

WILLOUGHBY HILLS SENIORS, INC.

Find a group of friends who challenge and inspire you; spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life. (Amy Poehler)



SENIOR NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 29, 2023

Willoughby Hills Seniors, Inc. is happy to provide this newsletter to you as a way to stay engaged in senior activities in our community.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING SENIOR CENTER DUES FOR 2024: We have applied for Lake County Senior Tax Levy funding which could provide for the myseniorcenter.com software, providing each member with a key fob for access to the Senior Room. We will send the dues applications out **in 2024** rather than before year end to allow for the new system for each member. We will keep you posted on this new membership amenity.

SENIOR POTLUCK:

Our January Senior Potluck is set for Tuesday, January 16 at 11:30. Main entrée will be sloppy joes! We have asked our new Mayor Chris Hallum to be our Guest Speaker. If he agrees, we have asked him to speak about his vision for the City during his term in office. We will keep you posted as our invitation to speak progresses.

RESIDENT NEWS...

Welcome to the following new residents: Johnny & Nicole Johnson of White Road and Ryan & Sarah Ricart of Loreto Drive. All Seniors are welcome to join our group! Welcome to Willoughby Hills!

Willoughby Hills Seniors was happy to partner with Willoughby Hills Quilt Guild this year to provide holiday baskets to four residents, including John & Donna Gell of Maplegrove (gave John a little “pick me up” following his recent convalescence for arm surgery), Ray & Judy Kifer of Mapleview Lane, Rosemarie & Victor Barwig of Mapleview Lane and Laura & Donald Pistor of Berkshire Hills (who also were happy to be together at home rather than in the hospital, as they had experienced earlier in the year!) So glad to bring these residents a little joy during their difficult times. Thanks to everyone who made this happen. The baskets came out great and the residents loved getting them!!



SENIORS SAY “THANK YOU” TO MAYOR GARDNER

In just a few short days, Mayor Andy Gardner will complete his four-year term as Willoughby Hills’ Mayor. The Willoughby Hills Seniors would like to thank him for his service to the seniors, to include some of the following highlights:

- 1) **COVID vaccines & booster assistance:** Shortly after Mayor Gardner took Office, we were thrust into the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Gardner and his Team quickly responded to the call of Lake County to open up the Willoughby Hills Community/Senior Center in order to administer the vaccine to as many Lake County residents as possible. Lake County Health Commissioner Ron Graham sought out Mayor Gardner to put together a site to keep our community safe. With the assistance of our former Acting Fire Chief (& then Lake County Health Department employee) Tom Talcott, the Mayor was able to successfully convert the Community/Senior Center to a vaccination and booster station where many of our seniors travelled to get immunized.
- 2) **Partnering with the County to assist with a massive number of vaccines and boosters at Lakeland Community College:** Mayor Gardner met with his Firefighter and Administrative teams to review the need to vaccinate the Lake County population in an effort to do so at Lakeland Community College. The plan was to vaccinate approximately six thousand people per day in order to seek prompt resolution of the pandemic vaccination process. The Team was so pleased that the Mayor supported this endeavor. It made for an unforgettable time in their careers when they sat in the Lakeland College Building and could look out onto the campus and see an endless line of individuals line up to get their shots. Buses kept bringing people (many seniors) into the line. Unlike today’s world where a line in the supermarket or bank brings out the worst in people, the people waiting to get their vaccines were patient and just happy to have the opportunity here in Lake County to get the vaccine. That was truly unforgettable and we thank Mayor Gardner for allowing us to be a part of that.
- 3) **Development of the City E-newsletter for seniors and all residents:** It was a constant battle for Mayor Gardner to try to keep residents advised of all of the rules during COVID, taking his lead from Governor DeWine on building rules, closures and social distancing. A new resident to the area mentioned that in her prior city, there was an electronic newsletter which helped get much of the important information disseminated. Mayor Gardner used this approach to begin the weekly E-newsletter, which not only got us through the COVID-19 communication needs, but continues to be a resource for City events. It is the hope of the seniors that, should the need arise for seniors who do NOT have computers or I-phones or a means to travel to City Hall to pick up an extra copy (which is minimal most likely), a paper copy may be mailed to them with the hiring of the City Communications Supervisor. The City E-newsletter has been a good addition to Mayor Gardner’s administration and to disseminate the information to as many people (including seniors) as possibly, would certainly allow his tradition to continue long after he leaves office.

