



WELCOME

Now that we have begun a new decade, it's time to count our blessings. And chief among them, for IVCG, are our wonderful clients, volunteers and our many friends in the community. I often stress the Inter**faith** part of our name, because in the final analysis it's faith, in our fellow human beings and in our Creator, that sustains us year by year.

Looking back at 2019, we added **223 new clients**, and about **20 new volunteers**. The amount of service that we provided grew by just under 10% —as you can see, we are providing somewhat more service, but to a much larger number of people. As an organization, we are dedicated to helping as many people as we possibly can, so we do view the forgoing as a positive.

Our new volunteers in the past quarter are **Laurie Bonjo**, **Lynne Costello**, **Richard Davies**, **Peter Liberti**, **Carolyn Paul**, and **Michael Riordan**. We also say a fond farewell and "God speed" to long-time board members **Meg Church** and **Dru Cherry**. Both have ably and lovingly served IVCG and we wish them all the best.

IVCG's many friends and supporters turned out to wish us a Happy Birthday at our November 3 celebration. It was so much fun and so gratifying to see folks from our past, present, and future.

We are also profoundly thankful that your generosity permits us to serve so many others in our community. **Mae's Closet**, our new durable medical equipment lending bank, is off to a roaring start, making multiple loans each month of gently used medical equipment.

We organized and coordinated the delivery of over **1,500 Thanksgiving meals** to elderly and homebound folks—and each household even got a child's card this year! True "labors of love" that your help makes possible. We also have some possible new initiatives "in the works" for 2020—projects that will dovetail with and support our mission in interesting and creative ways. So stay tuned!

Please accept IVCG's most sincere wishes for a peaceful and enjoyable holiday season. We wish you all the best for 2020 and thank all of you for our successful 2019.

Jane J. Ferrall

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SMILES, HUGS, & PRIZES!
A terrific time was had by all at
IVCG's 35th Anniversary Reception



IVCG SUCESSFULLY HOLDS 35TH ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION

On Sunday, November 3rd, IVCG marked its 35th anniversary with a celebration held at the Square Foot Theatre & Tavern in Wallingford. Over 60 guests, including volunteers, board members, staff, and others from the Greater New Haven community shared delicious snacks prepared by the culinary program of the Eli Whitney Technical School and took part in a raffle for a range of gift baskets contributed by our Board members. We are grateful to these and other donors who helped make this event a rousing success:

The high point of the event was a screening of **Lives Well Lived**, a documentary by the award-winning filmmaker Sky Bergman that showcases the inspiring stories and wisdom of dozens of men and women who share how they live their lives to the fullest.

We truly stand on the shoulders of all the many, many people who have helped IVCG come to this current day of celebration. This year we were so grateful to have the opportunity to re-connect with our alumni, both former Board members and employees, who stepped up to help ensure IVCG's continued viability.

IVCG's core mission remains providing the personalized, caring service that permits our treasured elders to age at home with dignity, grace, and friends. With your support, we hope to be "in business" for at least another 35 years, because IVCG's brand of caring will never go out of style!

THANKS TO ALL WHO MADE IT A GREAT EVENT!

Apex Pharmacy	Atria Larsen Place
Carter Hayes & Associates	Marilyn Bergen
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Don Sineti	Hillary Singer
Gordon Smith	Andrea Spence
Janice & Henry St. Hilaire	Hazel Taft
Ernestine Taylor	Gloria Testa
Gordon Wall	Pat Wallace
Kate Walton	Ann & Art Yost

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS:

FALL/WINTER, 2019

So many thanks to our wonderful friends and supporters, who contribute to help us keep our doors open! Folks who donated in the fourth quarter of 2019 include:

Prudence Armstrong	Barbara Bretko	Elaine Bryant	Vilma Capozzi	Marie Carangelo
Philip Carter	Nancy Casapulla	Anthony Consiglio	Louis Coppola	Constance Decker
Rose Dubin	Frances Farrell	Agnes Farrer	Alison Galanter	Marguerite Gardner
Marion Greene	Oliva Grippo	Irma Hammer	Cheri Kobe	Marvel Lang
Lorraine LaTerza	Nereida Maldonaldo	Augusta Mantia	Joan Mongillo	Donna Murphy
Sharon O'Neill	Margaret Outley	Madeleine Paul	Marie Picarello	Fred Quartiano
Anna Rubino	Leonara Russo	Lorraine Salerno	Nicholas Sepesko	Marilyn Sisson
Janet Sola	Gloria Testa	Marilyn Tolland	Patricia Wallace	Dorothy Young
David Zella				

