

# Senior Living

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SPECIAL SECTION

RETIREMENT



VINNY TENNIS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Roberta Strickler, 82, teaches a class at West End Yoga Studio in Lancaster. It's one of her two "retirement" jobs. Read her story on page 4.

## USE IT OR LOSE IT

Meet Marilyn Berger and 4 other seniors who decided to skip retirement and keep on working

Many seniors look forward to the day when they can retire from their jobs and spend more time relaxing, traveling, volunteering, pursuing hobbies and simply doing the things they want to do. For some Lancaster County seniors, however, working is what they want to do, and they're still doing it well into their 80s. This issue of Senior Living shares the stories of just a few.

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#### FOREVER FARMING

● Bob Wagner has always wanted to farm and, fortunately, he married someone who felt the exact same way.  
Page 3

#### MARGARET GATES MGATES@LNPNNEWS.COM

A few years back, Marilyn Berger saw a poll that found 85% of Americans don't like their jobs.

"That would be awful," she says on a recent summer day, sitting in the conference room of Marilyn Berger & Associates, her Keller Williams Elite real estate office on Lititz Pike.

Since her first day as a Realtor in the West King Street office of Warren Charles in May 1966, Berger has firmly planted herself among those remaining 15% who love their job — so much so that she is still working 60-hour weeks 55 years later, at the age of 89.

"As long as I can breathe, I want to be at a desk in an office," Berger says. "Older people today, they start thinking retirement at 65. That's when you're just getting started. By the time you're 65, you're in your prime."

Berger says she has always wanted to work. At age 7,



VINNY TENNIS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Realtor Marilyn Berger, left, shares a laugh with her longtime assistant, Anne Flawd, at her Lititz Pike office. Berger has been a Realtor for 55 years.

she was selling apples. At 14, she got a job at Schmid's Ice Cream Mill west of Lancaster. As a student at Lancaster Catholic High School, she was the only girl in her chemistry class. She enjoyed literature, too, but had no time for home economics.

"Pins, pleats and diaper rash just wasn't Marilyn Berger," she recalls with a laugh.

Berger and her late husband, Larry, took over his

parents' business, Berger's Confectionery Store on Maple Avenue, in 1954. "It was a sanctuary for every kid in Hamilton Park," she recalls. They also had a barbershop, a beauty salon and four apartments.

Once the last of their four children went off to school, Berger launched the career that continues to bring her joy and satisfaction a half-century later. After her start with Warren Charles, Berg-

er also worked for Murray and Son before opening her own office in 1979. Several of her children have followed in her footsteps.

Why real estate?

"I love looking at houses," Berger says, remembering how she would ride in her family's car as a kid and gaze up at the architecture. She particularly loves the "wealth of beauty" from President Avenue heading

BERGER, page 2



## Berger: Real estate

Continued from 1

west to Conestoga Creek. Most of all, Berger loves the city of Lancaster.

"To share Lancaster with other people and what we have to offer is the greatest gift anybody in this business can have," she says.

Berger's involvement in the city goes far beyond simply selling properties. She's been a partner in several projects, including Northgate, a condo and commercial development project on North Queen Street, and Lime Spring Farm in West Hempfield. Over the years, she and her husband also owned several restaurants, including the Horse Inn, the Paddock Inn and Molly's Pub.

In fact, Berger is so devoted to the city that she says she never leaves town to go shopping.

With her work schedule, it's hard to believe Berger has time to go shopping at all. She rises at 6 every morning and starts her work day while eating breakfast. On a recent morning, she'd already had two visitors and taken 10 phone calls before 9 a.m.

"It's never ending," Berger says, clearly relishing the pace.

She deals in both commercial and residential real estate, and finds something to love about both.

"Investors are entirely different than homebuyers," she says, noting commercial real estate is all about the facts and simple math.

Home sales, on the other hand, are all about emotion, she says. Where will the kids go to school? What's the neighborhood like? How is the commute? For most people, a home is the biggest expense they will ever have. "I don't take that lightly," she says, noting she won't sell a client a home that's beyond their means.

There's emotion on Berger's part as well. While a lot has changed since she sold her first home on Atkins

### FAST FACTS

● **If she didn't get into real estate, she would have been:** An architect. Berger's favorite building in Lancaster County is the Griest Building on Penn Square. She says she's always wanted to live on its sixth floor, because it has its own elevator.

● **If she were retired, she'd be:** Doing something in the community. Berger has a long history of community involvement that includes Go Red For Women and the board of the Fulton Theatre. "The more you get, the more you need to give," she says. "Community service is the best thing you can do."

● **Advice for people approaching retirement:** "Don't think about retirement."

● **The secret to keeping her job exciting:** Meeting a variety of people and seeing the smiles of both buyers and sellers across the settlement table.

Avenue for \$10,200, her connection to her clients has not. She still remembers that first year as a Realtor, helping a young couple qualify for a mortgage and selling them a home on Reservoir Street. The couple's children made a wreath for Berger out of corn husks and gave it to her for Christmas.

"Those are the kinds of things you don't forget," she says, tearing up. "You can't pay money for that."

Making those client connections isn't the only thing that keeps Berger working at 89. As a businessperson, she's still seeing opportunities everywhere she looks.

"I have one more (development project) left in me if I can find the right building. I just wish I had 20 more years," she says. "I've had such a wonderful life. Every day is a gift from God. ... Every day is the first day of the rest of my life."



Frank Burkhart, 86, a farmer and owner of an excavation business, stands beside a 1963 Caterpillar his father purchased almost 60 years ago.

