



# SSSF

Steuben Senior Services Fund, Inc.

*Building a Resource for Aging in Place*



Dear Friend,

## **THANK YOU!**

Thank you to all who donated to our recent annual campaign. This fund drive saw a 32% increase in donations, making it our largest annual fund drive to date, and a 19% increase in the number of donors. Your generosity is deeply appreciated and will enable SSSF to continue to invest in services that help our older county residents to age in place in their own homes.

### **LOVING LIFE IN HIS OWN HOME**

Eighty-one year old John Gruczkowski of Corning is aging in place with his Siamese cat, Trouble, in a lovely upstairs apartment overlooking Market Street where he owned and operated a flower shop for nearly thirty years.

John was born to first generation immigrants, his father from Poland, and his mother from the Ukraine and was one of ten children born to the couple. His was a wonderfully close family where the Christmas and Easter traditions of the old country were celebrated each year despite the Depression and other events swirling around them. John remembers his mother fondly as a magician in the kitchen who always welcomed another person at the kitchen table and his father as a generous man who helped his neighbors when they had no food.



John graduated from high school and moved to Corning to help his sister and brother-in-law in their restaurant business. After a two year stint in the Army in Germany, he returned to Corning and began his long career in the floral business as a driver for the Corning Flower Shop. In June of 1972, John purchased a flooded out business on Market Street, had it

completely refurbished and opened the House of Flowers on November 29<sup>th</sup> that same year.

John retired after decades in the business and says he still misses the people and relationships that came with his business, a business of caring for people in times of joy and sorrow. He says he learned compassion for people and how to give of yourself to others during this long career. Now John makes a daily trip to church for Mass and afterwards stops at Wegmans, where he says he still sees people he knew while in business all those years.

Getting people to smile is one of John's greatest joys. He especially enjoys older people and their stories. He believes his mission in life is to help others, hence his past volunteer work at Dayspring Senior Dinner Club and as a driver for Faith in Action. Currently John enjoys singing with a Gregorian chant a cappella choir which is looking for new members! He says they will even teach you the Latin!

John loves his life and his home. The independence, peace, and quiet his apartment affords him is priceless. Despite health problems, once in a while he even does some cooking. John says he makes a mean spaghetti sauce and recently made some stuffed cabbage which he shared with friends.

Thanks to family members who help out, a great stair climber that allows him to get in and out of his home, and the services of the Office for the Aging's EISEP Program, assisting him with cleaning, John is able to age in place.

## **WELCOME**

A warm welcome to the newest subscribers to our "Aging in Place Newsletter"; those who have recently joined our Aging in Place Club along with our newest donors! Your support is very encouraging as we work to help seniors in our county to stay in their own homes and communities as they age. We hope that you will let us know if there is any information which you might find helpful and interesting. Please feel free to email [info@steubenseniorservicesfund.org](mailto:info@steubenseniorservicesfund.org) or call 607-664-2298 if you have any questions, comments, or concerns with which we can assist.

## **FACEBOOK FRIENDS**

For those of you with Internet access and Facebook accounts, we hope you will become a friend of Steuben Senior Services Fund. You will receive short weekly stories of how donors to SSSF are helping seniors in the county to age in place. In addition, there are more valuable tips for aging in place included. You can help us spread the word by being our Facebook friend and liking the stories that you find interesting!



## **VOLUNTEERS, A CRITICAL PART OF AGING IN PLACE IN STEUBEN**

In addition to Faith in Action and the Ramps Guys, our county is blessed to have another great volunteer group wielding hammers, screw guns and other tools. Joseph's Hammer performs a wide variety of small home maintenance repairs in our county for those who can't do for themselves. They describe themselves as "Neighbors...Helping Neighbors". Begun in 2004, the group under the leadership of Bob DeSeyn, has completed over 365 projects, working in many areas of the county. Joseph's Hammer cooperates closely with the Office for the Aging, Pro-Action, Catholic Charities, churches, service clubs, and many others to achieve their great results.

Paul Smith, one of the over 95 volunteers who are involved, stated that "there are jobs that need to be done for people who can't do for themselves. If we don't do these jobs, they won't get done. I believe that everyone is responsible for making the world a better place in which to live in so far as they can. Moreover, I get to work with like-minded people; people who have taken it upon themselves to help our fellow neighbors. Joseph's Hammer, under the leadership of Bob DeSeyn, has been an organization that I have been proud to volunteer for. It's a special feeling when I see the gratitude in a client's eyes when we have assisted them."

Another volunteer, Tom Harnas, says the work makes him feel good and is a lot of fun. He thinks he gets more out of volunteering than the people they serve, but according to Vicki King of Bath, she doesn't know what she would do without Joseph's Hammer.

Joseph Hammer volunteers have helped her with a number of projects over the past eight or nine years such as replacing a bedroom window and the front door to her house, laying tiles in the kitchen, and closing up a window that had once held a leaky air conditioner and repairing the wall beneath. Vicki is unable to do the work herself or to hire someone for all the jobs that come up, so she is very grateful for the wonderful volunteers of Joseph's Hammer. "They are a great bunch of guys," stated Vicki.

For more information on Joseph's Hammer, contact Bob DeSeyn at 412-979-7585.

### **TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL AGING IN PLACE**

\*Have one corded phone in your home to use in case the electric goes out, because portable phones require electricity to operate. If your telephone service is bundled with your cable and/or internet, electricity is required for operation. In this case keep a fully charged cell phone as back up.

\*Eliminate throw rugs unless they have a non-slip backing. You can also use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.

## URBANA AND PULTENEY UPDATES

In Urbana during the past year, our Aging in Place project got off to a great start with the formation of an Advisory Group that met with our coordinator, Kathy Burns, on a monthly basis. After surveying Town seniors, work was done with the Steuben County Planning Department and Hammondsport Village Board to get a bus shelter constructed adjacent to Lake Street Senior Apartments. Additionally the project has worked with the Park Pharmacy to begin prescription delivery three days a week and with the Hammondsport Grocery to start grocery delivery two days per week. A display stand was purchased for the community room of the Fred and Harriet Taylor Memorial Library for Aging in Place materials. Additionally, ProActions's Bone Builder Program has been expanded an additional two days each week at the library. 2013 plans call for the dissemination of a postcard to all residents of the Town highlighting available Aging in Place services.



In Pulteney our AIP Project continues to hum along with the Lunch Bunch meeting at the Presbyterian Church two days a week, Mondays and Thursdays. They are planning to start technology lessons in the near future, provided by the Pulteney Free Library's new MiFi service. Additionally a grant for \$7000 was submitted to the Geneva Presbytery for the construction of a labyrinth and the expansion of the community garden in Pulteney.



## SSSF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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