

## NEWSLINE DECEMBER 2019

# CONTACT CAPE-ATLANTIC

### WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS AND CLIENTS

#### CONTACT VOLUNTEER AND DOG LOVER USES PERSONAL CHALLENGES TO HELP OTHERS



Linda Klersey learned a valuable lesson about having MS: Share it. CONTACT's newest Volunteer of the Month, who conducts about two shifts per week from her Northfield home, did not originally tell clients she was bound to a wheelchair because of the medical condition. She performed her regular duties until an occasion arose in which she should reveal it.

"Somebody was having a very bad time and saying nobody knew what it was like and I told the person about my situation and the reaction was 'yes, you really DO understand,'" Linda recalls. "You are not just being polite' It helps that people know they are not alone with what is affecting them."

Linda, one of the longest ranking CONTACT volunteers, has been with us since 2005. She has a specific group of clients for one shift and a floating list on days for which she performs backup duty.

The sharing initiative extends to her dogs, who bark throughout the calls. At first, they were brought to another room to avoid being a distraction. Now they are part of the conversation. Some of the clients have become attached to the dogs. Linda's dogs are an interesting part of her life. She has had seven, all rescues, since 2000. Her husband Rob has been there all throughout the journey. "I told him that he has to be the adult and say no to me when I want another dog," she laughs, "but he always says 'go ahead if you want one.' If I had a lot of money and a lot of land, I think we'd have every stray dog out there."

Linda is naturally effervescent, and uplifting. Twenty-five years after being diagnosed with MS, she hasn't let it stop her. Despite the ailments, Linda is grateful for what she does have and can talk anyone out of a bad mood.

"One of the nicest things about this is how good it makes you feel after you have made some good changes for people," she says. "You have somebody in the middle of a bad day and after you speak with that person, the outlook changes. Now they feel better. That is something that makes me feel good in my heart." CONTACT congratulates Linda for this honor and appreciates one more aspect of her sharing: what she does for us.

By Dave Bontempo



#### AS 2019 CLOSES We Say A Heartfelt THANK YOU

As December comes, we start to think about endings and beginnings again. It's a time to look back to all that has happened. There has been change and growth, all with an under current of extraordinary care and kindness.

This year CONTACT saw some significant changes and wonderful accomplishments. Our Spring Sensation of 2019 was one of the most profitable events of its kind to date for CONTACT. We thank our event sponsors for their generous support. We also had our most successful Avalon 5 Miler Run with nearly 200 people of all ages participating. We thank those that sponsored and volunteered for that hot day in July. We gained a number of new corporate sponsors and we hope you have been enjoying their stories in our monthly newsletters. We had a very successful Summer Lifeline campaign and we are seeing a great deal of generosity in our Annual Appeal (if you haven't had a chance to send your end of the year appeal donation in, there is still plenty of time). Our beautiful ornaments are still available for a limited time (see the ad on the last page). We have also received grant money from some wonderful Foundations and businesses. All of these achievements would not have been possible without the time, talent and treasure of our volunteers - from our volunteer Board of Directors to the event committees to our newsletter volunteers to our call center volunteers. The giving spirit of these individuals is what this season is all about.

But most of all, we are very grateful to serve such warm, spirited and diverse clients who touch our hearts with their voices, their sense of humor and their tenacious attitudes. Thank you so much to everyone in the CONTACT Cape-Atlantic family. You all play a big part in our critical mission.

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## RECIPE VAULT: Italian Ricotta Cheese Cookies

We are interested in your favorite easy recipes. To submit one for the newsletter, email to [contact-c-a@comcast.net](mailto:contact-c-a@comcast.net)

In December, many people bake cookies. If you are looking for something different and not too hard, these soft Italian-style cookies are a hit with everyone. The ricotta keeps them moist, and the recipe yields a large batch, which is great since the baked cookies freeze so well. Do not freeze the unbaked dough. You can decorate them with chopped candied cherries, colored sugar or candy sprinkles.

