NEWS&VIEWS

March 2025 Issue

WELCOME

from Board President John Murphy, MD

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our new newsletter and to HomePorts in 2025. I'm John Murphy, the newly elected president of HomePorts, having served on the board for two years. As a retired physician, I have a lifelong commitment to improving the health of individuals and populations. My wife Deborah and I moved to Chestertown 3 years ago. I look forward to working with all of you as we move HomePorts forward.

Please review the announcements section for news on upcoming events. In particular, I'd like to invite you to hear Mr. Zack Royston, Executive Director of Shore Regional Medical Center at Chestertown, discuss Rural Healthcare Transformation in Kent County and Dr. Mark Lachs' upcoming presentation at the Garfield Theater: The Changing Face of Aging – High Tech Meets High Touch.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the HomePorts newsletter and find it useful as well as entertaining. We encourage you to provide feedback on what you like, how we can improve it and any topics you'd like to see covered. In closing I want to extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to our members, volunteers, board members, donors and staff who make HomePorts possible.

John J. Murphy, MD,
President, HomePorts Board of Directors

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to identify, monitor and ensure access to a wide range of services that help members to remain safe and live comfortably in their own homes. HomePorts was founded in 2008 by a group of Kent County residents who were concerned about the availability of services for the aging population in our area.

MEET OUR LEADERS

Executive Director – Karen Carr

Board of Directors:
John Murphy, President
Gale Drenning, Vice President
Christine (Christy) Walker, Treasurer
Michael S. Connor, Secretary

Rachel Carter
Denise Groppe
Susan Eddy
Lee Hunley
CB Lovell
Missy Yachup

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Hello! I'd like to introduce myself to those of you that I've not yet met. I'm Missy Yachup and I'm the new Volunteer Coordinator. I've recently retired from almost 30 years with Marriott and am excited about my new role with HomePorts!

Some of you may have heard from me as I'm updating our files. If you are a driver, HomePorts is required to have up-to-date copies of your driver's license and car insurance on file. When they expire, I'll be asking you to take a photo of the new documents and text or email to me. I appreciate your patience while we keep our records in order.

It has been great to meet so many of our volunteers at the HomePorts monthly Dutch treat lunches! We'd love to see more of our members attend the lunches and other events as well. We invite our members to request a ride to future events. It's a fun way for volunteers and members to get to know each other better in a relaxed environment. Hope to see you there soon!

Last, and definitely not least, a big shoutout to our Newsletter Committee lead Denise Groppe and her team of volunteers for taking on this important communication tool for our members, volunteers and donors! And thank you to ALL our volunteers who make such a difference in our community.

Please reach out to me anytime, with any questions or ideas.

Missy Yachup,
HomePorts Board Member,
Volunteer Coordinator

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Hello! Things are heating up—not just outside, but in the membership department at HomePorts as well! HomePorts welcomed three new members in February, and we are eager to keep this momentum going.

A short story I wanted to share: We have a member, Florence. Florence is 97 years young and has become so much more than just a "neighbor-to-neighbor" visit for one of our volunteers. HomePorts volunteer Carol has been visiting Florence for a few months and, recently, she shared something very powerful with me—Florence is no longer just a weekly visit on her calendar; she's a true friend.

This HomePorts member/volunteer relationship is a testament to the deep connections that can form through HomePorts, benefiting both the member and the volunteer. Carol has expressed how uplifting her visits with Florence are, and at a recent Book Club meeting, Florence shared how wonderful it is to have new friends to talk to and spend time with. She couldn't ask for a better pal than Carol!

It's a true win-win—proof that HomePorts isn't just about services; it's about meaningful friendships that enrich lives at every age.

Looking forward to catching up soon,

Gale Drenning, Vice President,
HomePorts Board of Directors

Why HomePorts? Why Now?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 28.6% of Kent County residents are 65 or older. For every child in school in Kent County there are 3.9 people over 65. The cohort of those 85 and over is the fastest growing segment of our population in Kent County. And according to AARP, remaining at home as long as possible is a goal for 89% of people 50 and older. The longer we live, the stronger that desire becomes: 95% of seniors 75 and older want to stay put.

