It seems like a very long time ago that we put together the April newsletter. It was a celebratory affair, with information about our grand opening, the beautiful and functional design features of the building, and a calendar bursting with exciting new programs added to all of your favorites.

We are still waiting to welcome you to The Center at Belvedere. When that day will come is uncertain, but come it certainly will. In the meantime, we hope that all of you have been able to stay in touch with many of your friends and family members, either through phone calls or online options such as Zoom or Facetime, and that you are reaching out for help if you need it.

Never have we been so aware that humans are social beings than in this time of physical distancing. Center staff and volunteers are doing their best to call everyone to check in, and to provide opportunities for fitness, socializing, learning, and volunteering. Your patience, willingness to try new things, and feedback has been invaluable as we try to be responsive and creative. The current list of online programs is on the next page, with a month-at-a-glance schedule on page four. Check our website, emails, and social media for updates on an ever-expanding list of online offerings.

We are but one of the many organizations working to meet community need in different ways. Our friends at JABA continue to provide a range of services for older adults. Visit www.jabacares.org for resources, or call the Senior Hotline at 434.817.5253 information and assistance. And if you are experiencing financial hardship due to the impact of the virus, visit the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation website (www.cacfonline.org) or call 434.234.4490 for information about COVID-19 Household Relief Funds.

We miss you terribly and long for the day we'll be together in person and can experience everything the new Center was designed for. Until then, we hope the photos below and inside will give you a taste of what awaits.

For Mary and Mike Wilson, joining The Center just made sense. Mary learned about The Center after she and Mike moved to Charlottesville in 2005, but her interest grew when she attended several retirement planning classes. “I am a planner and the classes I took at The Center helped me feel confident I was on the right track. I also saw that I could get back to playing bridge and build a network of non-work friends,” says Mary. And the first thing Mary did after retirement? “I joined The Center of course,” she says with a laugh. Mike saw the value of The Center firsthand through the experience of his mother—Elaine Johnson. “Mom was really involved at The Center; she was in the Barbershop Bells and worked in the café. She also took a lot of trips through the travel program,” remarks Mike.

Both Mary and Mike have roots in Native Nations and share a connection through their work in mental health and child advocacy. Mary’s ancestry includes Lakota/Dakota First Nations and Mike’s includes Potawatomi and Shawnee Nations. Mike and Mary are also adopted Blackfeet. Mike, a fifth generation Chicagoan, was drawn to helping people identify and address problems that challenged them. He graduated from Valparaiso University with a degree in social work and earned an MSW from George Williams College, becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Mike worked with young people in in-patient healthcare settings and in-home counseling in Chicago’s public housing. When asked what inspired and kept him going, Mike says it was looking for the small changes—“those are the big wins.”

Mary, who grew up in Madison, VA, says she fell into social work, wanting to help others. She earned her BS from East Carolina University and later an MEd in Counseling from UVA while running...
These programs are currently offered online through Zoom, a free, easy-to-install online meeting platform. To access information on how to “attend”:

1. Visit the particular event page on our website, www.thecentricville.org; or
2. Go to the calendar page on the website and click on the event; the link will take you to the page with instructions; or
3. Use the links provided in the e-news

If you do not use the internet but want to participate via phone, call 974.7756 and leave a message for programs. We will call you back with the phone number we use for the session.

PROGRAMS

LIFELONG LEARNING

ELDER LAW WITH DORIS GELBMAN
Free and open to the community
Tuesday, May 19, 10:00–11:30 am
Advance Life Care Planning. Join Doris for some basic information on wills, trusts, powers-of-attorney, and advanced medical directives. Who needs them and are there alternatives?

ART HISTORY AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR STORYTELLING (April 27–May 22)
Free, for members only
Mondays at 11:30 am & Fridays at 9:30 am
A work of art can speak to people in different ways, triggering personal memories or inspiring narratives. Artist Tim O’Kane will present artwork—all representational and mostly paintings—that offer many creative writing possibilities. On Mondays he’ll show two works, give some background on the artists, and allow time for discussion. You’ll have the week to write whatever you like about one or both pieces, and then meet on Friday to share what you’ve written. Class size is limited; register on the website.

SOCIAL/RECREATION

ZOOM CHAT
Free and open to the community
Tuesdays at 11:00 am & Thursdays at 3:00 pm
Join Program Coordinator Carolyn Merrick and fellow members for an informal conversation for 30 minutes, followed by a presentation on some topic of interest. You’re welcome to join in or drop out as you please during the hour.