# At 86, Frank Burkhart still digs his earth-moving job

REBECCA LOGAN  
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

When Frank Burkhart was somewhere around 14 years old, his father made a purchase that helped shape his career.

"The farm Dad bought in '42 had a railroad right-of-way on it," Burkhart says. "He wanted to get that leveled out and straightened out. And he bought a piece of earth-moving equipment to do that. That instilled in me that running equipment like that was as fun as farming."

Now 86, Burkhart still loves to move earth. And he's still getting — and taking — calls from people who want him to do so.

He had been making plans to move to a retirement community with Doris — the first girl he dated and wife of 60 years. She died suddenly about four years ago. Burkhart then decided he wanted to stay on the West Hempfield Township farm where they raised their family and to keep working — at a pace of his choosing.

He might be harvesting his corn one day and excavating a customer's patio project the next.

"My physician tells me, 'I

### FAST FACTS

● **Advice for people nearing "retirement" age:** Whether someone is working full time or not, investing in family along the way is key, he says. "I believe you can't unify a family when it's being torn apart by death; it has to be unified before."

● **Secret to keeping his job exciting:** "I have never spent any money on advertising. If you do your job to the best of your ability, that person will say, 'Well, if you want to do that you call Frank.' That's been the route that it goes and ... that's a better way to work because you usually find a nicer group of people to work for. And there has been more than one place that has paid a premium without being asked to. I've had a few of those that were very special. It just makes you realize that they have appreciated the detail that you give them on your work."

● **If he didn't go into farming and earth moving, what would he have been:** "I just never had a big intention of doing something other than what I did. I love the dirt that was turned and the smell of it."

● **If he were retired, he'd be:** "I'm finding it pretty easy at 86 to sit in a chair and take time out. But I like to see a finished project. I just hope that I can finish this life that way."

don't know what you're doing but you'd better keep doing what you're doing because it looks good," Burkhart says.

"And I have four daughters and a son and their mates who really support what I'm doing and the way I'm doing it," he adds. "So this is why I am where I am."

From the motorcycle on which he and his wife once traveled the country to his dozer, grader and track loader, Burkhart has always found satisfaction in being able to understand how equipment works. And he's always been interested in how water and earth relate. "As a child, after a thunderstorm, I'd go into a place at our little farm with just a mini-shovel and such like, make a dam, put a pipe in it and watch the water accumulate," he says.

He was 18 when he worked his first job related to soil conservation — terracing

a farm in Manor Township using his father's Caterpillar D6 Dozer.

"We were growing potatoes at that time, so there'd be a period of time when we could do work for a farmer who would say, 'I'm going to leave this ground fallow (in order to take on a terracing project)'" he says. "I'd try to work that in with our farm program and it just happened that way."

He ended up serving on the board of the Lancaster County Conservation District and is still an adviser there. (So is Bob Wagner on page 4.) Burkhart also served 44 years in local government where a key priority was to get quality farm ground into the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve.

"And we did a pretty good job of doing that as a board of supervisors," he says. "That's something I like to smile about."

Burkhart did work with a dairy operation for about nine years. A longtime friend who moved dirt in the Southern End gave him some advice about that.

"He said, 'Sell those cows and get on the bulldozer when you have time,' " he says. "And that's about what happened."

"I have mostly old equipment now. But with owning it and being the only operator, it's an all together different thing than having employees," he says. "I know who ran it last, I know the condition under which it operated and what it needs in service."

He has an eye for that.

"I had the opportunity in 1964 to go on a salary. I could have left the farm and got what was known as a good wage at that time to just check a contractor's equipment and keep him informed of what needed to be fixed," he says. "I turned that down and if I ever made a good move, that was the time that I made the right move."

He's thankful for the time he had with his wife and now each year — around the time of her birthday in late August — the whole family gathers for a campout on the farm. "I have been blessed because what my wife did and stood for carries on in this family," he says.

He's also thankful for the family support that helps him keep working.

"There was an agreement to move to a retirement home and I don't fault anybody who does that," he says. "But ... I believe that if you can still earn an income that can help somebody else, there's a big blessing in that."

Older people today, they start thinking retirement at 65. That's when you're just getting started.

— Marilyn Berger,  
Marilyn Berger & Associates,  
Keller Williams Elite

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Joy Kushlan puts a price tag on a pair of cowboy boots in her store, Joy's Antiques, in Little Britain Township.

ANDY BLACKBURN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Joy Kushlan and her antiques part of Little Britain history

REBECCA LOGAN  
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

Joy's Antiques is a little bit of a Little Britain landmark. Owner Joy Kushlan, 82, landed there somewhat by chance.

The daughter of an appliance repairman, she spent her childhood in Connecticut, California and Florida, which is where she met her husband, Art. He joined the Navy and away they went to homes across the country. While her husband was serving as a personnel officer at the U.S. Naval Training Center Bainbridge in the early 1970s — toward the end of that Port Deposit, Maryland, installation's operation — the Kushlans rented a stone farmhouse south of Quarryville. They had five children and decided Solanco schools would be a better fit than Maryland schools, particularly for their dyslexic son.

But they wanted to own a house and, after spending some time doing flea markets, also wanted somewhere to open an antiques store. Kushlan says her husband spotted a two-in-one opportunity during his daily commute.

A new Little Britain Store was being built next to the old Little Britain Store, which at that time was on the ground floor of an old house — one of the first in the Southern End to have gas lighting and running water. He stopped to ask the house's owner his plans, which he learned involved moving out and converting the house into apartments. But the owner asked the man in the Navy uniform to stop back to be sure. He did and learned apartments were starting to look like a hassle.

