



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

The Newsletter of the Big Canoe® Wellness Collaborative

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Hello Volunteers!

Well, here we are in August, and still coping with Covid. I hope you and your family are staying safe and healthy. This is definitely an uncertain, trying time in our lives and even more difficult when we can't travel to see far-away family and friends. It has been encouraging to hear how many are creatively staying busy. Aside from cleaning out closets, some of you have taken up a new hobby or sport, others have "Zoomed" with friends and family, there have been relaxing "drinks on the driveway" with neighbors, and many have given themselves the luxury of spending time outside, soaking in this beautiful Big Canoe. We're all trying to do everything we can to stay healthy, and hopefully that will continue long after this has passed.

Even in this day of social distancing, the Collaborative has continued its mission - "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" - by providing Rides, Visits and Meals -- 16 meals in July! As a reminder, one nice aspect of volunteering for the Collaborative is that it is solely at your convenience and comfort level. We will do everything we can to assist you by providing masks and guidance, but no one should volunteer if not comfortable doing so.

We welcome two new columns in this newsletter – a delicious recipe from Carol Lively, a Meals volunteer, and an article by Sally Buckner, a new Healthy Living volunteer, about the importance of strength training. Additionally, Tracy Critchett, our Info Coordinator, introduces us to the Public Safety dispatchers who so capably handle all of our incoming calls. Please let us know if you might be interested in contributing to our volunteer newsletter – we'd love to have you!

Thank you for volunteering with the Wellness Collaborative. We're looking forward to getting our volunteers back together to celebrate the return of normalcy . . . and are hoping that is sooner than later!

*Linda Ricklef
Steering Committee Chair
and Board Member*





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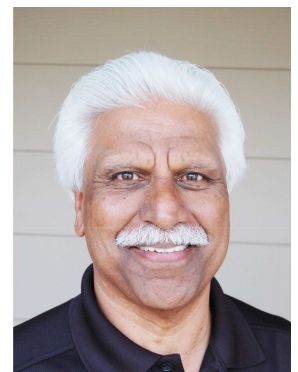
From Our Board President, Shiraz Alikhan . . .

In our last newsletter, I was pleased to introduce you to Dr. Ross Milley as our newest Board member. Since then, we have another Board change to announce.

Jack Schroder was one of our original Board members and, as a lawyer, played a key role in getting the organization started. This included shepherding us through the process to obtain our 501(c)3 designation as well as developing our articles of incorporation and initial bylaws and arranging our insurance. Jack had also chaired the fundraising committee which was responsible for the very successful Taste of the Mountains fundraiser held in the fall of 2016. He left the Board as his term expired at the end of 2018 to work on some other non-profit activities. Now that his responsibilities with those other activities have concluded, Jack let us know that he was interested in rejoining our Board and we welcomed him back with open arms. We're very excited to have him back on the Board.

Ron Reemsnyder served on the Board since the beginning of 2019, providing legal guidance for the organization. In his time on the Board, he has revised the bylaws so that they more accurately reflect the current organization, reviewed our insurance coverage, and provided legal reviews of other matters as needed. With Jack returning to the Board, Ron felt that we were in good hands for legal guidance and decided to resign from the Board to continue to focus on his work responsibilities. On behalf of the entire organization, we thank Ron for his contributions to the Collaborative.

Shiraz Alikhan
Board President



From our Info Program Coordinator, Tracy Critchett . . .

Volunteering to help one's neighbor is an idea at the very heart of Big Canoe's vibrant community. The Wellness Collaborative continues to offer amazing volunteer opportunities for our residents, while providing valuable programs and services to our neighbors.

During the summer of 2019, I was given the incredible opportunity to join the Info line program of the Wellness Collaborative. The Info line program is fortunate to have 34 active volunteers who are responsible for handling the calls that come in from our neighbors. Our volunteers handle the call requests by speaking to the clients/families, gathering pertinent information and then passing that information along to the appropriate service program coordinators for Meals, Rides and/or Visits.

Beginning in June 2019, Big Canoe's Public Safety Department graciously agreed to take the initial incoming calls for the Wellness Collaborative, which provides our clients with a more secure and confidential call experience. Once dispatch answers the call and gathers basic information, they forward the request to the Info volunteer on duty. To date, Public Safety dispatch has handled over 120 Wellness Collaborative calls from within our community.

