



# Neighbors Helping Neighbors

The Newsletter of the Big Canoe® Wellness Collaborative

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## Hello Volunteers!

Welcome to our first Volunteer Newsletter of 2021. This is also the first newsletter edited by our new Wellness Collaborative Communications Coordinator, Donna DiBiaso. We are thrilled to have Donna's assistance with all of our communications, including the Newsletter, articles in Smoke Signals and Inside the Gates, POA emails and Facebook postings on various pages. It is a big job, but so important. Welcome, Donna!

An update . . . the Collaborative was asked by the POA Board in February to help fellow Big Canoeers with their Covid-19 vaccines, and we were happy to assist. Many thanks to Tracy Critchett and Laura Larimore for leading the charge on this project and very quickly putting services, procedures, and website information in place. Thanks also to Liz Sherer for quickly designing the poster placed in the postal facility and wellness center. We said when we began this project that we would consider our efforts successful if we helped even one person obtain a Covid vaccine. We were pleased that in the first few weeks we helped some residents make their appointment, drove others to their appointment and provided vaccine availability on our website to several hundred new website visitors. As the vaccines continue to become more available, we remain ready to help however we can. If you know of any friends or neighbors in Big Canoe that are having trouble making their vaccine appointment, feel free to refer them to us.

We are happy to report that our Meals and Rides programs have been busy this year, which has certainly been a welcome change! With more people being vaccinated and Covid restrictions being relaxed, we look forward to resuming more of our services while still staying safe. Our volunteers will be wearing masks and following sanitizing procedures until those are no longer necessary.

Our Volunteer Forum will be back this year! Please mark your calendars now for Friday, November 5th, from 3:00pm to 5:00pm, when we'll welcome our volunteers in the Village Station and hear from our guest speaker, Katie Baker of New Beginnings. We'll also be serving wine and light snacks. It will be wonderful to see everyone again and to toast another successful year for the Collaborative!

In the meantime, our heartfelt thanks to all of you! Your support over the last difficult year allowed the Collaborative to continue helping those in our community who needed it most.

Stay safe everyone!

*Linda Ricklef  
Steering Committee Chair  
and Board Member*





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## COMMUNICATIONS

Donna DiBiaso

# A Pandemic Perspective

Over the past year the COVID epidemic has changed the daily lives of many Big Canoe residents. As Wellness Collaborative volunteers, we want to help our fellow residents continue to live as normally as possible. However, many experts feel that COVID is sufficiently entrenched that it may be with us for the near future. Thus, our immediate (possibly over the next several years) goal should be to help in as safe a manner as possible in spite of remaining endemic viral pockets.

To achieve this goal, our major weapon is effective immunization. Unfortunately, though unknown for COVID, various estimates from other viral epidemics have suggested an immunity rate in the 70-90% range will be needed to halt viral transmission. Presently, we are at a vaccination rate of less than 25%, nowhere near this goal. In addition, there remain pitfalls. First, vaccinations must be widely adopted and available. Those who refuse vaccinations are contributing to the prolongation of this pandemic. Constraint of the supply of vaccine by manufacturing or supply line disruptions will also prolong the risk of infection. Second, the vaccine must be effective at decreasing transmission. Recent comments from the CDC suggesting about 80% reduction in transmission of the virus after vaccination are reassuring. Thirdly, we do not know how long immunity from the vaccine will last. Estimates range from a few months to several years. Obviously, the longer the duration of effect, the more likely that we can achieve an immune population. Finally, so far most viral mutations have resulted in variants susceptible to the vaccine. Potential mutations that mitigate vaccine effectiveness may greatly delay achieving population immunity.

We have been doing our part to support increased immunization through our assistance to Big Canoe residents in scheduling vaccinations and, in some cases, providing transportation to appointments. Thanks to everyone involved in this effort.