"So he told Art, 'I guess it's



A collection of hand mixers on display at Joy's Antiques.

for sale,'" Kushlan says.

That was 1973. The rest is history — a history that's involved decades of Kushlan sitting in that house greeting customers. Depending on the day, those might include neighborhood Amish boys sprawled out on the floor admiring vintage fishing equipment, home renovation types sorting through boxes of antique hardware, or hardcore tool collectors who keep Joy's on their rotation.

Joy's doesn't have set hours. Kushlan urges customers to call first because the sign out front says "by chance or appointment." But cruise through the four-way stop at the intersection of Little Britain Road and Route 272 and more often than not you'll see Joy's "open" sign glowing.

Among the exceptions are times when the Kushlans are instead out hitting yard sales or auctions to replenish their stock. They mainly stick to ones in Lancaster County these days. Their once regular go-to in Maryland is no longer worth it, she says. That auction still offers decent furniture finds. But Joy's Antiques has been out of the furniture business

for years and now focuses on a small item selection.

"And that's not showing up down there," she says. "Not if it's any good. They're sitting at home selling it online."

Kushlan isn't.

"We're an old-fashioned mom-and-pop shop. We don't do eBay," she says. "I hate wrapping and mailing." Nor is Kushlan a fan of tedious auctions. She's learned long ago which ones to avoid.

"When the auctioneer is just hammerin' and hammerin' and talking and talking. Then he'll tell a joke. Then we'll get back to it," she says. "Pffft. It's a waste of my time."

"When the auctioneer sells fast? Somebody's not paying attention," she adds. "A bargain slips through."

That's exactly what happened with one recent find now perched atop an old postcard rack.

"This is really cool. Didn't know what it was when we bought it," she says.

Internet research revealed the answer to be a Navy hat box.

"I told my husband, 'I think that's military,'" she

KUSHLAN, page 4

### FAST FACTS

● **Advice for people nearing "retirement" age:** "My husband says: 'Everybody I ever knew that retired died young.' Keep working at something."

● **Secret to keeping her job exciting:** "Finding something at an auction I haven't seen before."

● **If she didn't go into antiques she would have been:** A swim instructor

● **If she were retired, she'd be:** "Digging in the yard a lot, probably. I like to garden. That's my recreation."

## Bob Wagner always wanted to be a farmer

REBECCA LOGAN  
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

The July sun had only been up a few hours and was already beating down mercilessly on Bob Wagner's 150-acre farm.

But rain was in the forecast. Wagner's son, Scott, cruised past on a John Deere tractor to which he had just hooked a hay rake.

"We're not trusting the weather. So what we're going to do is roll it up and wrap it. Make snowballs," Wagner says, giving a quick wave to his son, who was headed out to the field. "That's what you do if you can't get it dry. With this weather, it would take two more days to dry the hay enough to dry bale.

And it's supposed to rain today, maybe tomorrow and maybe the next day."

Amish neighbors were also out in their fields, hustling with mule teams apparently to beat the weather, too. Wagner says there weren't any Amish in Little Britain Township when he was growing up there. They came later. So did several 25-year-old and newer subdivision-style houses, just fields away from his farm — many of those populated by folks with office jobs.

"I got here 82 years ago," he says. "I was born in this place."

There are a lot of Wagners in the Southern End. As far

WAGNER, page 5



SUZETTE WENGER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bob Wagner, a lifelong farmer and still working full time, uses a grinder to sharpen a mower blade.



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# Roberta Strickler combines work, passions

**MARGARET GATES**  
MGATES@LNPNEWS.COM

When Roberta Strickler worked as a marketing manager for Harrisburg International Airport, she would often go up the hill from her office after work and hit balls at nearby Dauphin Highlands Golf Course. Twenty years ago, as she left her job at HIA for good, she saw an opportunity on the horizon.

"The day I retired, I went up the hill and said, 'I would like to have a job.'"

For Strickler, 82, retiring wasn't about not working, but about finding a way to combine her work and her passions, and she has done that in myriad ways throughout her life.

One of her current retirement jobs, as "flower lady" on the Dauphin Highlands maintenance crew, has her tending all plant life, except the turf itself. It allows her to pursue multiple passions.

"It is an outdoor, very physical job," Strickler says. "It pays for my love of the game of golf, as a player. And it gives me a huge garden to tend when I live downsized without flowers at home."

Even before her "retirement," Strickler was finding ways to pursue her interests, either through work or because of it. She went to college with the intent of becoming a dietitian, studying English, biology and home economics; however, her lengthy resume tells a slightly different story.

Over the past five decades, she was a writer for Lancaster Newspapers (now LNP Media Group), a part-time marketing consultant for a flour company, the owner of her own small public relations consulting firm and a press secretary for the state Department of Health — all before taking the position at HIA.

"People would say to me, 'Why have you had so many

jobs?'" Strickler says. "If I'm interested in something, I go get a job doing it. I don't get hung up on money."

Perhaps nothing sums up Strickler's approach to life and work better than yoga. She began practicing it at age 50 and started teaching it a few years later, in 1995, when her children were both in college. Through all of her career changes, yoga has been a constant and a career all its own.

"Yoga teaching is a profession," Strickler says. "There is a written down body of knowledge. It has a philosophy, a lifestyle."

Studying that lifestyle is expensive, she says, but all of her full-time work over the years helped to fund her training.

Strickler earned her first certificate as a yoga teacher from the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, Massachusetts. She then studied Anusara Yoga, an Iyengar-based style of yoga known for its "elegant language and therapeutic principles of alignment," for 12 years.

