

Senior Living

FALL 2016

Thomas Robinson from Herndon is listed bowling 220 with no handicap. This is his first year entered in the Senior Olympics competition, but he says he has been bowling for over 40 years since he was 10. Robinson says this was sort of an accident. He was signing up for the volleyball competition and just happened to notice bowling. He pulls out his favorite brown ball “that smells like root beer — no kidding” and wipes it off with a cloth to get some of the oil off the ball. Then he swings his long arm back and lets go — another strike. Robinson wins gold in the 50-54 year age group with a score of 726 for three games.

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The Kensington Falls Church Presents the Parkinson's Communications Club

Announcing an Introductory Orientation with
Codrin Lungu, MD and Susan Wranik, MS, MA, CCC-SLP
Saturday, October 22, 2016 • 1:30-3:30pm

Hilton McLean Tyson's Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Drive, McLean VA 22102

Light refreshments served • RSVP to Karen Akers at 703-570-8671 or to kakers@kensingtonsl.com

The Kensington Falls Church is pleased to announce its collaboration with the Parkinson Foundation of The National Capital Area (PFNCA) to offer the Parkinson's Communications Club. The Club establishes a wellness and prevention program for individuals with Parkinson's disease and their care partners, with a focus on maintenance of communication skills. It stresses the importance of speaking louder to be heard in social settings.

The Parkinson's Communications Club is led by a licensed speech-language therapist, Susan Wranik, who has been trained in LSVT LOUD therapy (Lee Silverman Voice Treatment,

which improves vocal loudness by stimulating muscles of the voice box and speech mechanism through systematic exercises). The Club, however, is not therapy. Rather, it is a group approach to applying the exercises and skills of LOUD and/or other therapies. The first of weekly sessions begins in November 2016 in Falls Church. The program is available at no cost.*

Please join us for an orientation with Dr. Codrin Lungu, Chief of the Parkinson's Disease Clinic at the National Institutes of Health, and Susan Wranik, MS, MA, CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist and President of Susan I. Wranik Associates, LLC. RSVP requested.



Codrin Lungu, MD is a board-certified neurologist who specializes in movement disorders. He is a member of the Parkinson Foundation of The National Capital Area Medical Advisory Board. He is currently involved in collaborative research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in several areas related to movement disorders.



Susan Wranik, MS, MA, CCC-SLP is a Speech-Language Pathologist and President of Susan I. Wranik Associates, LLC. She provides comprehensive assessment and treatment of speech, swallowing, memory and cognitive issues related to stroke, traumatic brain injury, Parkinson's, dementia and other neurogenic diseases. Home visits. Licensed in DC, MD, VA.



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*Annual PFNCA program registration required. There is a \$15 annual administrative fee, which can be waived for financial hardship.



Senior Living

Life at Vinson Hall — Living the Difference

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

Mary DeMaris is headed down on the elevator at Vinson Hall with her black case of art supplies, an artist headed to a still life class out of the building. “There is a club here for everything — poetry, art, choral group, photography, book, gardening,” she said.

Vinson Hall residents can use the bus and courtesy car for errands, doctor’s appointments and other scheduled outings.

“The food is excellent. I don’t know I can pick a favorite. Hmmm, the soups here are unique, delicious. The dining director — he’s a real foodie,” said Mike Solari, the purchasing and catering manager at Vinson Hall. “You’ll never believe it but the favorite is chicken livers with a light gravy if they like. And the seafood dishes, oh seafood Newburg. Lots of people use imitation seafood, but we use real shrimp, crab, lobster and scallops in this dish.”

Norman Zalfa from Arlington, said, “Well, I like pound cake. I don’t like a lot of cream and other stuff so I mentioned it to the chef. He made a pound cake for me and had it delivered to my apartment.”

Solari says that in his opinion you eat with your eyes first so he presents a nice plate. Sometimes when he creates the weekly menu, “It’s what I feel like. I try to have one pork, chicken, beef, seafood and pasta every week and to be sure that I’m not repeating the same thing too often.” Solari says he listens to what people ask for and what they don’t like. Solari says the only way he adjusts his menu for older appetites is to take out the salt. “We use herbs instead.”

“Hi Norman,” Zalfa waves at a man going by with his walker. “That’s my next door neighbor. He was a submarine commander.” Vinson Hall independent living is open to commissioned officers and their immediate



Mike Solari, the purchasing and catering manager at Vinson Hall, readies the dessert cart for lunch with coconut cake, chocolate mousse and lemon cakes. Soon it will be full of tarts and other choices offered in the formal dining room.

family from all U.S. uniformed services. They are now accepting government employees of equal rank from the Departments of State and Defense, the CIA and Foreign Service.

Zalfa continued, “We go check on Norman. He is 91-years old. My wife, Grazia — she’s from Italy — went to Eden Center and bought bok choy and other vegetables and made him a bowl of soup today.”

