



# Neighbors Helping Neighbors

## The Newsletter of the Big Canoe® Wellness Collaborative

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## Hello Volunteers!

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2020! As you will read in other columns, last year was a banner year for the Collaborative. Simply put, our hearts are grateful for the continued strong year over year growth in client services, our active and very engaged volunteers, and the many comments from our clients about what the Collaborative has meant to them and how it has made a difference in their lives. I'm always reminded of one of our long-time clients who said that the Collaborative has not only enabled her to remain in Big Canoe, but has enabled her to be happy. A huge "THANK YOU" to all of you who care so deeply about the welfare of your neighbors!

Your Wellness Collaborative is continually looking for other ways to help the Big Canoe community and improve its services. We have had requests to offer small support groups and are working on this additional program. Watch for more information coming soon! We also have had requests to offer skills training on things like CPR, and are researching that. What ideas do you have? We'd love to hear from you!

We hope you have had a chance to look at our new website at [www.bcwell.org](http://www.bcwell.org). We've been amazed at the activity on the site (561 "hits" in the first two months!), the increase of client and volunteer requests coming in through the site, and how easy it has been to use. We'll be adding more content as we go through this year, including restricted diet recipes for our Meals volunteers. Please let us know if there are other items we should add.

Lastly, we're looking for someone to help with our communications efforts, such as writing articles for Smoke Signals and Inside the Gates, contributing to our Volunteer Newsletter, and assisting with our marketing materials. We'll soon be sending an email blast to all of our volunteers, but please consider this opportunity. There are still those in Big Canoe who do not know about the Collaborative and we'd love to have you join us in helping to tell all of Big Canoe about our services!

Thank you for all you do to serve your neighbors!

*Linda Ricklef  
Steering Committee Chairman  
and Board Member*





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# From Our Board President, Shiraz Alikhan . . .

Wow - what a year it's been! 2019 was a year of significant milestones for us. We celebrated the 5th anniversary of the establishment of our organization as a non-profit entity and the recruitment of the initial Board of Directors. We also celebrated the delivery of our 1,000th program service in the 2nd quarter and ended the year with over 1,250 services delivered.

Beyond these milestones, the Healthy Living Committee continued to focus on the three "E"s: Education, Eating, and Exercise. The educational presentations have been very well-received and have strengthened our partnerships with Piedmont and Northside hospitals. The Healthy Eating events have offered the community ideas about how to eat more nutritious meals. We have also encouraged more exercise through the weekly walking groups and making progress on establishing exercise stations on our trail system.

Along with these program and service accomplishments, we implemented a major upgrade to our website to make it more functional and easier to navigate.

These accomplishments have only been possible because of the wonderful work of you, our volunteers, in moving our organization forward and in helping our neighbors.

This year, in addition to maintaining the quality of the programs and services we provide to our clients, we'll also continue to expand the marketing of who we are and what we do while we look for opportunities to continue our outreach to the broader community.

The Board thanks you for your ongoing care and commitment and we're excited to work with you as we move steadily toward our next milestones.

*Shiraz Alikhan*  
*Board President*



# From your BC Visits Coordinator, Charlotte Johnson . . .

2019 was a busy year for the Wellness Collaborative Visits Program. As of the end of December, the Visits Program had completed 69 services versus 53 services for the prior year. This is a 30% increase in one year. In addition, the Visits Program completed the 1,000th service for the Wellness Collaborative in late June. Connie Hildebrand visited with client, Loretta Glass. This milestone was celebrated with floral bouquets for both Connie and Loretta! Volunteer numbers for the Visits Program remained steady during the year at 42. Special recognition is given to Barb Kelly for 2019. Barb visited with clients at least once a month from February through December.

While training new volunteers continued throughout the year, the Visits Program also lost volunteers due to moves and other life circumstances. In mid-January, four new volunteers were trained, and we hope this strong start will continue in 2020. If the Visits Program continues the growth experienced in 2019, and as more aging “Baby Boomers” move to Big Canoe, we will need additional Visits Volunteers to support the Big Canoe Community. Please share with friends and neighbors the success of the Wellness Collaborative Programs and encourage them to volunteer. Individuals interested in volunteering for any of the programs may do so by visiting the Wellness Collaborative website at [www.bcwell.org](http://www.bcwell.org). Just click on the green volunteer button and provide contact information. Program Coordinators will reach out to schedule training. It’s that easy!

*Charlotte Johnson*  
*BC Visits Coordinator*



*Charlotte interviewing Bernie Bear, who cannot drive and needs an occasional home visit and also a wake-up call in the Spring!*

# Volunteer Corner . . .

## Bill and Sue Merrick

Today we're introducing two of your fellow Wellness volunteers, Bill and Sue Merrick, who have very quickly become two of our busiest volunteers! Bill and Sue are used to a hectic lifestyle, having raised two kids while living and working in New Orleans, Houston and the Netherlands. Since retiring (Sue having held different volunteer and part time jobs focused on kids and education and Bill from the oil industry) and moving to Big Canoe a year and a half ago, the energetic couple has wasted no time getting involved in their community. In addition to being new volunteers for the Wellness Collaborative (Sue helps on Info and Meals, while Bill provides Rides), they are also active in several other Big Canoe groups and activities. Sue is in the Big Canoe Chapel choir and a Bible Study group, and Bill is a member of the Trails committee and BC Chapel Men's Home Repair Ministry. They both enjoy the hiking and photography clubs. Sue also volunteers outside the gates as an intake counselor at CARES in Jasper. They're both currently completing the Leadership Big Canoe program.

Bill & Sue's goals are centered on giving back to their community while still enjoying their well-deserved retirement together, including exploring the U.S. As Sue says, "Balance is important. We believe in neighbors helping neighbors and want to give back, and also want to stay focused and not over-commit to too many things."

*...with our thanks to Dave Patton, for interviewing the Merricks.*

*Bill & Sue Merrick*



# Big Canoe Wellness Collaborative Statistics

Program Activity	2019 Y/E	2018 Y/E	Since Inception
Client Service Calls (initiated through BC Info; some requested multiple services)	215	209	671
<b>Services Completed:</b>			
BC Info	41	42	104
BC Meals	192	96	379
BC Rides	171	144	462
BC Visits	69	53	177
<b>Total</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>1264</b>

## Coming Events

**May 1**

**Volunteer Forum** – 2:00pm - 4:00pm, Village Station