

# THE OPEN LINK



VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

SUMMER 2019 NEWSLETTER

## THE OPEN LINK

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Summer 2019 High School Equivalency classes begin July 9 and run T/Th nights 6:30-9 p.m. Ready to test for your diploma? HiSET testing will be held Sept. 14 at 8:45 a.m. at Penn Street. Call 215.679.4112 for more info.
- The annual Back-to-School Supply Drive is underway. Please call 215.679.4112 for more info.
- Ice Cream Social at The Center on July 19 at 1 p.m. Come enjoy ice cream, toppings and plenty of good company! Call 215.679.6550 for info/ to RSVP.

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## Next Stop for the Food Pantry Without Walls: The Center!

The smiles were big and the thank-yous profuse. But looming largest of all was the sense of relief you could feel in the midst of all the gratitude.

"Oh my goodness, this is fantastic!" said one resident of the bags of groceries being loaded into her cart. "This will help us so much!"

"This is wonderful, it will help the budget a lot.

Thank you!" said resident Carol.

In mid-June The Open Link expanded its Food Pantry Without Walls to a second location, the Villas at Red Hill. The mobile ordering and delivery service, which takes groceries on the road to our neighbors who need them most, made its first stop at the income-eligible senior living com-

plex. Interest in the program there was high, said Property Manager Jane Benning. It mirrored that at the Upper Perkiomen Manor, where the program launched last year.

As is the case with many seniors, mobility and transportation can be barriers for them getting to the pantry. Stigma can also be a problem as many people,

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Nutrition Services Coordinator Brooke Harvey, left, helps deliver groceries to a resident at the Villas at Red Hill on June 12. As a part of the expanded Food Pantry Without Walls program, seniors there are now getting healthy foods delivered!



## Message From the Executive Director



Stuart Bush, Ph.D.

## This is Why We Do What We Do!

Did you know that more than 1,100 children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches in the Upper Perkiomen School District? That is a great program for feeding kids during the school year, but what happens during the summer?

One answer: The Open Link's Summer Lunch Bunch program! For the fourth consecutive year, The Open Link is providing nutritious lunches, Monday – Thursday, between 11:30

and 1 p.m. through August 8 at two locations: Bieler Park, adjacent to Colonial Village in East Greenville, and Treichler's Mill Park, next to Hereford Estates in Hereford.

I had the pleasure of helping at Bieler Park during our first day on Monday, June 17. We were joined by 26 kids for food (turkey and cheese sandwiches, fruit, carrot sticks and popsicles for dessert) a fun craft (pool noodle mon-

sters) and an activity (a rousing game of kickball!)

I was the first to arrive and as I drove up to the park I saw a pre-teen boy running toward my car. As I started to unload the meals, he stood about 15 yards away and waited expectantly. I asked him, "Are you ready for some lunch?" He gave me a big smile and nod of the head and asked, "Can I help?" He joined me in carrying the food and

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## Paint Break with Jin's Art Studio

**Cost:**  
**\$10 pp**



**Thursday, July 25, 2019**

**1-2 p.m.**



**517 Jefferson St.  
East Greenville, PA  
18041**

Join us for a fun painting class where you will create "Intertwined Branches" on a 12x12 canvas with Instructor Georgeanne Zvodar of Jin's Art Studio of Pottstown.

RSVP to Evet Hexamer at 215.679.6550 or [programmanager@theopenlink.org](mailto:programmanager@theopenlink.org).

# Super Sponsor Spotlight: QNB Bank

A community institution is getting some new digs!

QNB, which turns 142 this year, will be getting a brand new home for its Pottstown Avenue, Pennsburg branch in the next year. It's exciting news, said Bank President and CEO Dave Freeman.

"We love that location and it's done very well for us. It grows every year a significant amount, every month, every day. The way that branch was built was a little dysfunctional, so now we have the opportunity to build something start from scratch. It'll give us tremendous visibility when you're coming from [Route] 663."

Freeman said the bank had no intentions of moving and had just signed a long-term lease. But, with new buildings now being constructed closer to the road, they didn't want a competitor to move in in front of their current location. There will be three new office spaces, according to Freeman, on the newly-acquired land with QNB leasing one of the prime locations. He said to his knowledge, the other two spots haven't been leased to date.

The plans for the 3,000-sq.-ft. space, which is around the same size as the current locale, is a more open floor plan with drive-through windows and a drive-

through ATM. It also will include cash recyclers, machines built to handle and automatically count the large amounts of cash deposits and check cashing the busy branch is used to seeing from customers. Ultimately, Freeman said the developer's plan is to take the current building QNB occupies and to attach it to the new building in the new portion of the shopping center.

The bank, with 11 locations and a twelfth on the way in west Allentown,

have all these customers and have customers who stay loyal to us, we feel it's a real privilege to serve them and hopefully they feel good about their relationship



Top right, QNB Bank President Dave Freeman. Above, the construction site in the 400 block of Pottstown Avenue in Pennsburg which will house the Pennsburg branch.

serves Bucks, Montgomery, Lehigh and Northampton counties. It's a publicly-held company with \$1.2 billion in assets and 192 employees.