IVCG gratefully acknowledges those who dedicated gifts in honor of the memory of Charles Curello:

Rose LaBonia	Shelley Kiernan	Frank Rosano	Maryann Curello	Patricia Crisco-Denicola
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Aging at Home:

Shirley Dobihal

We'd also like to thank the following for their incredibly generous contributions that helped make Thanksgiving for All happen the elderly and homebound this year:

Paul Cosenza	Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church	Carol Mitchell	Joan Rafford	Allen Rose
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CHILDHOOD

Estelle McKernan

HAMDEN—I grew up in the Hill section of New Haven, surrounded by family, friends, and neighbors. Daggett Street was just a block long. It is bounded by Congress and Washington Avenues. I knew all my immediate neighbors, and if ever no one was home, there were many places I could have found a safe haven. There were Jewish, Italian, Polish, Russian, and Irish names.

My friends and I occupied ourselves in many ways. We played games we learned in school like Huckle Buckly Beanstalk, dodgeball, and Giant Steps. We jumped rope to a variety of rhymes, bounced a tennis balls with an alaree or two, and, of course, played games of hide and seek. There were items that were purchased too, such as tiddlywinks, pick-up sticks, easy money, or bingo. I remember how my friend Janie was with a metal dollhouse and a Sparkle-Plenty doll. I had to be content with a heavy cardboard dollhouse bought by my brother and sister-in-law. Some things were scarce in the war years and for some time after World War II. But most of all, we had our imaginations. We could play games with dolls, paper dolls, and the like. But we made up many of our own amusements. We had a game called "Scenes of Pictures," where we acted out a scene from a favorite movie for our audience to guess. Anyone lucky enough to guess correctly got to do the next acting stint.

We once decided to write a newspaper because the Walmans who ran the printing shop up the street gave us strips of paper. Or we might decide to have a business where we washed (and then dried and ironed) doll clothes using tubs of water strategically positioned on Mrs. Esposito's porch. We would embroider and chat, and of course on Saturday

mornings there was on the radio a program called "Lets Pretend." No matter what we were doing on Saturday, everything would stop when Nila Mack's "Lets Pretend" came on the air. All those wonderful fairy tales were embellished with sound effects and Ann Seymour's booming voice. Who could ever forget hearing her say "east of the sun and west of the moon" — 20 years later, I recognized the timbre of Seymour's voice when she played Sara Delano Roosevelt in "Sunrise at Campobello" at the Shubert,

Family and school were very important in our lives. So when we had a unit on parliamentary procedure, we decided to form a club. As we were in love with the movie "Little Women," we called it the Little Women's Club. It was an unusual club in that there were only four members, each a club officer. Our youngest member Jo-Ann was treasurer and guardian of our dues, 25 cents. I was the secretary and could type our minutes on a type writer my brother had borrowed. Margie Soli was the vice president, and Janie the president. We had a club song, the words to which I can still recall: "Little Women Club, we are all together, we shall never part."

We played together and did errands for our mothers in the neighborhood. I can still remember my Mom complaining that my errand-running was worthless. By the time I called my friends and they got ready and compiled their own mothers list, my Mom could have gone to Washington Avenue or Legion Avenue many times over.

But this leads to one of our most memorable happenings, as it typifies our innocence and the fun to be had.

This essay is affectionately dedicated to Jane Esposito Patton and Jo-Ann Guarineo Giannoi

A NOTE TO OUR CLIENTS: LET'S STAY IN TOUCH

As most of our clients know by now, the demand for IVCG rides continues to far out-pace our ability to supply them. While in years past we were able to accept and fulfill ride requests made within seven days of the appointment, this is, sadly, no longer the case during most weeks of the year. The primary reason for this is that our client base has exploded since 2018. Our number of dedicated volunteers has grown also, but not at all in tandem with our client growth. IVCG is no longer "New Haven's best-kept secret" and that has its pluses and minuses for sure. We have the same number of staff hours available and, even though our scheduling software has helped a lot in making us more efficient, there are still some aspects of our operation that could be improved.

