SOUTH
COASTAL
VILLAGE
VOLUNTEERS

Helping Older Adults Live Independently

WINTER 2026

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Claudia Thayne

Winter Greetings!

January 20 marked an important day for the South Coastal Village Volunteers. We held our first Board of Directors meeting and welcomed two new board members who, as volunteers, made positive impacts on SCVV. Len Caro has added treasurer to his volunteer list. Having been a member of the Finance Committee, Len will now chair that committee. Diane Maddex, a Strategic Partner and newsletter editor and designer, will continue working with the Communications Team.

During the meeting, our committee reports were packed with plans benefiting our members and volunteers.

- The **Membership Committee** is adding social and educational events to our SCVV calendar, which is regularly updated on: southcoast.helpfulvillage.com
- Thanks to the **Operations, Planning, and Finance Committees,** we stay focused on our goals, objectives, strategic direction, finances, and fiscal responsibilities.
- Our **Communications Committee** continues to provide information concerning our successes and plans using a variety of media.
- Our **Development Committee** is researching a pilot with the potential to enhance social interactions.
- Our **Volunteer and Outreach Committee** is making plans for a fun event to celebrate our wonderful volunteers, who are so important to our mission's success (more information to follow via email).

SCVV offers a way to age with dignity and grace. Our members and volunteers share wonderful stories, exciting careers and experiences, and continue to mak our lives interesting. Having an opportunity to talk to them and learn from them is an honor.

We have so many opportunities to engage our members, volunteers, businesse and communities to help older adults live independently and safely. In Decembe our volunteers performed 256 services, including 161 transports (63 percent of the services provided during the month) and 95 home visits (37 percent). We ha 76 volunteers fulfilling those services. What a wonderful team!

Do you have a talent or interest you'd like to share? I'd like to hear from you. We need people with the skills in the Help Wanted item just below. Reach out to your friends and work together to help others. It's fun and incredibly fulfilling. Thanks for all you do already.

Please reach out to me at chair@SouthCoastalVillageVolunteers.org*.*

HELP
WANTED

The South Coastal Village Volunteers i looking for a few good people to join our outstanding team of volunteers. We need experienced people who could be:

- **Grant and article writers**
- **Marketing specialists**
- **Project leaders**
- **Committee members**

If that's you, please contact:
chair@SouthCoastalVillageVolunteers.org
or 302-500-1281 (office)

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Steve Ricks and Darlene Lewis.

Feliz Navidad!

Diane Strobel

The SCVV office staff met for a celebratory happy hour at Zoca on December 10—a Navidad Fiesta! Trish Broward brought us fun headgear, while Zoca provided the usua delicious food and drinks. Good cheer came via the staff. Santa's reindeers, wearing antlers from Trish, were played by Steve and Dar (above). We missed those who coul not attend.

As always, we are so grateful to work with these wonderful, good-hearted, and carin people who support each and all of our members every single day in this our sixth year.

Pictured around the table are Steve Ricks, Darlene Lewis, Martha Strickland, Diane Strobel, Trish Broward, Donald Sheridan, Amy Gorman, and Jan Gibson.

Holiday Party Attracts a Record Crowc

SCVV's holiday party on December 19 welcomed the greatest number of people to attend one of our events. About fifty members and volunteers, including many of our office staff and the board of directors, gathered at the Ocean View Community Center to celebrate the holidays and the village. Organizer Chris Powers was delightec by the turnout.

An impressive selection of delicious foods—including snacks, sandwiches chicken soup made by Chair Claudia Thayne, and desserts—was available to provide a substantial lunch for the partygoers. Many of the dishes were homemade and generously donated b volunteers.

Entertainment was provided by SCVV volunteers Len and Carole Wolek, who kindly offered to play the ukulele and the accordion for the festivities. The two featured man seasonal tunes and included a singalong. In addition, Chris Powers composed and conducted a game of holiday trivia.

The event was a fine opportunity for members and volunteers to mix and mingle to ge
to know one another as we came to the end of 2025—SCVV's fifth year of services.

Guests at our holiday party were treated not only to plentiful food and camaraderie—they were also serenaded by SCVV volunteers Len and Carole Wolek (above center) on the ukulele and the accordion.

