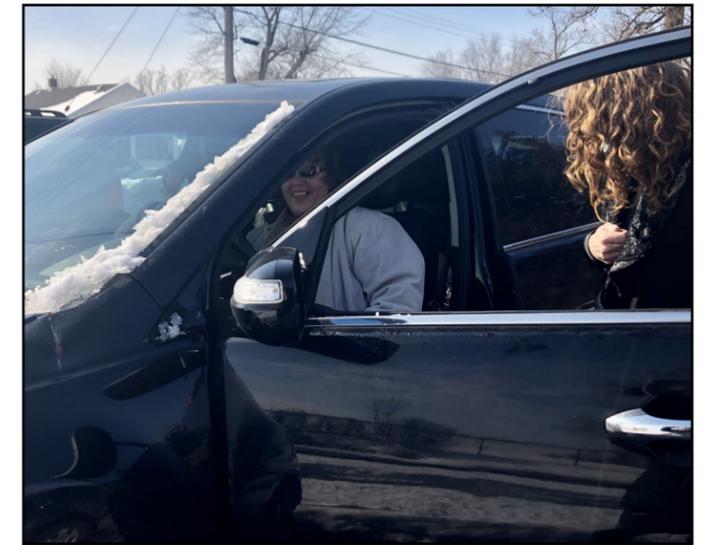


Porter County Aging & Community Services Inc.
1005 Campbell Street
Valparaiso, IN 46385

Non-profit Org
U.S. Postage
Valparaiso IN
Permit NO 134



Continued from Front Page

“Kathy has been making a difference in our community for years,” said PCACS Executive Director Bruce Lindner. “What a heartwarming opportunity to give back to someone who gives so much.”

NeighborLink Porter County has been connecting volunteers to families in need since 2008. Projects range from basic home maintenance and repairs to shoveling snow and mowing grass.

Volunteers can sign up to help at www.NeighborLinkPC.org.

“There are currently 22 families in Porter County asking for help with various projects around their homes,” Alders said. “Since NeighborLink was started, over 800 families have been helped right here in Porter County.”



For more information on the services provided by PCACS, contact:
Bruce Lindner, Executive Director,
via phone at 465-7144 or
via e-mail at bhlindner@portercountyacs.org.

Join us on social media!
Facebook: [facebook.com/PCACS](https://www.facebook.com/PCACS)
Twitter: twitter.com/PorterCACS
Instagram: [instagram.com/PorterCACS](https://www.instagram.com/PorterCACS)



Alternate/accessible formats available upon request.

PCACS is proud to be a member agency of the United Way of Porter County

Special Gift for Special Volunteer

Surprise donation helps drive community mission

Community volunteer and “Goody Lady” Kathy Conn recently received a special surprise from NeighborLink Porter County at the Porter County Aging and Community Services offices.

“A couple weeks ago, someone approached me about donating a car,” said Judy Alders, executive director of NeighborLink Porter County. “Our organization and volunteers are all about helping people. When the car was donated to us, it was suggested that Kathy would be the ideal candidate because of the work that she does on her own for the community.”

“She needs reliable transportation to be able to help feed Porter County families, so it was an easy decision to make.”

Since 2013, Conn has been bringing bread, cakes, cookies, pies and more to area nonprofits for people in the community to pick up and enjoy.

She has utilized her personal vehicle to help connect those in need of food by picking up the day-old items from Strack & Van Til and delivering them all over the region from the PCACS offices in Valparaiso to Sand Castle Shelter in Michigan City.

“It’s a form of therapy to me. I am going to do this until I can’t anymore,” Conn said about her community work in 2019.

The anonymous donor paid it forward with the gift of the 2013 MDX Acura and is also assisting with six months of Conn’s car insurance.

“I don’t know what to say – I am in shock,” Conn said. “Someone is going to have to show me how to use it as I have been driving an old clunker.”

Continued on Back Page

SHIP volunteers provide guidance; Tax prep, mortgage help available

During the Medicare Annual Open Enrollment period in the fall, SHIP counselors assisted 210 Medicare beneficiaries with drug and health plan comparisons, as well as other Medicare issues.

Throughout all of 2020, 345 clients were served, which, due to the impact of COVID, was considerably less than during 2019.

For Medicare beneficiaries who have a Medicare Advantage plan and missed the Fall Open Enrollment period, or may be having second thoughts about their plan, there is an annual Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment period which runs through March 31.

SHIP counselors are available year-round to assist Medicare beneficiaries and those getting ready for Medicare with any Medicare related issues.

Appointments must be scheduled in advance and can be conducted over the phone, via Zoom, or in-person following CDC and local public health guidance at the PCACS offices.

For more information, contact the SHIP office at 219-464-1028 or via email: ship@portercountyacs.org.

Tax Prep Help

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides no-cost tax preparation services to eligible community members.

IRS-certified volunteers help with both federal and state tax return preparation through April 13. The program is following COVID protocols this year.