"We really are honored to

with us," Freeman said, noting the bank has grown each month for the eight years he's been with the company. "What also helps us is that when people are disgruntled with their current bank

*"We've been supporting The Open Link for years because they really have a tremendous impact in that area. They spend their money wisely, have great leadership, great community support and they have a lot of volunteers helping out."*

*~ Dave  
Freeman*

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## Valued Volunteer: Judy Capelli

Greeting you from her spot at The Center's big wooden receptionist's desk, Judy Capelli could give many late-night TV hosts a run for their money.

Always equipped with a smile and a hilarious quip or anecdote, she instantly makes people feel welcome. She's like the funny friend you long to be around after a difficult day. She earned her disposition honestly – sense of humor and a love of people is a must when you teach pre-school for more than 20 years.

"Those little people were tough," she joked, slumping down in her chair. "Seriously though, I absolutely love seeing the people who come into The Center. I make a big fuss over them and like making them feel as though they're the most important person around. I like seeing them really happy and knowing that I can make them happy."

Capelli said she first came to The Open Link during a difficult, not funny, time in her life though.

After her mom had a stroke in the early 1980's while living with her, Capelli went to The Center, then the Upper Perkiomen Senior Center, for

interested in volunteering.

"I saw firsthand what an asset the services were to the seniors and others in our community.

That easily drew me to want to be a part of it," she explained.

Giving her time since early 2015, Capelli is a staple at not only the front desk, but also in making phone calls for the organization's fundraisers like the Penny Auction and the Brunch and Silent Auction. She has also delivered Meals on Wheels and volunteered in the food pantry at the main office in Pennsburg. She is truly happy to help out in any way she's



Have you met Judy Capelli? She currently volunteers as receptionist at The Center but also helps with other administrative duties for The Open Link.

help. She credits staff with giving her assistance and guidance that was indispensable during that difficult time.

Sometime after she retired from teaching at Palm Country Day School, Capelli visited The Center for an exercise class. While she was there, she said she saw other things going on and the support the organization was continuing to provide seniors in the community. She immediately said yes when asked if she'd be

asked.

"Judy is a joy to have around and has really been an asset to us in many ways," said Assistant Center Manager and former volunteer coordinator, Evet Hexamer. "We appreciate her giving spirit and hope she continues to volunteer for a long time."

Capelli, of Marlborough Township, keeps busy maintain-

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## Summer Food Pantry Needs:

- Corn, Peas, Mixed Vegetables
- Tomato Sauce
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Pastas: Spaghetti-O's, Ravioli, Beefaroni, etc.
- Condiments: Ketchup, Mustard, Mayo
- Paper Products: Toilet Paper, Paper Towels
- Cleaning Supplies: All-Purpose Cleaners, Window Cleaners, Toilet Cleaners
- Personal Hygiene Supplies: Shampoo, Conditioner, Body Wash

*(Continued from page 1)*

especially our older neighbors, are used to taking care of themselves.

Talking with them, the setbacks with their income versus expenses were familiar. Social security wasn't a lot, then there was rent, food, insurance and many times medical bills and medications.

Benning said when she was approached about it, she thought the idea of the program was a great one. Now that it has started, it has been a welcome addition. Sixteen people/households ordered groceries through the online inventory system with volunteers and Open Link staff a little before lunch on launch day. Their orders were delivered just three short hours later.

Thanks to our generous corporate donors, like Walmart in East Greenville and Redner's in Red Hill, as well as donations from the community, the options included frozen high-quality meats and nuts this month.

In addition there were staples like milk, eggs, beans, oatmeal, fruits and vegetables.

"I haven't had a steak in 40 years!" said one woman. "Can I really have that?"

"I'm thrilled with The Open Link's Food Pantry Without Walls program!" Benning said at the close of delivery. "The residents who participated were amazed at the variety of food that was made available to them; and how easy it was to order exactly what they wanted."

"This program will be a tremendous help for the residents who struggle to put healthy food on their tables. Many thanks to The Open Link and their volunteers who made this happen for us."

Thank you to all our supporters who make our work possible! We're looking forward to implementing this program at The Center for additional seniors in the coming months. To

find out more about the program, contact Nutrition Services Coordinator Brooke Harvey at

215.679.4112 or email [nutrition@theopenlink.org](mailto:nutrition@theopenlink.org).



Counselor Laura Dzugaan with one of the Villas' residents who received groceries on June 12.

