



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

The Newsletter of the Big Canoe® Wellness Collaborative

Volume 6 • Issue 3

October 2021

Hello Volunteers!

When we started offering services to our community in November of 2015, we began with BC Info, BC Meals, and BC Rides. As we delivered services, we found the need to provide respite for caregivers and established BC Visits in early 2016. We have continued to be open to new community needs and how we might best meet them. This year, we are seeing the most significant expansion of our services since then.

Earlier this year, at the request of the POA Board, we acted as a clearinghouse of information about where to get COVID vaccinations during a time when there was a lot of confusion as these vaccinations were being rolled out. In June, Beth Durban organized a COVID vaccination clinic here in Big Canoe for folks who had not been able to get their shots. Since then, Beth has coordinated additional vaccine clinics for COVID, flu, and shingles shots. Please see the Upcoming Events section for information about the clinic schedule.

As our new BC Support Groups Coordinator, Beth also conducted a four-session Grief Support class in September that has received such positive feedback that the Chapel is interested in perhaps directing possible attendees to Beth for future sessions.

Another new Collaborative member, Lori Levey, will be conducting training sessions for caregivers of loved ones with dementia. This could include Alzheimer's along with other forms of dementia. Lori is a retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Please check out the article about this program elsewhere in this newsletter.

We had already become a significant part of the fabric of our community. Our expansion into these new ways to serve the community make that fabric that much stronger.

Thanks to all of you for all you do.

Shiraz Alikhan
Wellness Collaborative Board President





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A Word from Wellness Collaborative Board Member Bill Hoffman

Having been proactively involved in four volunteer organizations here in Big Canoe over the last 14 years, I can honestly say that my time working as a member of the Wellness Collaborative Board of Directors has been the most rewarding of all.

My first contact with our organization came five years ago when I called and requested assistance in getting transportation to and from an outpatient medical facility. My volunteer driver was not only prompt, kind and courteous but also waited patiently during my two-hour appointment to drive me home afterward. That experience made me realize how important the BC Rides Service was to Big Canoe residents. And the experience also motivated me to want to become a part of the organization and contribute anyway I could. Also, at that time, I knew very little about the impacts all the other services of the Collaborative were having on our community.

At our board meetings Linda Ricklef, board member and Steering Committee Chair, reports on all the services performed by BC Info, BC Meals, BC Rides and BC Visits. The amount of work and the unselfish efforts of our many volunteers never ceases to amaze me. And it's not just the quantity of services that is amazing but also the quality and relevance of activities. The Vaccine Clinics, Blood Drive and Grief Support Group Sessions are just a few examples. And in the not to distant future the Fitness Station near the Wildcat Dog Park will be completed because of the efforts of board member and Healthy Living Committee Chair Christine Flaherty. Wish there was more space because there are so many more examples involving so many more people!

I consider myself fortunate to be involved with the Wellness Collaborative and never knew it would have started with a phone call!



Bill Hoffman
Wellness Collaborative Board Member

Don't Forget About the Volunteer Forum!

The Wellness Collaborative will be holding its annual Volunteer Forum on Wednesday, November 3rd from 3:00-5:00 at the Big Canoe Lodge. Diane LaCharite and Laura Larimore are organizers for this year's event. Diane commented, "The Wellness Collaborative is excited about this year's forum. We are finally able to meet in person again, since last year's forum was cancelled due to Covid-19. The forum is an opportunity for us to reflect back on all of the work we have done and thank each of our volunteers for their time, effort and compassion."

This year's event will feature Katy Baker from New Beginnings Therapeutic Services. Katy will be sharing information on all of the programs that New Beginnings offers Big Canoe residents at the Wellness Center, as well as programs available for residents with Parkinson's Disease. Also speaking will be Big Canoe General Manager Scott Auer.

If you haven't already, please mark your calendars for November 3rd. We hope all of our volunteers can attend the forum. It will be a great opportunity to get together and celebrate all the good work our organization is doing for the residents of Big Canoe.

Info provided by Diane LaCharite and Laura Larimore

Dementia Caregivers Support Group Coming to Big Canoe

A new support group is being formed in Big Canoe to help residents who are caring for a loved one suffering from any of the various forms of dementia including Alzheimer's Disease, Lewy Body Dementia, Vascular Dementia, as well as others.