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE ONLINE
Fitting in Fitness - A Daily Routine and Activity
Available online at any time
This series of short videos shows you great exercises to do at home to help maintain mobility and balance. You’ll find them on The Center’s YouTube channel.

INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE ONLINE
Free and open to the community
Thursday, 2:00 pm
Come and learn an International Folk Dance or two! You’re invited to learn and dance along to a few easy-to-learn folk dances. This is a great class for beginners! Dance along or just watch and listen to the music. We’ll have dances from countries such as Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and others.

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE ONLINE
Free and open to the community
Tuesdays & Fridays, Noon, Sundays, 2:00 pm
Get an introduction to the joys of dancing to beautiful Jane Austen-era music. From the graceful, elegant, elegant Upon A Summer’s Day to frivolous Gathering Peacocks, join in to sing, dance, and have fun from the comfort of your home. If dancing’s not your cup of tea, simply Zoom in to enjoy watching others and then visit with participants between dances.

OVER 50 PILATES ONLINE
Free and open to the community
Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:30 pm
Class provides instruction in traditional Pilates mat exercises as well as some modern interpretations of them. These are designed to assist with improving strength, particularly of core muscle groups (abdominals, back, shoulders, and hips), flexibility, balance, posture, and harmonious movement. For those with joint issues, osteoporosis, etc., modifications are provided so each participant can work safely at their own level. Suggested supplies include a mat, 1–3 lb. weight, resistance band, 5–8” diameter ball, and foam roller or pool noodle. Instructor Deborah Layton received her B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation from VCU and has extensive training and teaching experience in Pilates and Yoga.

FRIDAY FITNESS WITH ALEX
Free and open to the community
Fridays, 11:00 am
This is a hybrid of Senior Fitness and Balance & Stabilization (one of the new classes coming to The Center). Join Alex for a combination of aerobic strength training and exercises designed to develop better balance.

Físicn r ce lecm a h s Free and open to the community
Saturday, 9:30 am
As taught in the Vinyoga tradition, this class is a mindful, breath-centered, vinyasa class including postures, breathing technique, guided meditation, and visualization. Class is paced to allow time to warm up joints and move through a logical sequence of postures toward more challenging poses in a gradual way. Students will learn to coordinate movement with breath in a way that works with their own capacity. Learn to use props appropriately to provide support as needed, develop somatic awareness and modify postures to avoid strain, and obtain skills in reducing stress. Suggested supplies: mat, block, strap, blanket—some of which can be substituted with home items! Instructor Deborah Layton received her B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation from VCU and has extensive training and teaching experience in Pilates and Yoga.

BEGINNING LINE DANCE ONLINE
Free and open to the community
Tuesdays, 1:00 pm
If you’ve never line danced before or have done a little here and there, this class is for you! Clear a space in your home and join in the fun!

SENIOR FITNESS ONLINE
Free and open to the community
Wednesdays, 11:00 am
This class focuses on the foundations for strength, mobility, endurance, and flexibility. You can modify this class to meet your needs whether you are a fitness enthusiast or new to classes, no matter your age or current physical condition. Join Fitness Coordinator Alex Waltrip for an engaging class that will help you get active and stay active!

FRIDAY FITNESS WITH ALEX
Free and open to the community
Fridays, 11:00 am
This gentle form of yoga is practiced sitting on a chair with no complicated maneuvers. Along with postures, students learn breathing techniques, meditation, and ways of relaxation with the aid of a chair. Class is taught by member Julie Horne.

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With Your Help, Healthy Aging Moves to the Web

Looking for meaningful, safe ways to give back to our community? Contact Coordinator of Volunteer Resources Bobbi Hughes at 434.974.7756 or bobbi@thecentercville.org.

What are your skills or passions? We all have something to share and help ourselves through helping others. Here’s what some of our fantastic volunteers have to say about sharing their time and talents.

“It’s a great way to mingle and socialize each week, working with a team of friends to get things done.”

“I love volunteering at the Center. I have met some amazing people ... everyone is kind and the feeling of community is essential if you live alone as I do.”

“I like the fact that everyone is very appreciative of the volunteers. I also like talking with everyone and finding out about what is going on in their lives.”

“I like spending time focusing on others and being able to help others enjoy what The Center has to offer.”

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped pack up everything at Hillsdale in advance of the move to Belvedere. We couldn’t have done it without you!

