

Monthly Newsletter October 2021 Edition



National Grid employees took the morning off to plant flower beds at The Bernardine.

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS

We are happy to announce that phase 1 of the Bernardine garden project is complete! Five employees from National Grid installed flower beds. Come springtime, we should see a variety of flowers and vegetables fill the beds.

Students from Parkview Academy spent a beautiful fall afternoon with their "grandpal" making fairy gardens. Everyone made colorful creations that they got to take home. After visiting the facility the next day, it was obvious that the students made an impression. The residents were beaming with joy as they talked about how much they liked spending time with the kids. They also requested that they come back soon, so this month we will be painting pumpkins!



A couple of our partner facilities are allowing volunteers. We are looking for people who want to visit with residents in a COVID-friendly open space. If you can only commit to once a month, we still want to hear from you. Residents are desperately in need of connection and community as the effects of COVID linger on.

VOLUNTEERS

This month marks one year of service for:

Kathy Miller

Thank you!!!

Three SU interns are joining us this semester.

Welcome Lauren, Olivia and Whitney!



The One to One Program increases joy and socialization for residents living in skilled nursing or assisted living facilities, through the power of volunteers.

A WORD FROM OUR VOLUNTEER: JOLENE H.

Last week, I took an afternoon to preserve some freshly picked tomatoes. This is something I remember my grandma doing when I was young, but that I never attempted until moving to New York and a 7 months-pregnant-friend and I decided to give it a try.

An interesting thing happened as I stood over the stove and smelled the hot tomatoes, then peeled them and put them into bottles. My mind flooded with memories.

Memories of my grandma and her garden and how hard she worked to care for 10 children after her husband died when her youngest was just a baby... of my tomato canning friend and her now 17 year old daughter... of my friend Randy, with whom I talk most weeks through the one-to-one program and who shares stories of her past gardens, her children and grandchildren, and of a recent family visit to Martha's Vineyard.



I realized at that moment that I really wasn't preserving just tomatoes. I was preserving memories and gaining new perspectives as I revisited each precious memory in my mind. That is one of the things I have loved about volunteering with Interfaith Works. Besides the fact that I make new friends and share and make memories with them, I gain so much perspective from hearing other's stories and experiences.

My friend Randy is over 90 years old and I have appreciated her steadiness and wisdom with the recent unsteadiness in the world. Randy helps me keep perspective and realize that sometimes our harvest doesn't look like we expect or hope but that no matter what happens around us, we can choose to be kind and bring goodness to others.

These are the memories and moments I want to cherish and preserve and the ones that I hope will return some cold, snowy, Syracuse day when I finally open one of those jars of tomatoes:)

RESOURCES

"Inspired by her parent's work with the elderly, Mrs. Feil followed them in their footsteps. After graduating with a Masters degree in Social Work, the people she grew up with in Ohio became the people she worked both for and with."

Check out this video of her TED Talk:

[Validation, communication through empathy | Naomi Feil](#)

JoAnne Spoto Decker, Commissioner and Executive Director, Onondaga County Office for Aging is pleased to share the recently updated "Give Yourself Peace of Mind" Essential Forms for Future Planning Booklet.

This booklet, and other critical lists can also be found, and downloaded, on our website at:

<http://www.ongov.net/aging/downloads.html>

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InterFaith Works affirms the dignity of each person and every faith community, promotes racial justice and religious equity, and builds relationships and understanding among us.