



# St. James NEST

*Neighbors Helping Neighbors*



*From Skip Shaw,  
St. James NEST  
President*

Hello all!

Autumn is upon us and with it, the beginning of our third year of operations here at St. James NEST. Since launching in September 2020, our wonderful team of Volunteers have filled over 2,000 service requests for our Members! That is a remarkable accomplishment and demonstrates the kind and giving folks who make up our Volunteer team. It should be recognized that our service to our Members is also made possible by several teams working behind the scenes: the Help Desk, Marketing, IT, Events, and the Membership team, who we'll be telling you more about later in the newsletter.

Also included in this newsletter: a remembrance of Bill McCormack, who was an early NEST champion; profiles on two of our NEST Members; pictures from the first Member's Tea, and an update on our very successful Speaker Series.

You'll also read about our second annual Volunteer Appreciation Event at the Woodlands Park Pavilion in October. Thanks to all who attended that and congrats to all of our "Volunteers of the Year!" Unfortunately, an untimely bout of COVID prevented me from seeing you in person, but Linda did an admirable job filling in for me. I had many people telling me she did so well, she may be gunning for my job.

So, that's it for me and once again, thanks for all you do for NEST!

**ALL OF US, AT SOME TIME OR OTHER,  
NEED HELP. WHETHER WE'RE GIVING  
OR RECEIVING HELP, EACH ONE OF US  
HAS SOMETHING VALUABLE TO BRING  
TO THIS WORLD. THAT'S ONE OF THE  
THINGS THAT CONNECTS US AS  
NEIGHBORS – IN OUR OWN WAY, EACH  
ONE OF US IS A GIVER AND A  
RECEIVER.**

**—FRED ROGERS**

*Special thanks to all the contributors of the St. James NEST Newsletter this time around: Thanks to Corrie Bovier, Nancy Leoncavallo, Maggie Smith Roedema, Lori Foster, Linda Shaw and Meg Meyer. It takes a Village (or a NEST)!*



## Helpful Tip!

**Remember to call to confirm the service request!**

When you have accepted a service request you should receive an email confirmation with information including the Member's phone number. The member will also receive an email confirmation. But since everyone is not comfortable with email, please call them to confirm.

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT

On October 18th, St. James NEST held its second annual Volunteer Appreciation event to celebrate another successful year of service to the St James community. The events committee chair, **Barbara Nail**, together with committee member, **Connie Kelly**, organized a lovely event at the pavilion at Woodlands Park. The tables were decorated in a fall theme with pumpkins and there were plenty of appetizers, desserts, and beverages.

After everyone mingled and enjoyed the food and beverages, we sat down to recognize our teams of volunteers which included the members of the Board, the Membership team, the IT team, the Help Desk team, the Marketing team, the Events team, and the Volunteer team. Each individual is important to the success of St James NEST.

Volunteer leaders by Service Category were recognized and include:

- **Marie Danco** - Going My Way Volunteer of the Year; she completed 8% of all service requests in this category for a total of 66.
- **Gary Novak** - Helping Hands Volunteer of the Year; he completed 12% of all Helping Hands requests for a total of 8.
- **Arlene Risano** - Just Checking In Volunteer of the Year; she completed 35% of requests for 117 total.
- **Jerry Passione** - Tech Connect Volunteer of the Year; he completed 19% of all service requests for 6 total.
- **Wayne Dennis** - St James Nest Volunteer of the Year; he completed 12% of all service requests for 155 total across 4 categories.

In two years of operation, St James NEST Volunteers have completed 1,915 service requests. Thank you to each and every volunteer! We salute you and we appreciate you!



Thanks to Barb Nail and Connie Kelley for a great event!



Going My Way Volunteer of the Year, Marie Danco, at the 2021 Appreciation Event.



Gary Novak was named NEST's Helping Hands Volunteer of the Year.



Arlene Risano receives her award for her Just Checking In work.



Jerry Passione seems happy with his award for his Tech Connect work.



Wayne Dennis was named St. James NEST's Volunteer of the Year after completing over 150 Service Requests for our Members. Wow! Thank you, Wayne!





## MEMBER PROFILE: Meet Rich and Sally Erickson



Dad watching daughter, Jill,  
during Oktoberfest 1977



Rich & Sally's holiday card  
from Switzerland, circa 1977



Santa and his happy helper, 2021

The Ericksons have lived in St James for 18 years, following successful careers in Delaware. They met at Purdue where they were both working on graduate degrees...Rich in Mathematics and Sally in Speech/Language Pathology. Rich has a wonderful sense of humor. Rich explains that he and Sally met in an elevator at Purdue, where his short ( 5'7") friend wanted Rich to meet tall (5'9") Sally because she was really special and his friend felt he didn't measure up.....

