

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING

>> From 6

than that. As a learning community, OLLI members develop deep connections with others who share a passion for learning. OLLI members actively participate in discussions, explore shared interests, volunteer their talents, and plan joint travel experiences. The bottom line: When we are part of learning activities that fully engage us, that invite us to actively participate and engage with others, we benefit on all levels.

What attracted you to taking the OLLI position? What do you bring to the table?

I am inspired by people in my life who approached their later years with a sense of curiosity, purpose, generosity, and joy. Every one of them embraced life as learners and teachers, mentors, and novices. They are my role models for living life fully at any age. I find kindred spirits within the OLLI community, and I am honored to play a role in helping this community thrive.

I have spent the last decade of my career focusing on ways to tap the talents of an aging population for the greater good. As an educator, program administrator, researcher, and writer, I centered my efforts on engaged aging, lifelong learning, and building community. Also, I am part of a network of people and organizations that see potential in our aging population.

How have the past years of pandemic and quarantine impacted our OLLI program?

Like everyone, OLLI had to pivot on a dime to convert our programming to virtual. We went from delivering 100% of our programming in person to delivering 100% online. With 60+ courses each term, this was no small task! We needed to train our instructors on how to teach this way, and help our members get comfortable with using Zoom.

We were all so isolated, especially in



Dr. Kate Schaefer is OLLI's new director. (Photo by Jessica Mealey)

those early days of the pandemic. For our members, who were in a high-risk group, this was particularly true for them. We had to creatively explore new ways to connect our members. We are proud of how OLLI helped our members during these troubling and lonely times. We were a lifeline for our OLLI community.

During my time as an OLLI instructor there was much discussion that the membership fee, now up to \$300/year, is prohibitive for some Minnesota seniors. Is there anything being proposed to help defray the cost and/or to subsidize less well-off citizens?

I'm so glad you asked! OLLI offers scholarships to help defray the costs for people in need, through the Miriam B.

Seltzer Scholarship Fund. We welcome applications for this scholarship and will help make OLLI accessible and affordable for all who want to join.

It is also important to look at what you get for that yearly membership fee. With four terms, and 60+ courses offered each term, members have access to a plethora of learning opportunities. Plus, members can join special interest groups and take advantage of other offerings. There is a lot of value that comes with an OLLI membership.

Please tell us a little about yourself: Childhood. School years. Education. Profession. Personal life.

I grew up in a tight knit community on the south side of Chicago. With seven children and a disabled father unable to work, money was scarce. Yet despite those hardships, we thrived, due in large part to the support of our neighbors and community. That early life experience grounded me and taught me the value of being part of a community.

In college, I had two majors: mathematics (because I thought it was practical) and psychology (because I was fascinated with the field). On a whim, I applied to graduate school at the University of Minnesota, and by some miracle was accepted, so that is what brought me to Minnesota. I fell in love with Minnesota, and soon fell in love with my husband, so the rest is history. We have been married 34 years and raised our two daughters here.

I'm trained as a psychologist (my Ph.D. is in counseling psychology), with much of my career in higher education: developing curriculum, launching programs, and coaching employees as they navigate leadership and career transitions. I have expertise in encore careers and the intergenerational workplace.

My career isn't a straight line, and I'm grateful for that. I have made career choices along the way that have taken me in directions I could not have anticipated ear-

lier in my career. I followed my heart and instincts at times, and it opened a world of opportunities.

As OLLI enters its spring session, what would you like our readership to know that we haven't covered?

OLLI offers something for everyone – we have courses in the arts, science and technology, social sciences, and interdisciplinary fields. From Art of Ancient Greece to The Stories Hidden in Our Genes, we offer a range of options each term (you can find our full OLLI Course Guide on our website). Our courses are taught by an outstanding cadre of instructors who bring topics to life for OLLI learners.

The OLLI community is welcoming! We have special interest groups that allow members to connect around their passions, like movie appreciation, sharing music or games, or even memoir writing. There are ample opportunities to meet people and develop new friendships through OLLI.

You can join OLLI at any time. We host four terms per year, with the spring 2022 term beginning on March 21. Our website is <https://ccaps.umn.edu/olli>

Author's Note: Classes and events always have been held throughout the metro area, but due to COVID-19 protocols most offerings are now online. With spring 2022 courses just beginning, there's no better time to feed our hungry brains. Again, everything you need to know is found in the course guide: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oRnzZtY_IzsuxJuf-cp5U196aEVs9TTBnt/view.

Happy learning!

Susan Schaefer is a widely published independent journalist, creative writer, and poet. Her articles appear in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, PBS' online magazine, Next Avenue, Next Tribe, and beyond. She was columnist and features writer for Minneapolis' Southwest Journal and Minnesota Good Age magazine.



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Demonstrators marched from Summit Ave. to Grand Ave., around the governor's residence and back on Jan. 4, 2022 to mark the one year anniversary of Dolal Idd's death. He was killed by police at the Holiday station at 3550 Cedar Ave. (Photo by Jill Boogren.)

ACTIVISTS RALLY >> From 8

In a followup conversation, Garraway Allen wanted to be clear that while she's not saying all police are bad, she does want acknowledgement of evidence presented by community members that shows harm done by law enforcement.

