



FRIENDSHIP NEWSLETTER

Connecting Elder Neighbors

The Importance of Teaching Compassion

Martha Holmes
Mercy Care Volunteer

When my parents bought the house I grew up in it was 1948. It came with a boarder named Lillian. My older sister was about a year old. I wasn't born until the following year, and my younger sister arrived in 1952. Lillian lived in a room upstairs at the back of the house and usually ate her meals there but ventured out sometimes. I don't know where or what she did with her time. I was little.

But I do remember her standing in the upstairs hall leaning over the banister to talk to Mom who was standing at the foot of the stairs. Oddly, I recall them talking about apples.

Lillian lived with us until I was about 10 years old and by that time my parents decided that they wanted my older sister to have her own room. They asked Lillian to move, and she relocated to a room in a hotel several blocks away. My sister kept the room at the front of the house, and I moved to Lillian's room at the back. My dad and the across the street neighbor replaced the flooring and mom made new curtains.



Martha Holmes (left) with her sisters.

I think my parents felt bad about asking her to move. Mom occasionally made Lillian a meal and I would walk it over to the hotel to deliver it. After all, I was the one who took her room. Lillian lived at the hotel a few years before she died, and then a few years later the hotel burned.

I wonder if this short period of caring for someone outside of family when I was young planted a seed for my future compassion for others.

Tears on my Pillow

Shirley Clark
Elder Friend

I was sick one night. Sick enough to go to the hospital in my PJs by ambulance. The hospital is great and helped me, but while they were drawing my blood and doing an IV, I asked the nurses and doctors, “Do you believe in Jesus?” Their answers were all the same- that they do believe in something. What, I thought? Jesus is something and all good things come from him, and he loves us all. It put tears on my pillow thinking that some people don’t really believe in Jesus.

Then I was thinking of good things and about my experience with Mercy Care. A few years ago, a Mercy Care Volunteer came to see me. What a blessing! She sees me every week, brings me flowers or baked goods and gives me joy beyond explaining. So then, I had tears of joy on my pillow.



After that, I was given the go ahead by the doctor to go back home to Will Rogers. They gave me my medicine, instructions, and release papers. Wow, was I glad not to have to stay longer in the hospital. I just had a bad case of the flu. I had a problem though. It was the weekend, and it was early on Saturday morning. I told the doctor I had no way to get back to Will Rogers. My family was out of town and on the weekends at Will Rogers there is no van available to pick people up. As I sat in the wheelchair with my release papers, the doctor said they would see if they could arrange to get me back to my apartment.

As I was waiting there, a voice came to me and said, “Shirley, I came to get you.” Oh my! It was Jamie, the Executive Director of Will Rogers coming to take me home. Wow! Early on Saturday morning he was changing his weekend plans to take care of me! Then I had tears of thankfulness on my pillow.

So, all the tears don’t have to be sad. Jesus is here and in charge of everything, so be thankful for him.

Newsletter Submissions - we want to hear from you!

1. Tell us about the most incredible thing or place you have seen?
2. Share your work - a poem, a story, an experience, art, photography.
3. Share your favorite memory of your lifetime.
4. Share a story about you and your Mercy Care Friend.

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A Day in the Life

Katherine Rhodes

Director of Elder Care & Volunteer Services.



Hi friends! I hope you had a wonderful summer full of sunshine and are as excited as I am to see the leaves start turning.

Every September, the Mercy Care team invites our Friendship Volunteers to a picnic so we can thank and recognize them for all the great things they've done over the last year. I love

getting to see volunteers chat, laugh, and have a good time together, whether they've been with Mercy Care for a few months or for years and years.

We recognize volunteers who have donated over 100 hours or driven over 1,000 miles with Mercy Care Elders and Care Receivers in the last year—this year, there were 13 volunteers who hit one of those milestones, and many who did both.

We also give a few special awards to volunteers who have gone above and beyond while assisting their Elder neighbors. The picnic was our chance to thank them in front of their fellow volunteers, but I want to thank them here, too.

Novice Volunteer of the Year:

Ginette Abbanat

Appreciation Award: David Aldrich

Caring Heart Award: Penny McGill

World of Difference Award:

Bernie Clarke & Carmine Salvo

Last but certainly not least, our 2025 Catherine McAuley **Volunteer of the Year** is Sheila Venezia, who has been with Mercy Care from the beginning and has assisted countless Elders in her 17 years as a Friendship Volunteer.

To all of our volunteers: Thank you for all that you do!

--Katherine

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My Bicycle

Ruth Cassin

Elder Friend

I have a new little e-bike. It came in a box. I just finished assembling it yesterday but will need stronger hands than mine to finally tighten some of the nuts and clamps. It is designed to fold. Using longer -handled wrenches doesn't give me enough torque to securely tighten some of the bolts. Even my trusty old vice grip doesn't do the job. A friend, David, tightened the nuts and tried the little e-bike. I tried it very briefly, with David "spotting." It'll take quite a learning curve, I expect, for me to use it as the "commuter bicycle" it is advertised as, IF I am able to learn to use it safely.



I have always loved bicycling. In my thirties in Munich, Germany, while in medical school, I used a bicycle as my chief means of transportation. At first I had a new German "truck bike" (needed in the city because some of the roads are still cobblestone; it is also good on dirt and gravel trails.) After it was stolen, I made a bicycle from parts of multiple discarded bikes. For several weeks I preferred riding with one leg in a cast and my crutches across the handlebars to using the (very good) subway system.

In New York, New England, and Pennsylvania I've gone on and led a number of American Youth Hostel bicycle tours, with an English, three speed bicycle I had

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Technology Assistance Workshop

Friendship Volunteers, Elder Friends and friends from the community came together to review managing benefits online and online banking. Many joined the Mercy Care Permanent Loan iPad Program, and received one-on-one instruction.



Friendship Picnic

We were fortunate to have enjoyed ideal weather making it an exceptional day to acknowledge our outstanding Volunteers at the Mercy Care for the Adirondacks Annual Friendship Picnic held at Lake Placid Club Golf House, courtesy of the Lussi Family's generous venue donation.



Spirituality Retreat

The Mercy Care 2025 Spirituality Retreat focused on Caring for the Human Spirit in Times of Growth and Change. This was a day of inspiring confidence and resilience!



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purchased for myself when I was eleven years old. Some of the AYH tours were even after I was no longer exactly a “youth.” But balance issues are now a problem. I’ve never fallen off a chair while fully awake, though. Maybe an adult-size tricycle will be the answer for recreation and exercise, if not for an occasional trip into town, at least in what is left of the summer.

Thank you for all you do. Mercy Care has greatly enhanced my life and made it possible for me to continue living in my house.

Social Engagement and Education Opportunities

RSVP to Lexi Bevilacqua at 518-523-5446 or abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or register at www.adkmercy.org/events

Friendship Volunteer Training
Wednesday, October 1st
9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
BOCES AEC, Saranac Lake

Technology Assistance Workshop
Wednesday, November 5th
9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
BOCES AEC, Saranac Lake

Holiday Event
Wednesday, November 19th
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Raquette River Brewing, Tupper Lake

Age-friendly, Growing Up, Growing Older, and Living Well

"The great thing about getting older is that you don't lose all the other ages you've been."

~Madeline L'Engle