LIQUORS
NO SMOKING
Golf Package
Cripple Creek Golf and Country Club
50/50 Tickets
1 for $1.00
8 for $5.00
20 for $10.00

Cottage Cafe D&D a Success

Dottie Schmitt

The new year got off to a fun and rewarding start with our Dine & Donate on

January 8 at the landmark Cottage Cafe on Route One in Bethany Beach. The event raised $1,000 for the South Coastal Village Volunteers.

We are grateful for all of you (we couldn't keep count) who came to enjoy a grea lunch or dinner as well as fellowship with those you know and perhaps new friends you were able to meet. As the day went on, things became livelier, especially during the dinner hour. Everyone seemed to have a fun time.

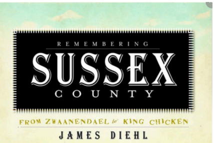
We thank SoDel Concepts once again for its unwavering support, the Cottage Cafe, those who greeted guests at the entrance table—and all the diners who came out to support us.

Top: SCVV leaders Kathy Green of the Development Committee, Past Chair Chri Powers, and Chair Claudia Thayne greeted guests at the Cottage Cafe. Above left: John and Eileen Giaquinto turned out for dinner to support SCVV. Right: Betty and Herb Martin, in front, dined with Chris and John Conner at the fundraising event.

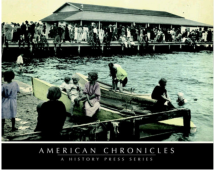
Read Along with the Book Club Babes

Liz Bolton

SCVV's Book Club Babes met on December 18 for our last monthly meetup of the year. We were surrounded by sparkling Christmas decorations while discussing that month's book, *One Christmas Eve,* written by Shari Low. Everyone brought a food item to share for our dinner while celebrating our year-long adventure into reading different genres of books.



The new year started off great with *Remembering Sussex County,* by James Diehl. Reading ahead of time, I found the following fact: The restaurant Café 26 was the original home of Cecile Steele. When she ordered fifty chickens to replace her own, she ended up receiving 500 chicks. That is how the chicken broiler industry was born in Sussex County in 1923. Another interesting fact in the book is that there have been four bridges over the Indian River Inlet. The first one, built in 1934, was a wooden bridge. The second, built in 1938, was a swing bridge. Two other spans that are more familiar followed these early crossings.



Below are the upcoming titles to be read and discussed, all at the SCVV office in Ocean View, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

February 12: ***90 Minutes in Heaven,*** by Don Piper with Cecil Murphy

March 6: ***Frozen River,*** by Ariel Lawhon

April 17: ***Between Silk and Cyanide,*** by Leo Marks (suggested by Ferne)

May 14: ***This Tender Land,*** by William Kent Krueger (suggested by Eileen)

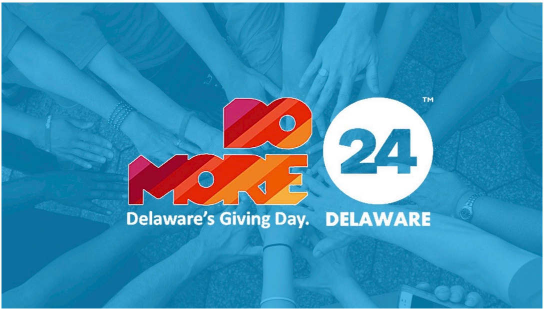
Appetizers are welcomed. If interested in joining the Book Club Babes, contact lizbeachbum50@gmail.com. Great discussions, great food, and lots of laughs are hac at our meetings. Stay warm this winter with a good book.

Save the Date!

The SCVV Development Team

Lauren Caro, Ferne Cooper, Kathy Green, Kathy Jankowski,
Kathy Johnson, Dottie Schmitt, and Donna Swain

We have some fun things coming up—and we are asking you to *Save the Date!*



DoMore24

Thursday, March 5, at 6:00 p.m., through Friday, March 6, at 6:00 p.m.
This annual fundraiser is a 24-hour day of giving designed to help nonprofits. Watch for more information to follow.

Dine & Donate

Thursday, April 16
SCVV's next Dine & Donate will be at Northeast Seafood Kitchen in Ocean View. Reserve a table, gather your family and friends, and join us for a fun evening out.