There is no required meal plan at Vinson Hall for independent living so that a person can choose whatever they feel like eating any day from three kitchens — the main dining room, the bistro with cooked to order choices, snacks or light fare.

“My favorite thing is networking with people,” said Zalfa. “It’s small enough you get to know people. It’s a family, really. There is a men’s club that gets together, takes walks, works as a support group.”

LaVonne Boyer, a four-year resident, says it is easy to make friends here and “there are so many interesting, intelligent and ex-

perienced people living here.” She is busy packing for a weeklong trip to Cancun where her family has time-shares and always gather the third week in September. She says right now she has a crazy daily life because her daughter has stage 4 cancer and three children so Boyer does everything she can to help. “Today my daughter is on Capitol Hill where they asked her to lobby for experimental trials and approval of a new medication.” Boyer says when her surgeon husband died early, she went into real estate in Springfield for 35 years to put her children through college.

“I always use the gym. The most appreciated person around here is George, the personal trainer who evaluates each person and then sets up an individual training program,” said Zalfa.

Zalfa reports that he has broken almost every bone from his years of horseback riding in Wyoming, Ecuador and Brazil. “And then there was my motorcycle. And the time I passed out riding my bike and



LaVonne Boyer, 4-year resident at Vinson Hall, says, “There are so many clubs for anything you want to do.” She tries to take advantage of as much as she can. Boyer is on the Chapel Committee.

broke my hip.” But he says that his wife Grazia says no more motorcycles, “and when she says no, she means no.”

Zalfa remembers World War II. “I was 14 when I enlisted but lied and used another kid’s name. I wanted to be a hero.” Now Zalfa runs a business and teaches courses in Arlington on how to organize one’s estate.

Boyer says she uses the gym a lot, the pool and the weight machines. The gym is currently moving into a new expanded space. In addition, new space is being added on the garden level including a dance studio for yoga and stretching, a cyber cafe and some new office space.

A resident’s meeting is underway in the auditorium, also used for community events and guest speakers. Another larger auditorium in the Community Building hosts

dances, performances, and the McLean orchestra performs there as well. A piano sits outside the main dining room which has been set for lunch with white tablecloths and with a sign in front about the wine tasting.

Dave DeClark, the director of marketing says Vinson Hall bottles its own wine from grapes in California. Their specialties are offered at dinner and at happy hours during the week.

DeClark says in addition to independent living Vinson Hall Retirement Community offers assisted living, long-term care and skilled nursing at Arleigh Burke Pavilion and Memory Care at the Sylvestery. DeClark says they draw residents from a seven-mile radius. No military affiliation is required for these residences. He adds that a new addition just opened in November 2014 with 75 new independent living apartments, all named after Presidents “but only one after Washington since there was only one first President of the United States.” Vinson Hall is located at 6251 Old Dominion in McLean.

TJ Student Creates ‘HeartScribe’ for Seniors

Mobile app helps manage health data. electronic way of doing what they were already doing.”

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

When Vienna resident Rohan Taneja’s grandfather experienced heart failure last year, he was inspired to create a mobile application that would help senior citizens to better manage their health metrics and share them with caregivers and doctors.

When a “Shark Tank”-style assistive technology challenge for Fairfax County High School students came across his radar, Taneja

decided it was the perfect opportunity to develop his app.

In March of this year Taneja, now a senior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, presented his project called HeartScribe to the challenge judges as a finalist.

“Many seniors have to measure their blood pressure, glucose and other things every day, and write all that down,” Taneja said. “This makes that job a whole lot easier. In a matter of seconds, you can record all that data on your phone and bring it to your doctor. It’s an

Using the app saves seniors time and the stress of losing their documentation, he said.

Taneja won first place in the competition, along with around \$1,300 in prize money. He used the money to make informational flyers, buy devices to demonstrate the app and help launch it.

Taneja wanted to take the project further. He started visiting several senior centers and talking with elderly people about his app, what they liked and didn’t like.

“That’s when I realized it could be really helpful,” he said.

Though he wrote the app by

himself, he’s also reached out to the tech world for advice, including the Refraction co-working space in Reston.

From his senior feedback, Taneja has made numerous tweaks to the app, including making the buttons significantly larger and simplifying the interface to make it easier to use.

The app is live and available for free in the Google Play store, and works with any Android device. Taneja makes no money from it. “I guess you could call it one big service project,” he said. “It was fun making it.”

The TJ senior chose Google to start because he learned the Java



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

When Vienna resident Rohan Taneja’s grandfather experienced heart failure last year, he was inspired to create a mobile application that would help senior citizens to better manage their health metrics and share them with caregivers and doctors.

coding language for Google in a programming class. However he’s currently working on versions for iPhone and web browsers.