"There's a certain group bein' protected and a certain group being brutalized in our urban communities. It's not right. We just need the rules that have been in

place to be changed so all people can be treated equally in our communities. We are all human beings, we all have families, it's only right that we treat each other as such," she said. "If we ever want to build our communities up and start the healing process, the first step in that is accountability so that everybody can feel safe as human beings."

The legislative session begins Jan. 31.

More information can be found at www.fsfapv.org.

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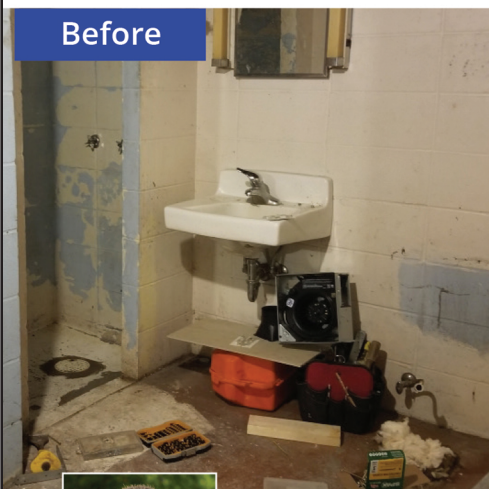
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BECKETWOOD >> From 8

From orphanage to senior housing

The anniversary report also included a timeline intended to help educate the co-op's newer members about Becketwood's history. That history extends back to the 19th century, when an early Minnesota settler named Richard Martin bequeathed 130 acres of undeveloped property along the Mississippi river bluffs to an Episcopal orphanage, Sheltering Arms, then located in downtown Minneapolis. The bequest enabled Sheltering Arms to build a new facility on the Martin property in 1910. With changing times, the orphanage was converted to a rehabilitation center for polio victims and, later, to a school for young people with development disabilities. In 1982, after closing its school, Sheltering Arms sold its 13-acre site to the St. Paul-based Episcopal Church Home (ECH), Becketwood's developer. ECH guaranteed the initial financing for the new senior housing facility that replaced the original 1910 orphanage building. Becketwood has retained its ties to ECH but operates today an independent entity with its own board of directors.

Always planning ahead

A key milestone during Becketwood's 35-year history occurred in 1988, when Becketwood's board established a capital long range planning committee to help the cooperative deal with its future capital needs. The committee laid the groundwork for a repair and replacement reserve fund that now totals more than \$3 million.

"When our building first opened 35 years ago our early leaders may have been tempted to ignore the co-op's long-term needs, since everything was so shiny and new," said Loren Flicker, who now chairs the Reserve and Replacement Long Range Planning Committee. "Fortunately, our founders did not heed this 'siren song'. Guided by the principle of starting to save for a replacement as soon as any new item was acquired, they put in place the process that continues to serve us so well today."

COVID-19 affects co-op

In its anniversary publication, the Becketwood timeline concludes with the board action in the spring of 2020, suspending most group activities in face of the COVID-19 pandemic. David Liddle, who served as board president in 2020, said his year

"We are so lucky to live here along the river, so the walk was our way of celebrating this lovely piece of nature right at our doorstep." ~ Elaine Kirk

in office was a challenging time for the board. "We had to find a way to preserve a sense of community - one of Becketwood's defining characteristics - at the same time that we were doing everything we could to keep everyone safe by following CDC and Minnesota Health Department guidelines," Liddle said. "Complying with the guidelines meant that we needed to impose restrictions and disrupt familiar routines. Those restrictions and disruptions were necessary, but they made life more difficult for all of us."

"Zoom has given us a way to keep some of our activities going, even with COVID-19," explained David McKay who chairs Becketwood's program committee. "But some of our members are not online or are not comfortable with Zoom, so we have come up with a hybrid arrangement. Most of us stay in our own apartments and use Zoom to access our online programs. But we are able to let a limited number of people watch the Zooms on the big screen in our large community room. That lets us provide a broader community reach for our activities."

Becketwood used the hybrid plan for a variety of shows that concluded Becketwood's 35th anniversary celebration on Nov. 6, 2021. The hour-long show on Zoom showcased Becketwood's humorists, musicians, storytellers and poets.

With a nod to the Gen Xers who will soon start moving into Becketwood, the show included an original rap performed by Joel Mortensen and Debbie Richman, Becketwood's general manager. The show also included Ole and Lena jokes told by Howard Bergstrom, a World War II vet and a member of the Greatest Generation.

"We really did honor the past and embrace the future," Mortensen said.

Editor's note: Local historian and writer Iric Nathanson is a member of the Becketwood Cooperative.



Becketwood has held some events in person such as the anniversary walk if they meet CDC guidelines, and has done a hybrid approach for other activities using Zoom video calls. (Photo by Terry Faust)

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- 5) Offer to help with yard chores, or feed and exercise the pets.

- 6) Write notes of encouragement and support, and help with "thank you" notes.
- 7) Offer to drive or accompany him/her to the cemetery regularly.
- 8) Make a weekly run to the grocery store, laundry or cleaners.
- 9) Anticipate difficult periods such as birthday, anniversaries and holidays.
- 10) Always mention the deceased by name and encourage reminiscing.

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About 270 people who identify as active and independent seniors currently live at Becketwood. (Photo by Terry Faust)

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