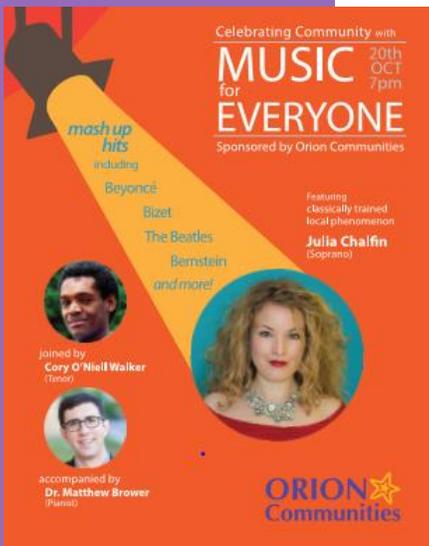


ORION Communities

Fall 2016

ORION is honored
to be the Chamber of Commerce's
2016 Charity Gala Beneficiary!
THANK YOU!

Music for Everyone Returns – October 20th!



Julia is thrilled to be returning to her childhood stomping grounds, taking a break from her stage performances in Germany to come home. Ms Chalfin says, "Phoenixville has grown so much over the years and it is so incredibly important and uplifting that Orion Communities is committed to helping everyone have access to that growth and improvement."

Orion's broad reach for the local community is exactly what Julia Chalfin hopes to do with her career in music. Touching and moving as many people with melody and rhythm - waking people up and getting people inspired.

Our sponsors help provide tickets for our neighbors in need so the whole community can truly enjoy this special evening. This fundraiser concert is for EVERYONE. It's for people who grew up listening to the Beatles and people who love dancing along with Beyonce and people who love singing along with Bernstein. Julia encourages everyone to "Come join us for a smash up of mash-ups! We'll be bending the rules of music and inviting you all to enjoy where it can take us."

Join us in Celebrating Community with a night of fabulous entertainment at the Colonial Theatre!

For ticket and sponsorship information, call our office or visit our website

– see you on October 20th!

Win a Jamaican Vacation at Lookout Cove!

A week for 6 at an incredible villa including meals, cooks, cleaning and \$500 towards your vacation dream getaway!

Raffle tickets are 5 for \$100 or \$25 each. Raffle drawing will be at the Music For Everyone concert. Order your tickets at

www.OrionCommunities.org

\$75,000!

Matching Gift Challenge

Dollar for dollar match for the second \$25,000 raised in new funds or increases over last year's gifts – can you help us raise \$75,000 for our neighbors in need?

Please stop by the office or go to OrionCommunities.org

Thank you!

What Does Orion Actually Do?

Every day, as you might expect, is different. We've talked about how in December 2014 Orion averaged 2 client contacts per day and in December 2015 we had more than 20 incoming client touches each day! That is tremendous growth in people seeking out Orion to help with critical issues for life's basic essentials of shelter, food, clothing, transportation and medical services.

On the day we are finalizing this newsletter, we had over 40 contacts from our neighbors in need! We are so grateful that people know Orion is a safe place to turn for assistance.

But what kind of assistance is provided? On this day we provided financial assistance to 7 people - 4 bus tokens for a medical appointment, \$10 towards help with driver's license renewal to get to work, food gift cards for 4 families totaling \$50, \$10 for gas to get to a new job and \$180 to cover half of a back due utility bill to avert power shutoff.

The other interactions were non-monetary and quite varied – computer assistance in doing job/housing searches, research for rental or utility bill assistance, referrals to our wonderful partner organizations, assistance with paper work or faxing documents, use of the phone, conversations to review a client's plan, etc. This is what Orion did today.



A Call to Millennials – It’s Time to Give Back

This just in! A way to get off the couch and get going, and we’re not talking about Pokemon Go. This kind of exercise could be physical but also mental or emotional. I am by no means an expert, but I have made some observations through my involvement with non-profits about the people I need to motivate – my MILLENNIAL peers.

The excuses I hear the most are “money is tight now” or “I don’t have the time” and I have to say, I get it but you don’t know what you’re missing! There are so many interesting opportunities and all kinds of people involved in local nonprofits and they can use your help. In fact, many nonprofits are partly run by folks with full time jobs, a family to take care of, and often other volunteer commitments. If those people can find the time or money, so can you!

What is the difference? I truly believe that the willingness to invest oneself in a nonprofit creates a beautiful feeling of fulfillment achieved through volunteering or making a financial commitment. A person simply will not know the positive psychological income until they see a smile on someone’s face who they recently helped and that intangible income seems to last as long or longer than the income we all work so hard for in our careers.