4) Mind Challenge Participation and Senior Trivia Night: When Mind Challenge representatives Art Greenberg and Phil Levine approached Mayor Gardner about trying to bring seniors out again after COVID, he recognized the challenge but liked the idea (being a trivia buff himself) and a Mind Challenge team was formed consisting of members Mary Melvin, Sandy Falck, Ira Lorber, Gloria Majeski, Michael Kline, Dave & Denise Reichelt and Mayor Gardner. In the three years of participation, the Team has taken home 2nd Place, earning \$1500 for the seniors each time. The first \$1500 prize was used to buy a projector so that the City could hold “Senior Trivia Night” once a month to keep in practice for the Mind Challenge competition and to continue to bring the seniors out. Mayor Gardner has assumed the role of “emcee” and we thank him for his interest and commitment to do this for our seniors.

5) Rock N Roll Day - Tribute to Michael Stanley Gee (now evolved into “Music Fest”): With the passing of our resident Michael Gee (better known as Michael Stanley of Michael Stanley & the Reasonators), Mayor Gardner was gracious enough to allow for a special tribute at the Community Center to honor his life and legacy. Billed as “Rock N Roll Day in Willoughby Hills,” it was a successful music event that brought Michael’s family, bandmembers and friends, into our beautiful city to dedicate a large shadowbox in his memory, which still remains in our Community Center Lobby. This event has evolved to “Music Fest” and is planned for fall each year by our Recreation Commission.

6) Mothers’ Day Remembrance: Mayor Gardner wanted to pay tribute to all of the mothers in Willoughby Hills who work so hard to keep the family unit together. His thought was to honor each one with a special “Mother’s Day tumbler” and through his efforts, many mothers were the proud recipients of this beautiful gesture. It means a lot to be remembered in this manner and all of the mothers were so appreciative of this beautiful tribute from the Mayor.

7) Senior Tax Levy Application: Finally, thank you Mayor Gardner for submitting the Senior Tax Levy Application for our seniors. We will take some space on the next few pages to explain this to seniors and residents who may not understand what this means. We are hoping that this means that by submitting the application to the Lake County Commissioners, the City of Willoughby Hills will now be recognized as a Lake County Senior Center and be afforded the funds to begin the work of providing personnel, facilities and programs for a facility close to home for our seniors to enjoy.

Hopefully, this offers a glimpse of some of Mayor Gardner’s accomplishments for our senior population. We appreciate his dedication to our cause! Best wishes as you complete your term as Mayor!



INFORMATION ON LAKE COUNTY SENIOR TAX LEVY:

- **What is it?** The Lake County Senior Levy passed (by voters) in 1992. Formally organized by the Lake County Senior Services Coalition, the 12 participating agencies (a full-time Coordinator was a prerequisite to qualify for this, which Willoughby Hills did not have) agreed to a distribution formula for the funds (made of monies from real estate tax collection), as well as specific uses of these funds by these entities. While the Coalition still exists, the role for allocation of levy funds was replaced in 2013 when the Lake County Commissioners established the Lake County Senior Citizens Advisory Panel. Historically, allocation of levy funds has only been made to the 12 original agencies, but also came to include such agencies as Lake County Council on Aging, Lifeline, RSVP and others. Willoughby Hills residents contributed \$210,509 in 2023 for this endeavor.
- **Why didn't Willoughby Hills apply for Senior Tax Levy Funding before?** One of the rules was that the entity needed to have a full-time Recreation/Senior Coordinator. Willoughby Hills did not have that. However, three years ago, the rules changed in that a part-time Coordinator was acceptable in order to receive funding. This was most likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic when some of the cities were forced to lay off staff, resulting in the loss of full-time Coordinators. Unfortunately, Willoughby Hills was never notified of this. In 2023, Willoughby Hills Seniors Inc. reached out to the LC Senior Citizens Advisory Panel to find out that they were indeed eligible and an application to participate was sent to Mayor Gardner for completion. He completed the application, requesting \$116,000 to provide for a full-time Recreation/Senior Coordinator and funds for programs and facility upgrades, including the software for client tracking.
- **Why should Willoughby Hills get funding?** 1) Despite our residents paying into the fund, the City receives nothing for the Senior Center. While it can be said that programs such as Lifeline or Western Reserve Development and others exist, as well as two Senior Centers being close to Willoughby Hills, it is only fair to add that some of the programs are income based, which disqualify many of our residents, and going to the other senior centers means paying more for non-resident membership fees and non-resident program fees. We believe our residents want to stay local.
- **Didn't the MCS Consulting Service Survey that was prepared (and paid for) by the Lake County Commissioners on October 16, 2015, identify Willoughby Hills as having the second most (only to non-participating Painesville) age 65+ Black or African American population?** Yes, the survey indicated that statistic, along with the fact that by the year 2030, 1 of 3 Lake County residents will be age 60 and over. This is why we need to pay attention to what we are providing for our seniors! The County has used this survey's recommendation to begin to provide the software to track clients served. It also stated that all capital and major equipment expenses should come from the "Contingency Fund" which is part of the Senior Levy, allowing that the Senior Tax Levy be used only for operations. It may be nice to pull this report and start following some of the suggestions to avoid decisions that may seem to be discriminatory or unfair to all of the County's residents. It seemed that Commissioner Regovich was on board with the unity of all seniors when he was recently quoted in the News-Herald, saying "I see people out at the senior centers, socializing, and I worry about those who don't come out." We will give you less to worry about, Commissioner Regovich, if you approve Mayor Gardner's application for Senior Tax Levy Funding!