In 2014 and 2015, she returned to Kripalu to earn a formal certificate in Ayurveda, a natural, Eastern style of medicine that promotes food as medicine, cleansing practices, yoga and meditation as the foundations of a healthy life — a nod to her earlier college studies in biology and nutrition.

Strickler also has studied mindfulness meditation and yoga as therapy, for issues of balance, physical rehabilitation and well-being.

"I do look and act young for my age," she says. "I think that's a lot of it."

And perhaps another part of it is doing work you love. Strickler spends three days a week tending to the plants and flowers at Dauphin Highlands, a far bigger undertak-



Roberta Strickler teaches a class at West End Yoga in Lancaster. She says yoga is more than an exercise — it's a way of life. And it's the reason she looks and acts young for her age.

VINNY TENNIS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

ing than the little floral oasis she's created in a backyard corner of her apartment building near Grandview Heights.

"I feel like I have one more garden in me, creating one more spectacular garden," she says.

When she's not at the golf course, you'll likely find Strickler at her other retirement job, teaching the basics of yoga at West End Yoga Studio.

"I like to teach in sequence," she says. "There's a sequence

to learning anything." Yoga, she emphasizes, is not just an exercise but part of a way of life.

And for Strickler, it's a life-long education, whether she is doing her daily 12-hour fast or taking a three-week summer retreat to the Himalayan Institute, a center for yoga and holistic living north of Scranton.

As a teacher, Strickler combines a calm demeanor with a sense of fun. Her classes may be educational, but she also likes to tell corny jokes. The

same is true outside the yoga studio.

When a 15-year-old boy in her neighborhood recently showed her a TikTok video of his grandmother, Strickler offered to appear in her own TikTok video — while standing on her head.

"I stand on my head every day. I feel it refreshes my brain," she says. "Everybody should be standing on their head. You have to learn to be supported and grounded in whatever orientation you are."

## FAST FACTS

● **Advice for people approaching retirement:** Use it or lose it. One thing both of Strickler's "retirement careers" have in common is they exercise the mind.

"I'm the yoga teacher for intelligent people. If you don't want to think, don't come to me. It's the same with gardening. There's so much to learn," she says. "It's not about earning money. It's about wrestling with new stuff and figuring things out, not just sitting in a chair taking a pill."

● **If she were retired, she'd be:** Playing a lot of golf.

● **The secret to keeping her job exciting:** "Keep studying and learning. Try hard not to be a know-it-all. I learn from my students every day."

● **If I had a different career, it would be:** Some form of teaching. If it weren't for yoga, Strickler says she would likely finish her college credentials as a dietitian and teach about the Ayurveda attitude toward food. "Food is medicine, not good or bad," she says. "It must be used to balance each person in light of their own qualities, not in light of what the internet is promoting today for everyone."

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## Kushlan: Little Britain landmark

Continued from 3

says. "That auctioneer never paid any attention to it. He just said, 'Here's this neat, painted tin.'"

While speed is key on the buying side, Kushlan has plenty of patience when selling. Chances are no matter what it is, it will move eventually, she says, adding that one day the price on the tag will be too much of a bargain for someone to pass up.

"Somebody bought my

western saddle yesterday. A girl that rides at the place

down the street," she says. "She doesn't have a horse ... I think she's planning on getting a horse to put under it."

Dishes don't bring what they used to, she says. Decoys are doing well.

"These are hot," Kushlan says, motioning to boxes filled with records.

"The kids want them," she says. "These are 50 cents each and I sell a couple hun-

dred dollars a year out of these boxes."

Nothing much surprises Kushlan about the cyclical and sometimes fickle world of antiques and collectibles. She said she learned not to let it soon after opening the shop. Kushlan shakes her head, chuckles and grins as she describes those early '70s days.

"I said I'd do this for 15 years," she says. "We're still here."

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SUZETTE WENGER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bob Wagner moves a piece of hog fencing as he prepares to enclose a barn for young steers.

## Wagner: 'I always wanted to farm'

Continued from 3

as Bob Wagner knows, he's not related to any other than his immediate crew. His father was originally from Maryland's Eastern Shore. His family moved down from Berks and Lebanon counties and his father bought the Wagner farm in 1934.

Bob Wagner's wife, Joyce, hails from near Mount Joy. They met at a Rocky Springs roller skating party.

"It just so happened that she wanted to be a farmer. She grew up in town but they'd go out and help some of their friends who farmed and she liked it," he says. "When she was a teenager she was helping a guy strip tobacco. I said, 'You're crazy.'"

Wagner helped a relative with tobacco for a time. That was more than enough for him. He prefers other crops and creatures. He used to have a large dairy herd. That's gone. Bob and Joyce just keep one dairy cow for themselves now and milk her twice a day. The couple has two sons.

"Steve's the one that was the dairy guy. He's in Maine now tending some high-class herd of cows," he says. "That's his thing."

Scott had spent some time touring the country with competitive rodeo. He's back now and has taken on crops and turkeys.

"Now I help him out. I do a lot of repairs, run the

### FAST FACTS

● **Advice for people nearing "retirement" age:** "If you like it, you can do it if your health's good enough. You've got to be careful though when you get this old."

● **Secret to keeping his job exciting:** "I don't know, just seeing things grow and improve. And, like with the cattle, watching them mature."

● **If he didn't go into farming he would have been:** Probably a mechanic.

● **If he were retired, he'd be:** "I'm not actively farming the way I used to but I'm still going. Even though some days I spend more time sitting in a chair than I'd like." If he were to scale back more that might mean additional time for himself and his wife at their cabin.

skid loader, stuff like that. I don't get to run the tractors as much because he likes to do that," Wagner says. "He's into the technology. He's got GPS on there, maps out the fields. He's even got it on the manure spreader. He's got it on the combine and corn planter. Us older guys don't mess around with that as much."

