



FRIENDSHIP NEWSLETTER

Connecting Elder Neighbors

BEANS FOR THE BRINE

Ruth Vaill

Mercy Care Elder Friend

"Our country is at war."

As children we heard these words, but could not fully comprehend the enormity of what this meant. There was anxiety in the air and we knew that things were amiss. Odd things were happening.

Great convoys of camouflaged vehicles rumbled down the roads and we would wait, in our little two-door Chevrolet, for what seemed like hours before turning on to the parkway a few blocks from our house. We would count the trucks as they rolled by, wave at the young men in uniform, and wonder about them and where they were going.

Small plastic bags of white margarine, with a button of orange food dye in the middle, would appear on the kitchen counter and we would knead the contents for hours in an attempt to disguise it as butter.

Our mother, dressed in cloaks of darkness, would disappear into the night after cautioning us to lay low, to keep the heavy blackout curtains drawn, and to go to bed without turning on any of the lights upstairs.

But though an air-raid warden at night, and a counter of coupons by day, my mother was at heart a gardener. "A garden," she proclaimed, "we must have a garden." And what a garden it was!

A fair distance from the house, through a stand of young oak, was a large and sunny piece of level ground edged on the east by a great seam of stone. A long ledge, it rose up out of the ground providing the eastern wall to our garden. My brother called it a stone wall, I called it a cliff...it seemed so tall. The other



three sides were fenced with standard wire garden fencing attached to metal posts, foot driven into the soil, often by standing on top of the metal triangles near the base and jumping up and down. A wooden trellis, planted with climbing roses, provided the entrance to this wonderful, magical place. This place that was more than a garden, this place that was a refuge, a place of peace, and of security. Though productive and a place of purpose, our garden provided more than a multitude of vegetables, it provided solace for the soul.

With our hands in the soil, weeding, probing for new potatoes, or merely making tiny paths for the fairies and elves who surely took the shade under the wide leaves of squash, we spent hours in the garden.

My brother was the one admonished to weed, on his hands and knees for hours, getting tired of it all, but persevering under the steady gaze of our parents. My sister gathered vegetables, bouncing about in her wide brimmed straw hat, skirts gathered up into a hammock slowly filling with beans and an occasional tomato.

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While the others labored I was the one who played with the fairies. Gathering acorns during my walk to the garden, I would set out tiny bowls and cups in safe hidden places. I would snap green beans into bits and pieces to add to the fare I had so carefully arranged.

I don't remember ever working in the garden. Whatever I did there it was never work, but always a joy. The tomatoes were my favorite. Great green plants arching over their frames... sturdy wooden structures, built by my father, resembling very much huge and rather dainty sawhorses, but with legs both longer and thinner, with slats on each side, coming together at the top like a frame for a tent. We were only allowed to pick tomatoes under the closest supervision. Not a hint of green, maybe a tiny speck of yellow, some orange perhaps, but mostly red and fully ripe, ready to be plucked from under the velvety leaves. The tomatoes had to be close to perfect when we picked them. Beautiful globes of sun-warmed fruit, hanging beneath a tangle of thick ropy stems that turned your skin yellow if you brushed against them, and left your arms tinged with a uniquely acrid and pungent odor.

I would fill my baskets with green beans destined for the heavy ceramic crocks in the cellar where they would repose for the winter submerged in brine. I liked them best right off the vine, deep green, with a snap and a crunch, so much better than soft and gray, and much too salty.

We grew corn, carrots, and beets, and potatoes. Root crops and hardy crops. As there was no water source nearby we grew plants that could do fairly well on their own. And they did. Our victory garden was bountiful. It provided baskets of fresh produce for our meals and beans for the brine. It provided a place of peace and a refuge from the anxiety in the air, from the tension filling the airwaves and spilling over into the streets, the shops, and the lives of us all. With our fingers deep in the soil we became grounded. We survived the war, but none of us survived the gardening fever. To this day all three of us, my brother, my sister, and I turn to the land, the soil, the warm brown earth, for solace, for respite, for joy... for nourishing the spirit, for enriching the soul. We are gardeners.

Growing Together: Seeds of Thanks

Bonnie and Ken Kausner

Mercy Care Volunteers



The Mercy Care Garden is a wonderful tool in Mercy Care's toolbox for the Adirondack seniors. It provides a fun, warm, welcoming place for folks to gather whether they want to actually work, reminisce about gardening days past, harvest produce, pick flowers, or simply soak in the outdoor ambiance.

This year, in my opinion there are some key players that have truly made the Garden experience memorable, and I know they will only continue to expand on this wonderful idea going forward.

A shout out to Erica for her never-ending enthusiasm for all that is planted in the ground. She gives new wonder to gardening as though you are growing something for the first time again. As Ken says, "Erica, your enthusiasm is why I come every week!" Thank you Erica!

Lexi, you have supplied all of us with a never-ending array of delicious baked goods every Tuesday, rain or shine! You have lined up wonderful guest presenters ranging from herbs to art for all to enjoy. Your ongoing sincere support of seniors is a true gift, and we appreciate you!

