

ORION Communities



Concert Raffle Items

- Week of summer camp
 - Art & music classes
 - Pilates class
 - Restaurant coupons
- Must be present to win!

To order tickets – see page 4 or go to www.OrionCommunities.org

Celebrating Community – Music For Everyone

"It's a great way to give back to the community where I was raised!" Julia Chalfin explained about her upcoming concert for Orion Communities.

When initial planning for the concert began, both Ms. Chalfin and Orion wanted the event to be both joyful and centered around community. Anyone who has heard Julia sing, knows she brings incredible talent, energy and wit to the stage which assures it will be a fun evening.

The next step was to make the concert a community

experience... we knew the concert needed to be in Phoenixville. What more local place could there be than 'our own' Colonial Theatre!

According to Kris Keller, Orion's Executive Director, "This concert needs to be shared with everyone in the community - so we asked sponsors and donors to help us provide tickets to our neighbors in need and partner agencies who don't have much discretionary income themselves."

Ms. Chalfin, who currently resides and performs in Germany, will be joined on

stage by tenor Corey O'Neill Walker and pianist Dr. Matthew Brower. Doors open at 6 pm for light refreshments, music and conversation with neighbors. Please join us in celebrating our wonderful community!



Julia Chalfin and friends Sunday, June 21st at 7 pm at the Colonial Theatre

Amazing Local Middle School Students!

Who would have guessed that Orion Communities might get funding to help the most vulnerable in the community from local Eighth graders? But we did!

The Phoenixville Area Middle School has a program called UTOPIA - United Teens for Philanthropy in Action that teaches local teens about philanthropy through

personal experience. Board President Ken George said, "Orion was flattered and honored to be considered for a grant from our local middle school."

The students reviewed a number of applications and then conducted site visits. Students arrived at Orion in 2 school buses to see the organization and learn more

about Orion's mission and work in the community.

Orion Communities is grateful to be one of the recipients for this year's awards. We are also grateful to have had the opportunity to share stories with PAMS students about some of the needs right here in our community. Thank you UTOPIA!



Cooperation & Coordination – It Works!



Problem solving is rarely a simple matter of a one on one conversation resulting in a quick decision to provide the needed assistance.

An example is reflected in the situation of one woman on Social Security who had recently been robbed and now had a large electric bill. The first step included completing applications for utility assistance but her request was denied and her home was under the threat of a power shut-off.

Orion collaborated with two non-profits to secure partial payments that, when combined with additional funds from the family and Orion’s Emergency Fund contribution, has kept the power on!!

This successful collaboration was accomplished over a period of weeks through the hard work of our client, cooperation with partner organizations and the coordination between three Orion case managers involved in resolving this

potential crisis.

Together Orion provided her with the support and continuity required because of our adherence to an extensive intake process and careful documentation in her file. Both cooperation with other organizations and coordination among our staff are crucial in creating positive outcomes for a individuals and families who already had more than their share of challenges.

“I’m so embarrassed I’m crying but these are tears of happiness. I didn’t know anyone could help me so much.”
 ~Client~

Who Do You Call ‘Partner’?

The word 'partner' is getting a lot of use these days. When you check out the American Heritage Dictionary - one who is united with another or others in an activity or sphere of common interest - you realize that the term is applicable to lots of relationships.

At Orion we see new partnerships forming every day, often in unexpected ways. Recently Orion

partnered with other agencies to ensure continued use of life enhancing medical equipment for a local man.

Or a woman who just secured a second job but needed safety grip shoes and an Orion volunteer realizing Wings For Success could provide those shoes.

Or two young men, both new to Orion - one initially a client and one a volunteer –

working together to clean out a basement.

It's part of our humanity to be social creatures and find ways to 'unite' with others in an activity or area of interest.

At Orion, we couldn't serve our neighbors in need without these wonderful partnerships and opportunities to learn from one another.



College Intern – Two Way Learning

This past semester we had the good fortune of having our very first intern – Jordan Westerman - a sophomore and social work major from University of Valley Forge.

“It’s great to see how Orion helps people with real world problems. It is very different from the role playing we do

in school and helps me to better understand the importance of this work,” Ms. Westerman explained.

Kathy Wilson, MSW at Orion also shared that she learned from Jordan. “Jordan was very interested in understanding how to work with clients to develop a plan

so they share ownership of the outcome. Her questions helped Orion better articulate our problem solving process.”

We wish Jordan well at her summer job back home and in her continued studies and we will apply what she taught us with future interns and volunteers!



Orion Intern Jordan Westerman (center) with Ken George and Kathy Maqas Wilson, Board members.

Orion Board Member – Keith Burress

What a ride. I came to Orion knowing little about the agency and less about the community. As a social worker for Family Service of Chester County I had referred clients to Orion for financial assistance and transportation. I had no idea of Orion’s history and place in the Phoenixville area.

