in a roof over my head for the upcoming year.



Howell



Middletown



Red Bank



Bradley Beach & Asbury Park



Neptune



Office & Kitchen



Bayshore Area



Easter Seals Sayerville

"Thank you for all that you do in the community and for being there when I needed help."

Pausing to Give Thanks

Last month, Interfaith Neighbors honored the hundreds of volunteers who make the Meals on Wheels program possible during an October luncheon at Branches Catering in West Long Branch.



"Volunteerism is the thread that keeps us together," said Monmouth County Freeholder John P. Curley, the keynote speaker. "I certainly salute Interfaith Neighbors and all the actions they've done --that you've done."

Curley, a member of the Monmouth County Board of Freeholders the past eight years, serves as liaison to the county's Office on Aging, Disabilities & Veterans Services through which federal funding for Meals on Wheels is administered.

Speaking to more than 200 volunteers who were able to attend the annual luncheon, Curley said: "No one is more cherished than an individual--someone who lightens the burden of others."

Co-Executive Director Paul McEvily paid special recognition to the dedication of Interfaith staff members Sandi Silber, Sally Maloney and Diane Madsen whose work and coordination contribute to the program's success. The lunches and breakfasts currently reach approximately 3,000 individuals each year.

McEvily said it is impossible to state the number of lives impacted by the volunteers' service, and expanded that concept to include volunteers serving across the country. "I want to thank everyone for those hours, upon hours," he said.

Interfaith Neighbors' Meals on Wheels and Nutrition programs are served by approximately 500 volunteers each year, serving approximately 330,000 meals a year. Photos to the left recognize our volunteers present at the event with ten-plus years of volunteer service in the program.

SAVE THE DATE

Interfaith Neighbors is pleased to announce that our **30th Anniversary Gala** will be held Thursday, June 14, 2018. We will celebrate the start of summer and honor two amazing Jersey Shore figures: **John K. Lloyd**, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Hackensack Meridian Health and **Joseph J. Marmora**, Founder & Executive Director, Interfaith Neighbors. Save the Date! More information coming on our [website](#).

2017 Golf Outing

Tremendous Success

Many thanks to the sponsors, golfers, guests and planning committee who made Interfaith Neighbors 2017 Golf Outing a huge success.

With over 135 golfers, two shotgun starts, and an amazing gift auction and dinner, the event resulted in



IFN Welcomes Diane Shelton

Brings Her Community Expertise to Interfaith Neighbors



We welcome Diane Shelton to her new position as Community Outreach Specialist where she plans to continue Interfaith Neighbors'

over \$110,000 in net proceeds in support of Interfaith Neighbors' Rental & Mortgage Assistance Program.



Local students making art from recycled materials as part of the Kula Urban Farm Green Thumbs program.

Stand Outs are Recognized

Two Kula Cafe Trainees Receive Awards

One of the primary funders of the Kula Cafe Hospitality Training program is the Monmouth County Workforce Development Board (WDB). In October, the WDB presented 25th Annual Alumni Awards to two of our program participants. Congratulations to Christian and Johnny on their well-deserved recognition!

partnership and collaboration with youth and residents, other agencies, foundations and the city of Asbury Park.

Diane comes to Interfaith from Prevention First where she worked for five years as a community development specialist and administered the federally funded Drug-free Communities Support Program for the last four years.

“I would like to have residents become more involved in the community --their community,” she said. “So much has happened in the years past that resulted in non-involvement...Things are improving as far as increased life brought into the community, and it has a lot to do with Interfaith Neighbors.”

Diane grew up in Neptune and has lived in Asbury Park for the past 11 years. She is executive assistant to Bishop Mark E. White, Pastor of the Shiloh Community Fellowship Ministries on DeWitt Ave., Asbury Park. She is a member of the Prevention Coalition of Monmouth County and serves on the Board of Trustees, Asbury Park Public Library.

She received a Master’s degree in Social Work from Simmons College School of Social Work in Boston. Her undergraduate degree is from Morgan State University in Baltimore.

Diane has worked closely with Heather Schulze, Interfaith Neighbors’ former community youth outreach coordinator who is now executive director at Coastal Habitat For Community.

A Little Seasoning from the Old Country

Meals on Wheels with their Own Culinary Touch



Ralph and Alice Kremer of Ocean Grove love their native Netherlands and say Dutch cooking is just the best (of course)! But they, like other seniors, reached a time when they couldn’t keep their own cooking going and now get Meals on Wheels delivered five days a week from

Interfaith Neighbors.

In transitioning to meals that are nutritious but not quite the cuisine they prided themselves on, Ralph who is 91 and Alice who is 88, came up with their own solution. They often wait and eat their meal at dinnertime, when they add just the slightest culinary touch from their own kitchen. In a way, the meal becomes their own.

Married for close to six decades, the Kremers lived many of those years in two different homes they built themselves in Ocean Grove. Now they are in the home Alice’s father originally built. The couple met in North Jersey after immigrating to the U.S. – Alice in 1948 and Ralph in 1954. They lived in Clifton before making Ocean Grove their home, where they raised their son, Harry.



Award recipient Christian, IFN Youth Specialist Meg Flores, Award Recipient Johnny



Farm to Table Dinner in the Kula Farm Greenhouse

Ralph and Alice certainly are not getting around as they once did, but they share their life and there's a lot of conversation, laughter and history that fills the Kremer living room.

