



# FRIENDSHIP NEWSLETTER

## Connecting Elder Neighbors

*In loving memory of Shirley Clark. Her gift of story to all of us.*

### Hugs

#### Shirley Clark

Mercy Care Elder Friend

Hugs are so important. There are many reasons for a hug, so many that there is not enough paper to write all the reasons. It can comfort you or tell you that you are ok, say “I love you”, or even that you are really my friend, so don’t cry. A hug can help it all. I can’t mention all that hugs can do for you, but I can tell you a real-life story about a wonderful hug that changed not only me but the whole family.

One day, my son came home from school saying, “Look at what I have, Mom!”

“Where did you get that cat!?” I demanded.

“Oh, Mom! I love this cat,” he exclaimed. “Look at how cute it is and see how it loves me, too?”

“Well, I am so sorry,” I answered, “but you cannot have a cat! You have allergies. You scratch the rash on your arms until they bleed, and I have to bandage them. Didn’t you think of that?” With tears in his eyes, he said, “I don’t care, I love this cat!”

With that, he wailed, and again I told him, “No Cat! We need to go back to where you got him, and we will explain why you cannot have a cat.” He replied that maybe the woman would give me a cat too, and then we would both have something new to love. Oh my! His tears were breaking my heart, but I was determined to get rid of the problem. With that he cried, “No Mom! I can’t go. I love this cat, and I promise I will not cry when I get a rash. I promise I will not scratch my arms!”

Well, I looked at my son with tears running down his face and I just lost it. “Ok, Honey.” I gave in. “Let’s go inside and see what we can do for this cat.” With that, I got the biggest hug. It almost made me fall over. “Oh mom! I love you like I love this cat!” my happy boy yelled.

We named the cat P.M. because we all wanted to remember the afternoon that we got a cat. That cat spent many years with us and my son grew out of his allergies and never stopped saying, “Thanks, Mom.”

### A Lil’ Whimsey Snowstorm Craft

#### Nikki Neilon

Mercy Care Elder Friend



Little Good Luck Gnome  
~A.S. Waldon

This friendly little gnome  
is especially for you.  
In Fact, he came  
from underground  
to bring good luck to you!

Keep him on a shelf nearby;  
or carry him when  
you may roam.  
Happiness and good luck  
will follow with your  
Lucky Little Gnome.

## Joy in Creation

### Joanne Cote and Tracy Klossner

Mercy Care Elder Friend and Volunteer

For the better part of her life, Joanne Cote has been creating handmade treasures. Her love of crafting began 70 years ago when she picked up a pair of knitting needles, preparing for the birth of her first child. What started with the creation of that baby sweater has grown into a lifelong passion filled with creativity, skill, and generosity.

Joanne's early knitting days were inspired and supported by her friends in a knitting club she shared with Mae LaMare and Pat LaMere. But it was Loretta Berard whom Joanne credits as the most helpful in teaching her the craft. Over the years, Joanne's style became unmistakable; her "clever buttons," as she calls them, give each sweater its own special character.

Her talent and speed are remarkable: Joanne can knit a sweater in just two days, and every winter she completes around 40 sweaters. Her children and grandchildren are among the lucky recipients who look forward to her creations. For the community, her adorable sweater-and-hat sets can be found at the Health Hub in Tupper Lake.

Recently, Joanne has even been considering trying her hand at blankets—a natural next step for someone who loves to stay busy.

Always willing to learn something new, ten years ago, Joanne embraced another artistic outlet: painting. Encouraged by her friend Liz Denis, she began taking painting classes held in the basement of the Baptist Church. Taught by her cousin, the classes were offered at no charge; students simply had to bring their own supplies.

Joanne learned the Donna Dewberry method of painting, a single-stroke technique that uses



Joanne Cote with a display of her beautifully crafted children's sweaters.

two colors on a brush at a time. After learning the painting technique, she used canister sets as her medium. She works with enamel paint, and each set takes about a day and a half to complete, including drying time. To finish, the canisters must be baked in the oven to cure the design.

In her early days of selling at craft fairs, Joanne discovered that floral patterns didn't attract much interest. She then switched to Adirondack-themed designs: pine cones, bears, and moose, which quickly proved more popular. Though she no longer participates in craft fairs, her canister sets can still be found at the Health Hub in Tupper Lake. She finds her canisters in creative ways too, at garage sales, thrift stores, or gifted to her by others who know she will bring them back to life.