Until many more people are vaccinated, we all need to manage potential viral spread with continued use of masks and social distancing. What constitutes appropriate use has, however, become a moving target. The CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html> continues to reevaluate scientific data to arrive at up-to-date recommendations. Unfortunately, recent increases in COVID infections serve as a grim reminder that premature relaxation of these precautions has unwanted consequences.

Eventually, we will come to the end of this pandemic. Until then, on behalf of the Board, we truly appreciate the ongoing commitment from all of you to follow the safety protocols that we've put in place to protect ourselves and our clients by doing all that is necessary to prevent the spread of this virus.

*J. Ross Milley, M.D., Ph.D*  
*Board Member*



# A Word from the Wellness Collaborative's New Communications Coordinator

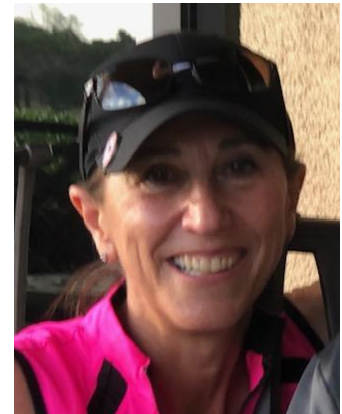
Welcome to the April edition of the Wellness Collaborative Newsletter. My name is Donna DiBiaso and I am the new Communications Coordinator for our organization. I am excited to share all of the good things the Wellness Collaborative is doing here in Big Canoe! In addition to the quarterly newsletter, I will be coordinating all of the news and information about the Wellness Collaborative for publication within Inside the Gates. As I am sure you are aware, Inside the Gates has now become a part of Smoke Signals, so you can also look for news about our organization there. We will also have the opportunity to report on any Wellness Collaborative activity within the Inside the Gates and Smoke Signals weekly newsletters. Finally, we hope to begin sharing important news about the Wellness Collaborative within the various Big Canoe Facebook pages soon.

I thought I would introduce myself by sharing a little information about me. I purchased my home in Big Canoe in August of 2019 and moved here full-time in March of 2020, right as things were shutting down across the country due to COVID-19. What a great time to move to Big Canoe! While it was certainly sad to hear that many of the activities in Big Canoe would be cancelled, I felt very fortunate to have moved to such a beautiful community that provided so many opportunities to stay active. I am an avid hiker and golfer, and have been able to enjoy both of those activities throughout the last year.

I live at the top of Ridgeview Drive with my dog Winnie and cat Fancy. I am still employed as a Sr. Vice President for Bluefire Insurance, a regional auto insurer. I am looking forward to the day when I am retired and fully able to enjoy all that Big Canoe has to offer. I was unaware that Big Canoe had an organization like the Wellness Collaborative when I bought my home. Now that I have learned more about the organization, I am even more certain I made the right choice to make Big Canoe my home!

I hope I get to meet members of our organization in person in the near future. In the meantime, feel free to contact me with any news or information about the Wellness Collaborative that you feel would be beneficial to share with our community.

*Donna DiBiaso*  
*Communications Coordinator*  
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# Choices

Choices as defined by Webster's dictionary is the voluntary act of selecting something that is preferred. We as volunteers of the Wellness Collaborative Rides Program have made a "choice" to serve our neighbors by providing rides. Since my last communication there have been choices and changes. Some volunteers have chosen to continue driving, some have chosen to wait for the Covid vaccine to reduce the risk of virus transmission, and some have chosen to join the Rides Program.

Four new names have been added to our ranks by choosing to volunteer. We welcome Henri Hall (6/2020), Phillip Thomas (6/2020), Chris Moore (10/2020) and Victor Hernandez (2/2021). This group has already been active by raising their hands when rides are requested. I also want to add special thanks and recognition to our new Rides Back Up Coordinator Kimberly Eschenbach. Kimberly is prepared and ready to back up my position, but she is also a valued driver. How many people do you know that would volunteer to pick up a client at 5:30 in the morning!