### INGREDIENTS

#### COOKIES:

1 cup sugar  
1 cup butter, softened  
15 oz. Ricotta cheese  
2 teaspoons vanilla (or 2 teaspoons anise, or lemon extract)  
2 large eggs  
4 cups flour  
2 Tablespoons baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon salt

#### GLAZE FROSTING:

2 Cups Confectioners Sugar  
1 teaspoon Lemon Extract  
1/3 cup water (or milk)

#### COOKIES:

In a large bowl, beat butter and sugar on low speed until blended, then beat on high speed until light and fluffy. Add ricotta, vanilla and eggs on medium speed. Blend in flour, baking powder and salt in thirds. Beat on low until blended. Don't overbeat to keep dough tender. Drop by teaspoon 2" apart. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes until light golden brown.

#### GLAZE FROSTING:

This is a basic glaze that can be used for several different cookies. It is a very versatile icing. You can substitute another extract (e.g. anise, vanilla, orange) to create different flavors. In an electric mixer on medium speed, beat all the ingredients until smooth. Using a metal spatula, frost the tops of the cookies, or you may dip each cookie into the frosting. The frosting will drip down the sides and coat the cookies. Cover with colored sprinkles. Dry the frosted cookies on wire racks. Store in an air-tight container.



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 12/6 Victoria Gaskill  
 12/7 Tina Smith  
 12/9 Aaryan Deshpande  
 Jim MacMillan  
 12/12 Carolyn Peterson  
 Mitwali El-Badrani  
 Nancy Williford  
 Claire Margan  
 12/13 Charlie O'Neill  
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 12/14 Kathy Pfieffer  
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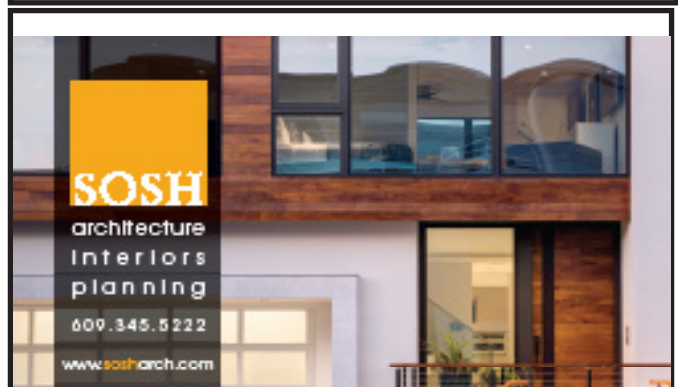
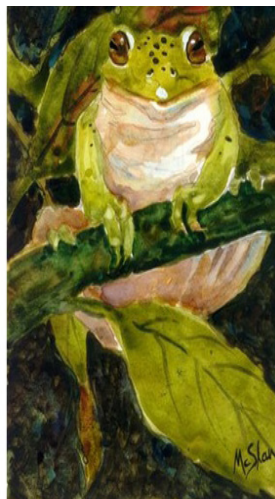
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**Protect Yourself Against Phone Scammers  
This Holiday Season**

Beware – phone scammers tend to ramp up their efforts to prey on people's generosity during the holiday season. During the holidays, these grinchers may call with a story of a relative in trouble who desperately needs money to fix a car or get out of jail – and home for the holidays – a common ploy known as the "grandparent scam." The ruse known as the IRS Scam takes on a vicious new twist with a scammer on the phone threatening an elder with being arrested and spending the holidays in jail for unpaid taxes or a fake debt.

And be wary of false or imposter charities, which sound identical to the real ones, where scammers call with requests for year-end, tax-deductible holiday donations.

Here are tips to protect yourself from holiday grinchers:

- o If someone who claims to be a grandchild (or other relative/friend) calls for help, be sure to contact your family to verify that the emergency or urgent request is genuine.
- o Never allow a questionable caller to discourage you from seeking verification, support and counsel from family members, friends or trusted advisers prior to making any financial transaction.
- o If a caller claims to be from an established organization such as a hospital, charity, or law enforcement agency, look up the number of the organization independently and verify the claim before sending money.

