



VISION, MISSION, PLAN

As we approach yearend it is a natural time personally and organizationally to reflect on the happenings of 2023, and to look ahead to 2024. Over the last year Lancaster Downtowners welcomed 54 new members, a new administrative assistant, a new auction coordinator, new board members & interns, and more. We also say a hearty thank you to outgoing Just One Call Coordinator John Kanagy, with great appreciation for 9 years of service! It takes all of these roles and more to make progress towards our vision for a **vibrant, multigenerational, interdependent community.**

Our organization has defined our role in achieving that broad vision in our mission --**to engage older adults in meaningful opportunities that build a multi-dimensional support network to stay informed, involved, and independent in their community.**

And our **strategic plan** provides specific guidance for our village. As we enter year 3 of the 5 year plan, in January the board will be reviewing our progress on the following four goals:

- Lancaster Downtowners provides members with volunteer help to perform day-to-day tasks associated with an independent lifestyle, and resources for access to home health and care coordination.
- Lancaster Downtowners reflects the diversity of our city and county by establishing partnerships and coalitions with groups from various sectors and populations to achieve shared goals.
- Lancaster Downtowners is visible and known in the wider community.
- Lancaster Downtowners continues to grow and is financially stable, with a sustainable funding stream to support growing staff.

HAPPY

Holidays!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 1/1 - New Year's Day Walk
- 1/3 - Trivia at Southern Market
- 1/8 - Morning Walks
- 1/9 - Books, Coffee, & Conversation
- 1/9 - Bowling and Beverages
- 1/10 - RRTA Transit Plan Update
- 1/11 - Koffee Klatch
- 1/13 - Community Meal Program
- 1/15 - SoloAgers
- 1/17 - Behind the Stands @ Market
- 1/22 - New(ish) Member Chocolates
- 1/23 - BIC Independent Writing
- 1/24 - Happy Hour: Decades
- 1/25 - Downtown Gardeners
- 1/25 - Education in Lancaster Series: Stone Independent School
- 2/1 - How to Avoid Internet Scams

Go to our [Event Calendar](#) for details and to register.

Downtowners Around Town

Holiday Party at Brightside

PHOTOS BY ANDY BERFOND

On Friday, December 15th members and guests of Lancaster Downtowners donned their festive attire and welcomed yule with a delicious Soul Food dinner catered by **Corey Woods** of [Soulcialize](https://www.soulcialize.com). Over 70 people gathered in the banquet hall of **Brightside Opportunities Center** to eat, chat, eat, chat, and eat some more. Thank you to our bustling **Program Committee** for a beautiful evening!



Photos (Clockwise from top): 1. Welcoming Remarks, 2. Cider and conversations, 3. Melissa R and Rod H, 4. Sue H, Barbara M, and Harry D, 5. Chris K, Mary Alice R, and John M, 6. Bridget H introduces Chef Corey Woods



Resource Committee Corner

News to Note

Member-recommended articles from a variety of sources.

The High Cost of Home Health

[This NYTimes article by Reed Ableson published Dec. 2, 2023 is a multifaceted look at the state of Home Health availability and cost for Americans.](#)

“**Long-term care coverage** for most Americans is a yawning gap in government programs. And the chasm is widening as more Americans age into their 70s, 80s and 90s.

The government’s main program for people 65 and older is **Medicare**, but it pays for a home aide only when a medical condition, like recovery from a stroke, has made a person eligible for a nurse or therapist to come to the home. And the aide is usually short-term. Medicare doesn’t cover long-term care.

Medicaid, which does pay for long-term care at home, is limited to the poor or those who can demonstrate they have hardly any assets. But again, the worker shortage is so pervasive that waiting lists for aides are months long, leaving many people without any option except a nursing home.”

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period

The **Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period** (MA OEP) runs from **January 1 through March 31**. The changes you make become effective the first day of the following month. You can switch to a different Medicare Advantage Plan or return to Original Medicare (with or without a Part D plan) from a Medicare Advantage Plan. Remember that this enrollment period is **only for people who already have a Medicare Advantage Plan**.

If Downtowners have questions, they can contact PA-MEDI at the Lancaster County Office of Aging.

- 717 299-7979

How to Cut Through the Ad Blitz during Medicare’s Open Enrollment

[This NYTimes article by Mark Miller published October 14, 2023 gives resources and best practices.](#)

DIRECTORY UPDATES

HAVE YOU MOVED RECENTLY?

The Resource Committee is collecting recommended **movers** for the directory. If you have been satisfied with a provider, please share with us!

LOOKING FOR A JILL OF ALL TRADES?

Downtowner Dolores P. highly recommends Coletta Smith: “*She is reliable, very capable, and very easy to work with.*” You can find her contact information [in the directory](#). (Members must be logged in.)

Your reviews and feedback help keep our Resource Directory up to date and relevant! If you have a resource to recommend, [use the online form here](#) or send an email to director@lanasterdowntowners.org and our Resource Committee will update the directory.