Currently, Public Safety dispatch is led by Pat Jarrett and Kim Borden. These ladies work to ensure that all calls are answered promptly and met with a friendly voice. They provide the first contact Big Canoe residents have to the Wellness Collaborative and our services.

As dispatchers for Public Safety, Pat and Kim work 12 hour shifts (7am -7pm). They take various calls from the Main Gate, North Gate, Public Safety and Wellness Collaborative lines, as well as emergencies for Pickens and Dawson County. Both are responsible for administrative tasks, as well. Bottom line is their days are never boring and never the same.

Pat Jarrett has worked for Big Canoe Public Safety for over 6 years. She loves her job and helping residents of Big Canoe. She lives just outside the Gates, which makes her seven minute commute a wonderful benefit of the job. She is a Gilmer County girl born and raised. When she got married, Pat moved to Pickens County and her current home, which she shares with her husband and son. During her time off, Pat loves to "piddle" around the house and enjoys gardening. She and her husband love vacationing at the beach- St. Simons Island and St. George Island are her favorite beach spots.



Kim Borden joined the Public Safety team three months ago and looks forward to working in Big Canoe until she retires. She was born in Atlanta but has lived in the Pickens County and Cherokee County areas since 1998. Kim comes to Big Canoe after a 25 year career as a law enforcement deputy and a 911 dispatcher. She is married, has one son and a daughter-in-law and 2 granddaughters. Kim has 3 small dogs- 2 Pomeranians and a Beagle. She and her family enjoy going on trips to the beach and cruises, as well as to the mountains.



As the Wellness Collaborative continues to provide programs and services to the Big Canoe community, we owe deep gratitude to our Public Safety dispatch department for their tireless help over the last year. They have done an amazing job handling our calls and have successfully helped the Info program refine its process along the way.

Pat Jarrett and Kim Borden are valuable parts of the Wellness Collaborative and all of our volunteers and clients appreciate the assistance our program receives so willingly from the wonderful ladies at Public Safety.

Tracy Critchett
Info Program Coordinator



From a Meals Volunteer, Carol Lively



Spinach Chicken Casserole with Cream Cheese and Mozzarella

This chicken casserole recipe is packed with delicious flavors - A nice combination for a busy day's meal!

Spinach Chicken Casserole with Cream Cheese and Mozzarella – All of the delicious flavors of cream cheese, spinach, and chicken are packed into this delicious dinner recipe! This easy spinach chicken casserole recipe comes together quite quickly and makes a nice combination for a busy day's meal. As a bonus, this casserole recipe is also keto diet friendly, gluten-free, and low carb. Enjoy!

Ingredients list for the Spinach Chicken Casserole

2 large boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut horizontally

8 oz cream cheese, softened

2 cup spinach, rinsed

1 tablespoon olive oil

4 oz Mozzarella cheese, shredded

The marinade:

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 tablespoon olive oil

1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes, optional

1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning, optional

Directions

1. To prepare the spinach chicken casserole: Add olive oil, garlic, Italian seasoning, and red pepper flakes into a Ziplock bag along with 1 teaspoon of salt and ½ teaspoon black pepper. Seal the bag and shake until mixed. Add the chicken breasts, seal, and massage so the chicken breasts are covered in the marinade, set aside for 10-15 minutes on the counter while you prep the remaining ingredients. Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

2. Quickly wilt the spinach in a skillet with 1 tablespoon olive oil and set aside.

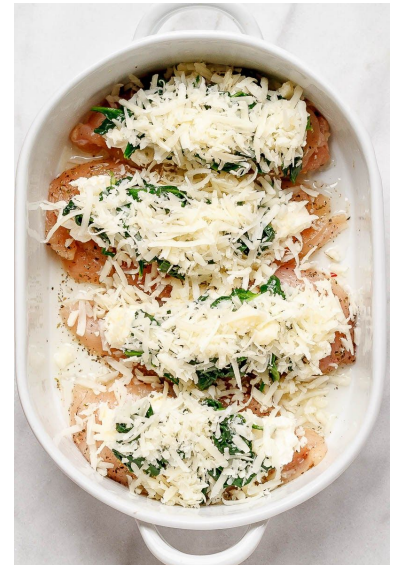
3. Arrange chicken breasts drained from the marinade in a baking dish. Spread the softened cream cheese over the chicken breasts and lay spinach on top of the cream cheese. Finally, sprinkle mozzarella over the top.

