

Interfaith Caregivers Opens New Headquarters in Hamilton



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Though a rainy day it may have been, there was nothing but bright smiling faces at the Interfaith Caregivers of Greater Mercer County open house Tuesday, June 12th. Even with the gloomy weather, this non-profit organization was able to celebrate the opening of their new headquarters located along Quakerbridge Road. Upon entering the door, I was greeted with a flood of welcomes and information regarding the reasoning for the evening's events.

(L to R) Freeholder Ann Cannon, Eileen Doremus, Jane Latini, Rosemary Durkin, and Paul Jellinek cut the ceremonial ribbon at Interfaith Caregivers Open House.

Photo by Brittany Schmittinger/HamiltonPulse.com.

most people take for granted to the elderly. Simple tasks like changing a light bulb, mowing the lawn, or grocery shopping are all provided by a volunteer assigned to the elderly individual. With one hour visits, the volunteers and elderly form a relationship that helps keep privacy all the while feeling connected. One of the newest projects is a fitness class still in its pilot stage known as "Project Healthy Bones." This class is geared toward those with osteoporosis in an attempt to improve posture, balance, and strength. The turnout for the pilot sessions were so good that this autumn, two 20 week classes will be offered!

This non-profit organization provides the daily tasks that

The open house was full of volunteers and other guests all equally excited for this new chapter in the life of Interfaith. Jane Latini, Acting Executive Director was among the first greeters. Board Members including Paul Jellinek, and a plethora of volunteers were all on hand to celebrate together. Freeholder Ann Cannon and Pat Colevita also made appearances to show support for the non-profit organization.

There was a lot to celebrate for the organization that started this branch about 17 years ago with a seed grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The grant was for approximately \$25,000.00, and things have only grown from there. Although it may be difficult to keep an organization open that is based on mostly volunteer work, Interfaith Caregivers have shown that it can be done. In the 2011, there were just over 300 volunteers that clocked 10,910 hours of volunteer work to 291 elderly people.

The rain stopped just long enough for the ceremonial ribbon cutting. Father Trammell of St. Greg's Parish said a prayer, followed by the beautiful song stylings of Joanna Latini, Jane Latini's daughter. There was a round of applause as the ribbon was snipped, joy and excitement shown through the expressions of all those in attendance. Once everyone grew quiet, a few short speeches were given as a light rain began to fall yet again. However, those in attendance kept quiet, intently listening, with only a few individuals shuffling to open umbrellas.

During the few speeches Paul Jellinek explained how Interfaith came to be. He explained that it started with his elderly neighbor Mary who was widowed. Jellinek and his wife would stop in and help her from

time to time and keep her company. Eventually Mary had to enter a nursing home, but toward the end of her life she spoke with Paul on one of his visits. She expressed to him how thankful she was, but she had just one regret. Mary said that there were so many other elderly individuals who needed the help and company just like she did and she wished she could have done something for them. Well, Paul took the initiative to speak with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. At the ribbon cutting Jellinek announced, "I know that Mary would be proud of everything we have accomplished, especially in this branch. Mary was from Trenton, this would make her proud."

The friendly atmosphere was enough for anyone to feel both welcomed and intrigued by the cause. Those of Interfaith Caregivers of Greater Mercer County are to be admired for their hard work, dedication, and big hearts.

Read more at <http://hamiltonpulse.com/interfaith-caregivers-opens-new-headquarters-in-hamilton-p577-90.htm#Mu8mXdgTsvv9uTXm.99>