Senior Living

Regaining Mobility

Local orthopedic surgeons offer keys for successful joint replacement surgery.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Tired of the limited mobility and pain that have thwarted her love of foreign travel and fall hiking, Lynda S. Johnson, 72, scheduled a knee replacement surgery for later this month. She chose a doctor, found a pet sitter to watch her Cairn terrier, and enlisted her sister to live with her while she recovers.

"I had been debating for months about whether to have it," she said. "I was in so much pain, though, that I don't really think I have anything to lose."

For Johnson and approximately 7 million other Americans living with a hip or knee replacement, the decision to undergo such a surgery is fueled by a quest for less pain, more mobility and an overall boost to their quality of life.

Nearly 90 percent of patients who have knee replacement surgery experience less pain and 85 percent of the replacement joints still work after 20 years, according to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. Most patients will feel better, and feel better quickly.

Addressing overall health issues like high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity can boost the chances that a joint replacement surgery will be successful, says Dr. C. Anderson "Andy" Engh, orthopedic surgeon, Anderson Orthopedic Clinic at Inova Mount Vernon. "Work on both your overall health and conditioning," he said.

Patients should be up and out of their hospital beds as soon as possible. "Patients are walking with assistance hours after their surgery. The reason patients do better when they get up and move around is that they decrease the risk of pneumonia and blood clots," said Dr. Mark P. Madden, an orthopedic surgeon with OrthoVirginia. "We start out with patients using a walker and having someone assist them in walking, and they generally progress to become fully weight bearing without any assistance at all."

Also, have a support system in place prior to surgery, whether it's a significant other, grown child or close friend. Often dubbed coach or advocate, that person might at-

tend medical appointments with a patient prior to surgery, serve as their point of contact the day of surgery and provide morale support throughout the recovery process.

"The more eyes and ears in addition to the patient's, the better," said Engh, explaining why it's so helpful to have someone with the patient at appointments and throughout the recovery. "We approach things that we have to do with set expectations, and sometimes those expectations can keep us from hearing other things. Having another person there is a good reality check and note taker."

The coach should be able to spend a significant amount of time with the patient during the early recovery period. "That person can expect to be with you 16 hours a day for two to five days after surgery," said Engh. "I don't want someone alone by themselves all day during work hours. The coach or advocate is like a safety marshal who keeps the patient safe and reminds them to take their time during their recovery."

Dr. George Aguiar, an orthopedic surgeon at Reston Hospital Center, advises patients to determine how they will get help with grocery shopping, transportation, pet care and house cleaning in advance. "Having these types of things handled before you go into surgery can only help the recovery process."

Patients should plan ahead to safety-proof. "Do everything you can do to avoid a fall within the first two to three months after your surgery," said Engh. "Have clear pathways and be aware of rugs that can catch your feet. Have good, secure handrails on stairways to help prevent falls."

Timing also plays a role in the success of joint replacement surgeries. "Some patients ask if they're too old to have surgery," said Engh. "Don't wait until you're home bound to have this surgery because the recovery will be quite long."

To decide whether joint replacement surgery is the best option, says Madden, work with a physician and weigh the effect the pain is having on one's quality of life.

"There's no right answer for every patient," said Madden. "The real answer is to work with your doctor to find the right treatment."



PHOTO BY TOM MANNING/THE CONNECTION

Men's doubles semi-finals teams in the 80-89 age group pose for a group photo before the match begins. From left are Neil Lane from Reston and his partner Phil Doherty from Burke, Jerry Vance from Annandale and his partner Bob Wilkinson from Fairfax. Vance and Wilkinson won the match 9-7 (8 game pro set) to advance to the finals.

From the Beginning to the End

982 participants signed up for 2016 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics.

The Northern Virginia Senior Olympics (NVSO) opened Sept. 10 and ran through Sept. 21 with another record registration of 918 participants. Saturday opening day ceremonies were followed by track and rowing events at Thomas Jefferson Community Center in Arlington and diving competition at Yorktown High School Aquatic Center.

Fifty events were held at 25 different venues across Northern Virginia including horseshoes and bocce at Fairfax Senior Center-Green Acres, field events at Stone Bridge High School Stadium, swimming at Claude Moore Recreation Center, tennis mixed doubles at Wakefield District Park and Wii Bowling at Greenspring Retirement Community Center in Springfield. There were two 100+ age group entries this year, Vera Punke from Arlington and Hilda Gross from Burke entered in the duplicate bridge competition held at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Arlington.

— SHIRLEY RUHE

VINSON HALL RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Independent Living at Vinson Hall

Vinson Hall Retirement Community is located in idyllic McLean, VA and offers independent residential living for military officers and government employees of equal rank. Our apartment residences offer all the luxurious comforts of home within a vibrant Life Plan community. Come see what's new!

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