The group will be led by Big Canoe resident Lori Levey. Lori is a retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker who has run similar support groups at Emory University, as well as having a private psychotherapy practice.

This group will meet twice per month and will be a safe place to express some of the emotions that are difficult to express with others. Caregivers of people suffering from dementia often find they have no one to talk to because of the feeling that nobody understands what they are going through. In this group, the other members of the group are going through something very similar and DO understand what caregivers are feeling and experiencing on a daily basis.

The Dementia Caregivers Support group plans to conduct their first meeting in January of 2022. More information will be provided in upcoming months, but to learn more now you can contact Lori at lclevy1@gmail.com.

Lori Levey



Why We Walk?

Walking is good. I believe we can all agree on that. But how good? Here is a list that perhaps will make you realize that it is even better than you thought – both for your physical and mental wellbeing.

It is good for your heart. You knew that. In fact, a daily 30-minute walk improves circulation, and reduces blood pressure and cholesterol, lowering the potential for stroke and heart disease.

It is an aerobic activity that increases lung volume and oxygen flow. In particular, those uphill climbs, are excellent for lung health.

Did you know that walking actually can benefit your eyes? It works to relieve pressure in the eyes, reducing the potential for glaucoma. It is also good for eyesight in general.

Walking also provides a boost to your immune system. That is particularly important now in our battle against Covid.

It works to improve the health of the pancreas, thereby reducing the likelihood of developing diabetes.

It improves your body's ability to digest your food effectively, which in turn decreases the likelihood of getting colon cancer.

Walking also reduces stress as it releases endorphins, stimulating the chemicals responsible for brain health.

Its brain boosting ability also contributes to the prevention of the early onset of dementia and reduces the risk of Alzheimer's.

Another brain related benefit of walking is that it calms the mind and can reduce depression.

Walking also builds bone strength. Sturdier bones mean a reduction in the risk of fracture. And the fact that walking is low impact means there is reduced stress on bones that may already be compromised. Additionally, walking cuts inflammation in the joints and can lead to less joint pain in the hips and knees.

Related is the fact that regular walking has the ability to diminish back pain. Increased blood flow to the spine is beneficial and the act of walking builds core strength, which is essential to properly support the spine.

Last...but perhaps not least, the toning and potential weight loss is another plus. The uphill walking we do here in Big Canoe is particularly helpful here.

So consider joining the Healthy Living Walkers as we enjoy our scenic trails. We walk on Mondays in McDaniel Meadows. Wednesday we do the paved trail around the perimeter of the Wildcat Recreation area, where the pool is. Friday we walk the paved red and blue loops at the Wildcat Dog Park, which is about a mile past the pool area. Starting October 4th we will begin walking at 9:30 am. For more information or if you would like to be added to our walkers' email invitation/reminder list, email christine.flaherty21@gmail.com.

We are also in the process of installing four fit stations adjacent to the red and blue Wildcat trails. These will provide individuals with an opportunity to add some upper body exercises and balance work to their walks. So watch for more information on when they will be completed. We look forward to seeing you out on the trails.

Christine Flaherty



Upcoming Events

November 2 – COVID-19 Booster & Flu Vaccine Clinic, 9:00 am – Noon, Big Canoe Chapel – Broyles Center

November 3 – Volunteer Forum, 3:00 – 5:00 pm, Big Canoe Lodge

November 3 – Stroke Awareness Seminar co-sponsored with the Big Canoe Volunteer Fire Department, 1:00 – 3:00, Mountains Grille Room at the Clubhouse

Photo of the Recent Blood Drive

Wellness Collaborative Support Group Coordinator and blood drive organizer Beth Durban checks in with a blood donor and LifeSouth employee. 57 Big Canoe residents donated at this very successful Big Canoe Blood Drive in Memory of Joyce Chura held on Sept. 23rd.



Big Canoe Wellness Collaborative Services Through September 30th, 2021

| Program Activity | 2021 YTD | 2020 YE | Since Inception |
|--|------------|------------|-----------------|
| Client Service Calls (initiated through BC Info; some requested multiple services) | 182 | 160 | 1,013 |
| Services Completed: | | | |
| BC Info | 88 | 56 | 265 |
| BC Meals | 92 | 54 | 583 |
| BC Rides | 111 | 100 | 724 |
| BC Visits | 8 | 31 | 233 |
| Total | 299 | 241 | 1,805 |