Who approves/disapproves the application for the Senior Tax Levy Funding?

The Lake County Commissioners (Commissioners Richard Regovich, John Plecnik, and John Hammerchek) review the recommendations handed down to them from the Senior Services Manager Alyea Barajas, who works with Planning Director Jason Boyd. The LC Senior Service Advisory Panel consists of a five-member volunteer board (including Chairman Lyle Shull, Vice Chairman Lisa Manning, Kenneth G. Gauntner, Ellen Foley Kessler and Thomas Dreher. They are responsible for reviewing the applications and making recommendations to the Senior Service Manager who then reports to the Commissioners.

How much have others gotten in the past?

	2020	2021	2022	2023		2020	2021	2022	2023
Eastlake	\$89,500	\$89,500	\$139,500	\$139,500	Fairport	\$115K	\$115K	\$165K	\$165K
Kirtland	\$75K	\$75K	\$125K	\$125K	Madison	\$93,500	\$93,500	\$143,500	\$143,500
Mentor	\$320K	\$320K	\$370K	\$370K	Perry	\$87,500	\$86,342	\$137,500	\$137,500
Wickliffe	\$90K	\$95K	\$145K	\$145K	Willoughby	\$130K	\$130K	\$180K	\$180K
Willowick	\$84,500	\$84,500	\$134,500	\$134,500					
WLBY HILLS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0					

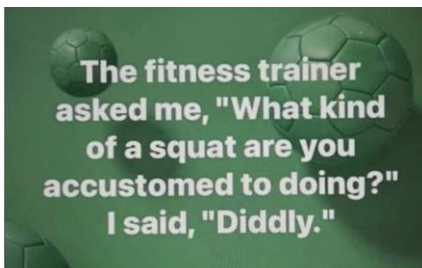
We will keep you posted!

HOLIDAY SENIOR LUNCHEON

Thanks to all who came, including Santa! Great time for our seniors!



BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR.....



**Have a good week! Willoughby Hills Seniors, Inc. Board Members
(Mary Cihula, Laurie Feltham & Gloria Majeski)**

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JANUARY 2024
Willoughby Hills Seniors, Inc.

<u>Sun</u>	<u>Mon</u>	<u>Tue</u>	<u>Wed</u>	<u>Thu</u>	<u>Fri</u>	<u>Sat</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	HAPPY NEW YEAR!		BRIDGE 12:30-3pm	KNIT/CROCHET 10am to noon	EXERCISE 11am MAHJONG 1pm PINOCHLE 6-9pm	PINOCHLE 6-9pm
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	YOGA 1pm (Lions Room) COMMUNITY QUILTS 10am-2pm		BRIDGE 12:30-3pm	KNIT/CROCHET 10am to noon PODIATRIST (By Appt.) 10am WINTER BASKET WEAVERS 5-9PM	EXERCISE 11am MAHJONG 1pm PINOCHLE 6-9pm	PINOCHLE 6-9pm
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	YOGA 1pm (Lions Room)	SENIOR POTLUCK 11:30am SENIOR TRIVIA 7:00pm (O’Ryan Room)	BRIDGE 12:30-3pm	KNIT/CROCHET 10am to noon QUILT GUILD MTG. 7:00pm	EXERCISE 11am MAHJONG 1pm	PINOCHLE 6-9pm
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	YOGA 1pm (Lions Room)		BRIDGE 12:30-3pm	KNIT/CROCHET 10am to noon	EXERCISE 11am MAHJONG 1pm	PINOCHLE 6-9pm
28	29	30	31			
	YOGA 1pm (Lions Room) SACERICH SEWS 12pm-3pm		BRIDGE 12:30-3pm			