4. Bake the spinach chicken casserole for 20-30 minutes. Chicken casserole is done when cooked through to an internal temperature of 165 °F (75°C). Serve the spinach chicken casserole warm with a side of cauliflower rice, or baked veggies. Enjoy!

Tips for the Spinach Chicken Casserole Recipe

You can cut the chicken breasts into cubes to help the marinade coat the chicken deeper, and speed up the baking time of the casserole.

Freeze individual portions of the spinach chicken casserole so you have a comforting dinner for evenings when you don't feel like cooking from scratch.



From Our Healthy Living Committee

By Sally Buckner

Defy Aging with Strength Training

Strength training, resistance training, weight-lifting – no matter what you call it – can sound intimidating. Especially for women. Dare I say? Especially for older women. Well, guess what – it's not! In fact, you can do it in the privacy of your own home with nothing but your bodyweight and a television or laptop to follow the classes.

First, both women and men should strength train. After the age of 30, we all start to lose muscle and bone mass. If we do nothing about it (live a sedentary life), the loss of muscle continues, making us weaker, flabbier, and increasing our risk of falling. But there are many more reasons that both women and men of all ages should strength train.

We need our muscles to do basic things like carrying groceries. I personally have experienced picking up a gallon of milk at the store, and for a moment thinking it was so light it must not be full. Then realizing I was getting stronger. What a great feeling!

More muscle equals more calories burned. Strength training helps boost your metabolism. Better yet, that stimulus continues after the workout, as muscle burns more calories than fat — even when we are idle. No problem there.

Strength training improves balance and posture as it increases your coordination and reduces your risk of falling. All good things.

Weight training improves your mood and energy, as it elevates your endorphins and increases your self esteem. Regardless of whether you lose weight, you will lose inches as flab turns to muscle. So clothes fit better. (That alone should improve your mood.)

Resistance training builds bone mass. For women, menopause results in loss of estrogen, which, in turn, depletes bone mineral density. For many, this can mean osteoporosis. Muscles pull on bones, and bones are living tissue. The more we work our muscles (and put force on our bones), the more we stimulate bone to grow, which can maintain (and even build) our bone density.

Resistance training can ease arthritis pain. Gentle weight training can ease arthritis pain and does not exacerbate it as some people believe.

Importantly we can build muscle at any age. Multiple studies have established that we can increase muscle mass well into our 90s (a call out to Ruth Bader Ginsberg). Age and gender are not factors. Women will not bulk up (whew) because more testosterone is needed for that. Rather women benefit outwardly with improved tone.

Multiple short strength training videos are available on YouTube for every ability level. Many rely on body weight for resistance and require no equipment at all. As you build strength, you can add dumbbells and go for a bit more of a workout. Very quickly you will improve, and be happily surprised when your current weights seem easy and you are ready for the next level.

So if you are thinking of adding strength training to your routine (and you should) two to three times per week is recommended. Eventually, you will want to strive for a total of two hours of workout per week spread over three to four days with a day of rest in between. If group workouts are more to your liking, or you want a personal trainer, checkout the many offerings at our own Wellness Center.

No matter what your approach, just do it. You'll be so glad you did!

Sally Buckner is an A.C.E. certified Health Coach and Personal Trainer with additional Specialty Certifications in Senior Fitness, Fitness Nutrition, Behavioral Coaching, Mind-Body Fitness, and Weight Management.

*Sally Buckner
Healthy Living Committee*



Big Canoe Wellness Collaborative Services – As of July 31, 2020

Program Activity	2020 YTD	2019 YE	Since Inception
Client Service Calls (initiated through BC Info; some requested multiple services)	95	215	766
Services Completed:			
BC Info	36	41	157
BC Meals	49	192	486
BC Rides	56	171	568
BC Visits	17	69	211
Total	111	473	1,422

Coming Events

To Be Scheduled*	Volunteer Forum
Ongoing	Volunteer Training (Contact: bigcanoewc@gmail.com)

*Will be scheduled once group gatherings are permitted