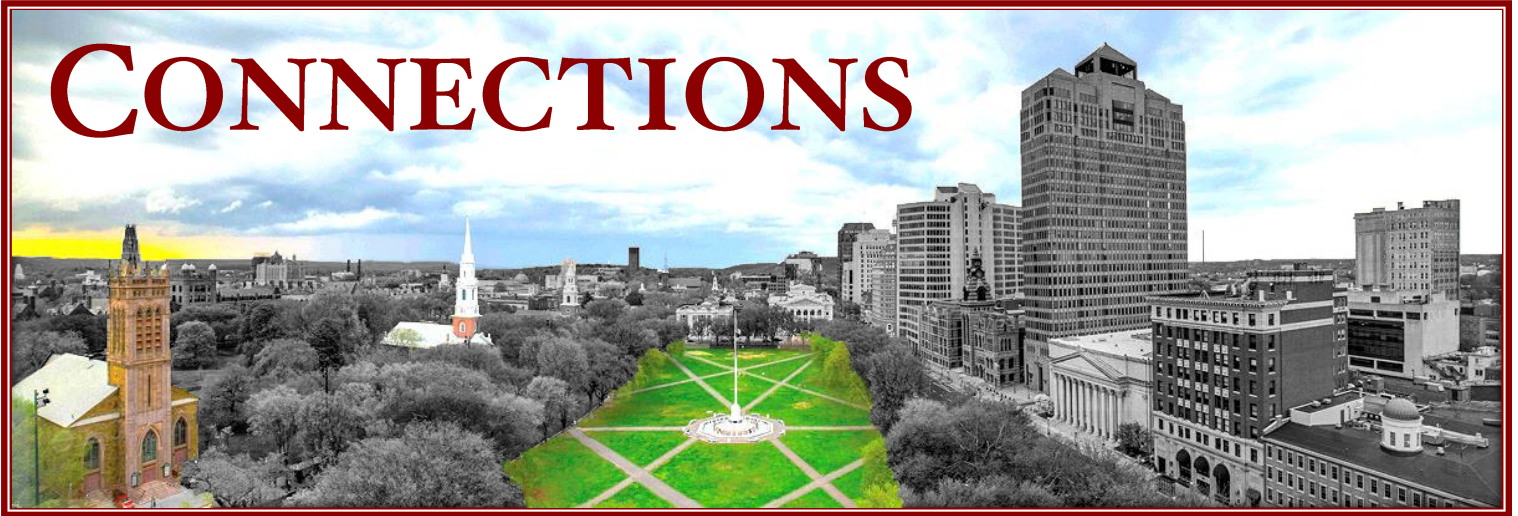


INTERFAITH VOLUNTEER  
CARE GIVERS of GREATER NEW HAVEN  
SUMMER 2020



# CONNECTIONS

## WELCOME

Jane Ferrall, Executive Director

My Dear Friends,

As I write to you, our city, state, and nation face crises of tragic proportions. None of us, no matter our age or station, could possibly have imagined that we would be in today's reality. The future is always un-knowable, but it feels more unclear and uncertain than ever.

In all of this darkness, one light that shines brightly is the willingness that we humans have to help one another. Interfaith was founded 36 years ago at another time of community struggle and disruption. Despite many challenges, we remain committed to volunteer caregiving: neighbors helping neighbors, friends helping friends. Nobody gets a prize or a front page accolade or even much in the way of social media fame. Volunteer caregivers just quietly and faithfully do what they do, with no expectation or hope for glory. In volunteer caregiving there is no east or west, black, brown, or white.

This is why the summer 2020 edition of Connections is **dedicated to our volunteers**. Since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, Interfaith has benefited from a veritable explosion of interest from our community and an influx of enthusiastic, motivated new helpers. We have been able to keep our doors open throughout the pandemic - and in fact not just to survive, but to thrive in our new

environment - because of the wonderful people who have stepped up and brought their time and talents to bear. At the same time, we recognize and celebrate the amazing folks who have loyally supported us all along.

Our new reality is sad. We cannot thank our volunteers in person this year because of the virus. We have lost friends, clients, and supporters. Each of us is dealing with loss and grief, and this will endure.

But what will also endure is the spirit of volunteer caregiving. Now is the time for us to show what we can do, how we can serve, how much we can love. We will get through this, and we will come out of it better, stronger, and more unified.

