

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Karen Wright
Executive Director

This April was hands-down the busiest month in HomePorts' history. We started off with our first-ever Community Health Fair on April 2, which included an aging plan workshop. The event was very successful and we are eternally grateful to the volunteers, sponsors, exhibitors and advertisers who made it all possible. If you did not attend this year's event, be sure to mark your calendar for next year.

Our next event was a fund-raising dinner at Luisa's on April 20. We had two seatings with 50 people at the 5:30, and 30 people at the 7:00. The food was fabulous and everyone had a really good time *and* we raised some much-needed funds. Again, watch for more of these events. The next day, April 21, we hosted a fabulous talk by Dr. Cumiskey on the topic of joint replacements. More than a dozen people attended to hear the latest information on knee, hip and shoulder replacements and to have their questions answered.

Our membership has leveled out at about 100 members, but our requests for services, namely transportation, continue to be on the rise. This puts somewhat of a strain on our volunteers, especially in Rock Hall. We continue to recruit new volunteers. If you or someone you know would be interested in assisting Kent County seniors to get to their doctor's or physical therapy appointments, please contact me.

The Board has approved a new, tax-deductible sustaining membership level. It is designed for those "not ready for HomePorts membership" people who want to support our efforts, but don't need our services. Current members will receive information with their renewals and have a choice of full service or sustaining membership. The cost is the same, \$350 per year. If you have questions or wish to transfer your membership sooner, give me a call or drop me an email.

Finally, it is with great sadness that I announce Shannon's resignation. She has been a rock and my right hand for nearly four years and is moving on to new and different adventures. We are working diligently to find a suitable replacement and will let you know as soon as someone is found. At that point we will have a "Hail and Farewell" to bid a proper adieu to Shannon and welcome our new Volunteer Coordinator. I very much hope this will occur in May!

What's Up?

May 21
HomePorts Member Luncheon at the Fish Whistle
12:30 pm

amazon.com

Come to HomePorts for your connection to Amazon!
A reminder that when anyone accesses the Amazon website through www.homeports.org ... a portion of the Amazon profit from purchases is donated to HomePorts. Tell others!

Blogging

Interested in sharing some thoughts on aging? On the Kent County community? HomePorts will soon have its own blog. Send ideas to info@homeports.org. And in the meantime check out marylandagingincommunity.org. This website features articles by some of our members. Contributions are welcome! Send to Carol Cober at ccober4@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR - A GREAT SUCCESS!

The Health Fair sponsored by HomePorts on April 2 was a great success. Comments from participants given on evaluation forms were almost unanimously positive. Of the possible ratings of Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor, ... 68% marked “Excellent”, and the remainder marked “Good”.



Health screenings were popular, and an enormous amount of current, useful information was on-hand. In response to the question, “Do you plan any changes in the things you normally do as a result of anything you learned or participated in at the Health Fair?” - 67% said “Yes”. And 100% of the 41 exhibitors polled said they would return.



The Board has already decided to hold a similar event in 2016. A larger attendance from the community is needed - accomplishing this is a challenge. A committee will consider changing the location and/or changing the day of the week and/or time of the year.



HOMEPORTS MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

What do you think of HomePorts?

44 members replied to our recent survey ... 30 women and 14 men.
Ages ranged from 66 to 94, with the average age of 79.5.

And the results are in:	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Very Satisfied
62% used our recommended providers	100%	0	0
41% used HomePorts volunteers	83%	17%	0
56% went to one or more monthly luncheons	64%	36%	0
38% have had a home safety inspection	70%	30%	0

100% say inquiries are handled professionally.

97% reported “Extremely Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with their HomePorts membership.

Here are a few of your comments:

- *Handyman is always prompt, competent and reasonable*
- *I don't know where I would be without the help from HomePorts*
- *The driver was on time, very sociable, very good driver and didn't mind that the screening took more time than it was supposed to take*
- *Very good information given to us!*
- *We support HomePorts as an idea whose time has come! Happy to have it there when we need it.*
- *Met some nice men! (wish I were younger!)*

CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

Effective June 1, HomePorts membership categories will be revised. This new policy reflects the fact that some members do not now require specific services and would benefit from a tax deduction as a charitable donation for the annual fee. Many other Villages have adopted a similar structure. Membership definitions are given below. Members can change their status from “Sustaining” to “Full Service” at any time. The present fee for each type is \$350/year.

SUSTAINING MEMBER

- Fully tax-deductible, as a donation to a 501(c)3 non-profit organization
- Receipt of bi-monthly newsletter
- Personal invitation to all educational and social programs
- For those in the “not ready yet” category, the confidence that they are helping to sustain an organization, part of an innovative self-help movement, that will continue to be operating when they are ready
- The satisfaction of helping to sustain a community service to help friends and neighbors continue to live independently

FULL SERVICE MEMBER

- Initial evaluation of needs
- Support from a volunteer “mentor”, if requested
- Up to 5 rides per month within Kent County, during normal weekday hours, driven by vetted volunteer drivers
- Referrals to HomePorts list of approved, thoroughly screened vendors, with discounts from those vendors offering discounts
- Home Safety Education session
- Receipt of bi-monthly newsletter
- Personal invitation to all educational & social programs
- Peace of mind for the member and family, knowing that help to maintain independence is just a phone call away

WE’LL MISS YOU SHANNON!



