

Kip Kourier

Volume X, Issue VII

Building Bridges for Successful Aging

July/August 2003

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW DIRECTOR

On July 1st I officially take on my new role as Executive Director of 55 Kip Center. I remember the first time I walked through the doors of the 55 Kip Center. I was a little nervous and apprehensive. I had agreed to teach a fitness class to older adults – having no idea what to expect since I had not taught aerobics in eight years. As I stood before eight curious members who told me “Maddy (the previous instructor) didn’t face the wall, she faced the cabinets” and “Maddy called this step a side step, not a grapevine”, it occurred to me to head back through those doors. Instead, I asked that they humor me and we would see how it goes. That was almost nine years ago. Right from the start, I was so impressed with the organization and the commitment to improving the lives of older adults that I was inspired to learn more about how and why senior centers function. That original class of eight continues to grow and remain the most popular of all the programs. Ironically, Maddy is back to teach the two low impact and one chair class for the summer session (make sure she faces the mirror).

Five years ago the title of Program Coordinator was added to my job description and I was challenged to expand programs and services beyond fitness. Today the 55 Kip Center is a vital, fun, empowering facility with a wide variety of programs that meet the standards and trends of national senior centers. Motivated by the leadership of our former Director, Karen Tucker, I started taking classes to improve my understanding of the aging process. Last May I received a degree in Gerontology and Psychology from Felician College.

I am honored that the Board of Directors has the confidence in me to continue the vision, leadership and achievement set by Karen Tucker. I am aware of the responsibilities and look forward to the challenges as we expand the center to meet the needs of an ever-expanding population of older adults. While my new duties take me away from classes, I will continue to stay in tuned to the needs and interests of the members. I will miss the daily contact with those of you I have become so fond of over the years, but I am confident that I can better serve you in my new position. 55 Kip Center is blessed with a knowledgeable and hard working staff, an active and dedicated Board of Directors, involved community organizations and many wonderful volunteers. I would like to thank all of you for your support and good wishes as we move forward together.

Sincerely,

Peggy Letsche

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“HAPPY 103RD BIRTHDAY TO YOU” EMILY JONES!

55 Kip Center was honored to host a birthday party for our oldest member. Emily, who turned 103 on June 4th, celebrated her birthday with her many friends, including Anne Dunham who brought a delicious cake to share with all the members. Emily was honored by Mayor Bernadette McPherson with a plaque from the Rutherford Council and birthday wishes were displayed on a sign in front of Borough Hall. Emily is a joy to behold; she remains an active participant in the center with a pleasant personality and a good sense of humor. When presented with a bouquet containing 104 carnations (an extra flower to grow on), Emily remarked that she hoped it worked because she had lost about 7 inches of the last few years. Emily is the epitome of the saying “A beautiful young person is a gift of nature, but a beautiful old person is a gift of God.”

Taste of Rutherford will be held on Park Avenue, July 17th, 5-8pm. You will get 10 food samples for \$10 or 5 food samples for \$5 from among the participating restaurants. Drinks can be purchased separately. Tickets are available at the Center, the Rutherford Downtown office at 176 Park Avenue, and at the Rutherford Library. All proceeds will be split between 55 Kip Center and the Rutherford Downtown Partnership.

KIPBITS.....

The following positions take effect July 1st. Peggy Letsche, Executive Director, Charlene Mariano, Assistant Director, Pat Yannacci, Program Coordinator. We will be hiring a Volunteer Coordinator to manage all areas of volunteer service.

After sending supplies to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, we still had money left from the generous donations from our members and St. John's Lutheran Church. This week we were able to send a check to Brand Senior Center in Moore, Oklahoma to aid in their recovery from devastating tornadoes.

Congratulations to following members who brought home medals from the Rutherford Recreation Senior Olympics: Virginia Torrence, Silver, John Justus, Silver, Anna Ferra, Bronze, and Mary Jane Tulp, Bronze.

The Strawberry Tea was held on Friday, June 20th and everyone enjoyed a fun afternoon. Congratulations to Fran Heim – the lucky winner of the 50/50 drawing. Thank you to Adela Soto who chaired the event and volunteers Jean Benzing, Barbara Burns, Anna Ferrara, Medgalia Meijide, Margaret Burns, Anna. The 55 Kip Center lost two special members this month. Bob Goetzl died on May 14th and Marie Bertone on May 21st. Our sincere condolences to the Goetzl family and the Bertone family on their loss. They will be missed here at the Center.

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DONOR NEWS.....

55 Kip Center has received tremendous support this spring from our donors, corporate sponsors and foundations. I am pleased to announce that thanks to the hard work of all involved (including our members who sold the largest number of raffle tickets ever), the golf outing raised over \$16,000. The money raised will be used to maintain programs and services in the face of funding cuts in a number of areas. I am also excited to report that 55 Kip Center has received a grant from the Bergen County Bar Foundation. The grant will fund a program of elder law education and legal consultation by a representative from the firm of Rubenstein, Meyerson and Blake. The program will begin in September.

Thank you to the Junior Woman's Club of Rutherford for their generous donation to our Bridgebuilder Program. We are grateful to this organization for their support throughout the year.