Rich was an executive with DuPont for 27+ years and Sally was a speech therapist at various settings, including hospitals, rehabilitation centers, university settings and schools. Their careers took them to exciting overseas places to live: Geneva, Switzerland and Frankfurt, Germany. While stationed in Europe, they were able to do extensive traveling and get to see and enjoy much of Europe.

The Ericksons recently sold their home in the Players Club area and are building a new home that's smaller and one level, no stairs. Rich has spinal stenosis and had major back surgery in July. Sally has neuropathy and no longer drives. Sally had heard about NEST from a friend, so they recently decided to give NEST a try. NEST volunteers have really helped the Ericksons by driving Rich to his doctor appointments in Wilmington and Leland. The volunteers drive him there, and also take him back home afterwards. Rich says that, for a period of time following his back surgery neither he nor Sally could drive, so having a friendly neighbor take him to/from his appointments was wonderful. Meeting the volunteers of NEST has brought them both a great deal of relief and enjoyment. He says it's actually fun to meet and converse with the NEST volunteers en route to his doctor appointments and hopes that the NEST volunteers know how much their efforts are appreciated.

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### Happy 80th Birthday to Jan Sutton on November 1st!



Fearless Jan mid jump!

Jan told her family that what she wanted for her 80th birthday was the chance to jump out of an airplane! Her kids found her a package deal where she got to jump out of a plane in Oak Island and the whole ordeal would be videotaped. She did it! She said it really wasn't that scary, but actually beautiful to see St. James from the sky! And she was accompanied by her 25-year-old granddaughter.

Jan is originally from Minnesota where she worked in the commercial insurance business for years. She now lives with her daughter, Wendee, in St. James. Since she moved here, last July, she's been a very happy member of NEST, whose volunteers drive Jan to the Senior Center and doctor appointments in Southport on a regular basis. Jan really loves St. James and is a big fan of the wonderful NEST volunteers who have been so helpful and so much fun to be with.

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE ST. JAMES NEST MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE



*The Membership Team: (Back row L-R): Yupei O'Toole, Deborah Bean, Diana Hong, Holly Anderson, Diane Saullo, Denise Hamer (Seated L-R): Ellen deGroof, Linda Gehring*

*Not pictured: Valerie McGhee, Patti Pelton, Anita Pedvis-Leftick, Sue Walker, Carrol Fiorino*

Membership in St. James NEST bears little resemblance to membership in most organizations. When you are a member of St. James NEST, you are asking for assistance and/or support that is customized to your needs. That is what NEST is about, and it is extraordinary.

What is also extraordinary is the work of the Membership Committee, which facilitates the membership process, then provides oversight to every single member. That committee has created a protocol designed to set new NEST members up for success from the very start. Their approach is nuanced and complex. Looking inside the workings of this committee is a real eye-opener.

When someone contacts NEST to inquire about becoming a member, their first contact is with Ellen deGroof, the chair of the Membership Committee. Ellen is a retired physician who, almost two years ago, took the reins of it from its first chair, Valerie McGhee, who still serves on the committee. Ellen calls the prospective new member to do an initial screening, asking the sometimes-hard questions that can reveal what this potential member may need, sometimes beyond what they think they need. Her committee wants to make sure the potential member knows what to expect (and what not to) and to ensure that their needs are within the scope of the services that NEST can deliver.

If the person feels like a good match for NEST, one of Ellen's Area Reps drops off a membership packet, then follows up later to conduct an initial intake interview and evaluation. That session can last an hour or more – information is gathered such as health history, mobility limitations, cognitive issues, and emergency contacts. That information is then used to create a member profile in the NEST database. This profile is critical to the volunteers who are answering service requests and providing help directly to the Member.

Once the applicant becomes a NEST member, their Area Rep is especially hands-on for the first few weeks to make sure the member is comfortable using the NEST service request system. Staying connected during these early days is crucial to making sure the NEST process is working – this is what this amazing committee does. And once the member is in a groove, the Area Rep stays in touch at least quarterly to make sure things are going well.