- o If you receive a letter or phone call from the IRS stating that you owe taxes, call the IRS directly at 1-800-829-1040 for information. And, if a caller asks for specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card or threatens you with arrest for not paying, hang up immediately as it is most certainly a scam.

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## GATEKEEPER PROGRAM

We continue to help older adults to remain living safely at home. Our Gatekeeper program provides information, brochures and business cards to those who are out in neighborhoods so that they can reach out to CONTACT Cape-Atlantic when they come across individuals who can use some help. A confidential call to our office can be the start of helping someone. Many different people can be gatekeepers. We have trained UPS drivers, Comcast employees, New Jersey American Water employees, meter readers, bank tellers, etc. to help reach out to people they encounter on a day to day basis. When we receive a call from the gatekeeper, we then reach out to the older adult and share information on the resources that are available to help them continue to live independently. These resources may include: a home health aide, visiting physician, mobile meal, transportation, or a personal alert button. We also offer the availability of our Reassurance calls. It's as simple as a call to CONTACT.

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Heart Attack, do you know what the sign and symptoms are? Some of the signs and symptoms of a heart attack include tightness, pain or pressure in your chest or arms. Other symptoms include shortness of breath, cold sweats, light headedness and fatigue. Please note, sometimes the signs of a heart attack are similar to an upset stomach, which includes nausea, heart burn, abdominal pain indigestion. These signs and symptoms vary from person to person in terms of how severe the above symptoms are. But the more symptoms you have, the more likely it is a heart attack.

A heart attack happens when the blood supply to the heart is disrupted. The blood supply to heart may be blocked by plaque. Plaques are formed from cholesterol, fat that builds up in the blood vessels, coronary artery. This causes the blood vessel to narrow and eventually becomes blocked. This process is called atherosclerosis. Another way that a coronary artery may become blocked is when one of the plaques ruptures and spills its contents into the bloodstream and then forms a clot. The clot in heart's blood vessel blocks the blood flow, nutrients and oxygen, to that part of your heart causing pain. The heart attack or myocardial infarction may damage that part of your heart permanently.

What to do if you are having a heart attack. First call for help, dial 911 for emergency services. If you have aspirin, then taking it may help reduce heart damage by keeping your blood from forming a clot. There are two kinds of heart attacks seen on electrocardiogram ECG or EKG. A complete blockage of the blood vessel is an ST elevation myocardial infarction. A partial blockage of the coronary blood vessel is a non-ST elevation myocardial infarction.

Risk factors for heart attack include being a male 45 years and older or female 55 years and older. Smoking tobacco or long-term exposure to it is a risk factor for heart attack. High blood pressure and high cholesterol damage the blood vessels and cause plaques, respectively. Obesity is associated with both high blood pressure and cholesterol. Diabetes damages blood vessels. Lack of exercise and unmanaged stress are also risk factors.

What can you do to prevent a heart attack or a future heart attack? See your primary health care provider regularly to get routine lab work and to help manage your chronic medical conditions. Take your medications as directed to control your high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes. If you smoke, then quit. Incorporate foods in your diet that are not high fats or salts and limit fried and processed foods. Exercises like walking 15-30 minutes per day 5 days a week, at a pace where you hold a conversation with someone. All together, these changes can help promote your health independence and happiness.

Giovanni D. Avelluto, DO, MS AtlantiCare Life Connection Program and Richard G. Stefanacci, DO, MGH, MBA, AGSF, CMD AtlantiCare Medical Director LIFE Connection Program and Population Health

