

2025 Fall NEWSLETTER

RESPIRE

Care

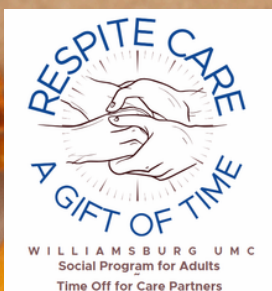
**Staff Recognized for
Excellent Care**



**Veteran John
LaGessee brings
gifts to Respite
Care**



**Garden Party
Record attendance raises record funds**



Williamsburg United Methodist Church
500 Jamestown Rd. Williamsburg, VA



WILLIAMSBURG UMC
Social Program for Adults
Time Off for Care Partners

VOLUNTEER FOCUS--NAVY VETERAN JOHN LAGESSE



John LaGesse, a retired Navy veteran, is a well-loved visitor at Respite Care. He makes a point of coming to Respite Care on all the patriotic holidays, such as Memorial Day, July 4th, and Veterans Day. One of his favorite activities is sitting with veterans and seniors and reminiscing about their life experiences. He also brings a flag, a poppy, and often snack bags for our members.

John is a very active member of the VFW and states he served “Sixteen years, 4 days, and 9 hours serving in the Navy.” While in the Navy, John worked on a flight deck refueling aircraft; he also worked as a lithographer, a criminal investigator, and an instructor. Originally from NJ, when the Navy moved him to Williamsburg, he decided to stay. John has four children and five grandchildren. And he happens to live across the hall from our very own Renate Wolfe.

John also volunteers with the Cooties, an honor group of the VFW, which focuses on supporting veterans at the VA Hospital, often taking them clothing, snacks, and providing a friendly visit. When asked why he devotes his time to veterans, he replied, “The VFW motto is ‘no one does more for veterans.’ He went on to say that “everyone needs somebody.”

John asks that we all “take care of our greatest generation as they are few and far between,” a statement that speaks to the heart of Respite Care.

A Blooming Success

Respite Care's 4th Annual Garden Party Fundraiser proved to be a resounding success, bringing together friends, food, and fun for a great cause. Held at the beautifully decorated Fellowship Hall at Williamsburg United Methodist Church, the event welcomed a record-breaking 176 attendees and raised \$13,750—both all-time highs for the fundraiser.

The hall was transformed into a vibrant garden setting, thanks to over 20 vases of fresh flowers generously donated by local stores and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



Guests were treated to live music from Respite Board member Neil Bright, whose performance on the Steinway piano included classical and popular selections.

A highlight of the event was the array of delicious food, all donated and served by our partners from local senior living communities—Brookdale, Windsor Meade, Spring Arbor, Commonwealth, and Edgeworth Park. Their generosity and attention to detail made the meal a true delight. Added thanks go to Bucktrout Funeral Home and Choose Home for our beverages.

The fundraiser also featured a raffle with incredible prizes, including \$250 gift certificates to popular local restaurants and shops. Additional prizes included golf packages, eco-friendly gift baskets, and tickets to performances by the Williamsburg Symphony and the Williamsburg Chamber Music Society.



We are especially grateful to our generous financial sponsors—Geddy, Harris, Franck, and Hickman; Davenport & Co.; Hill & Schultz; Town Management; Johnson, Gasink, and Baxter, LLP; Colonial Center for Hearing; and Oasis Senior Advisors. These community-minded firms and individuals play a vital role in supporting our mission. We encourage readers to consider their services and thank them for investing in care that makes a difference.



Thanks to the outpouring of community support, the Garden Party not only raised vital funds but also strengthened the bonds between Respite Care and those who believe in its mission. It was truly an afternoon to remember.

Respite's Super Staff Recognized

The strength of any great program is its people, and our staff is at the heart of that strength. In a recent survey of our members' care partners conducted by the Board of Directors, one message came through loud and clear: the level of care provided at Respite is exceptional. In fact, **100% of respondents said they are very satisfied with the care their loved ones receive!**

This glowing feedback is a result of the work of our incredible staff, led by Respite Manager Heike Williams. Each of the seven team members shows remarkable attentiveness to the individual needs, personalities, and preferences of every program member. Their effort goes well beyond routine care; they develop personal connections that foster trust, comfort, and joy.



Our unique 3:1 member-to-staff ratio enhances these relationships, allowing for highly personalized interactions. Because both members and staff attend on consistent days, deep bonds are formed, and members are welcomed by familiar, caring faces each time they arrive. This consistency creates a safe and nurturing environment where everyone can thrive.

We are also proud to share that staff turnover has been nonexistent for over two years—a testament to the shared mission at Respite. Team members like Cassie Mae, with nearly 19 years of service, and Sally Rowell, who has been with us for 10 years, embody the dedication of the staff to serving our mission.

The Board of Directors joins our care partners in offering our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to the entire Respite Care staff. You are the foundation of everything we do, and your unwavering commitment makes all the difference in the lives of our members and their families.

INVEST IN A LEGACY OF COMPASSION

Dear Friends and Supporters, In every community, there exists a unique space where compassion meets action. For many in our community, that space is found within the Respite Care Center at Williamsburg United Methodist Church. Our center serves as a lifeline for dependent seniors and their caregivers, offering stimulating activities, essential social engagement, and a comforting environment. Every dollar contributed to our cause directly impacts the well-being of our members, fostering a culture of compassion and dignity. But we can't do it alone.

Why Your Support Matters

- Continuity:** Consistent quality care for our senior members
- Expansion:** Broaden our range of activities and outreach programs
- Resourcefulness:** Acquire updated materials and equipment to better serve our community
- Accessibility:** Financially assist families who may not afford the full cost of care

When you invest in the Respite Care Center, you're not merely donating; you're becoming a part of a legacy of compassion that enriches the lives of both the elderly and their loving caregivers.

Ways to Give

- One-Time Donation
- Monthly Contributions Sponsor an Event or Activity
- Sponsor a Scholarship

Make your tax-deductible donation today and take the first step in becoming a part of our vibrant and loving community! With heartfelt gratitude, *The Respite Care Center Team*

Online Donations:
Scan QR code with
your phone
camera or follow
the below link:



<https://tinyurl.com/givetorespite>

DONATE BY MAIL:

Please mail your check to
**United Methodist
Church Respite Program**
500 Jamestown Road,
Williamsburg, VA 23185

Questions: Contact Ellen Bushman, Respite Care Executive Director 757-920-5538

Dementia

Support Group



For caregivers taking care of loved ones with various forms of dementia. You don't have to travel this journey alone. Please join us for information and support.



We meet the 2nd
Tuesday of every month
3:30-4:30pm in Room 174

Williamsburg United
Methodist Church
500 Jamestown Rd
Williamsburg, VA 23185