There are times during the intake process when it becomes clear that an applicant's needs are beyond the scope of what NEST can deliver. There are also times when existing members begin to need more than NEST can provide. When this happens, the committee works to connect them with other local resources they can reach out to for support. The committee maintains a Provider Service Directory which is a collection of helpful services and resources in the community that may be able to provide what NEST cannot.

Ellen and her Membership Committee team are constantly thinking ahead. It was this committee that initially began the Speaker Series, which aims to educate people who are needing support and, perhaps most importantly, others who are not quite there yet, but who want to be prepared for the inevitable changes associated with aging. Simply put, no matter what our current age or present situation, there are contingencies for which we all need to plan. And it is those contingencies and other issues that affect NEST's population, both present and future, which are the subject of much planning that is always in motion for this important committee.

Bottom line, the NEST Membership Committee is a literal powerhouse of connection, compassion and support for its members.  
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Without that group and its careful, sensitive work, NEST would not be the wonderful organization it is.

Here is the roster of the current committee:  
**Ellen deGroof** - Chairperson; **Patti Pelton** - Administrative Assistant; **Valerie McGhee** - Membership Coordinator; **Linda Gehring** - Area Representative Coordinator. Area Reps include: **Holly Anderson, Deborah Bean, Ellen deGroof, Carrol Fioriono, Linda Gehring, Denise Hamer, Diana Hong, Anita Pedvis-Leftick, Diane Saullo,** and **Yupei O'Toole**. New to the Membership team are **Marilyn Spendley** and **Joanna Holmes**.

We reached out to learn why these folks do what they do and how it feels to them. Their responses were remarkably consistent, and they say everything about this very special group of people. Remember when Mr. Rogers advised, "Look for the helpers?" Well, these committee members are all helpers, either by profession or simply because they care. And second, they are entirely committed to NEST's mission - to help people age in place with dignity. "It's an honor to serve." We couldn't say it better.

This committee is seeking new members. If you think you might be a good fit, there are a number of ways you could help, both behind the scenes as well as on the "front line" so to speak. If you would like to explore this possibility, you can apply on the [sjnest.org](http://sjnest.org) website under the Volunteer tab and specify your interest to serve on the Membership Committee or you can call Ellen directly at 240-401-1241.

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## SEE YOU AROUND TOWN...

Getting the word out about St. James NEST is an important part of the Marketing Committee's activities. Marketing Committee members, Cate Guinn and Paul Askew, represented NEST at the St. James Service Club's Non-Profit Fair on October 18th. Paul Askew said that there was a lot of interest in NEST, but that he was also surprised by how many people still aren't aware of NEST. No doubt that we need to keep sharing information about NEST with our neighbors.

Next up, Paul and Cate will represent NEST at the St. James Fire Department's EMS Expo on Thursday, November 10th. The EMS team sees people that could use NEST services and is supportive of our mission. Please stop by and say hello if you attend the event at the Community Center.

## IN MEMORIAM: BILL MCCORMACK



The St. James NEST family mourns the passing of Bill McCormack in August. St James Plantation lost a major lightning rod, civic leader, very kind man and great wit. His passing is a huge loss for the community at large, as well as for St. James NEST specifically.

Early in the development of St. James NEST, Cindy Hauman and Mary Page met with Bill hoping he would provide positive input into our efforts to organize NEST. Among the objectives of that meeting was to ask Bill to facilitate our approach to Homer Wright for his approval and use of 'St James' as part of the village name. Bill McCormack gladly did exactly that.

Bill arranged a breakfast meeting with Homer, himself and the NEST Board. The Board shared the vision of the newly formed 501(c)3 "village," the need for it and how it could work in St James. Homer was happy to hear about it, liked the idea and thought "the village concept fits right into my vision of what the St James future could be." He indicated that in his mind it was the "last piece of the puzzle" to offer to the residents in St. James. He was delighted that we were in the process of getting it up and running.

The Board did not mention that seed monies were needed to get the organization launched, but had been considering trying to obtain a grant or finding an "angel." At the breakfast meeting, Homer unexpectedly reached into his pocket and produced a substantial check that provided the seed money that allowed NEST to move forward. It turned out that Homer was "the angel" we were looking for and we can't thank Bill enough for making that connection for us.

Bill continued to support NEST, repeatedly using his widely read MemberToMember newsletter to communicate the launch of St. James NEST, our services and other NEST news.

Bill was a real treasure and instrumental in the development and success of St James NEST. We mourn his loss and are truly grateful for all he did for NEST and the St. James community. To view a memorial video, go to [www.bit.ly/3Fv0oSo](http://www.bit.ly/3Fv0oSo).