Wagner laughs as he remembers the equipment he had as a new farmer. "I started with a two-bottom plow with a 38-horsepower tractor. A two-row corn

planter. A one-row corn picker," he says.

On this particular morning, Wagner had just cleaned out the machine shed with a leaf blower. He would likely be making a parts run that afternoon. But for now, he was headed down to the calf barn to install some tin siding. Bob and Joyce Wagner still raise that barn's inhabitants together.

"We buy these Jersey calves that nobody wants and make steers of them. We fatten them for two years and we have our beef and we sell beef," he says. "The problem we have right now is going and getting them butchered. They're so full — scheduled a year ahead. It all happened when there was no meat in the stores and everyone went out and bought beef. And now they want these guys to butcher it. Small butcher shops just got flooded in the pandemic."

Asked what he'd have done if he hadn't gone into farming, Wagner's face scrunches into a quizzical expression as he contemplates that idea. "Mechanic, I guess," he says.

"I really wouldn't want to do too much other stuff," Wagner adds. "I like the fresh air. If you're a mechanic you're always in one place. You've got a lot more freedom out here."

"I always wanted to farm," he says. "My wife wanted to farm. So we farmed."

## 6 senior living nonprofits partner to meet challenges

CAROLE DECK FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

Two heads are better than one.

Six nonprofit senior living communities are taking this old adage to heart by forming a collaborative partnership called The Colligo Group.

Cornwall Manor (Cornwall), Fairmount Homes (Ephrata), Garden Spot Communities (New Holland), Moravian Manor Communities (Lititz), The Highlands at Wyomissing (Wyomissing) and Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community (Harrisonburg, Virginia) are The Colligo Group partners.

"Colligo" is a Latin word meaning to gather, bring together, collect, harvest, unify or unite. It aptly defines how the partnership works together to resolve industry challenges.

The group was officially established in April 2021 and is managed by ForgeWorks, a subsidiary consulting company of Garden Spot Communities. The Colligo Group officers are president Steve Jeffrey, co-founder of ForgeWorks and Garden Spot Communities chief strategy/innovative officer; treasurer David Swartley, president and CEO of Moravian Manor Communities; and secretary Jerry Lile, president and CEO of Fairmount Homes.

"In 2018, Garden Spot Communities began research on new models for independent, faith-based retirement communities to address some of the rising disruptors in the senior living industry," Jeffrey says.

A year later, 10 senior living organizations were in-



Steve Lindsey



David Swartley



Jerry Lile



Lee Stickler



Judith Trumbo



Kevin DeAcosta

ited to discuss the possibility of designing a model where they would remain independent, yet work together on common issues. Participants were selected that had a diversity in perspective and markets along with an interest in working collectively and sharing openly with one another. Six of the 10 jumped at the opportunity.

"As baby boomers reach their senior years, longevity increases and the number of disruptors increase and will continue to do so," Jeffrey says.

The collaborative "colligo" model strives to be actively intentional about taking

positive steps to help senior living organizations remain sustainable in the future, he says.

Judith Trumbo, president/CEO of Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, says the group provides a broader perspective with the forward thinking of other senior living communities.

"It helps to know other facilities face similar challenges and we have an opportunity to partner together," Lile says. "The group focuses on fundamental values and the residents."

Partners met in 2020 to develop the "colligo" model — a federated approach that allows the leadership of the participating communities to collaborate on solutions to shared workplace issues while at the same time remaining self-governing and maintaining their individual missions.

"Colligo is an exciting, innovative method to problem-solving for the changing senior living environment," says Steve Lindsey, CEO of Garden Spot Communities. "The group brings their own strengths and diverse perspectives to support shared goals."

Jeffrey says the group will identify individual needs, share best practices, apply research and testing, and then determine potential solutions.

Leadership staff members from each organization meet to work on a core focus area. Currently teams are focusing on ways to solve workforce issues: employee recruiting/sourcing, time-saving technology and new compensation approaches.

COLLIGO, page 8



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GETTY IMAGES

HEALTH

# THE ABCs OF ZZZs

*Why a good night's sleep keeps you feeling refreshed — and so much more*

**KARYL CARMIGNANI**  
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

You know when you get enough of it, and when you don't. We spend about one-third of our lives doing it, or at least in pursuit of it. While some may think it is a waste of time, the fact of the matter is, sleep is the bedrock of our physical and mental well-being.

Quality sleep supports overall health and enhances the immune system; improves learning; and boosts decision-making, problem-solving and coping skills, according to sleep medicine experts.

As people age, it may be more challenging to get a revitalizing night's sleep, but experts insist that, for most adults, a solid seven to eight hours of shut-eye is still important. However, about one-third of Americans don't get enough sleep, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**You (don't) snooze, you lose**

"Lack of sleep is associated with injuries, chronic diseases, mental illnesses,

poor quality of life and well-being, increased health-care costs and lost work productivity," the CDC states on its website.

The organization's goal is to increase awareness and education to mitigate the impact of sleep disorders on human health. As people get older, restless, uninterrupted sleep can be more elusive and compound existing health problems.

"Sleep is often neglected, but it is important to your body to function and to function well," says Jen Dougherty, certified physician assistant with Pulmonary Associates of Lancaster, which works with people with sleep disorders. "Mood and memory are impacted."

Studies have linked not getting enough quality sleep with an increased risk for dementia, she says.

