

PROJECT LONGEVITY/COMMUNITY CARE



JANUARY 26, 2024

Approximately 80 people were in attendance at the Public Safety Building this past Friday as presentations were made resulting from the efforts of the Project Longevity/Community Care Committee. The Committee's goal is to make islanders aware of all the resources that are available to them and to assist them to remain on Bald Head Island as long as they wish.

Gayle Sanders, who initiated the Committee, welcomed everyone and shared her vision for this project. She introduced the organizations who are able to provide resources and the islanders who have volunteered their time, expertise and resources to make it possible for Islanders to live and enjoy life on Bald Head Island as long as possible, utilizing the Brunswick County resources that are available as a result of our tax dollars.



Valuable information was shared by the following organizations:



Ilene Evans, the **Director of Marketing and Community Relations** of Doshier Memorial Hospital described for attendees the 93 years of history and the resources offered in Brunswick County. What Doshier has accomplished and their plans for the future are remarkable. Her description of everything from a helipad to the high technical equipment which is available gave assurance to those in attendance that living on an island is not detrimental to their health. In fact, in some instances, better and more timely care is provided on Bald Head Island than in larger cities.



Casey Poplaski, **Brunswick County Senior Resources** and Courtney Bledsoe are a team who provide, among other things, Meals on Wheels, nutritional information, classes on site and on line, promoting the wellbeing of all seniors in the county, and especially family caregivers' support. What is available to residents of Brunswick County is available to residents of Bald Head Island. They volunteered to provide interested individuals with a listing of available services and resources.



Working as **Off Island BHI Liaison for Brunswick County Services**, Islander Grace Valentine has stepped forward to coordinate and be a resource for Islanders wanting to connect to the correct organization for care when needed. Caring for people is what brings her the most joy. Residents may contact her at: gvalentine.bhicare@gmail.com.



On Island resident, Joan Maggio is **Director PL/Community Care Island Volunteer Division.**

Approximately 200 Islanders have already volunteered to provide assistance to Islanders who may need, for example, meal preparation, mail/package pick up, medicine pick up, transportation to doctors and appointments, as well as pet care. She shared that while many have volunteered, few may want to request these services. She stressed that this is the goal - to

help each other. Joan may be reached at:

joanmaggio.bhicare@gmail.com.



Misty York is the owner of **We Help at Home**, a private health care company that provides services such as home cleaning, reassurance to family caregivers to know their loved one is taken care of when they are away or merely a respite break. Her company provides many more services to assist in the care and needs when accidents or illness occur.



Jason Clamme, from **Lower Cape Fear Life Care**, challenged us to ask the question “What do I want or not want at the end of my life?”. Hospice is much more than an end-of-life service. Palliative care, Alzheimer’s, and memory partners, comfort, quality, holistic approach for pain, grief and bereavement counseling are many of the benefits that most are unaware of. He encouraged those in attendance to educate themselves.



Chris McCall, **Bald Head Island Village Manager**, noted that we have come a long way and shared how the Island is entering a new era in public safety. Our Public Safety Officers are trained to both protect and to administer medical emergency care. The Village is addressing the question “What do we need to do to live longer and better on BHI?” The Committee is grateful the Village’s support of its efforts.



Joshua Gibson, newly appointed **Public Safety Chief**, said that we now have 17 paramedics on staff, 1 advanced EMT, who’s completing his paramedic certification and 4 EMT-basic level staff. His department currently maintains 4 paramedics on each of the 4 shifts operating in the department, a rather large number considering the size of our island and its population. The Department has at its disposal equipment for water rescue, creek rescue, and medical attention. He reviewed a new program Community Connect; an electronic program that is to be instituted March 31. The program will be

used in conjunction with the Department’s current Vial of Life program. He stressed that what is input voluntarily into the system by residents is completely private. Each resident is able to control the information entered, and it can never be used except in response to an emergency call. All in attendance were also encouraged to have a Knox Box, the system which permits Public Safety officers to enter and access homes in the event of an emergency.

Anne and Chip Berry designed and set up a Health Fair where all were invited to talk with these representative and educate ourselves. With these resources we are BUILDING COMMUNITY, CREATING SOLUTIONS AND



SECURING SERVICES for our Future.