Our Volunteer Coordinator, Shannon Smulow, is leaving HomePorts to pursue her interest and training in art. That very pleasant voice on the phone will soon be replaced. We are so grateful for Shannon’s dedicated assistance to members and her consistent “can-do” approach to all tasks. Good luck, Shannon!

KENT COUNTY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The local Housing Improvement Program allows eligible homeowners a maximum of \$25,000 for health or safety repairs, including roof replacement, electrical and plumbing repairs. Annual income limits are approximately \$41,000 for a single person. A lien is placed on the property for 5-15 years. This program has been in existence for 20 years, with over 200 households assisted. Grants provided by the state and federal governments. Eligible seniors are urged to consider this program, since funds are now available and need to be used. Call Bill Kerbin, Kent County Department of Housing, Planning and Zoning, 410-778-7426.

VISITING LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS

Two of our HomePorts members are trained Ombudsmen, volunteers who visit nursing homes, investigate complaints, and advocate for residents’ rights. Kent County has three skilled nursing long-term care facilities and seven licensed assisted living facilities. If you know of someone who would appreciate a visit, please call Louise O’Brien, 410-810-2726 or email lobrien6@verizon.net. Complaints may be reported by residents, relatives, friends, or facility staff. They may remain anonymous and can be directed to Pat Carney, Upper Shore Aging, 410-778-6000.

HOMEPORTS FOR ME By Member, Jack M.

If you don't learn to laugh at trouble, you won't have anything to laugh at when you're old. Will Rogers

One of the reasons we moved from a waterfront home to Byford Drive was the 6 acres of grass I was mowing every week in the summer and the snow I had to shovel in the winter. Our new residence has ¼ acre and a carport, so I gave the big tractor to our son and bought a small JD that worked fine until four year years ago.

Mowing grass was something I enjoyed so I was looking forward to Spring. Had started the tractor several times so was confident it would be OK ... but was unprepared for what happened next. My legs could not lift me up to the seat - arthritis! I knew I had it, knees, hips, back, neck, but had not done anything that put all of my weight on one leg like that. Yes, I actually laughed at myself, and wondered what to do next?

Didn't take long to think about calling HomePorts, and soon had a name to call. That young man now takes complete charge of our 'outside' including servicing, buying gas for the

tractor, mowing, trimming, and mulching when he thinks it is needed, and seems to take pride in the appearance of the place.

When my wife was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and I was forced to deal with the government, insurance, medical entities, etc., I read about Geriatric Case Managers and called HomePorts. I asked if they knew about ` , and totally unexpectedly, the reply was, "Yes, we vetted one last week."

I have no idea how many times that person - who is a nurse - has professionally and easily handled situations that Will Rogers was talking about, but would have been so frustrating for me. She knows who to talk to, the questions to ask, and how to follow up, if necessary. I have had several other occasions to call, and all experiences make me feel comfortable that HomePorts will assist me in staying in our home as long as possible.

HOME SAFETY INSPECTIONS - MORE FEEDBACK!

We continue to receive positive feedback from members participating in HomePorts free home safety check ... *"John Leek did a complete home safety inspection and recommended some hand grips should be installed in one area. This is a great service that HomePorts sponsors and I wish that more members would take advantage of it. He is congenial, cooperative and efficient!"* Call for an appointment.

DOC IN THE BOX ... by Wayne Benjamin, M.D. Send your question to info@homeports.org



Q. I'm so confused about what I should eat and what I shouldn't eat. I'm told to stay away from foods high in cholesterol, and then I learn that even if I become a vegetarian I will not reduce my cholesterol by more than 20%. I'm told to avoid salt, but then I think that some salt is necessary.

A. We can find benefits in most everything, to a degree. The bad can outweigh the good. Want to raise your good cholesterol (HDL cholesterol)? Drink more alcohol. Initially it was said it had to be red wine. Beer, wine (red or white), or hard liquor will work equally well. One serving of alcohol raises the good cholesterol. Two servings raises it more. But we all know that too much is worse than not at all, when it comes to alcohol, for sure. We can all relate to similar stories whether it be about cholesterol, fats, chocolate, sugar, sugar substitutes, caffeine, or alcohol. How about the old philosophy "everything in moderation". Exercise in

moderation. Experts say we should all be doing at least 150 minutes per week. The only thing I know that has no positive attributes is tobacco. Smokoing is not healthy. The less you smoke, and sooner you quit, the better!