This is why I'm asking that in the New Year, our clients make sure that we can stay in touch. Why? The way our service works is that, after we've accepted a ride booking, there are two telephone contacts. The first is usually the Friday before the week of the scheduled ride and is made by our office, and the purpose of that call is (1) to inform you of your driver's name and (2) to "touch up" and make sure nothing has changed about the ride. The second call is from the driver him- or herself, directly to you, and takes place within 24-48 hours of your ride. The purpose of that call is for the driver to check in and determine the final details of the ride (where and when you'll meet up, the type of car, and anything else pertinent to the ride).

If you cannot be reached for either of those calls, that's a problem.

We are increasingly finding that many of our clients have voicemail boxes that aren't set up, or that have become full and can no longer accept messages, or whose phones have been disconnected without a forwarding number. Any of these things means that there is no way for us to reach you. We call your emergency contact if we cannot contact you, but often those people are working during the day when we call, or have also changed their phone numbers, and it isn't uncommon for us to be wondering and worrying about what has happened to our client.

Making repeated, unsuccessful calls to clients is more than an unnecessary burden to our office staff; it makes things unduly difficult for our volunteers. It really isn't fair to expect your volunteer to call you multiple times, then call our office, then make more calls, and then show up not even knowing whether the ride will happen at all.

It is your responsibility to provide us with a workable way to communicate with you. This is part of successfully navigating our program. Please, take a minute to make sure we have all your phone numbers, that they all can receive calls and messages, and that we have current information for your emergency contact. The less time we have to spend hunting you down, the more great service we can provide.



YOUR DATA: WHAT & WHY

Jane Ferrall

These days it seems like we are constantly hearing about data breaches, scamming, "phishing," and other data-related crimes. People hesitate to use such services as Facebook, or to give information over the telephone, for fear of how their data will be used, or mis-used.

In this challenging environment, I thought it might be helpful to go over the data that IVCG requests of its clients, so that everyone knows why we request, what we request.

The first category of information that we ask for relates to what we need to know to serve you safely. Of course we need your basic information so we can come and get you, and also contact you when we need to. We need to know if you have any relevant medical conditions, such as vision or hearing loss, that might affect our ability to serve you. Having an up to date emergency contact is critical, because we do have difficulty reaching our clients from time to time, and it's important that "somebody" can help us find you if necessary.

The second category of information relates to the fact that, as most of you know, IVCG receives about half of its annual funding through the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut, which disburses funds administered by the Federal Administration for Community Living, of monies appropriated by Congress under the Older Americans Act of 1965. The OAA provides funding for a range of programs serving seniors, including nutrition (Meals on Wheels), legal services, caregiver support, at-home support, and elder abuse prevention, in addition, of course, to transportation. Under the current arrangements, local agencies, such as the AOA, are given flexibility to support programs that best support their specific communities. (Although this funding is critically needed, **OAA Title IIIB funding**, which covers IVCG, has remained flat since 2004. This is not a good state of affairs).

At any rate, every month, IVCG is required by the terms of its grant to report its activity to the AOASCC. The AOA, in turn, records this activity and reports it "up the chain," to show that the OAA funding is being appropriately spent. AOA must verify, to the extent possible, that the OAA funding is being spent correctly and being fairly distributed to the community. Thus, the AOA requires IVCG (and its other grantees) to collect such data as ethnicity, income level, housing status, birth date, and the "last 4 digits" of the client's social security number. This is, of course, entirely proper, as the AOA (and IVCG) are responsible for spending taxpayers' money! So you can see that many of the data items that IVCG collects are required to be reported to the AOA as part of IVCG's grant compliance.

The third category of data that we collect relates to our operations, planning and funding. For example, we ask our clients how they found us (referral source) because we like to know who is sending folks our way. We hope that one day some of these referral sources might like to help support IVCG financially. We ask for your religious congregation affiliation, if any, because we are hoping to assist some of our faith communities to better connect with their members through weekend transportation (this is a goal for the future). We ask for the type of medical appointment to, again, help us get a better sense of how we're serving our clients and to qualify us for specialized grant funding.

While we do appreciate the sensitivity of some of these subjects, virtually every funding source (whether the AOA or private foundations) requires that IVCG submit demographic and other aggregate data. After all, these funders are entitled to know where their money is going, and IVCG is required to submit accurate answers. We appreciate your cooperation.

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make a life by what you give. ”

—WINSTON CHURCHILL