Documents can be picked up at any Porter County Public library, including the Valparaiso or Westchester branches.

Instructions and documents are also available online at www.unitedwaypc.org/VITA-forms. Completed forms can be dropped off at the United Way of Porter County once an appointment is made by calling: 219-464-3583, Ext. 108.

What's the Buzz?



WE'RE HIRING!
FULL-TIME BUS DRIVER

Chauffeur's license needed.
Call 219-464-9736 to apply.



Hardest Hit Fund

The United Way of Porter County is teaming with the Indiana Foreclosure Prevention Network to assist homeowners struggling to pay their mortgages.

The Hardest Hit Fund will provide qualifying homeowners facing hardships with assistance on their mortgage loan commitments up to \$30,000.

Financial hardships include:

- An involuntary loss of employment or reduction in employment income
- A reduction in household income due to death of a spouse
- Loss of employment income related to medical procedures or emergencies.

Questions about the program: Call or text to 219-262-0048 or email info@unitedwaypc.org.

Details and to apply: visit www.unitedwaypc.org/Hardest-Hit-Fund

Neighborhood Love

New nonprofit helps homeowners

The importance of home is more evident than ever during this pandemic.

Having a safe and secure place to live is what Home Team Valpo is all about. The new nonprofit began in October 2020 with the goal of bringing together the community to make an impact in Valparaiso neighborhoods through home maintenance and cleanup.



Home Team Valpo Executive Director Lori Simon said the nonprofit was launched by Valparaiso residents with help from the city.

"We hope to lift up individuals by offering a service that those in need will feel they may rely upon. We are working to restore homes to safe and sufficient, quality housing," she said. "We hope to earn the trust of our community with a servant's heart. Priority is given to senior citizens and physically disabled property owners as well as veterans in the community in need of assistance with their home maintenance."

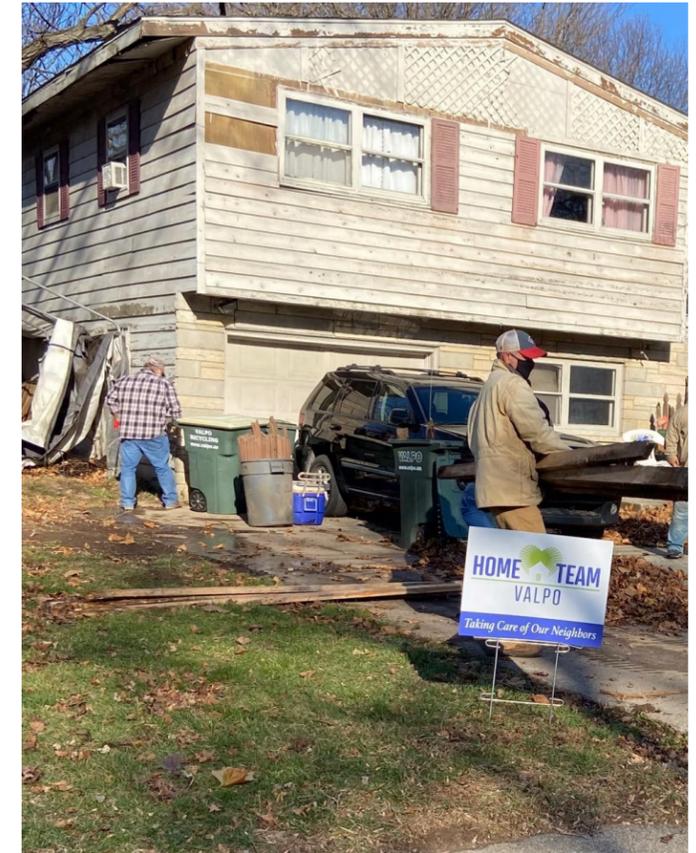
The fall kickoff project was able to help six homeowners have cleaner yards with the help of volunteers.

Simon said the nonprofit is navigating the COVID landscape to ensure that the team is working toward its mission and goals in a safe manner.

"When working as a team of volunteers, we like for groups who are together often to volunteer for a project as they are familiar with each other, social distance well together, and respect each other by wearing face coverings during the entire project," she said.

Homeowners in need of help can apply for assistance. After an application is submitted, two volunteers will review the scope of the work to be completed and assess if it is a doable project at this time.

"We are able to navigate during COVID by creating work that needs to be done outdoors," she said.



Volunteers assisted with fall projects as part of Home Team Valpo's launch.

"Any other work is typically going to be with contractors who work in homes safely during these times."

Simon is looking forward to propelling the nonprofit forward when restrictions ease, but for now is hoping to spotlight the new organization's planned impact.

"Home Team Valpo is working with charter partners in this first year that are passionate for our cause and believe in our mission," she said.

Homeowners can apply for assistance at www.hometeamvalpo.org or request an application by calling: 219-548-4827.