If you would like to join the Development Team, please let us know. We are a lively bunch with lots of ideas and welcome even more. And don't forget to join us for our fundraising events. We could not do what we do without you, and we thank you!

Building Connections, One Lunch at a Time

Chris Powers

The South Coastal Village Volunteers is excited to announce an education series, Lunch & Learn, free for our members and volunteers. Each month will focus on topics that interest seniors in our area. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn, connect, and enjoy a light lunch together. Mark your calendars for the second Thursday of every month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

On **February 12** we will kick off the series with an emergency preparedness workshop led by Danielle Swallow, a coastal hazards specialist with Delaware Sea Grant, University of Delaware. By the end of the workshop, participants will know how to access information and resources in the event of an emergency. They will also leave with helpful tools to prepare themselves and their homes.

On **March 12** Stories Love Music, a nonprofit organization, will present an interactive program that will provide volunteers, family members, and caregivers with tools for their own self-care and their care giving—designed to assist in preventing long-term burnout.

The topic for **April 9** is not yet confirmed.

And on **May 14** we are planning a Bingo Party.

In addition to these sessions, we are organizing field trips and other activities throughout the year.

Come hungry for knowledge and connection. You are welcome to bring a guest. Register on our events calendar (https://southcoast.helpfulvillage.com/events/index_list) or call the office at 302-500-1281. We look forward to seeing you there!

Volunteer Spotlight: Lee Metzger

Donald Sheridan, SCVV Vice Chair

When asked what benefits he gets from being a part of SCVV, Lee Metzger responds: "The people are great! You might just be moving their trash to the curb, but that could mean a half-hour conversation."

Lee Metzger also volunteers in the summer at the VFW Chicken Shack.

Lee has been with SCVV for almost two years and is recognized as one of our most active volunteers, providing both transportation and assistance with household chores. During the summer months, you can also find him on Saturday mornings volunteering at the VFW Chicken Shack on Coastal Highway in Bethany. It was at that Chicken Shack where he first heard of SCVV from another volunteer.

Born in Easton, Pennsylvania, Lee grew up in the Lehigh Valley. He attended Penn State on an ROTC scholarship before he was commissioned in the U.S. Navy. Even though his commission was technicall to the Atlantic Fleet, Lee found himsel aboard a ship in the Gulf of Tonkin during the Vietnam War. While in the Navy, he met his wife, Shahpar, to whom he has been married for fifty-three years.

After his years in the service, Lee reunited with Shahpar, and the couple eventually settled in the Maryland suburbs outside Washington, D.C. It was there that they raise their son, Sassan, who now lives in Colorado. Lee spent most of his career with the Océ Corporation (now Canon Production Printing), selling office supplies and equipment. Before retiring, he and Shahpar decided to plant roots here on the Delaware shore. Their first home in the area was at Sea Colony, before they moved to Bethany Proper and eventually to their current home in Bethany West. When Lee isn't busy with volunteering, the couple love to travel.

Even though Lee originally learned about SCVV at the Chicken Shack, he really focused on it when he heard again about our organization from the Sheridans and the Rubackys, fellow pickleballers and fellow volunteers. Lee loves to play pickleball, which has replaced his previous hobbies of tennis and surf fishing. He appreciates th valuable service that SCVV provides our community, but Lee really enjoys the interaction with members and other volunteers. To him, giving back to the community is important.

It is people like Lee who make SCVV what it is today.

Meet Jeannie Rubacky, Our New Care

Manager

Joan Gordon

Jeannie Rubacky at the SCVV office

“I love being here.” This was Jeannie Rubacky’s answer when asked how she liked living in Ocean View after spending her life in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. Starting November 1, 2025, Jeannie became part of the South Coastal Village Volunteers team in the position of care manager.

Jeannie works closely with Chris Powers and Betty Martin of the Membership Committee and with the office staff. She admires them greatly because they are so caring and they “pick up the pieces that no one else knows about.”

In her position, Jeannie works about ten hours weekly. She meets with people interested in SCVV membership to determine if they are in our service area, if there’s good fit, and if we can meet their needs. As a “people person,” Jeannie enjoys her jo talking to so many interesting people; she has learned that “people move here for a million different reasons.”