## TABLE of CONTENTS

Summer 2020

2	DRIVER AND VISITOR RECOGNITION
3	REASSURANCE PROGRAM VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION
4	A THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS
5	A THANK YOU TO OUR NEW DRIVERS FROM ANNA'S DESK
6	"TO BE GRATEFUL" BY MARY COMFORT AN UPDATE ON OUR PROGRAMS
7	A THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD

## 2 | CONNECTIONS

### DRIVER AND VISITOR RECOGNITION

We begin this special Volunteer Issue by recognizing the steadfast and loyal volunteers who have been serving our community for so long. We especially remember Jim Mayer, our beloved friend of Hamden, who passed away in February of this year. Please join me in acknowledging the contributions of the following drivers who served between March 1, 2019 and March 1, 2020:

Marilyn Bergen\*  
Fred Bernard  
Lewis Bither\*  
Laurie Bonjo  
Jane Caldwell  
George Coulombe\*\*  
Ed Cowern\*  
Richard Davies  
Chris DeAngeli  
Charlie Deegan  
Bill Donaruma\*  
Joe Donroe\*  
Donna Marie Fioretti  
Bela Garrison\*  
Ray Gibault\*\*  
Carol Hasnosi  
Leonora Heitler  
Carl Jordan  
David Juliano\*  
Evelyn Katz  
Minna Kaufman  
Maggie King  
Stephanie LaMacchia  
Jim Leahy\*\*  
Ann Levison  
Bruce Levison  
Peter Liberti  
Anne Marie Ludwig  
Al May  
Jim Mayer  
Bill Morris\*  
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel drivers\*\*\*  
Cecelia Palacio\*  
Carolyn Paul\*  
Maribeth Pennoni\*\*  
Ann Petrini  
John Phelan  
Bob Primavera\*  
Michael Riordan  
Pat Roy  
Laurel Schneider  
Diane Schultz\*

Joe Shapiro  
Gordon Smith\*\*\*  
Janice St. Hilaire  
Roger Tausig\*\*  
Melinda Tuhus  
Al Via\*\*  
Baxter Walsh  
Kate Walton  
Thurman Whitley  
Art & Ann Yost\*\*\*  
Carolyn Young

\* = more than 25 rides

\*\* = more than 50 rides

\*\*\* = more than 100 rides

These great folks served as volunteer visitors and callers between March 1, 2019 and March 1, 2020:

Claire Chambers  
Laurel Davidson  
Mary Fichandler  
Leslie George  
Sandy Kline  
Estelle McKiernan  
Richard Melot  
Carol Mitchell  
Diane & Nicole Ortiz  
Diane Petaway  
Kate Walton  
Carolyn Young



Professor Cathy Mebane of Gateway Community College addresses the February meeting of Aging at Home, presenting "Stitched Together: a History Revealed."

### 3 | CONNECTIONS

## THANK YOU TO OUR REASSURANCE CALLING PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

In mid-March, after the COVID pandemic caused so many to have to shelter in place, we realized that it would be incredibly important for us to keep in touch with our clients. We immediately initiated a reassurance call program that drew almost 130 volunteers, all of whom committed to calling our clients at least once per week for the duration of the lockdown. Each caller received a list of 5-10 seniors and agreed to be responsible for letting IVCG know of any needs or concerns. With their help, we were able to connect many clients to sources of food, shopping, financial help, and PPE. Lots of the folks who stepped up to help with the calling program are either students or people who work full-time and are temporarily at home due to the lockdown. We hope that many of our new friendships will endure, as we have greatly enjoyed working with so many new faces!

Jennie Aden  
Grace Ambrossi  
Marion Ammons  
Peter Angelica  
Rebecca Batchelder  
Barbara Bellis  
Rosemary Benedict  
Lewis Bither  
Sofia Caycedo  
Linda Chaffkin  
Claire Chambers  
Tiffany Chan  
Lauren Chan  
Eun Sun Cho  
Sydney Cohen  
Sally Connolly  
Patrick Coughlin  
Laurel Davidson  
Richard Davies  
Denise Dean  
Annika Eberle  
Clancy Emmanuel  
Talia Erris  
Asha Evans  
Ivy Fan  
Donna Fioretti  
Casey Gaughan  
Leslie George  
Constance Greaves  
Abigail Grimes  
Jessy Grizz  
David Harpin  
Dick Hasbany  
Carol Hasnosi  
Traci Hodes  
Jillian Huberty  
John Isaacs  
George Iskander  
Kavita Israni-Winger  
Lucille Jaglow  
Priyanka Jain  
Lucy Jiang