Krista, your contacts have provided us with fresh eggs each week! How incredibly special is that in time when we know every little bit helps. You, along with Lexi and the Mercy Care staff provide a truly wonderful service to the North Country seniors.

These are only the people we have had direct contact with, but we know there are many more behind the scenes folks that made this possible. Thank you!

Ken and I come and go, but knowing you are all here when we are in Lake Placid makes it feel like home. We know that this project will continue to grow and do wonderful things for all involved!

With sincere thanks for allowing us to participate!

The Connection

Krista Berger

Director of Elder Care & Volunteer Services

Embracing Autumn Together



As the leaves change and the weather cools, autumn reminds us of the beauty found in seasonal transitions and shared moments. Fall is a wonderful time to slow down, connect, and enjoy simple comforts together. Whether that means

sharing a hot drink, swapping favorite autumn memories, or enjoying a brisk stroll through the neighborhood.

Our vibrant community thrives because of the strong bonds built between our volunteers and older adults. This season let's focus on keeping everyone cozy, active, and connected as the days grow shorter.

Autumn Health & Safety Tips from the NYS Department of Health:

- **Mind the Leaves:** Wet leaves on sidewalks and porches can be as slippery as ice. Take small, steady steps and clear walkways early.
- **Layer Up & Light Up:** Cooler temps mean dressing in easy layers. With the sun setting earlier, make sure porch lights are working and bring a small flashlight if stepping out in the late afternoon.
- **Stay Hydrated & Nourished:** It's easy to forget to drink water when it isn't hot outside! Warm teas, soups, and plenty of fluids keep energy levels up and immune systems strong.
- **Prep for Vaccine Season:** Talk with your healthcare provider about updating your annual flu shot and other seasonal boosters early in the season.

A Message of Thanks

To Our Elder Friends: Thank you for sharing your days, your stories, and your joy with us. You are the heart of this community.

To Our Volunteers: Thank you for your endless generosity, smiles, and dedication. You make this season—and every season—so much brighter.

Wishing everyone a safe, cozy, and joyful autumn!

~Krista

Phone: 518-523-5585

Email: kberger@adkmercy.org

Flowers

Frank Lescinsky

Former Founding Board Member; Former Friendship Volunteer and Trainer

I do not claim this to be great poetry, but it quickly expresses my delight in this morning's visit to the Mercy Care Garden at Uihlein Farm.

Flowers, flowers, flowers
on

Bowers, bowers, bowers
and

Towers, towers, towers.

I could sit for

Hours, hours, hours
among these

Towers and bowers of flowers.

Oh

Flowers, flowers, flowers

Fun Outings with Friends



Beth Hasseltine, Mercy Care Volunteer with Elder friend, **Mary Hardy** enjoying a fun day at the Wild Center visiting the trolls.



Stacey Dodd, Mercy Care Volunteer with Elder friend, **Ruth Cassin** sharing in the fun at the Franklin County Fair.



Peter Roland, Mercy Care Volunteer with Elder friend, **Frank Lescinsky** enjoying the sunshine and friends in the Mercy Care Garden.

Technology Assistance Workshop

Held at the Adirondack Adult Center in Tupper Lake, our Technology Assistance Workshop taught participants essential tech skills and the latest technology upgrades at Adirondack Credit Union. The session concluded with personalized one-on-one instruction.



Mercy Care Garden at Uihlein Farm

The garden invites Volunteers and Elders to connect, learn, and grow together. Whether you are looking to dig into hands-on cultivation, gather with friends, or simply unwind amidst the natural beauty, this welcoming space offers something for everyone.



Friendship Picnic

We couldn't have asked for a better day to celebrate our incredible volunteers at Mercy Care's Annual Friendship Picnic. The beautiful weather at the Lake Placid Club made the occasion truly special. We extend our deepest gratitude to all of our compassionate, dedicated volunteers for everything you do.



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 a favorite memory.
4. Share a story about you and your Mercy Care Friend.

Mail to: Karen Rodriguez
Mercy Care for the Adirondacks
P.O. Box 7,
Lake Placid, NY 12946

Email: krodriguez@adkmercy.org

Social Engagement and Education Opportunities

To inquire or RSVP, contact Lexi Bevilacqua at 518-523-5446 or abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or register at www.adkmercy.org/events

Mercy Care Garden at Uihlein Farm

Programming through October 13th

Every Tuesday, 10:00 - 11:30am

281 Bear Cub Lane, Lake Placid

Holiday Workshop

Wednesday, November 18th

1:00pm - 3:00pm

Raquette River Brewing,
11 Balsam St., Tupper Lake

Technology Assistance Workshop

Wednesday, November 4th

AEC BOCES

711 Route 3, Saranac Lake

iPad Permanent Loan Program:

If you, or someone you know is interested in receiving an iPad and monthly one-on-one instruction contact Mike Magurk by calling 518-523-5582, or emailing mmagurk@adkmercy.org