Jeannie and her husband, Bill, who is also an SCVV volunteer, sold their home in Germantown, Maryland, and moved here in 2022 because she loves the beach and had been coming here her whole life. With its convenience to other areas, this was a “natural choice” for Jeannie and Bill. Once here, they followed the lead of longtime friends Donald and Kathy Sheridan to volunteer for our village.

Jeannie was born in D.C. and raised in Montgomery County, where she raised her own children. She and Bill have a daughter, a school guidance counselor in Maryland who has two daughters. The Rubackys also have a son, who lives in West Palm Beach, Florida, and is a filmmaker who travels all over the world with his work.

After getting her associate degree from Montgomery College once her children had grown up a bit, Jeannie worked at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring. She was a school nurse in a private school in D.C. and then worked in a private pediatric practic in Rockville, Maryland, where she watched kids grow from infancy to adulthood. In he later years there, she mostly did triage—answering the phone and telling parents whether they should stay home and do what was needed, come to the office, or go t the ER.

After moving to Ocean View and commuting back to work in Maryland for two years, Jeannie “got tired of having two toothbrushes” and retired in June 2024. Her job for the summer of 2025 was Code Enforcement/Beach Ambassador for the Town of Bethany Beach—a “green shirt.” She enjoyed her job and her associates and walked about ten miles every day patrolling the beach, but she found that job to be too hot.

SCVV is lucky to have Jeannie now working with our members.

Charting SCVV’s Independent Path

Chris Powers

As part of our transition to an independent village—no longer a branch of the Village Volunteers—the South Coastal Village Volunteers is undertaking a comprehensive review of all of our procedures, handbooks, and agreements. This process is designed to ensure that our policies and procedures reflect our mission, values, and commitment to serving our members and community.

What’s Changing?

Policy and Procedure Updates: Every handbook and agreement is being carefully reviewed and updated. Our goal is to make sure that our policies are clear, current, and supportive of our members and volunteers.

Transparency and Access: Once the review is complete and the new documents are approved by our Board of Directors, they will be posted on our website for everyone—including potential members, family, and volunteers—to access.

No Increase in Membership Dues: We are pleased to announce that annual individual and household membership fees will not increase and will stay the same as in the past five years. In fact, we are making membership more accessible by using HUD income guidelines for Sussex County, which allow more individuals to qualify for reduced membership fees.

What’s Next?

When the updated documents are finalized, we will ask all members and volunteers to review and agree to the new policies. Your participation is essential to ensure that our organization remains strong, inclusive, and forward-thinking.

We remain collaborative partners with the Village Volunteers (serving the Lewes, Milton, and Rehoboth areas), as well as a shared network of 282 other villages in the United States and Canada. This network allows us to learn the best practices of other villages and to share with them our lessons learned starting as a former branch, successfully acquiring 501(c)(3) status, and now creating our own strategic plans for moving forward.

Thank you for your continued support as we move forward together.

Helpful Village Update

Donald Sheridan, SCVV Vice Chair

For more than six months, the South Coastal Village Volunteers has been operating our business on the Helpful Village software program.

As noted previously, training is easier, and obtaining data from the system is much more straightforward.

For example, training SCVV volunteers how to access the system takes considerably less time. In the earlier system, we also had to perform some complex data analysis t obtain performance measures. These tasks are now much simpler and straightforward. As our office manager, Diane Strobel, has remarked, “We continue learning about all of Helpful Village’s benefits for our volunteers and our efficiency.”

We have begun expanding the use of Helpful Village’s many components. Because the software was developed by a volunteer primarily for use by villages, many components are designed for the various tasks we do on a regular basis. The events calendar is now being regularly populated with program information such as chair yoga and volunteer opportunities such as preparation of Valentine cards for members

We have also begun using Helpful Village to complete our background checks of volunteers. The program contains a process flow to guide our staff and prospective volunteers by linking to a third-party background screening provider. This will allow us to track all volunteer vetting steps within Helpful Village. The system previously converted volunteer application data into profiles.

