



872 E. Main Street, Bridgewater, NJ 08807
Telephone: (908) 725-0068 * Fax: (908) 725-2995

Diann Robinson, Executive Director

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Press Contact:

Hilary Kruchowy

(732) 735-2235

Hilary.kruchowy@adulthoodcenter.org

ADULT DAY CENTER OF SOMERSET COUNTY CELEBRATES NATIONAL POLAR DAY WITH A COKE AND A SMILE

Adult Day Center's Response to COVID-19

BRIDGEWATER, NJ – February 25, 2021 – The Adult Day Center of Somerset County (ADC) celebrated National Polar Bear Day with a drive through for its members and caregivers at the Bridgewater location.

February 27th is declared National Polar Bear Day and focuses the community's attention on conservation efforts and learning more about the fabulous polar bear. The ADC adopted this day of recognition and made it along with "*Share a Coke & a Smile*" the theme of its February drive through event at the ADC. On Friday afternoon approximately 40 members and caregivers arrived at the building to drive around the circle entrance to talk with ADC staff and pick up their ADC activity care packages. After a long snowy month, staff were grateful for the opportunity to see friends and bring smiles to the ADC's members who are unable to attend programs at the facility due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The drive through was a labor of love and took a team effort of staff and volunteers. A thoughtful friend made scarves for every member to be picked up as they drove through. Bella and Ryan, the children of ADC nurse Jennifer D'Onofrio, jumped in to fill in as guest DJ's bringing and installing their home stereo equipment and planning an appropriate play list. Members were enlisted to paint signs and put together activity packages.

The ADC's physical facility is still closed to members due to COVID-19 but is offering Distance Programming to its members and caregivers. For nearly a year, ADC staff has been offering a full virtual activity program consisting of videos, live events, call-in groups and downloadable activities, weekly nurse wellness calls, and weekly caregiver support groups through Zoom. Additionally, ADC staff mail and drop off ADC Activity Care Packages and Sensory Packages to show their families how much they care and want to support them during these difficult times. The once-per-month drive throughs have become a part of the regular Distance Programming and give a chance for in-person socialization and in-person check in on our caregivers.

Diann Robinson, Executive Director for the ADC says "The stress of caring for a loved one living with Alzheimer's disease or a physical disability has only been amplified over the past year. Caregivers are with their loved ones 24/7. Many caregivers are juggling working from home, their children's home schooling, and caring for a parent with dementia. Spousal caregivers are feeling isolated, exhausted and often fearful of becoming ill because of their own age and health issues. Members are facing social isolation and a loss of purpose."

The public is invited to like Adult Day Center of Somerset County on Facebook to participate in the virtual programming and connect with other families. On it they are presenting:

- From Tuesday through Friday at 11:00 a.m. Facebook live events such as virtual bingo, word-in-a-word, crosswords, and Pictionary
- Released every weekday morning a video library featuring staff cooking demonstrations, word games, riddles, and puzzles and at-home exercise routines.
- Virtual performances by ADC entertainers

The center’s website content has been expanded to curate links to county and state resources, caregiver hotlines, and support services. Activity staff compile and post printable home activities such as word searches, crosswords, adult coloring pages, and discussion guides, regularly. These free resources and activities are available on the Adult Day Center website and can be accessed at www.adultdaycenter.org.

“We plan to reopen as soon as we safely can so that we may offer vital, in-person services again,” said Ms. Robinson. “We have a waiting list of families who would like to enroll their loved ones and we are starting to process their applications and incorporate them into our Distance Programming. Families who are interested in having their loved one become a member and contact our social services coordinator through email at sselfo@adultdaycenter.org. The ADC staff and program volunteers are heartbroken that we can’t be there in person to support our members and their families, but we will continue to remain connected and offer as much as programming and assistance as possible during these challenging times.”

The ADC’s operating budget has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. They have cut back extensively on monthly expenses, but with the lack of private pay fees coming in, they have a large gap to fill. The ADC is proud of its longstanding history of never denying service due to a person’s limited resources and offering a sliding fee scale. They are planning to hold their annual Getting Better with Age wine tasting in June and will be launching an appeal to raise funds to meet the funding gap and implement social distancing measures for when they re-open. To learn more, or to make a donation, please visit their website at www.adultdaycenter.org.

The Adult Day Center, a compassionate community of acceptance, is a non-profit agency committed to providing extraordinary day care services for vulnerable seniors, adults living with a disability or dementia related illness, and support and education for their caregiving families.

To learn more about the ADC, including membership, its new activities and resources, or to become a volunteer or donor, contact Hilary Kruchowy for more information at hilary.kruchowy@adultdaycenter.org or 908-725-0068.



Pictured above: Bridgewater residents Kiran and Shyam Sethi