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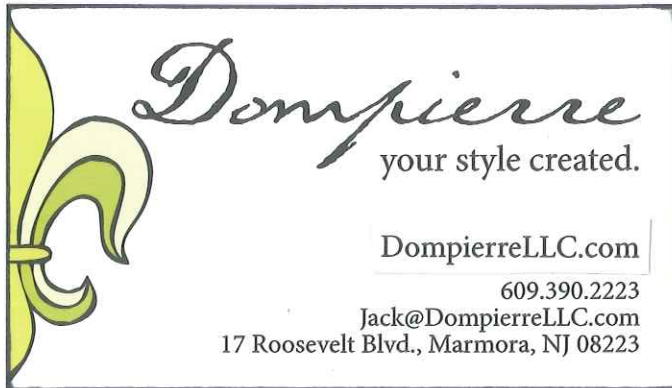
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**HOLIDAY ORNAMENTS BY MUDGIRLS  
BENEFIT CONTACT - \$10 AND MAKE A GREAT GIFT**

MudGirls Studios is a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization that empowers disadvantaged women through the making of functional ceramic art and architectural tiles. empowering women through training and the offering of employment. Each year CONTACT is proud to partner with MudGirls to offer an annual holiday ornament which will help CONTACT serve more seniors and disabled individuals while also supporting women in our region. When you purchase these beautiful and handmade ceramic pieces from our local MudGirls Studios, you are part of the movement to help women transition onto a pathway towards self-sufficiency and out of poverty.

This years ornament is in the shape of a heart because we love the heart to heart connection we have with out volunteers and conenction. The ornaments can be purchased for \$10 by calling the CONTACT offices at 609-823-1850

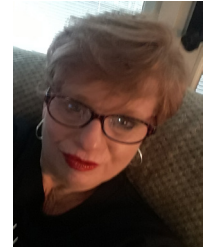


**Marie Soreth and Selma Ramundo  
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**Making a Difference, One Call at a Time!**

**DIRECTOR'S CORNER**

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**LIGHT**

I was recalling a greeting card that someone sent me that said "go toward the light and leave the darkness behind you." These words helped me in a time of trial and can serve as an appropriate theme this December.

All the festivities of the season can bring comfort and joy and merriment, however these things can also create an effect that is not quite so bright. In a season decked out with pretty lights, presents and merriment, some of us find can ourselves in a place that feels removed from others. With all the images of the season, it's easy to trick ourselves into believing that we're the only ones who are struggling through life, that we are the only ones who are lonely due to a lost of broken relationship, that we are the only ones suffering from aches and pains and things that limit us. We may think we are the only ones who can't buy the things on our our loved one's wish list. Friends, the truth is that there are no perfect lives;, all of us struggle with something and we're all just doing the best we can with what we have. But there is light in the darkness.

Light is a concept that appears in almost every tradition. In Islam, light is a mark of God's presence. In Hinduism, light is the highest form of energy. This time of year, there is no shortage of examples of light. At Hanukkah, those that are Jewish celebrate the miracle of light that burned for 8 days when it should have only been for one. Christians celebrate a star and the light of the world. The Yule log dates back to ancient times when the Druids lit the log to signify the return of light at the winter solstice. One way to cope with the seasonal expectations is to focus on this universal concept, not necessarily on the many lights that adorn trees and houses this month, but on a deeper more internal flicker.

It may seem counterintuitive at this busy time of the year but try to go for some real moments of solitude. If you can, step out to look a the stars and the constellations that appear in the winter sky. Or light a candle, for a loved one, for yourself, for a dream that was lost, for a question that still needs an answer. Begin to notice a minute longer each day after the equinox. Whether an answer comes at the moment or down the road, you will have gifted yourself with a moment of peace and reflection in this hectic time.

Each of you has brightened our world this year, with your laughter, with your voice, with your gifts, with your stories. We celebrate you and wish you light in the coming year!



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*Check Out Our Website:*

**[www.contactcapeatlantic.org](http://www.contactcapeatlantic.org)**

## MY CONTACT DONATION

Since 1973, CONTACT Cape-Atlantic has been providing a lifeline for countless individuals. Now we would like you to think about throwing us a lifeline to help CONTACT to continue to serve residents of Atlantic and Cape May Counties.

Please make your check payable to:

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***Thank you for helping us keep in CONTACT!***