It has now been almost two years since being asked to join the Board of Directors and it feels like home. I am

working with board members, volunteers, and staff who are committed, passionate, and empathetic about our charge.

For over 30 years Orion has engendered hope, dignity, and self-reliance for those experiencing poverty, disability, or illness. Over this past year we have gone through a process that refined our focus so we can better and more reliably serve the Phoenixville area

for another 30 years, if needed.

It began with a mindset change that became a physical change (come see our office). This will allow us to provide services and partnerships that keep us accountable to our clients and the community. Thank you for the patience and support that you all have shown.



Keith Burress, Board VP and Case Manager Volunteer

A Volunteer’s New Understanding

The biggest surprise for me has been hearing how many people have never had to ask for help before. Things must have been tight, but somehow they managed to make it work.

It must have been a real struggle at times such as for the retiree who stopped in after his rent jumped 50% and he had less than 2 weeks to find a new place. He didn’t know where to turn

and didn’t want to be homeless.

Another family had a medical crisis during the winter that prevented the primary bread winner from working and now the utility company was threatening to shutoff the power - they didn’t know there were programs to assist families in need.

Or a gal starting a new job but couldn’t pay for both bus

fare and food before her first paycheck.

The clients are so grateful to have someone hear their concerns and offer suggestions to reduce their bills, get critical support, start to create a plan for moving on with their lives. It always feels good to see someone come to Orion distressed and leave with some new ideas and maybe even a glimmer of a smile.

Proud Member of

Cc
the Community
Coalition



Weight Training

Say you start working out at the gym with a friend. After a week or so you both are ready to go up a notch. But the training partners started at different places – you at 10 pounds, your partner at 100 pounds.

However the next weight unit

is 10 pounds so that’s a 10% increase for your workout buddy and 100% for you.

That’s how different it can be for people living at or near the poverty level and someone with a higher income. Without the muscle or resources, the

next increment can be overwhelming.

A neighbor with a medical crisis, reduction in work or unexpected large maintenance bill may be asked to lift more than they can handle.

A majority of public school students across the country are considered “low-income” and qualify for free or reduced price meals, a rough proxy for poverty.

Washington Post
Jan. 16, 2015



**247 Bridge Street
Phoenixville, PA
19460**

Phone
610.415.4110

E-Mail
**info@orion
communities.org**

We're on the Web!

**www.orion
communities.org**



**www.facebook.com/
orion247**

Volunteer Talent

A year ago, Orion's Board of Directors decided to operate Orion on a more volunteer basis and you really never know who might be inspired by the mission.

We have had a variety of people offer their time to volunteer at Orion – professionals, interns and

community enthusiasts.

Some of these new friends help with upcoming events and some bring their experience and interest to work with the people who come to Orion's door.

We are most fortunate to be able to consistently provide

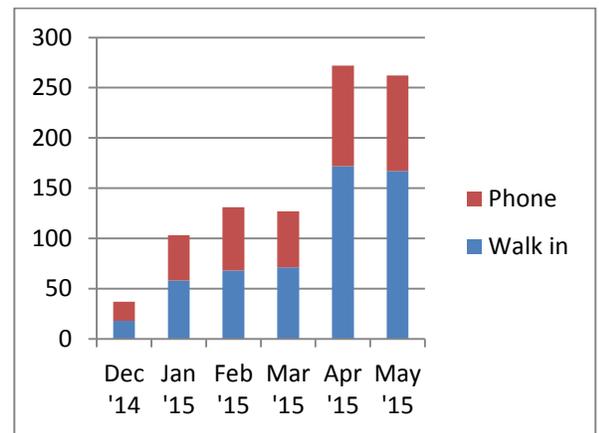
good listeners, referrals to support agencies and access to resources for our clients.

Would you like to get involved? Volunteering makes a difference in you and your community!

Word on the Street...

Over the last several months, Orion has added office hours, staff and resources. As a result partner agencies and our neighbors have made more referrals to Orion for those struggling in our community.

In turn we have expanded our client meeting areas and available computers. There is quite a healthy buzz at Orion HQ these days – stop by and check out what's going on!



Concert Ticket Order Form



Celebrating Community – Music For Everyone

with Julia Chalfin and friends!

June 21, 2105 @ 7 pm, doors open at 6 pm for light refreshments
At the Colonial Theatre, 227 Bridge Street Phoenixville

*Or go to our website to
order tickets by
credit card or paypal!*

www.orioncommunities.org

___ Number of Adults at \$25	\$ ___
___ Number of Seniors at \$18	\$ ___
___ Number of Students at \$15	\$ ___
___ I would like to make an additional donation for neighbors in need	\$ ___
___ I am unable to attend, but would like to make a contribution	\$ ___
Total Enclosed	\$ ___

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

Please make checks payable to Orion Communities and put 'concert' in the memo line. Tickets will be available at the door. If you have any questions or need special assistance with seating, please call us at 610.415.1140.

Join Orion Communities... neighbors helping neighbors!