## ANOTHER FUN EVENT FOR MEMBERS!

On Sunday, August 7th, a tea party was held for a number of our senior St. James Nest members and some of their caregivers. Many of these folks have been limited in their social interactions due to the pandemic. This gathering would give them an opportunity to meet others in similar circumstances and hopefully make some long term connections.

Graciously hosted in her home by St. James Nest Membership Chair, Ellen deGroof, the event featured a lace tablecloth, cloth napkins, Lenox china and fresh flowers. Refreshments included ice tea, lemonade, water, finger sandwiches, brownies, lemon cake and other assorted goodies.

The guests included Sue Walker of the Member Intake Team and her mother-in-law Shirley, Jan Sutton, Felicia Garland and Lorraine Lanosga, Betty Nichols, Isabel Teasdale and Lorraine Armstrong with Kayla, a caregiver. Volunteers aiding in this event were Sheila Sullivan, Barbara Nail, Connie Kelly and Ellen deGroof. A special thank you to Sue Walker who sent out the invitations, made half the food and assembled the party favor bags. A flower arrangement was given to the oldest attendee, Lorraine Lanosga and another to the member with the closest birthday, Shirley Walker. Tea bag caddies were given to Betty Nichols and Jan Sutton whose names were drawn out of a hat. Conversation flowed, a good time was had by all and everyone went home with a party favor bag.



Shirley Walker and Isabel Teasdale getting to know each other.



A beautiful tea service



Lorraine Lanosga and Lorraine Armstrong enjoying a chat and the delicious tea and treats.



Betty Nichols admires her tea bag caddy..



Front row (L-R): Jan Sutton, Isabel Teasdale, Lorraine Lanosga, Lorraine Armstrong, Betty Nichols and Shirley Walker. Back row (L-R): Sue Walker, Ellen deGroof, Barbara Nail, Connie Kelly, Sheila Sullivan and Felicia Garland.



Jan Sutton shows off her tea bag caddy.

## 2022-2023 SPEAKER SERIES: AGING IN PLACE: WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?



Valerie Moreau, LPN and Senior Care Consultant speaks in September.

On Tuesday, September 27th St. James NEST held the first of five programs in our new speaker series **Aging in Place: What's the Plan?**

Valerie Moreau an LPN and Senior Care expert, presented **What's Next? Navigating the Challenges of Aging in Place**. Valerie spoke to a host of topics that need to be considered as we plan to age in place, including Advanced Directives, Healthcare Power of Attorneys and DNRs. She also talked about making informed choices and she reviewed Home Care, Long Term Care, Palliative Care and Hospice.

If you were unable to attend, but would like to hear her very valuable presentation or view links to information she discussed, you can go to [sjnest.org](https://sjnest.org) to find the 2022-2023 Speaker Series page under the Events drop down.

Coming up on November 15th is a program that is back by popular demand - **Estate and Long Term Care Planning**. Kara Gansmann, an experienced Elder Care attorney, will again help you understand essential estate planning tools, asset protection and long-term care planning; Powers of Attorney and how to determine if yours is "hot" enough; Wills versus Trusts and determining which one makes the most sense for you; how estate plans from out of state impact you in North Carolina; the best steps to take now to protect your assets for long term care; and how to find and pay for quality long term care.



Kara Gansmann is back by popular demand!

The **Aging in Place: What's Your Plan** speaker series continues into 2023. On Tuesday, January 24th, we'll hear from Jeff Pittman, a Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) and owner of TruBlue of South Wilmington on the best modifications you can make to your home to make it as safe and livable as possible as you age.

On Tuesday, March 21st, two Certified Professional Organizers from Organized Havens, Donna Epps and Kim Ausbury, will discuss the psychology behind why your home is cluttered and/or disorganized and why decluttering your home is especially important as you age. You'll leave with tips for organizing success and ideas to streamline and simplify your daily life.

And, our last program in the series, is **How to Masterfully Manage Your Own Medications** on Tuesday, May 16th. Denise Hayes, RPh, MS, and owner of The Apothecary at St. James, will discuss how to speak with your doctors to better understand and manage your medications safely; how to organize your medications at home; and, best ways to compare medication pricing and services.

For more details and to register for any of the programs, go to [sjnest.org](https://sjnest.org). Under the Events tab, click on the 2022-2023 Speaker Series option.