Lack of sleep is connected to a cascade of health issues including Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, heart attacks, obesity, depression, lung disease and cancer.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) shared a study that found that short sleeps accelerate aging of the brain. It found that "seven hours a day for adults seems to be the sweet spot for optimal performance on computer-based cognitive tests."

While sleep needs may

vary, most adults (even over 55) should shoot for a solid seven hours of sleeping like a log.

Studies are honing in on what exactly happens in sleep — and lack of it — that impacts health. One Harvard article states: "During sleep, our bodies secrete hormones that help to control appetite, energy metabolism and glucose processing. Obtaining too little sleep upsets the balance of these and other hormones."

Poor sleep also increases the "stress hormone" called cortisol, which puts undue stress on the body and leads to weight gain, diabetes and heart disease, the article states.

**Losing sleep over it**

Older adults may encounter barriers to getting a good night's sleep.

"Depression and anxiety are biggies that impact the quality and schedule of sleep," Dougherty says. "Losing friends and spouses, as well as health issues," can keep a person from getting adequate shut-eye.

Another common culprit to getting good sleep is obstructive sleep apnea. This occurs when the throat muscles relax and the airway collapses and becomes blocked during sleep, causing the person to stop breathing for

short periods, then jarring awake briefly.

When this happens multiple times during the night, sleep architecture is damaged and the person may wake with a headache, feel sleepy during the day, have trouble concentrating and remembering things, and be short-tempered. Chronic sleep apnea can also increase the chance of developing health problems like high blood pressure, heart attack, heart failure, stroke or sexual dysfunction.

"Sleep apnea is more prevalent as people age," Dougherty says, but people of all ages can have it. Her clinic sees both women and men for the problem. "Women are here because they're tired, while men are here because they're tired of their wife complaining about their snoring."

Sometimes changing personal habits can get the person back on track: side sleeping to reduce airway blockage; losing weight so structures in the throat can remain open easier; avoiding alcohol and certain medications like sedatives; and keeping the nasal passage clear with breathing strips or menthol cream.

If that doesn't eliminate the problem, a doctor may prescribe a continuous positive air pressure pump called a CPAP. A small portable pump sends air through a hose into a mask, which is worn over the nose. It provides a steady stream of air to overcome the obstruction of the airway. Once the patient gets a good night's sleep, the benefits are profound.

"This importance is not realized until they get quality sleep again," Dougherty says.

**SLEEP PHASES**

Carving out adequate time for sleep is important, but so is the quality of it.

"Sleep architecture" refers to the breakdown of the various 90-minute cycles of two basic types of sleep: rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and three stages of non-REM sleep. Each is linked to specific brain waves and neural activity, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NIH).

They describe the stages as:

● **Stage 1:** The changeover from wakefulness to sleep. Breathing, heartbeat and brain waves slow; muscles relax, with occasional twitches. This may last several minutes.

● **Stage 2:** Lighter sleep gearing up for deeper sleep. Body temperature drops and eye movements stop. Brain waves slow but have brief bursts of electrical activity. This stage is repeated throughout the night more than any other.

● **Stage 3:** The period of deep sleep that makes you feel refreshed in the morning. Heartbeat and breathing slow to their lowest point during sleep; muscles are relaxed, brain waves even slower.

● **REM sleep:** First occurs about 90 minutes after falling asleep. As the name implies, eyes move rapidly behind closed eyelids. Brain waves become closer to wakefulness, breathing becomes faster and irregular; heart rate and blood pressure increase to near waking levels. Most dreaming occurs in this stage — limbs are temporarily paralyzed, keeping you tucked in bed. As we age, less sleep time is in REM sleep.

SLEEP, page 8

**SLEEP TIPS**

For older adults having trouble sleeping like a baby, Jen Dougherty, a certified physician assistant with Pulmonary Associates of Lancaster, shares some tips to improve sleep hygiene:

- Create a sleep routine, including bedtime and wake time, and stick to it.
- Minimize daytime naps and keep them to less than 30 minutes.
- Hydrate during the day and take sips in the evening to reduce nighttime trips to the bathroom.
- Get exercise during the day, which will help tire you out for sleep.
- Limit screen time and don't keep a TV in the bedroom.
- Try cognitive relaxation techniques, like deep, slow breathing.

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LIFESTYLE

# Want to give back? Here are 8 great ways

**GAYLE JOHNSON**  
FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

Cindi Moses will tell you she has supervised perfect workers. They never arrived late, proved dependable and professional, and were caring and understanding. And, they never got paid.

Moses, now executive vice president for the United Way of Lancaster County, says she remains impressed by the 30 senior citizens who volunteered when she managed the Well Spring Library for Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health about 11 years ago. "They took this as seriously as a paid job," she says.

Those volunteers also checked several boxes for mental health professionals who recommend senior citizens regularly volunteer in person to protect and improve their psychological and physical health.

"Volunteering fills a human need," says Dr. Petrous Levounis, who chairs the psychiatry department at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. "Retirees who have led incredibly productive lives may find themselves not contributing to society as much as before."

Better mental health, decreased anxiety and reduced feelings of depression often result from the sense of belonging senior volunteers feel when they share a community with other people, Levounis says. In addition, a regular volunteer schedule adds routine and structure to a daily life that may have loosened when work stopped.

Michelle Carlson researches the physical benefits for senior citizens who volunteer. The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health professor helped found Experience Corps, an enterprise that trains and places retirees as tutors in public schools. Research shows participants "were showing improvement in cognitive function and executive decision-making," Carlson says. Volunteers receive testing before and after training and tutoring.