Some Downtowners are for the birds!

BY MARY HINKLE

As the Downtowners events calendar, newsletter, and Facebook page attest, our members pursue a wide variety of interests, one of which is birding.

Did you know that Lancaster County has a longtime, busy birding organization? The **Lancaster County Bird Club** has been active since its founding in December 1937 in pursuit of its goals: “to record the observation of bird life in the county, to disseminate in a popular manner the result of such observations, to provide education concerning the habits and identification of birds, and to secure the cultivation of public sentiment in the preservation of our native bird life.”

From late summer through late spring each year, members meet for **monthly education programs**, make **local outings** to observe birds, and occasionally travel farther afield on **overnight or weekend trips**. Experienced birders in the LCBC eagerly share tips and knowledge with newcomers, and the group regularly schedules outings designed for beginning birders.

You can get more information and apply for membership (extremely affordable!) at <https://lancasterbirdclub.org/>. You can also find the group on Facebook. Or feel free to reach out to Downtowners **Bettina Heffner** or **Mary Hinkle**, who are also LCBC members and would be happy to answer your questions.



LEFT: Downtowner Bettina Heffner (center) in a photo from LNP | LancasterOnline published on 12/14/23. Bettina was participating in the 2022 bird count in Manheim Township; photo taken by LNP Staff Andy Balckburn.

Welcome to Downtowners' Newest Members

David Flaschen, Steve Dalbour, Joanne Leatherman, and Susan Heim

Happy Birthday to these Downtowners in January!

Ruth K, Jeff L, Ruth Ann K, Susan H, Albert K, Wendy C, and Judy M-G

Downtowners Around Town: The Power of Community

BY ANDY BERFOND

I recently sat in **Central Market** with my morning coffee and reflected on the power of our Downtowners Community. We've been using those words lately when we talk about who we are and what we do, and I came to the conclusion that community is a word describing more than just our organization.

Market is a community of vendors, farmers, and stakeholders within the small business community and a part of the abundant foodie community to which I personally pay close attention. I currently live in a large intergenerational condominium complex which is its own community, and Lancaster City is made up of smaller neighborhood communities, empowering neighbors to be connected and involved.



Above: Melissa Siwiec, Executive Director of Lancaster Central Market, talks with Downtowner and Central Market board member John Mullineaux in December 2023

Many of our communities embrace diversity and inclusion and we even have a Director of Neighborhood Engagement as part of the City's team. Every community has the collective voice of its members to express their views, share knowledge, skills and experiences to become involved.

Our Downtowners community is well connected to the bigger picture. We are a part of the age friendly community, spiritual community, the intergenerational community, the supportive consumer community, the volunteer community, and the activist community, lending our voices to issues that are meaningful to us and the place we call home.

It wasn't too long after I started writing notes for this article on my phone sitting at Market, when I saw Downtowner John. As a member of the Central Market's Board, he was there for a meeting with Melissa Siwiec, the Market's Executive Director. He briefly sat down next to me to chat before Melissa arrived. They told me it was ok if I stayed at the table when they talked, and of course I couldn't resist the opportunity to get a picture, which accompanies this article. But then, Downtowner Bettina passed by, and I wanted to talk with her, so I said goodbye to Melissa and John, and we went outside.

We are DOWNTOWNERS AROUND TOWN, active and involved, and a perfect example of the POWER OF COMMUNITY.

HAVE A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND BLESSED HOLIDAY SEASON.

Wellness from Within

BY LANDIS COMMUNITIES, DIAMOND SPONSOR

“Friends Life Care isn’t just a long-term care insurance agency. It’s so much more,” explains Patti Vogl, the newly appointed Care Coordinator for Landis Communities partner, Friends Life Care. “We emphasize wellness in all aspects of life and focus on putting programs in place to support an active lifestyle.”

Patti worked as a social worker in hospice care for nearly 20 years before coming to Friends Life Care, and this background helps her understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle for optimal health. “Though one may think of a healthy lifestyle being mainly focused on physical health, there’s much more involved. Sound mental health, social health, and spiritual health play huge parts in assuring individuals lives are fulfilled to their utmost potential,” says Patti.



Above: Patti Vogl meets with Lois Good

One member, Lois Good, is a resident at Landis Homes and is a retired nurse. She understands the importance of planning for the future. “I knew we wanted to stay in our home as long as we could. The idea of Continuing Care at Home really appealed to me. So we spent time talking with the Friends Life Care people and decided this was a tool that made sense for us. I am SO glad we did.”

Patti adds, “When I joined the FLC team, Lois already had her once per year annual wellness visit in the spring, but I still offered to meet with her anyways so we can get to know each other. Meeting with members isn’t just about assessing their aspects of living. Sometimes, it’s just walking and talking, listening to them, and supporting them.” Additionally, Patti tours the homes to make sure there are no fall risks or safety concerns. She talks with clients about everything that has to do with wellness. “We’ll usually discuss their social support system, what they like to do activity-wise, and what they do for exercise. A balance test and nutritional screening are also part of the visit.”