Wilson, cont. from cover

the first family-oriented group home in Charlottesville. Eventually she moved to Chicago, continuing her career working with abused, neglected, runaway, and homeless youth. Mary and Mike worked tangentially on a few shared cases and became friends, attended Pow Wows together, and married in 1998. In 2005 they moved to Charlottesville where Mary served as the District Manager for Child Support and Mike continued his work with adolescents in Region 10 and the Department of Juvenile Justice until their retirement.

“The Center has truly become a treasured extended family to us,” remarks Mary. “There are hundreds of programs offered monthly, there is bridge, and just so many wonderfully interesting members. We support the Center with our dollars and our time so that it will continue.” Mary recently joined The Center’s Board of Directors and chairs the Philanthropy Committee. Mike and Mary regularly volunteer at Getting Better at Bridge, where, along with program leader Gene Philippi, they provide guidance, suggestions, and alternative play advice to program participants playing bridge games in real-time. Mary and Mike also play Duplicate Bridge and Party Bridge.

Fast Facts: Mike and Mary ... love to travel and their bucket list includes staying in every National Park and Railway lodge • serve as mentors to the Native American Student Union at UVA • are chocolate lovers—their favorites come from Belgian Chocolatier Piron, in Evanston, IL • are avid hikers, working through all the trails in Shenandoah National Park

open. For the foreseeable future, philanthropic giving will need to make up a larger percentage of our budget.

The Center is committed to continuing to offer this programming to all members of our community for as long as it is needed, but we must ask for your help to financially support these efforts. Please consider making a gift to support The Center at Belvedere, our ongoing commitment to healthy aging, and our expanded efforts to deliver meaningful programing online. You can make a gift online at thecentercville.org or, if you have questions, please contact Melanie Benjamin by telephone at 434.220.9744 or by email at melanie@thecentercville.org.

We look forward to the day when we can be together to celebrate the opening of The Center at Belvedere. Until then, please know that we continue to work hard every day to support older adults in our community.

VOLUNTEERING

JENNIFER KING
Board President

Last month we postponed our opening celebration of The Center at Belvedere in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and until we receive the “all clear” from our government officials, The Center doors must remain closed to the public. Even so, we want you to know that The Center is actively pursuing its mission. Over the last few weeks our staff and volunteers have joined forces to restructure program delivery, developing web-based opportunities that support social engagement, physical well-being, and lifelong learning. We have invested in new software to enable this and are working with instructors and participants to make these new programming initiatives successful. These offerings will continue to grow, as will our outreach to seniors who do not use the internet. And because volunteering is one of the best ways to foster connection and engagement, we are pursuing new ways to match individuals with those in need, providing them with practical, safe ways to contribute.

The physical distancing necessitated to slow the spread of COVID-19 can intensify social isolation and loneliness, conditions linked directly to adverse health consequences that include depression, cognitive decline, and increased risk of premature death. For older adults—who are more likely to live alone and may lack a network of social support—the negative impact of isolation can become life threatening. Combating these challenges is a large part of promoting healthy aging, making our mission as vital today as it has ever been.

More than ever, we need your help and the help of our community to support this work. Like many healthy nonprofits, The Center relies on several revenue streams to pursue its mission to positively impact healthy aging. Over 60% of our annual budget is funded through philanthropic gifts, with the balance of our budget coming from memberships, program fees, travel, and rental income. With our building closed, rental income and program fees are not being collected, and prospective members are choosing to hold off on joining The Center until we are physically open. For the foreseeable future, philanthropic giving will need to make up a larger percentage of our budget.

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We interviewed Mary and Mike before the pandemic, so touched based with them just before this went to press for thoughts on the Center’s response. “... hard decisions have been made with the utmost care for our members and the community. I am just astounded by the staff’s ability to turn on a dime and shift many of the programs to digital formats. They are also calling to keep connected those who may not like or have digital access. Talk about commitment to mission and to maintaining ‘social connections’ in a time of ‘physical distancing.” —Mary Wilson

PETER THOMPSON
Executive Director
**Sentara Family Medicine**

Sentara Family Medicine at Belvedere is now open for patients of all ages. The practice has Saturday hours, and walk-ins are welcome.

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**Programs available online via Zoom as of 4/20/20**

Get updates and access information at www.thecentercville.org/calendar

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A morning view of the rear of the building. The edge of the garden shed is just visible on the far right. Performing arts auditorium is to the left of the covered terrace at center.