We are also running virtually all of our online fundraising through Helpful Village. Having all of our data and transactions in one secure location saves time. The system also automatically provides personalized acknowledgments with any online donation. SCVV will continue to introduce more tools and enhancements as time permits. As is common with new software, some challenges may arise as we expand our use of the system.

If you have any questions, concerns, or need help, please text 302-500-1281.

Health & Wellness Corner

Exercising for Well-Being

CAREPatrol™
Your Partner In Senior Care Solutions

“Aches, pains, and health issues are just a part of getting older.”

“I’m too old to start exercising now.”

You have likely heard these statements at some point in your life, and maybe you hav even started to repeat them as you have gotten older. As common as they are, these statements are more like myths. You can improve your physical well-being in your older adult years even if you have never exercised before.

It’s not how old you are, it’s how much you move. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services suggests that adults do at least two-and-a-half to five hours a week of moderate-intensity activity. Focusing on the postural alignment of your body may also help you start feeling better and moving with confidence. Proper postural alignment helps with everything from cardiovascular health to relieving joint pain and arthritis. (Wannamethee et al., 2006).

When you are young and continue the exercising habit throughout your life, your health improves and your chances of death decrease. But a recent study found that the same is true for adults who start exercising later in life. (Saint-Maurice, Coughlan, and Kelly, 2019). According to the study's authors, "Although long-term participation in physical activity may be important to lower mortality risk, the present study provides evidence that becoming physically active later in adulthood (40–61 years of age) may provide comparable health benefits." Other scientific studies have uncovered similar conclusions, including the fact that exercise programs for sedentar middle-aged adults can help to decrease the risk of heart disease (Howden, 2018).

Now that you understand that exercise can help you turn around your health at any age, the next step is figuring out what activities you enjoy and will stick with over the long term.

Rethink Fitness: Starting exercise later in life requires that you find more meaning in why you are moving. For example, can you transition from standing, go down to the floor, and get back up again easily? How do you feel when you get out of your car? Do you feel sluggish when you have been sitting for a long time? Ask yourself these questions and start to reshape your fitness goals to enhance your day-to-day functions in life and the confidence you have in your body.

Make Exercise a Fun Habit: Choose activities that you enjoy, which will make it much easier for you to stick with your exercise routine. Get your family involved by going on a hike or a walk around the neighborhood. Dance with your grandkids in the kitchen, play a game of pickleball with friends, or go for a swim at your nearby gym. Willpower will only get you so far, so find a way to make exercise a new routine in you daily life. Reward yourself for exercising so you are motivated to do it again.

The bottom line: The earlier you start the better, so start today.

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South Coastal Village Volunteers
Celebrating 5 Years
Helping Adults to Live Independently

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info@southcoastalvillagevolunteers.org / www.southcoastalvillagevolunteers.org

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for completing the day-to-day tasks of organizing the South Coastal Village Volunteers.

Claudia Thayne, Chair
Donald Sheridan, Vice Chair
Len Caro, Treasurer
Kathy Jankowski, Secretary
Elizabeth Bolton, Outreach and Volunteers **.** Ferne Cooper, Development
Joan Gordon, Communications and PR **.** Kathy Green, Development and Marketing
Ron Kerchner, Finance **.** Romas Laskauskas, Outreach
Diane Maddex, Communications **.** Betty Martin, Membership
Chris Powers, Membership **.** Diane Strobel, Operations Manager

Strategic Partners

Our Strategic Partners are a group of area professionals who have special skills to contribute to the development and operations of the South Coastal Village Volunteers.

Bonnie Burnquist, MD **.** Christine Connor **.** Cliff Graviet **.** David Green
Maureen Hartman **.** Carol Houck **.** Charlie Kopay **.** Michele Morgan
Zita Pennypacker **.** John Robbert **.** Susan Ryan **.** Eileen Scerra

Editors: Joan Gordon, Claudia Thayne, and Diane Maddex

SOUTH COASTAL VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS, INC.,
EIN 33-3942314, is an IRS-approved 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Village Volunteers and South Coastal Village Volunteers now are separate and independent nonprofit organizations. Whether through joint initiatives, strategic alliances, or co-development efforts, both organizations look forward to working together to drive innovation and mutual growth in helping older adults live independently in southern Delaware.

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