Patti and the team from Friends Life Care provide peace of mind that someone is always there to provide guidance when more care is needed, in addition to finances when costs are needed to be covered. A Care Coordinator, such as Patti, is assigned to work with the client from day one and will assist with achieving wellness goals and help coordinate any required care. Wellness activities and courses are available to members who are interested in bettering themselves.

“Friends Life Care clients are a close-knit group of amazing people who are doing everything they need to continue to live an active and full lifestyle,” says Patti. “I am grateful to be connecting with so many wonderful people.”

LANCASTER DOWNTOWNERS HEALTH BUDDIES

WANTED

A Health Buddy is someone who confidentially serves as a second set of ears, and takes notes for accuracy during medical appointments.

No Medical Experience
Needed

DETAILS
ANNOUNCED
SOON!



Class Held In March

Downtowners Out of Town: Bus Trips

I love to travel. I have found that approaching life with curiosity has yielded good times and good memories. I'd notify friends (often other DTERS) of possibilities to explore art, books, exhibits, lectures, and so on with me. I'm happy to drive to Philadelphia (my home town) and back so we can take advantage of the Phila Library Author events, Phila Art Museum exhibits, and music or theatre events.

Friends have other friends, and I was urged to do bus trips like the Demuth Museum has done in the past. So I thought, "how hard could this be?" and called bus companies about day trips, little knowing about the advance planning necessary to make trips successful. Elite Coach offered to do a lot of the leg work, and they had much more experience than I in the world of tickets and logistics. I developed some ideas of where to go based on what I had been reading in the newspapers or notices I received from the multitude of Museum newsletters to which I subscribe.

With Elite's help, we had a few bus trips, including the Met Cloisters, Brooklyn Botanical Garden, and the African American Museum. The word of mouth through Downtowners has increased the number of non-DTERS participating in bus trips to about 30%, thus providing opportunities for recruiting new members.

Then Covid hit, and everything came to a halt. It was tough getting everyone back on to the bus for health reasons, and a lot of trips were cancelled due to low enrollment. Then fuel, personnel, museum admissions and transportation prices had risen, so costs were getting steeper. To save costs, I started to make the arrangements myself, hoping to keep prices down.

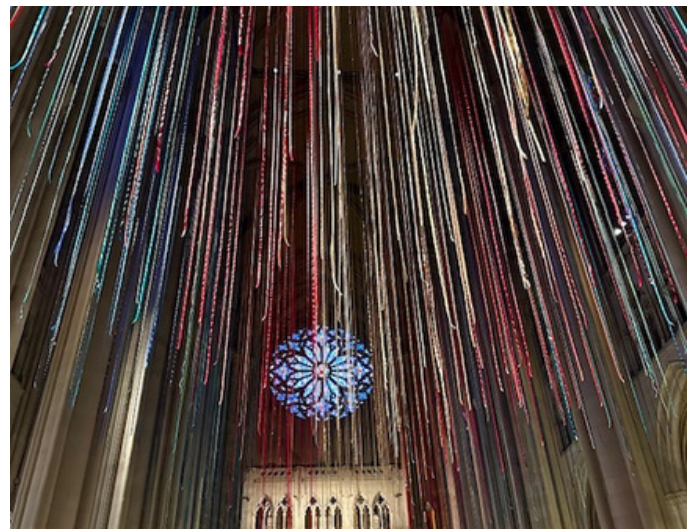
Although it is many hours of work managing the arrangements and registrations for each trip, including lots of communication with each participant, my overwhelming experience has been one of friendship, good nature, and cooperation from everyone involved.

The Downtowners who are the backbone of these bus trips always have suggestions of where to go. I don't think I'm up for the responsibilities of an overnight trip, but according to my list, there are still many more places to explore!

BY SUSAN LEINBERGER



Photos by Angie Piel: Featuring the 12/11/23 NYC bus trip to the Met and St. John the Divine.



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SmartLife Info Session

**Tuesday, January 16, 2024
at 10am**

This is an in-person session at the **Eden Resorts & Suites** (222 Eden Road, Lancaster).

Registration: [Click here to sign-up for this free event.](#)

Enjoy the benefits of a senior-living community wherever you call home.

Continuing Care at Home Seminar

Wednesday, February 1 at 3pm

First Floor - Conexión at Landis Place on King
239 W. King Street, Lancaster PA 17603

The partnership between **Landis Communities** and **Friends Life Care** has been a vital resource for many older adults. Our Continuing Care at Home plans offer assistance in coordinating care, safeguarding your assets, supporting your wellness, and more.

REGISTER HERE:

FriendsLifeCare.org/Landis/