Doreen Kaminsky  
Minna Kaufman  
Ellen Keababian  
Hyunjin Kim  
Yujin Kim  
Sandy Kline  
Patrick Korth  
Claire Lafave  
Sarah Lapin  
Catherine Lee  
Kerin Lee  
Clare Leinweber  
Jessica Leiser  
Lauren Leitch  
Ann Levison  
Peter Liberti  
Yan Liu  
Anne Marie Ludwig  
Craig Machado  
Tristan Mahan  
Mandi Mangler  
Laurella Martin  
Al May  
Annika Minotti  
Amy Myers  
Grace Niewijk  
Sarah Nikkel  
Colby O'Connor  
Lisa Omark  
Isabel Packevicz  
Tom Packevicz  
Ann Packevicz  
Kayla Patel  
Carolyn Paul  
Diane Petaway  
Matthew Peterson  
Anna Preston  
Natalie Prinz  
Gary Rapaport  
Lauren Reichart  
Susan Reuter  
Michael Riordan

Ruth Risberg  
Lizzie Robbins  
Elizabeth Rogers  
Laurel Schneider  
Diane Schultz  
Olivia Shoemaker  
Pam Sletten  
Ben Soltoff  
Janice St. Hilaire  
Allison Su  
Keitra Thompson  
Aoi Tischer  
Mary Travers  
Laura Traverse  
Melinda Tuhus  
Susanne Turi  
Stacy Uchendu  
Al Via  
Donna Vinci  
Baxter Walsh  
Hannah Walsh  
Kate Walton  
Margaret Weisberg  
Jess Welch  
Thurman Whitley  
Solangine Williams  
Sarah Wu  
Leslie Wyrzten  
Jonathan Wyrzten  
Jin Yang  
Karen Yao  
Art Yost  
Ann Yost  
Carolyn Young  
Lillian Yuan  
Wendy Zhang  
Hope Zhang  
Lewis Zundell

## 4 | CONNECTIONS

### A THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Contributions from generous, caring folks like those listed below allow us to continue to provide service in our communities. IVCG would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their contributions made since April 1, 2020:

Mary Bales  
Paula Biondello  
Nancy Bodin-Libor  
Barbara Bretko  
John Cannon  
Vilma Capozzi  
Marie Carangelo  
Anthony Cillio  
Raffaella Coppola  
Elvira Costanzo  
Richard Davies  
Constance Decker  
Joseph Dombrowski  
David Engerman  
Jane Faitella  
Frances Farrell  
Frank Giarmita  
Joan Goodliffe  
Irene Haller  
Annie Hardy  
Kathy Highman  
Mildred Hopkins  
Arthur Joyner  
Betsy Keating  
William Knight  
Patricia Krosky  
Lorraine LaTerza  
Francine Lipka  
Grace L'Manian  
Robert Lyons  
Augusta Mantia  
Robert Mills  
Marian Ottaviano  
Kathy Paduano  
William Parcesepe  
Deloris Paul  
Madeleine Paul  
Marie Picarello  
Leonara Russo  
Muffy Sabatino  
Lorraine Salerno  
Amy Salvati  
Waltraud Schneider  
Kevin Sellner  
Nicholas Sepesko  
Ann Signore  
Roenia Smith

Gloria Testa  
Shirley Vitale  
Dorothy Young  
Beverly Zimmer

City Missionary Association of New Haven  
Community Foundation for Greater New Haven  
Immanuel Baptist Church  
Rotary Club of Hamden Foundation  
Rotary Club of Wallingford  
The Yale Community for New Haven Fund  
The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund

### THE GREAT GIVE

Every May, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven sponsors the Great Give, a 36-hour online donation drive that assists area non-profits. This is a wonderful opportunity for IVCG to reach out to our wider community and serves as our annual appeal. Given the financial uncertainty facing so many, we worried about asking for funding this year, but as it turned out, our supporters showed that IVCG's care for the senior community is more important than ever. We are so grateful to our friends who responded to this year's appeal, including:

Eileen Benoit  
Marilyn Bergen  
Cheryl Bode  
Brian Borgerson  
Skip Borgerson  
Steven Borgerson  
Jeffrey Buell  
Melissa Canham-Cline  
Lisa Cantu  
Sarah Charlow  
John Clark  
Timothy Dann  
Marcie Dimenstein  
Dr. Catherine Dinauer  
Joseph Donroe  
Carol Eisenhardt  
Georgia Erickson  
Al & Marianne Fontana  
Ronald Ferraiolo  
Leslie George  
Jean Hansen  
Will Janisch  
Susan Jordan  
Dr. Beverly Kidder  
Melissa Lamoreaux  
Ann Levison  
Robert Lyons  
Dr. Cynthia McNamara

## 5 | CONNECTIONS

Joan Mongillo  
Karin Patriquin  
Linda Pawelek  
Bob Serow  
Jean & Jim Silk  
Elizabeth Stevens  
Gordon Wall  
Kate Walton  
Thurmon Whitley  
Art & Ann Yost

### THANK YOU TO OUR NEW DRIVERS

When the COVID pandemic "hit home" in mid-March, it seemed that many of us were caught somewhat by surprise. Whether this should have been the case is unclear, but it certainly felt as if events overtook us suddenly. This was especially true when it came to medical ride bookings. For most of March, our phones "rang off the hook" with clients cancelling long-scheduled appointments, procedures and operations. Similarly, most of our pre-pandemic drivers understandably decided to temporarily suspend their own driving.

While virtually all routine appointments were off the calendar for the second half of March and all of April and May, IVCG made the difficult decision to continue to provide transportation for critical medical needs, such as cancer care, dialysis, and post-operative care. In these cases, the patient's medical team had decided that the risk to the client of not receiving the care was greater than the risk of breaking isolation to obtain it. IVCG was incredibly fortunate that a corps of drivers, most of them new to our organization, stepped forward to fill this need.

We would especially like to thank: **Katie Criswell, Joe Dombrowski, Joe Donroe, Will Ferrall, Julianna Lai, Jamie Lier, Caroline Paul, Matthew Peterson, Elizabeth Searcy, Gordon Smith, Christian Tallo, and Roger Tausig**, all of whom stepped up to help out in incredibly difficult and even frightening circumstances. We cannot adequately express our gratitude.

As part of our response to the pandemic conditions, IVCG also moved into the areas of grocery shopping and providing staples. Because of the efforts of our generous volunteers, we were

able to create a stockpile of paper products (including toilet paper!) which we delivered to our clients and others in need. Donors, grocery shoppers and delivery volunteers include: **Talia Erris, David Harpin, James He, Sarah Nikkel, Anne Packevicz, Diane Petaway, Kia Russell-Agrell, Fi Schroth-Douma, Ben Soltoff, Rohan Subramanian, Meaghan Sullivan, Melissa Thomas and Laura Traverse.**

Whether IVCG will remain in "the grocery business" permanently remains to be determined. We are encouraged that things seem to have gone smoothly and we are most grateful to have been able to be of service at such a critical time.

### FROM ANNA'S DESK

If you've called the office recently, you may have heard a new voice. Since late April, I've been working as the Program Assistant at IVCG. In just a short time, we've been able to accomplish a few things of which I'm proud to have been a part. Not only did we redesign the website, we also started an Instagram (@interfaithvolunteercaregivers) to connect with other community organizations and to help get the word out about what we do. As some of you may know, IVCG has recently started a new program called "We've Got You Covered" to distribute reusable cloth masks to homebound seniors. Thanks to generous grants from The Yale Community for New Haven Fund, The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, and The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, we've been able to send 700 masks to all of our existing clients! We still have a small quantity of masks left over, so if you or someone you know needs a mask, call the office and let us know.

On a more personal note, it has been an absolute pleasure working with Jane and with many of the clients and volunteers I've had the chance to interact with over the phone or in person. When I got this job, I was about to graduate from Yale with a Ph.D. in German Literature and, like so many others, was facing the terrifying prospect of a frozen job market in the wake of the Covid-19 epidemic. Without knowing if I'd be able to find employment, I signed up to volunteer through the New Haven Help with Covid website in hopes that I'd at least be able to find some way to be productive and help my community through this

## 6 | CONNECTIONS

uncertain time. I found a listing for an opportunity at IVCG and, much to my surprise, it was a paid position! I have greatly enjoyed working in a place where I can see what we do come back to us in ways both large and small. If there's anything I've learned from this experience, it's that the universe has ways of taking care of us when we reach out to help others.

In gratitude,  
Anna

## TO BE GRATEFUL

By Mary Comfort

In these recent few months, our world as we know it changed from what we knew as everyday normal to a "new normal." We had a new vocabulary: social distancing, six feet apart, wear a mask, wash your hands, pay attention to the one way directional signs in the store and more.