Experience Corps, now run by AARP, has chapters in Baltimore and Philadelphia, although none in Lancaster.

Lancaster County does, however, offer several volunteer spots for senior citizens, from Mozart to home runs to helping city visitors. There's one virtual option and even a paid position that will get your blood pumping on a roller coaster or flying trapeze. Also, most places provide seated positions to people with mobility issues.

## Bond with Boomer

**Pennsylvania SPCA of Lancaster**  
848 Prince St.  
717-917-6979

The dogs want to leave. Tails wagging, they wait for their volunteer humans, eager for a few hours out on the town. A cocker spaniel may go out to brunch, a poodle may take a stroll inside HomeGoods, while a Chihuahua may dash to a dog park.

"This is such a great way for the community to get involved," says Lindsay High, community relations manager and site director for the Pennsylvania SPCA of Lancaster.

This much-needed personal contact puts animals waiting for homes at ease with humans. For people who don't want to gallivant? Just come on in and tickle a kitten or two. "It's incredibly important," High says. "We have a very limited staff."

The shelter divides dogs into colors green, yellow and red. Volunteers start out walking green dogs, who have the easiest temperament, High says. Yellow dogs take more experienced participants, while dogs in the red zone work only with paid staff. After more experience, volunteers also start training dogs to obey simple commands. Playing with kittens also is encouraged.

Another part of the process involves Petventures, a commitment that combines adventures and pets. Volunteers "check-out" an animal to give a prospective pet time with people. "Our volunteers are incredibly important," High notes.

Fill out a volunteer form online at [pspca.org](http://pspca.org)

## Keep kitties comfortable

**Pet Pantry of Lancaster County**  
26 Millersville Road  
717-983-8878

Pet Pantry not only shelters animals but supports more than 250 families who can't afford vet bills, food, medicine or toys.

"We have quite a few volunteers who help us with cleaning and feeding the cats," says Nacomi Bissonnette, the shelter's rescue manager.

In addition to working with animals, the shelter offers other jobs, such as washing and folding laundry, answering the phone, helping sort donations and volunteering at off-site adoption events.

Participants may also foster animals, and Pet Pantry offers volunteer information sessions.

[petpantrylc.org/volunteer-foster-information](http://petpantrylc.org/volunteer-foster-information)



FILE PHOTOS

No matter their interests, seniors have a multitude of volunteer opportunities in Lancaster County, including Lancaster Barnstormers games, kitten cuddling, Fulton Theatre performances and Dutch Wonderland (where you can actually get paid).

## Root for the home team

**Lancaster Barnstormers Clipper Magazine Stadium**  
605 N. Prince St.  
717-509-4487

Smell the popcorn, watch the hits and listen to the play-by-play announcers. Senior citizens may volunteer at Barnstormer games.

"Baseball is part of the older generation," says Melissa Tucker, the team's vice president of corporate partnerships.

The team this season began a partnership with The United Way. Four volunteers per game can assist patrons in sky boxes, greet people at the front gate, work on the concourse, supervise the kids' park or perform several other duties. The Barnstormers then donate a set amount of "salary" to The United Way to use on other organizations it supports.

"Helping out nonprofits and helping out Lancaster County is part of who we are," Tucker explains. "This is a great volunteer program."

[lancasterbarnstormers.com](http://lancasterbarnstormers.com)

## Act 1, Scene 3

**The Fulton Theatre**  
12 N. Prince St.  
717-394-7133

Volunteering at a theater spreads joy, says Andrea Wright, front-of-house manager for the Fulton Theatre.

"The purpose of a theater is to tell a story," Wright says, "but we're bringing happiness and helping people."

Senior citizens can be part of that, she says. Between 20 and 25 volunteers help with each performance. Ambassadors sell snacks and water, guide patrons to seats and take tickets, among other duties. Participants in the theater's Angel Program help with actors coming to Lancaster to perform. Angels may take actors grocery shopping, out to dinner or

pick them up from the train station. Other participants may work in the Fulton office helping with mailings.

The theater usually counts on a volunteer list of about 1,000 people, but numbers are down between 600 and 700.

"If someone has an excitement, a passion to be here, we can make it happen," Wright says.

[thefulton.org](http://thefulton.org)

## Answer questions about Lancaster

**The Lancaster City Visitor Center**  
38 Penn Square  
717-517-5718

The Lancaster City Visitor Center, housed inside a city hall building from the 1790s, soon will begin a renovation that will enlarge its second-floor gallery to display addi-

**VOLUNTEER**, page 8



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## Sleep: What to know

Continued from 6

### Tossing and turning

Another common sleep issue is insomnia, which occurs when you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. It is more common in older adults, women, people under stress, and people with certain medical or mental health problems.

There are two types of insomnia, based on frequency and duration, according to AASM: short-term insomnia, which lasts for up to three months, and chronic insomnia, which occurs at least three times per week and lasts for at least three months.

This sleep disorder can have many causes, including restless legs syndrome, with its uncomfortable burning or itching sensation leading to leg movements; depression; chronic pain from another medical problem like arthritis or cancer; and "monkey brain," where a person just can't stop thinking and rethinking about things.

Restless sleepers can make behavioral changes to ease the problem, such as avoiding caffeine at least six hours before bedtime; turning off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bed, as many devices emit blue wavelengths that mimic daylight and can prolong wakefulness; and making the bedroom a cozy, dark, cool environment, which facilitates slumber when it's time to hit the sack.

If people are concerned about their sleep habits, Dougherty says they should "seek help with a professional and don't self-

medicate." Even over-the-counter sleep aids have higher side effects and more drug-to-drug interaction in older people, she says.