Despite these statistics, funding for public services for seniors in Kent County has been a challenge for some time, in large part due to budget reductions and increasing demands. Recognizing this situation in Kent County, a group of local seniors researched the "Village" concept for over two years prior to founding HomePorts in 2008 as a non-profit membership organization for those 55 and older. The goal was and still is to help members continue to live independently and to reduce the demands on the healthcare and social services systems. The organization is now able to offer financial aid to those unable to afford membership fees.

> "Remaining at home as long as possible is a goal for 89% of people 50+ and 95% of seniors 75+."
>
> - AARP

Over the years members have benefited from a multitude of services, educational programs, and social activities. By far the most requested service offered is rides provided by a cadre of volunteers. Of necessity, at the onset of the pandemic, HomePorts severely reduced its services; however, it is now well on its way to returning to a robust community with expanded programs and opportunities. The future looks bright!!

The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving. - Oliver Wendell Holmes

Navigating Assisted Living: A Critical Need in Kent County

As we age, staying safe and supported becomes essential. Assisted living offers a lifeline for those who need help with daily activities, medication management, meals, and health monitoring, while still maintaining dignity and independence. Yet, finding the right care can be overwhelming—especially in Kent County, where options are limited.

In our community:

- **Rock Hall:** Small group homes like Golden Rule, Rock of Ages, and Whispering Pines provide compassionate care for up to 10 residents.
- **Worton:** My Abode primarily serves veterans, offering a supportive environment.
- **Chestertown:** Despite being home to the largest senior population in the county, there are no assisted living facilities beyond Heron Point Continuing Care Retirement Community.

The Kent County Commission on Aging recognizes the growing need for more assisted living options, particularly in Chestertown. Sadly, Medicare does not

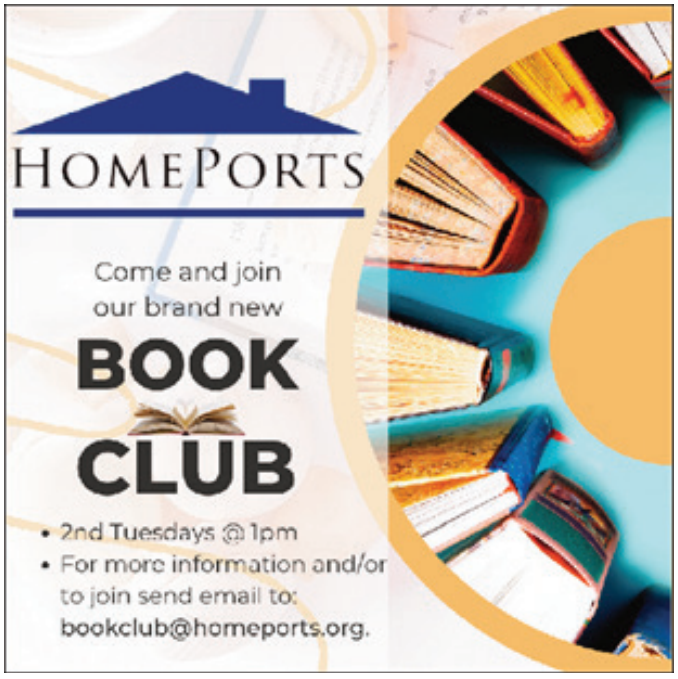
cover assisted living costs, leaving most families to pay privately, rely on long-term care insurance, or apply for Medicaid waivers—though waitlists are long. The average monthly cost is $5,000, making affordability a concern for many seniors and their loved ones.

We understand how difficult these decisions can be. If you or a loved one are considering assisted living, we invite you to an informative and supportive discussion at our next Community Education Series event:

May 15 | 1 PM
Town Hall, Chestertown
Presented by Maresa Henry, Senior Living Advisor, Assisted Living Locators, Inc.

Let's navigate this journey together. For more information, visit www.homeports.org or explore the "Assisted Living in Maryland" guide: http://www.aging.maryland.gov/documents/ALGuide.pdf.

Because every senior deserves to age with dignity, in a place they call home, we know HomePorts can help fill that need and provide families and older adults peace of mind as these decisions become more and more apparent.



It's Time to Join Our Book Club!