This call to Millennials is an open challenge, to get out in your community and find a nonprofit that reflects your beliefs, test the waters, and give back! Money is tight? Then sign up to be an event volunteer which is probably a few hour commitment at most. Work 60 hours a week, go home to a spouse and 3 kids? Then take 10 minutes, sign up for recurring donations of as little as \$5 a month. Everyone has a bit of time to explore non-profits and you never know, you might stumble onto a new found passion!

An Orion Millennial Volunteer

Unique Partnership

Orion Communities is a member of the Community Coalition. The Cc serves Southeastern Pennsylvania by raising funds, providing resources and operational support to diverse non-profit organizations whose missions and practices enhance the wellbeing of their communities.

“I’m fascinated that an organization like this exists at all,” commented Executive Director Kathleen Sanger in a recent meeting. She noted the Coalition is not like the United Way or a foundation. Rather it is an innovative approach to supporting the important work of vibrant non-profit organizations. In this model, the member organizations select two representatives to serve on the Coalition’s Board. Understanding, transparency and trust are essential in this thriving collaboration.

Also essential, is the type of funds distributed. “Unrestricted dollars’ are the hardest to raise,” said Kathleen. “Many donors are understandably interested in funding specific programs so they can see the impact of their gift. The Cc realizes soliciting gifts to cover operational expenses is nearly impossible. That’s why we distribute funds that each organization’s Board can use to meet its most pressing needs.”

In addition to Orion, the other member organizations of the Cc are Association of Colonial Theatre (ACT), Citizen Advocacy, Open Hearth, and Phoenixville Area Positive Alternatives (PAPA).

Orion is grateful for this partnership and support in raising funds for our neighbors in need.



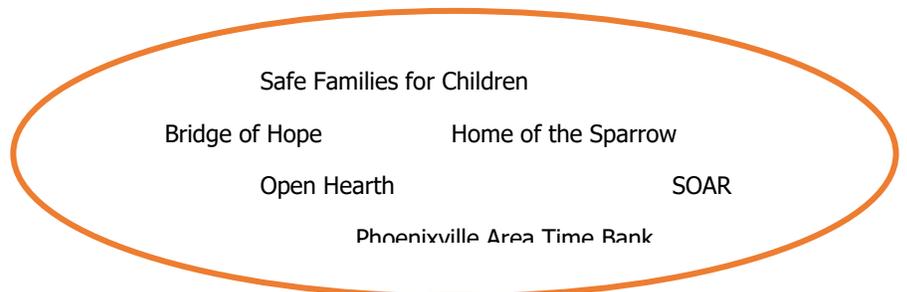
Kathleen Sanger



Community Sharing



Phoenixville community has so many wonderful partner organizations. With Orion having a new larger office, we are able to offer office space to a number of organizations to increase their presence locally and to make it easier for our neighbors in need to connect to essential resources. Thank you for your collaboration!



ORION's New Board President – Keith Burress

What an honor! During our June meeting, after serving as Vice President under Ken George, I was asked to serve as Orion's Board President. I had watched and learned as he guided Orion Communities through difficult times with intelligence, savvy, and grace. Ken, thank you for your dedication.

Orion Communities has journeyed in this community for 39 years, providing services to neighbors in need by partnering with our donors, foundations and local organizations to meet their challenges. Our neighbors finding their way to Orion have increased. Costs for services and utilities have increased and there are fewer employment opportunities that provide a living wage. Affordable housing is difficult to find. There has been an increase both with individuals and families that are coming to Orion Communities in need of housing supports. We have already provided over \$20,000 in emergency assistance for shelter and utilities this year and we haven't even begun the cooler Fall days yet.

We have wonderful family events coming up this Fall (please see information in this newsletter). The Run/Walk/Roll/Stroll and Julia Chalfin's concert help us to raise awareness in the community about our most vulnerable neighbors as well as raise needed funds to help those who are struggling to get back on their feet. We are also excited to be challenged to raise \$50,000 in new funds to earn a \$25,000 match to further our mission!

There are many ways to support Orion Communities – as an event or office volunteer or donor or helping to spread the word about our programs. As we continue to refine our services, we would like to hear from you. Our consumers and community partners, our friends and those who are just getting to know us – Orion's doors are open, so drop in or join us at one of the events around town. I look forward to seeing you.



Ribbon Cutting!

Orion has moved in to our new office and that has been cause for celebrating...

Phoenixville Chamber of Commerce President, Jessica Capistrant led a ribbon cutting ceremony to recognize Orion Communities new office at 237 Bridge Street. Representatives from local foundations that had been instrumental in Orion's growth joined the event – Phoenixville Community Health Foundation who provided a technology grant and Chester County Community Foundation who awarded Orion a capacity building grant. Thank you to our funders and friends!