I had been going along, still trying to get through the grief of losing my husband last year. So I was taking baby steps: starting to go, at first, just to the store. A few months later I then started to go to the senior center a little.

Then I decided to join a bereavement group for widows. All of a sudden in mid-March it was like the whole world stopped.

The CDC issued guidelines to follow. Stay at home became the norm. The number of coronavirus deaths kept going up and up to an astronomical figure. It certainly was so difficult to comprehend all this happening. I thought, if I go to sleep then tomorrow will be different, but, no it was not, just worse. The Governor's daily updates were on the news.

Places were closed. The norm became order groceries for home delivery, order takeout, have your prescriptions delivered. Everything focused on not going out or interacting with anyone so the virus wouldn't spread.

But just when I thought I was totally alone, friends called to check on me. Places started calling. One of the places was Interfaith Volunteers, they called

to check to see how I was doing during this dark time, asked if I needed anything, and took the time to just listen and talk. After that phone call, I felt great and so appreciative.

The senior center in town also did the same, so I felt all is not lost, people do care, and we're all going through this together and we are all going to get through this together. For I know I was not the only one and they, themselves, were also going through this as well. These places were calling me to uplift me. How special is that? So I truly have so much to be very grateful for. To all I'm very thankful.

## AN UPDATE ON OUR PROGRAMS

\* We are providing medical driving, subject to volunteer availability. Please call the office at 203-230-8994 to reserve your ride as far in advance as you possibly can. *Our ability to provide transportation will be limited due to lack of volunteer drivers.* We appreciate your patience.

\* Friendly visits are suspended until further notice; friendly calling continues.

\* Grocery shopping can be provided subject to volunteer availability; please limit your requests to two per month.

\* Mae's Closet has re-opened for loans. We are not accepting donations at this time. Call 475-414-8333 to arrange for a loan and a no-contact pickup.

\* Aging at Home is suspended at least until September, at which point we will decide whether to resume the program for the fall.

\* We have a limited number of cloth masks remaining from our "We've Got You Covered" program. If you would like us to mail you a re-usable cloth mask and/or latex gloves, please call the office!

## 7 | CONNECTIONS

### IVCG THANKS VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBERS

No volunteer recognition issue would be complete without acknowledging the tireless contributions of IVCG's Board of Directors. Our all-volunteer Board meets every month (these days via Zoom) and deals with the high-level issues of our organization's direction, how closely we are adhering to our mission, governance, and of course our financial stability. All our directors are outstanding members of the community and have devoted themselves to IVCG's well-being and sustainability. They supply the overall direction and guidance, as well as oversight, that are necessary for IVCG to serve our community with integrity and transparency. All directors not only serve on the Board itself, but also belong to at least one Board committee (Finance, Governance, Development, and our Faith Community Task Force). You can be confident that IVCG is in good hands!

IVCG's 2020 Board includes:

Bob Serow, Board Chair (RLS Consulting)  
Marianne Fontana, Board Vice-Chair (retired)  
N.L. "Skip" Borgerson, Treasurer (retired)  
Josephine Marra, Secretary (Regency House Wallingford)  
Mary Dansinghani (Yale University School of Medicine)  
Marcie Dimenstein (Elder Pathways)  
Al Fontana (retired)  
Miriam James (Peoples Bank)  
Margaret Rubano (Synergy Homecare East Haven)  
Gordon Wall (Synergy Homecare East Haven)

If you are a client, volunteer or friend of IVCG, and would like to help guide our organization, please contact Jane to discuss Board membership. You'll be joining a remarkable group of men and women and helping to support one of your favorite causes! We provide extensive director on-boarding as well as specialized governance training through the Community Foundation's "Purposeful Boards" seminar.

Last but not least...

IVCG also thanks St. Rita's R.C. Church (Divine Mercy Parish) for their amazing support. Since

1992, the church has provided IVCG with a roomy, comfortable office suite, located in the former convent building on Gillies Road, which also houses the St. Rita School Early Learning Center. IVCG pays significantly under market rate for our space, so the church's support plays an important role in our being able to devote more of our budget to client service. We are blessed!

INTERFAITH VOLUNTEER CARE GIVERS  
of GREATER NEW HAVEN

30 Gillies Rd  
Hamden CT 06517-2113

NONPROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
NEW HAVEN CT  
PERMIT NO. 124

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