We invite you to join The HomePorts Book Club which has been meeting since the summer of '23. We meet on the 2nd floor of the Chestertown Town Hall at 1pm on the second Tuesday of every month. We have approximately 12-14 attendees at each meeting. Book Club membership is $100 annually and entitles members to all HomePorts services offered for the Associate Membership level. (These include Monthly luncheons, our newsletter and other social and aging-at-home services.)

On our book list, you'll find both fiction and non-fiction, old and new, lengthy and slim books. Members nominate books to be considered as a club selection and then we vote. So far this year, we've read and discussed James by Percival Everett and Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan. In March, we discussed Kristen Hannah's book, The Women, a novel based on much research about the experiences and reality of women who served as nurses in Vietnam during the war.

Upcoming Book Discussions
April 8 – Northwoods, Daniel Mason
May 13 – Bel Canto, Ann Patchett
June 10 – Demon of Unrest, Erik Larson

If you have questions, please drop me a note at cblovell20@gmail.com or give a call at 410-615-9570. For the complete Book Club schedule and updates, visit the Book Club page at www.homeports.org.

All are welcome to join us in building a vibrant community of readers here in Kent County as we support the HomePorts goal of enriching the lives of members and prospective members.

CB Lovell, HomePorts Board Member, Convener of HomePorts Book Club

HomePorts Monthly Luncheons

Come join fellow HomePorts members, volunteers, Board members and staff for a monthly Dutch-treat luncheon on the dates and locations listed below. If you plan to join us, please RSVP to our email invitations or call Karen Carr at least 48 hours ahead of time at 443-480-0940.

April 10, Flying Decoy, Rock Hall
May 8, The Kitchen, Chestertown
June 12, Chester River Yacht & Country Club, Chestertown

Check the HomePorts web site and future newsletters for more luncheon dates.

Community Events

A Community Conversation about Rural Healthcare Transformation in Kent County, March 18, 5:30pm

In partnership with the University of Maryland Shore Medical System, HomePorts is pleased to host an open-to-the-public conversation with Zac Royston on the topic of Rural Healthcare Transformation on March 18, 2025, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. The event will be held at the Town Hall in Chestertown, Maryland in the 2nd floor Conference Room. Free refreshments will be served.

Zack is Vice President in charge of the Rural Healthcare Transformation initiative at Shore Medical. He's in a unique position to share updates about the initiative, and to answer questions that community members may have about changes and plans at the hospital in Chestertown.

To register, please RSVP at www.homeports.org.

Getting Your Affairs in Order – A 4-Part Community Education Series, 1:00 - 3:00PM at Town Hall Chestertown

Planning for the future—especially regarding finances, healthcare, and end-of-life decisions—is often overlooked, placing a financial and emotional burden on loved ones. This series will provide essential guidance on organizing personal affairs, so individuals and their families can feel secure and prepared for the years ahead.

Kickoff Session – March 20 (1–3 PM)

The first **20 registered attendees** will receive a **FREE Nokbox™ file organization system** to help streamline planning. The session will also feature a special presentation:

"Future-Proofing Your Home for Safe Aging in Place"

Presented by John Hanley, Home Repair & Renovation Expert

With 35 years as a mechanical engineer at Union Carbide and extensive experience in home

renovation, John specializes in modifying homes to enhance safety and accessibility for aging residents. He has also conducted home safety checks for HomePorts members and collaborates with local contractors to implement necessary modifications.

Future Sessions will cover a broad range of topics:
April 17- Creating, updating your Will, Durable Power of Attorney, Living Trust & Advance Directives
May 15 - Maresa Henry - Senior Living Advisor, Assisted Living Locators, Inc.
June 19 - Palliative Care vs Hospice, How are they the same or different

Internationally Recognized Speaker coming to the Garfield Theater, April 10, 7:00 - 8:00pm