Please feel free to stop by and say "Hello."



In photo: Keith Burress - Orion Board President, Beth Briglia - Chester County Community Foundation VP, Jessica Capistrant - Phoenixville Chamber of Commerce President/CEO, Ken George - Orion Board Past President, Rebecca Romaine - Orion Board Past President, Lou Beccaria, PhD - Phoenixville Community Health Foundation President/CEO, Kris Keller - Orion Executive Director, Jim Kovaleski - President Phoenixville Borough Council.

Photo by Phoenixville Photography

Chester County is the wealthiest county in Pennsylvania and yet 7.3% of residents live below the poverty line including 9.2% of Phoenixville neighbors.

In Chester County 14% of residents are food insecure meaning they are without reliable and steady access to a sufficient quantity of nourishment.



Client Story

A strong, single, middle aged working woman walked into our office recently in search of help with her back rent. She shared that she felt some shame in being in this position. After hearing her story of recent financial challenges, we complimented her for working all of her life. We also shared that most folks, from time to time in their life, face some hardship and that asking for help during those times was the right thing to do.

She explained that if she could get over this current bump, that she would be ok. We discussed some options and possible resources as well as offered her hope, support and we started on a plan. We agreed to work together to assist with her current situation and this meeting was just a first step.

We then offered a small gift card for groceries to reduce some of the current financial stressors; the look in her eyes of appreciation and relief needed no words. With a smile and a hug, our working relationship began; we now speak regularly as we work together towards stabilizing her current situation.

ORION Communities

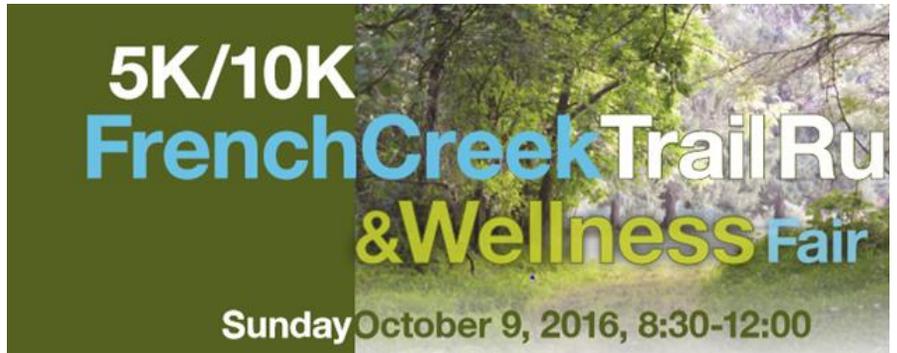
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Orion247](http://www.facebook.com/Orion247)

Orion Communities is a
501(c)3 non-profit
organization



If you run, walk, ride a wheelchair or push a stroller, please join us for the Fourth Annual Trail Run and Health & Wellness Fair. This year, the Kimberton Waldorf School is partnering with Orion Communities to raise awareness and funds for the hungry & homeless in Phoenixville and surrounding communities.

The Run/Walk event will be held at the Waldorf School's 430 acre campus improved French Creek Conservation trails. The Roll/Stroll will be on paved surfaces near the trail.

There is something for the whole family to enjoy, including a Health & Wellness Fair, free delicious lunch for registrants, a free Kids Fun Run, children's activities, and free post-race massages. There will be awards

cash prizes, and Performance Tech T-shirts for all pre-registrants. This refreshing French Creek activity and Wellness Fair brings together outdoor enthusiasts of all ages, and supports efforts on campus to promote environmental and clean water stewardship.

This is a wonderful community event; please consider providing a donation for a sponsorship. Proceeds will benefit the Kimberton Waldorf School Community Spirit Fund, as well as Orion Communities.

For more information or to pre-register, please go to www.Kimberton.org/5K.

Save the Date!

Do you have a blanket, coat, socks or food to gift to our neighbors in need this winter?



Last year Warmth for All collected 4 minivans full of warm clothes and more as part of National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week. Join us again at Kimberton Waldorf School on November 12th for music, community and the opportunity to help those in need stay warm.

Details coming soon ~ check our website!



Gratitude!

We, ORION and our clients, are blessed with such a generous and kind community – volunteers, donors and friends giving their time, energy and treasure to help the most vulnerable of our neighbors. The first 6 months of this year, Orion met with men, women and children from 339 households, 90 of those 'households' were or continue to be homeless. Phoenixville area has so many organizations that collaborate together to address a variety of needs in our community.

Thanks to all of you who help improve the lives of our neighbors when they are feeling the most vulnerable...

We love our Community!

