



Vassar-Warner's The Columns

Volume 7, Issue 1

Late Summer 2008

A Senior Residence of Distinction Since 1871 - Offering Independent Residency, Assisted Living and Respite Services

Message from the Executive Director *by Irene Andujar*



A lot has been happening at Vassar-Warner, so I thought this would be a great time for some updates. First, Vassar-Warner has stepped up its outreach and marketing efforts to increase community awareness.

We have found it interesting that many people have heard of Vassar-Warner, but do not

know of the services we provide, nor that we are a not-for-profit organization.

Marketing and outreach have been a fun challenge; we enjoy meeting new people, and it strengthens Vassar-Warner's community relationships. Our efforts are working well for us, allowing us to offer great intergenerational programs, internships, educational seminars, respite for caregivers, and we now have 52 residents who call Vassar-Warner "home."

The next update is regarding the New York State Assisted Living Residence licensure. Vassar-Warner applied for licensure as an Assisted Living Residence in 2004. We have recently received information that the state is moving forward with this program and licenses will be coming.

What this means for Vassar-Warner is a more consistent and defined set of regulations for all organizations who provide Adult Home, Enriched Housing or Assistive Services. There will be no interruption or changes in the services we provide, but it will be a more distinguished classification for Vassar-Warner.

Lastly, Vassar-Warner has submitted two grant applications. The first grant is for continuation of installing air conditioning throughout Vassar-Warner. Last year, Vassar-Warner was awarded a grant, and we have installed air conditioning for the hallways of the second and third floors.

If we are awarded the grant this year, we would be able to install air conditioning into 21 resident rooms, from the existing new condenser units we have.

The second grant application is through the Environmental Protection/Preservation Fund. We are requesting to be considered for a matching grant to restore the front facade of Vassar-Warner. This would include restoration of the porches, decks, columns, cornices, and masonry.

Although I have been on the Vassar-Warner team for a short time, I continue to be impressed and excited with the support we receive from the community. Vassar-Warner has been an anchor in this community since 1835 (first as Dutchess Academy for Boys, and as you all know, it has been a senior residence since 1871).

I believe it is imperative that we make the necessary changes to enhance the lives of those we serve and to preserve this historic home for all generations.

Moments in Vassar-Warner History:

1904: "An attractive spot indeed this summer has been the Old Ladies Home, and the well-kept grounds with flower beds, clusters of snowballs and other old-fashioned flowers often attracting passers-by, who stop to take in the picture..."
Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle

1913: When the suffrage parade passed by on the morning of the 4th of July, "every resident [of Vassar-Warner] was on the balcony and applauded when the suffragists shouted up to them "IN THE NAME OF OUR GRANDMOTHERS!"
Poughkeepsie News-Telegraph

NEWS IN BRIEF

Board of Advocates: The Board of Advocates is a group of volunteers whose mission is the enhancement in appropriate resident services and activities. The advocates host a number of special events for the residents of Vassar-Warner.

They hosted a Valentine's Day Luncheon with a delicious meal and fantastic desserts. The advocates also had fun donning hats and sipping tea with our residents at the Victorian Tea. It was a beautiful afternoon with background music provided by "Lost in the Woods," and the advocates served tea and treats.



Above: Advocates hosting Victorian Tea; Below: Spring Card Party



On April 17th, 91 people had a great time playing cards in the parlor and tasting the homemade bake sale treats at the Advocates' Spring Card Party. 20 door prizes were awarded; and best of all, the Board of Advocates raised more than \$800 which will be used to offer special luncheons, outings and other events for the residents of Vassar-Warner.

Extraordinary Staff: Each year, employees nominate their colleagues to be considered for Employee of the Year. Each nominee receives a framed letter with quotes from their nominations.



Josh Lowery receiving "Employee of the Year" Award from Executive Director Irene Andujar

Each nominee is also recognized at the annual employee appreciation luncheon, served by the Board of Trustees. The winner is honored with an "Employee of the Year" plaque, gift of \$100 and a cake.

Congratulations to Josh Lowery, this year's winner, who received nominations by his peers for his cheerful manner, his willingness to step in and assist any time and for his great cookies!