Whether she is knitting cozy sweaters or painting woodland-themed canisters, Joanne rarely sits idle. For Joanne, crafting is more than a hobby; it is years and years of joy in the creation of a project, and the happiness felt when sharing her talents with others.

## The Connection

### Krista Berger

Director of Elder Care & Volunteer Services

### From Winter to Spring: A Season of Growth and New Beginnings



As winter slowly releases its hold and the first signs of spring begin to emerge, we're reminded that change brings growth and renewal. In Volunteer Services, this season feels especially meaningful as we prepare to settle into our

new office space, a fresh chapter filled with optimism, energy, and opportunity.

For nearly twenty years, our team has been privileged to serve from the beautiful and historic St. Margaret's Convent, which has been home to the Sisters of Mercy and Mercy Care's office. Within those walls, countless conversations, plans, and memories have shaped the story of our elder and volunteer community. The convent was a place where our mission flourished. A home built on mercy, compassion, service, and connection.

As we transition into our new location, we will bring that rich history with us. Every Sister of Mercy, every elder, every volunteer, and every act of kindness has been a thread woven into the fabric of who we are. That legacy will be carried forward with us. Our new space is more than an office; it's a reflection of the spirit that's guided us all along.

Spring reminds us that with every change comes opportunity. With fresh surroundings come fresh ideas. With new beginnings come renewed purpose. And through it all, our elders and volunteers remain the heart of everything we do.

As we look ahead to warmer days and new possibilities, let's continue to nurture the same spirit of service and gratitude that has always defined us. The season may be changing, but our gifts of mercy among us remain as the foundation of our mission to empower elders to live happier and fuller lives.

~Krista

**Krista Berger**

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## Keep Memories Alive

### Melissa Eisinger

Mercy Care Board Member and Volunteer

Molasses bread keeps memories alive.

After watching Gramma Sears make his favorite bread many decades ago, my cousin has re-created the recipe. It isn't anything like today's recipes. For



instance, to start, you pour some boiling water over some butter and add a jar of molasses. However much "some" is or how big a jar is. The bread comes out great when he bakes it, and the aroma evokes pleasant memories for my cousin's dad, Gramma's son, who is now a very old man. I caught a whiff on a recent visit to our family seat and experienced a "Madeleine moment" as soon as I bit into the warm, dark bread. Gramma's hair was coiled in braided loops around her ears. She smiled and bustled and kicked up her legs, and, according to legend, she could stretch a dime to clothe and feed her three kids.

So now I make that bread, too. Each batch comes out differently because, like Gramma, I wing it most of the time.

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## A Stroll in Spring

### Frank Lescinsky

Former Founding Board Member; Former Friendship Volunteer and Trainer

The trail deep in brown leaves

So fall-like

But Look!

A bit of bright green

There among the brown.

And there

And there.

With flowers

White and pink.

O beauty of spring!

## Technology Assistance Workshop

Mercy Care's Technology Assistance Workshop, held at AEC BOCES in Saranac Lake, provided valuable insights into online banking and fraud protections.



## Health Care Companion Volunteer Training

As accessing and navigating healthcare becomes increasingly complex, a Health Care Companion Volunteer is a specially trained Mercy Care Friendship Volunteer who will accompany an elder on their health care journey. Inaugural training was held on March 4th at Heaven Hill Farm in Lake Placid.



## 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.

**Mail to: Karen Rodriguez**  
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**P.O. Box 7,**  
**Lake Placid, NY 12946**

**Email: [krodriguez@adkmercy.org](mailto:krodriguez@adkmercy.org)**

## Social Engagement and Education Opportunities

To inquire or RSVP, contact Lexi Bevilacqua at 518-523-5446 or [abevilacqua@adkmercy.org](mailto:abevilacqua@adkmercy.org) or register at [www.adkmercy.org/events](http://www.adkmercy.org/events)

## In-Service: My Plan My Power: Your Personal Guide to Successful Aging

Wednesday, April 22nd  
Heaven Hill Farm, Lake Placid

## Technology Assistance Workshop

Wednesday, June 10th  
9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
BOCES AEC, Saranac Lake

## Annual Educational Forum

Wednesday, June 17th  
Paul Smith's College

## Keynote Presenters:

Dr. Corrinne Auman - Author, *Keenagers*  
Greg Olsen - Director, NYS Office for the Aging

Dr. Dawn Carr - Director, Claude Pepper Center, Florida State University

**Register at [www.adkmercy.org](http://www.adkmercy.org)**