A truism in geriatric medicine is that improvement is often found in taking away pills, rather than adding more.

"There may be variability in your sleep patterns from night to night, but if it persists for a few months, seek professional help," Dougherty says.

After keeping a sleep diary for several weeks, noting times to bed and to rise, fitfulness of sleep, times up in the night, alcohol and caffeine consumed, and exercise, bring it with you to meet with an AASM-accredited doctor.

At Pulmonary Associates of Lancaster, Dougherty says they talk to the patient and their sleep partner about what kind of sleeping problems they are having.

The patient may benefit from a diagnostic sleep study. A home study can show whether or not the patient has sleep apnea or not. It is around \$500, but garners less detailed information than an overnight, in-clinic study. A sleep study performed at the clinic will provide detailed information about a patient's sleep stages, brain wave activity and limb movement. A board-certified sleep specialist will interpret the results to recommend an effective course of treatment. That test is around \$3,500.

There are many types of sleep disorders, and if it is impacting your waking life, it may be time to root out the problem.

Still undecided? Just sleep on it.

## Colligo

Continued from 5

"Hiring and retaining good employees is an immediate priority to tackle," says Lee Stickler, president and CEO of Cornwall Manor. "Our senior living residents need service on a 24/7 basis. Working together to find a positive strategy to address the issue will be beneficial to all of us."

Kevin DeAcosta, president and CEO of The Highlands at Wyomissing, agrees that workforce shortages are affecting the service-based organizations, which need "hands-on people for hands-on care." Working with The Colligo Group, he says, has been an "exhilarating, powerful experience."

The partners have a two-year management contract with ForgeWorks. While the fee wasn't disclosed, all agreed it was nominal and a modest budget investment for the anticipated return.

ForgeWorks staff facilitate monthly partner meetings. Along with Jeffrey, primary staff includes Lois Dostalik, founder and former chief strategist for E4 Strategic Consultancy, Lancaster; Holly Rosini, former LeadingAgePA chief operating officer/executive vice-president; and Allison Cuthie, former Garden Spot Village associate director of development.

All the partners believe the group model and its focus on communication, building relationships and creating a forum for problem-solving will be a new direction for senior living organizations in the future.

"Working together with like-minded people to tackle a lot of challenges can help all of our organizations better serve our residents and really make a difference," Swartley says.

## Volunteer: 8 local opportunities

Continued from 7

tional art. "We're going to need more people," says Pat Sherman, the center's administrative assistant.

Volunteers also hand out maps and recommendations, and gather people for either an African American Heritage Walking Tour or the Historic Lancaster Walking Tour.

[visitlanastercity.com](http://visitlanastercity.com)

### The magic flute

#### Lancaster Symphony Orchestra

48 N. Christian St.  
717-291-6440

Listen to soothing flute melodies plus every other instrument featured in The Lancaster Symphony Orchestra as a senior volunteer.

"We have lots of different opportunities," says Melinda Myers, orchestra marketing and program director.

About 40 participants cover as many as four performances in each of the seven concert weekends.

"We are in great need for ushers for all our performances," she says.

Jobs include passing out program booklets, taking tickets, directing patrons to restrooms and helping customers retrieve tickets. The organization offers an orientation before a volunteer's first shift. Performances occur at First Presbyterian Church on Orange Street, and volunteers wear white shirts and black skirts or pants.

In addition, Myers needs about 45 volunteers during the mornings May 17-

18, 2022, for two children's concerts at JP McCaskey High School and the Lancaster Bible College on Eden Road.

Email: [mmyers@lancastersymphony.org](mailto:mmyers@lancastersymphony.org)

### Virtual story time

#### ZTutors United Way of Lancaster County

1910 Harrington Drive  
717-394-071

Spend 30 minutes a week reading with an elementary school student over Zoom. ZTutors began a year ago. The program is run by the United Way, the Lancaster Downtowners and Lancaster Partnership for Learning Equity, which includes the Steinman Foundation.

"It really came out of COVID," explains United Way's Moses.

Older residents lost a place to volunteer when schools shut down during the pandemic. So ZTutors reached out to computer-literate retirees and has trained about 30 volunteers who read with students at Fulton and King elementary schools in the School District of Lancaster.

The program will remain virtual, even though most students returned to the classroom, says Melissa Ressler, executive director for the Lancaster Downtowners. Teachers, it seems, want the Zoom tutors to keep going, in addition to any classroom volunteers.

"This program has a lot of potential," Ressler says.

[uwlan.org](http://uwlan.org)

### The one that pays you

#### Dutch Wonderland

2249 Lincoln Hwy E.  
866-386-2839

Jeffrey Eisenberg wishes he could let seniors volunteer, but the marketing director for Dutch Wonderland Pennsylvania insists he has to pay them \$12.50 an hour plus perks. Those include free park tickets, discounted food and merchandise, and free entrance at participating venues, such as Hersheypark.

"If you're having a bad day, seeing a little kid smiling with his family may be a really good opportunity," Eisenberg says. "If someone is looking to one or two days a week to give back, we are happy to do that. We are flexible and open to all individuals."

Workers may select their areas, such as air-conditioned or indoor spaces, and whether they need to be seated or can stand. Positions range from operating rides or midway games to selling food or working inside a gift shop. Other jobs cover janitorial services.

"We give team members a choice," Eisenberg says.

The park, which currently has about 600 workers, always is hiring.

Hiring now focuses on Happy Hauntings in the fall and Dutch Winter Wonderland during the holiday season.

[dutchwonderland.com/employment](http://dutchwonderland.com/employment)

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