Lori Allen Receives NYAHS A Long Term Care Employee of Distinction Award

This award from the New York Association of Homes and Services for the Aging was created to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of the front line staff working in the Association's member organizations.

The award's purpose is to provide patients, residents and other employees with the opportunity to recognize those individuals who have demonstrated a willingness to make personal sacrifices to improve the lives of others.

Carl Young, President of NYAHS A, came to Vassar-Warner to present this award in person to Lori for her outstanding commitment to excellence. In addition to the award, she received a gift of \$100 from NYAHS A and a gift from our Board of Advocates. We are proud to have Lori on the Vassar-Warner team!

Meet the Residents

Peter Carrie came to Poughkeepsie about eight years ago from Hastings-on-Hudson where he had worked for Anaconda Cable Company of Westchester. For over twenty years, before he retired, he had been in the field as a sheet metal worker relating to air conditioning in new building construction.

He was no stranger to Poughkeepsie. His son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren (Mady, 10 and Emily, 8) live in Wappingers Falls. When the time came for Peter to consider assisted living, he “picked Vassar-Warner. It offers freedom of choice unlike a nursing home.” Now that he’s been here since mid-December, he’s decided that “all the little things offered here make anyone feel at home.”

Peter was quick to enumerate enthusiastically what he likes about Vassar-Warner, especially how impressed he is with the “friendly, responsive and immediate care by staff.” He went on to talk about how “safe and watched over” he feels; how he has freedom of choice to participate or not in the goings on; how he likes that “there are things to keep your mind active, that they’re looking out for your good.” He feels as if he’s been “welcomed to the club” by residents and staff and mentioned how much he enjoys the sociability (especially the tea and cookies at Happy Hour).

As much as Peter enjoys what goes on inside Vassar-Warner, he also likes taking walks in the neighborhood “on a beautiful day” or evenings spent sitting on the balcony and looking at the bright lights of the Mid-Hudson Bridge. As he stated appreciatively, “I don’t need for anything here.”



Peter Carrie



“Pat” Vanackooy

Pat Vanackooy’s “tickled” to return to the Hudson Valley. She’s got her brothers, sisters, sons, daughter-in-law, and seven year old grandchild, Brooke here. Pat’s originally from Hyde Park where she and her husband raised twin sons and a daughter who now lives in New Jersey. She was also a breeder of chinchilla and silver Persian cats; her husband was an artist with Western Publishing Company and a sax player in a local band.

Over the years - twenty spent in North Carolina - Pat became a widow and a resident of a senior facility...but she wasn’t content there. Her sons wanted her back home.

“They thoroughly investigated every place, and Vassar-Warner won out,” said Pat. Since March, when she arrived, Pat has nestled in with “not a thing to complain about!”

In fact, she says she has “fallen in love” with every aspect of Vassar-Warner: staff who “give such time and attention and treat us so good;” residents who are “welcoming and friendly;” lots of activities to participate in; the security of being cared for while at the same time an independence to share holidays with family, go out to breakfast or lunch with sons who visit daily or even just to enjoy quiet times when she wants them.

Pat’s especially proud of her newly furnished room “with even a small refrigerator for my favorite banana, strawberry and Boston creme yogurt!” - and of course with her husband’s remarkable oil painting of a Persian cat accentuating the wall. She couldn’t agree more with her sons’ assessment on her behalf that “one look and Vassar-Warner was the place to retire.” Welcome back to the Hudson Valley, Pat.

A Senior Residence of Distinction

Vassar-Warner



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Powerhouse Theater Special Performance

The Apprentice Company of Vassar College's New York Stage and Film Powerhouse Theater program recently performed "The Vassar-Warner Project," an ensemble production directed by Maureen Towey.

During a two week period, Maureen and the actors met with residents of Vassar-Warner and gathered their life stories.

They entwined these stories into a performance of songs, dancing and recollection entitled "Primary Sources: Vassar-Warner."

The stories were fabulous and the residents enjoyed seeing their stories come to life! *(photo: Powerhouse Apprentice Theater Company performing in the parlor at Vassar-Warner)*