# THE OPEN LINK




*We gratefully acknowledge the support of our 2019 sponsors:*

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## Gold Sponsors



## Silver Sponsors

Calvary Church • Falk Funeral Homes & Crematory • Fife & Drum Tree Farm • Geryville Storage LLC • Gordon H. Bayer, Inc. Lechner & Stauffer, Inc. • Palm Schwenkfelder Church • Perkiomen School • Perkiomen Tours • Perkiomen Valley Woman's Club • Perkiomenville Mennonite Church • Upper Perkiomen Community Church • Upper Perkiomen Rotary Club • Upper Perkiomen Valley Lions Club

## Bronze Sponsors

Bally Mennonite Church • Bally Savings Bank - A Division of Ambler Savings Bank • Entrance Systems • Green Lane-Marlboro Lions Club • Harleysville Bank • Professional Pharmacy • St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church • St. Paul's Lutheran Church • Thomas & Muller Systems • Unami Friends Meeting • US Tape Company

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ing her home and property, as well as taking care of her beloved dog, reading, doing crossword puzzles and word searches and going out with friends. But it's important to set aside time to give back, she said.

"I volunteer because it's a very satisfying feeling to give back to the organization that helped me. I also realized how fulfilling it is to be of service – especially in one's own community. Our volunteers are friendly, neat people. It's wonderful how they donate

*(Continued from page 2)*

then, aided by a few other eager participants, helped set up tables, benches, etc. before digging in. A few minutes later I turned around to his question, "Can I have another lunch?" "Yes!" Big smile.

He was not alone in being hungry that day. Over the next hour and a half, we found ourselves surrounded by children from toddlers (with their moms) to middle school to high school-aged kids, all ready to dig in. And they all stayed for crafts, kickball, hula hooping or just swinging in the park. A "flash" community was formed.

When I announced that it was time to cleanup, my young friend asked, "Is it over already?" After the kids and volunteers had collected all the balls, bases and hula hoops, he bid me farewell, "See you tomorrow!"

I had a big smile on my face as I drove away. This is why we do what we do!

If you are interested in helping with our Summer Lunch Bunch program or any of our programs helping, feed, educate and give a hand up to our participants, please contact us at [volunteers@theopenlink.org](mailto:volunteers@theopenlink.org) or 215-679-4112.

Have a great summer!

their time."

Thank you, Judy, for your willingness to help those in need in our community. We couldn't do our work without people like you!

For more information on volunteering at The Open Link, please contact Tammy Styer, volunteer coordinator, at 215.679.4112 or [volunteers@theopenlink.org](mailto:volunteers@theopenlink.org).

## Back-To-School Supply Drive 2019 Needs

SCHOOL BUS

- |                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| New Backpacks                  | • #2 Pencils        |
| 3-Ring Binders (size 1" to 2") | • Pens              |
| Pocket Folders                 | • Graphing Paper    |
| Markers                        | • Glue Sticks       |
| Pencil Pouches/Cases           | • Ear Buds          |
| Loose Leaf Paper               | • Calculators       |
| Highlighters                   | • Flash Drives      |
| Colored Pencils                | • Dry Erase Markers |

**Donations currently being accepted! Thank you!**

Donations can be dropped off at the Main Office:  
452 Penn St, Pennsburg, PA 18073  
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday until 7 p.m.

THE  
**OPEN LINK**



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#### **Main Office**

452 Penn St.  
Pennsburg, PA. 18073  
Phone: 215-679-4112  
Email: [info@theopenlink.org](mailto:info@theopenlink.org)

#### **The Center**

517 Jefferson St.  
East Greenville, PA. 18041  
Phone: 215-679-6550

[www.theopenlink.org](http://www.theopenlink.org)

**"Opening Doors, Linking Communities, Helping Neighbors Flourish."**

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and they ask their neighbors, they say, 'I'm with QNB and I love QNB!' That's the best recommendation, when it comes from actual customers."

Freeman said a big part of being a community bank is serving people in the local neighborhoods, especially people with low to moderate income. And that's why they partner with The Open Link each year.

In 2019, QNB increased its support from a gold to a platinum sponsor of the non-profit. QNB Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Dale Westwood currently serves as president of The Open Link's board of directors.

"As a community bank, we definitely believe the idea that we're only as strong as the communities we serve," Freeman said. "One of the things we

try to identify is the social services agencies who make an impact in the community. The Open Link, we've been supporting for years, because they really have a tremendous impact in that area. They spend their money wisely, have great leadership, great community support and they have a lot of volunteers helping out. So all those things really fit in for us in that area."

"What I like best about [the organization] is they are trying to meet all the community's needs. They aren't just saying this is what we do. I think that's powerful. When you do that variety, you have a better feel for what's needed. I also like that you're working on this idea where you try to create permanent solutions for people who are getting aid (a program called Bridges Out of Poverty). It's exciting to me because it's a more permanent solu-

tion."

While QNB also supports other non-profits like Habitat for Humanity in Bucks and Lehigh counties and the United Way, Freeman said there's something special about devoting your resources to local organizations where you can see the impact.

"You know the people...That's what we like about Open Link and all the people I've met there...you know you're going to spend the dollars wisely and stretch them as much as they can to do the greatest job in the community."

Thank you, QNB, for your investment in TOL and in our community!

For more information on QNB, visit [www.qnbbank.com](http://www.qnbbank.com), find them on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, or call (215)538-5600.

**There's still time to give to the Year-End Appeal! Please visit [www.theopenlink.org](http://www.theopenlink.org).**