With the help of 500 volunteers and paid drivers, Interfaith Neighbors delivers 900 to 1,000 meals a day to seniors and disabled individuals in their homes or at congregate noonday sites in Monmouth County.

Educator Enriching Kula Farm Offerings

Newcomer Briana Nichols is bringing her teaching and education expertise to the Kula Urban Farm afterschool Green Thumbs program.



Nichols developed eight-week curricula for spring, summer and fall classes to give middle school-aged children greater exposure to biology, ecology and the notion of community agriculture as a form of social justice.

“The objective is to get the kids to a place where they're learning without even realizing it,” Briana says. “There's a structure that allows them to feel safe but also very open to exploration and gaining knowledge and experience to take out to the community.”

She also is creating new one-day free workshops that last two to three hours and focus on local food production, cooking and nutrition, organic farming practices, the importance of biodiversity and community and the connection between the social, ecological and economic of agriculture in their lives.

Briana moved to Asbury Park from Philadelphia two years ago to be with her husband Jose Melendez. Jose teaches fifth grade in the Long Branch Public Schools. The couple is expecting a child --a daughter--in January.

Briana previously lived in Chicago where she taught in the Chicago Public Schools for five years. She is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Pennsylvania pursuing a joint degree in anthropology and education. She plans to do field work in Guatemala, researching the outcomes of children who were deported to Guatemala after they came into the United States illegally. Two days a week, Briana interns with an immigration advocacy organization in Newark which helps fight for immigration relief so that children can stay in this country.

The Kula Farm and Café Green Thumbs programs are funded by the Elizabeth and Baretts O Benjamin Foundation.

Farm to Table

Local Chefs Support Kula Cafe Hospitality Training



Last year, Interfaith Neighbors introduced Farm to Table cocktail and dinner events at the Kula Urban Farm in support of the Kula Cafe Hospitality Training program. These events bring local "celebrity" chefs to the Kula Farm to present a fine dining experience in the midst of the Kula Farm. Participants in the Kula Cafe training program work with the chef in preparing, presenting and serving the meal.

"These Farm to Table events provide our program participants the opportunity to meet local chefs for future employment opportunities and broaden their experience beyond the casual breakfast and lunch dining training experiences at the Kula Cafe," says Gillian Edgar, general manager at the Kula Cafe.

To date this year, guest "celebrity" chefs have included:

- Chris Mumford, Cafe Mumfords, Shrewsbury
- Arielle Brown, Taka, Asbury Park
- Carol Ann McLaughlin, Carol Ann McLaughlin Catering, Allenhurst
- Michael Haimowitz, Deal Golf & Country Club, Deal

Also thanks go to E&J Gallo Wines for the donation of wines for two pop-up Farm to Table cocktail parties.

Watch [Interfaith Neighbors Facebook page](#) to register for upcoming Farm to Table events. Our next event is scheduled for December 5, 2017 with Dean Schreefer from The Grand Tavern. Tickets go fast as seating is limited, so be sure to "like" our page so you are sure to know when registration opens.

Fundraising Office Changes

Expanding Philanthropic Support

This past summer, Catherine Wiczorek, director of development for 10 years, left to follow a calling to ministry. Interfaith Neighbors thanks Catherine for her work and we know she will do well. In June, Interfaith welcomed Stephanie Ferrier as our new senior development officer and in September, Kelly Aliperti came on board as grant writer.



Stephanie and Kelly previously worked together in similar roles at The Community YMCA in Shrewsbury.

"Part of the strategy of bringing Kelly and myself in as a team is to diversify our fundraising efforts. Historically, Interfaith Neighbors has been very reliant on grant funding, which can change with the economic and political climate," says Stephanie.

“We’re going to focus on building other streams of philanthropy in the area of individual and corporate giving so that we have a diversity of giving,” she said. “We want to make sure we always have plenty of resources to meet families’ needs in a community of faith.”

The new team’s responsibilities see Kelly focusing on maintaining and growing existing grants, and Stephanie focusing on building individual and corporate relationships and giving. Both said they are happy to continue their fundraising work in services that help families and children.

Stephanie grew up in Avon and lives in Neptune City. She served as senior vice president of financial development for five years at the Community YMCA, and before that, as director of development for seven years at Georgian Court University.

Early in her career, Stephanie worked for 10 years in community development for a family of faith-based nonprofits in New Brunswick. “I feel like I’ve come home now,” she said. “I’ve come full circle. I’m back at an organization doing direct service to families and this time in my own community.”

Stephanie holds a Master’s Degree in city and regional planning from Rutgers University and earned her undergraduate degree at Furman University in South Carolina. She also is a licensed New Jersey realtor.



Kelly previously worked for financial institutions that included FINRA, US Trust, and Morgan Stanley before her employment at the Community Y in Shrewsbury. She grew up on Staten Island and received her Masters in Business Administration from Wagner College and her undergraduate degree in psychology from Wagner.

While she started out in the banking and investment field, Kelly said she knew she wanted to take a different path. “I wasn’t satisfied with what I was doing,” Kelly said. “I remembered my undergraduate degree in psychology and moved toward work that helps children and families in need.” Kelly lives in Aberdeen with her husband and three children.