Upper Shore Aging (USA) is bringing renowned physician, scientist, gerontologist, and dynamic speaker Dr. Mark Lachs, MD, MPH, to the Garfield Center for the Arts on Thursday, April 10th from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Dr. Lachs will discuss "The Changing Face of Aging: High Tech Meets High Touch." This talk is free and open to the public; however, pre-registration is required. Dr. Lachs is widely recognized, having appeared on radio and television and contributed articles on aging for the Wall Street Journal and other publications. His primary area of interest is the disenfranchised elderly. He has published extensively and lectured internationally on topics such as elder abuse and neglect, the epidemiology and neuroscience of financial vulnerability among older adults, and the assessment of decision-making ability as people age. His book, 'Treat Me, Not My Age' (Viking Penguin), was named one of the best consumer health books of 2010."With the increasing number of seniors on the Eastern Shore, we have an obligation to address some of the key issues they face today. We are thrilled that Dr. Lachs is coming to share his research and groundbreaking work," said Kay Brodie, President of the USA Board of Directors. The event is sponsored by The Grayce B. Kerr Fund. To register for the event, please call 410-778-6000.

Upper Shore Aging (USA)
Upper Shore Again has 5 Senior Centers located across three counties. The Amy Lynn Ferris Adult Activity Center is located at 200 Schauber Road, Chestertown. The Adult Activity Center is a community hub for socializing, exercise, nutrition, games, hobbies, health promotion activities, education and Medicare counseling. The Center is open from Mon - Fri 8am - 3pm and the phone number is 410-778-2564. Call the Amy Lynn Ferris Center for information on the many activities offered at the Center or check the USA website uppershoreaging.org.

University of Maryland Medical System Aging & Wellness Symposium, Saturday, April 12, 2025, 8:00am-12:30pm

Wesley Hall at Heron Point, 501 E. Campus Avenue, Chestertown

Continental breakfast and light snacks will be provided. This event is free to the public. Space is limited, please register by calling 667-343-3151 or go online to umshoreregional.org/health-education. Call 667-343-3151 for any questions or assistance with registration.

Save Your Redner's Shopping Receipts!

Did you know that HomePorts can earn money from your Redner's shopping receipts? Rather than throw out your old receipts, please drop them off at the HomePorts office, 2nd floor Town Hall, or mail them to:

HomePorts, Inc., P.O. Box 114, Chestertown, MD 21620.

HomePorts is GROWING! Join our volunteer team!

Below is a list of volunteer positions currently available. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Missy Yachup at myachup@yahoo.com, or visit us at www.homeports.org.

Many ways to get involved!

- Grant writing
- Social media posting
- Newsletter content writer
- Educational and social program planning
- Transportation volunteers – We need a few new Rock Hall Drivers ASAP!!
- Communication outreach to members

Join HomePorts Today!

Do you know someone who could benefit from HomePorts services?

Membership is available to those aged 55 and older who reside in Kent County and the adjacent area in Queen Anne's County within the 21620-zip code. The annual fee of $350 covers individual or household membership. A $100 three-month trial membership is available to new members. And an Associate Membership is available for those wanting all the benefits of membership except for transportation. Based upon funding availability, membership dues assistance is available to those in financial need.

Please encourage your friends and family aged 55+ to become a member! Benefits include:

- Five (5) roundtrip rides per month within Kent County (i.e., doctor's appointments, shopping, hairdresser, etc.)
- Friendly visits
- Grocery Shopping
- Assistance with small home projects
- Educational and social programs
- Monthly Dutch Treat Luncheons
- Monthly Book Club
- Bi-monthly Newsletters

Contact info@homeports.org for more information or call 443-480-0940.

Become a HomePorts Donor!

Your 100% tax deductible donation will go toward supporting the mission of HomePorts with the added benefit of being invited to all social and educational events and receiving our newsletter!

Visit www.homeports.org and navigate to the Donate page. Or use the QR code.

HomePorts, Inc. Town Hall Building 118 N. Cross Street
P.O. Box 114 Chestertown, MD 21620
Karen Carr, Executive Director 443-480-0940
director@homeports.org
www.homeports.org

HomePorts, Inc. is a 501(c)3 charitable organization which serves to build community among Kent County, Maryland residents aged 55 and over. Our mission is to reduce isolation and loneliness through social and educational events and to identify, monitor and ensure access to a wide range of services that help members remain safe and live comfortably in their own homes. For more information, call 443-480-0940 or email director@homeports.org.

HOME PORTS
Keeping home a safe harbor

KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Maryland DEPARTMENT OF AGING

United Way
United Way of Kent County

Mid-Shore Community Foundation