I am grateful for all our drivers. We currently have 32 drivers on the active list and 26 drivers waiting for the right personal time to begin driving again. Please let me know if your choice changes and I will always honor what you think is best.

Now, I come to the "choice" that I made three years ago to be the Rides Coordinator. My term will be completed at the end of this year. I need someone to make a "choice to be blessed". Why do I say blessed? Well, I get to work with the best group of selfless volunteers, train the new ones, meet our clients, and watch you bless our Big Canoe Community with your "choice" to volunteer! Just give me a call if you are interested.

*Robyn Bish  
2021 Rides Coordinator  
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# The Importance of Sleep...

## And How to Get More

The importance of seven to eight hours of sleep for all adults has been well documented. Because the struggle to sleep is so commonly associated with aging, you may think older adults need less sleep. That is a myth, per the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Importantly, researchers have established that getting the recommended shuteye can have as beneficial an impact on our health as diet and exercise...that was good news for this occasional napper. However, it is also true that the deep sleep we get at night is the most restorative. With fewer responsibilities most of us have the time enjoy a full eight hours — but often we wake too early — or we are sleepless at 3am. So here are a few ideas to help our bodies wind down, and stay that way, long enough to get that sought-after seven or more hours of sleep.

According to the NIH (National Institutes of Health) we should strive to go to sleep and get up at the same time each day, including when traveling. Avoid napping in the late afternoon or evening (that likely would include while watching after-dinner reruns of *Leave it to Beaver*) and develop a relaxing bedtime routine. Reading is good, as is listening to soothing music or doing gentle stretching to ease muscle aches that might interrupt sleep.

If that is not sufficient here are some additional suggestions. First of all, a comfortable mattress and pillow are crucial. A bit of research will point you in the right direction based on how you sleep. Try lowering your thermostat a few degrees. This helps your core temperature drop as intended during rest. However, if your feet are cold, wearing loose-fitting socks can help you fall asleep faster. Heating up cold feet causes your blood vessels to dilate, stimulating blood flow. This will keep your heart, liver, kidneys, and other important organs functioning optimally.

Sunlight helps your body produce melatonin, which regulates your sleep cycle. Try to get at least two hours of exposure to bright light each day. If you combine that with a bit of exercise you double the benefit — as sufficient exercise is another aid to good sleep.

Avoid beverages, particularly alcohol, for two hours before bedtime. Alcohol is a stimulant and can cause you to waken in the middle of the night. Stay away from caffeine for eight hours before going to bed. If indigestion is an issue, limit highly seasoned, fatty foods at dinner. Minimize light and sound. TV, computer or hand held devices can lead to wakefulness. Consider black-out shades or an eye mask. Darkness causes your brain to release melatonin for a calming, sleep-promoting effect. If you still remain awake, try visualizing pleasant surroundings to reduce stress and take your mind off the issues of the day. Count backwards from 100 — by three — not a huge challenge, but enough to keep your mind occupied.

Then if you still have trouble sleeping, experts recommend getting out of bed, as the stress of not getting back to sleep can contribute to the problem. Do something relaxing and head back to bed once you feel tired again. The good news is that two four-hour segments of slumber are as good as one eight-hour night of sleep. Sweet dreams.

*Christine Flaherty*  
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# Big Canoe Wellness Collaborative Services

## 1st Quarter, 2021

Program Activity	2021 YTD	2020 YE	Since Inception
Client Service Calls (initiated through BC Info; some requested multiple services)	50	160	881
<b>Services Completed:</b>			
BC Info	22	56	199
BC Meals	34	54	525
BC Rides	24	100	636
BC Visits	0	31	225
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>1,585</b>

## Coming Events

**Volunteer Forum:** Friday, November 5th, 3:00pm, Village Station

**Volunteer Training:** Ongoing - please contact your Program Coordinator if you would like refresher training

Watch for information on our new Grief Support Group, CPR Training and other new activities!