

## MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Karen Wright  
Executive Director*

A new year, a new leaf...

Like most non-profit organizations, HomePorts has struggled during the pandemic. We are keeping our fingers crossed that the worst is behind us and that things will improve in 2022.

HomePorts held its annual meeting on Tuesday, January 25, with a presentation by Tom Eager, Acting President, summarizing our 2021 activities. If you would like to review the Annual Report, it is available on our website at <http://www.homeports.org>. Please don't hesitate to call me if you would like to have a hard copy mailed to you (443-480-0940).

We also elected five new members to the board: Gale Drenning, a registered nurse case manager for Shore Regional Health in Chestertown; Susan Eddy, a retired newspaper reporter and researcher; Lea Hunley, a former Kent County Public Schools employee and active Lions Club member; Jeanette Jeffrey, Health Educator with the Aging and Wellness Center of Excellence at Shore Regional Health in Chestertown; and Stewart Seitz, retired health care manager and past President of the Kent County Chamber of Commerce.

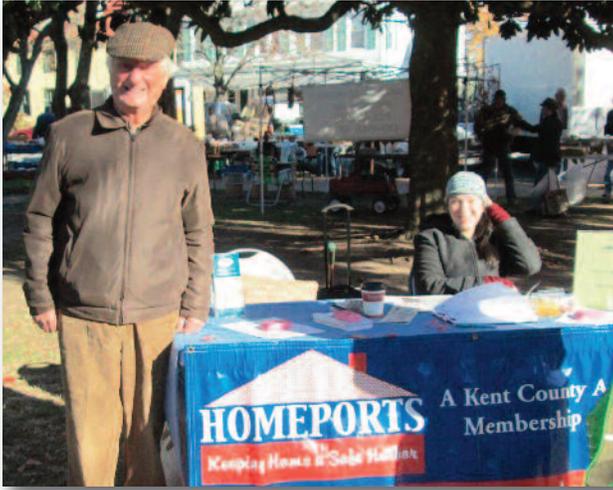


*New HomePorts Board members: Susan Eddy, Gale Drenning, and Stewart Seitz, all of Chestertown, and Lea Hunley of Coleman.  
Not shown is Jeanette Jeffrey of Chestertown.*

Immediately following the Annual Meeting, a general board meeting was held. The following officers were elected: Tom Eager, President; Jeanette Jeffrey, Vice President; Susan Eddy, Secretary; and Stewart Seitz, Treasurer. Thanks to all our board members for their willingness to serve.

A big topic of discussion at this board meeting was the question of how we can best serve the aging community in Kent County. The board plans to meet weekly over the next two months to brainstorm and provide additional directions for the organization. If you have suggestions or comments, please do not hesitate to email me at [karen@homeports.org](mailto:karen@homeports.org) or call me at 443-480-0940.

So we start the new year with great hopes. Stay healthy everyone!



HomePorts display at the first annual Kent County Volunteer Fair.

## VOLUNTEERS ... WE APPRECIATE YOU!

Sometimes we may fail to acknowledge the impact of volunteer service and the power of volunteers to come together to tackle tough challenges, and build stronger, more resilient communities.

HomePorts participated in the first annual Kent County Volunteer Fair held on September 11 in conjunction with the Chestertown Farmers Market. Thirty-seven non-profit organizations displayed opportunities for those wanting to volunteer, and hundreds signed up. The variety of offerings was impressive: working with disadvantaged children, sick people, the disabled, dogs and cats, houses

needing mending, houses needing building, music, adult education, performing arts, visual art, literature, history, human rights, gardens, emergency response, environmental conservation.

There is always a need for volunteers. And never enough recognition, but unending appreciation, for those who volunteer with HomePorts.



UM Shore Medical Center at Chestertown

## DEVELOPMENTS IN HOSPITAL CARE

Dr. Memo Diriker of Salisbury University warns ...

*"We used to get sick and die. Now we get sick and live, get sick and live, get sick and live. The aging of the Eastern Shore is reaching truly crisis proportions."*

2021 marked a tremendous milestone in health care for seniors in greater Kent & Queen Anne's Counties. UM Shore Regional Health officially designated the UM Shore Medical Center in Chestertown as a Maryland Rural Hospital. As an anchor point for hospital-based care, it would have up to 25 inpatient beds and continue to offer services like emergency care, inpatient and outpatient

surgery, physical therapy and more. At the same time, it would bring more aging and wellness services to Kent County, making access to care even easier. HomePorts members have been leaders in the "Save The Hospital" organization and are now on the Community Advisory Council. HomePorts has strongly advocated for the University of Maryland Medical System to retain and strengthen its Chestertown facility and to ensure that it is a well-designed, well-staffed, and well-supported institution that will provide first class medical, surgical, and wellness services.

## THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT WE'RE LIVING LONGER!

Yes, we're living longer. In the U.S. the population age 65 and older numbered 54.1 million in 2019 (the most recent year for which data are available). They represented 16% of the population, more than one in every seven Americans. And ... the senior population will soon double. The Population Reference Bureau projects that in 2060 nearly 100 million Americans will be 65 or older. This reflects the senior population more than doubling over 40 years. Here are a few more notable statistics ...

- **The 85 and older population is projected to double**

The 85 and older population is projected to more than double from 6.6 million in 2019 to 14.4 million in 2040, a 118% increase. *(as published by PRB)*

- **More than 90,000 Americans are age 100 or older**

According to the US Census Bureau, the number of centenarians in the U.S. grew from over 53,000 in 2010 to over 90,000 in 2020. This figure is expected to increase to 589,000 by 2060. *(as published by Statista)*

For every child in school here in Kent County, there are 3.9 people over the age of 65. And the group of those 85 and over is the fastest growing segment. Seniors bring retiree income to the county, volunteer in unprecedented numbers, and bring a veritable wealth of experience while setting examples for the younger generation. Kent County is a beckoning destination for retirees for many reasons.

A longer life brings with it opportunities, not only for older people and their families, but also for societies as a whole. Additional years provide the chance to pursue new activities such as further education, a new career or a long-neglected passion. Older people also contribute in many ways to their families and communities. Yet the extent of these opportunities and contributions depends heavily on one factor - and that's good health. One of the best ways to stay healthy is to remain active. Consider doing simple exercises in your home, or reach out to one of the several exercise facilities available in Kent County.



### Here are a few additional healthy habits for seniors:

1. eat healthy - drink plenty of water
2. focus on prevention - get annual screenings
3. get information on medication management
4. get plenty of sleep
5. remember mental health & stimulate your mind
6. screen for vision changes
7. socialize
8. take advantage of free physicals
9. visit your dentist every six months
10. get annual vaccinations

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## LOOKING AHEAD

HomePorts is planning to reinstate many of our social and educational events for members and for the public. Once the threat of COVID subsides and it is safe to gather, we will eagerly kick off this agenda, with the goal of strengthening the organization in order to foster healthy aging in Kent County.