



Members, from left: Carol Clevenger, Lou Vaccaro, Betsy Caivano, Vivienne Blake, and Herb Jung.

By Sahana Karthik

Louis Vaccaro, a part-time facility aide at Montgomery Parks and Recreation, based in the Otto Kaufmann Center on Skillman Road, is the incoming president of the Montgomery Senior Citizens Organization.

This organization has been hosting activities and events that seniors enjoy since the late 1950s. This includes educational lectures, entertainment programs, trips, quarterly birthday breakfasts, summer picnics, and ice cream socials.

This month, the club is sponsoring a bus trip to Hunterdon Hills Playhouse for the Christmas show, and a year-end party.

The organization is planning to expand its membership.

Vaccaro says, “There is more we can do, or do better, with more members.”

For example, the organization could host even better programs, and sponsor more trips.

“We need to do a better job of promoting this wonderful organization,” he said.

Another important mission of the organization is to act as a strong advocate for issues important to seniors, and to perform volunteer work to help each other and others.

The pandemic was disproportionately difficult for seniors. Many feared for their health and safety outside their homes, so

the Montgomery Senior Citizens could not meet for almost two years.

“The executive committee weren’t even sure if they should continue, but when the question was posed to their members, the answer was an overwhelming yes,” Vaccaro said.

The organization is important to its members and is a place where they can socialize with their friends and make new ones. Many who volunteer with the organization and work on committees find the work to be challenging and rewarding.

This past summer, meeting attendance had exceeded previous years before the pandemic. Sign-up to the Hunterdon Hills Playhouse trip is a record high. There are 20 new members since the spring, and Vaccaro says he is hopeful to add more.

The organization has monthly meetings. Each meeting can be quite different: Some are fun, like playing bingo, while others are more educational. Recently, the organization had two Montgomery police officers come to educate members about scams targeting the senior community.

Each year they also have a summer picnic in the park. Something that Vaccaro would like to reinstate in the community is a program in which boy and girl scouts would volunteer to help seniors.

“They used to do projects,

helping a senior citizen who needed some raking done, or who needed help with some other household chores,” he said. “It was a great way to connect young people with the community around them. They can also learn so much about the world by talking to seniors.”

In the past, the senior citizens would give scholarships to high school seniors going into the health field. Vaccaro says he would love to create more volunteering opportunities.

The Montgomery Senior Citizens organization is important, Vaccaro said. Anyone over 55 is invited to join. In spite of the organization’s name, all ages are welcome. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month at the Montgomery Senior Center (Otto Kauffman Community Center) at 1:30 pm. ■

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