



Islanders of the Month

BY PATTY SMITH

Residents on Point for Community Service

For residents of Island Pointe (IP) Condominiums on the Indian River at the entrance to Merritt Island, community service is not just a random act of kindness – it's a way of life.

IP residents spread encouragement through a Light Up for Hope endeavor. Light Up for Hope began in 1935 during World War II to remind people to unite and help one another in difficult times. “The effort has continued all these years,” said Margaret Livermore, a resident of Island Pointe.

So, during current difficult times, “IP residents have lit up their balconies with hearts, stars and flags. When people drive over the [State Road] 520 causeway, they will be encouraged by the display and remember that there's always hope, no matter how difficult the situation,” Livermore said.

IP residents offer hope by recognizing those on the frontlines during COVID-19. On Easter Sunday, representatives from the fire, police and ambulance services were honored at a central location along the marina where residents sang “God Bless America” and waved flags from balconies.

Although residents have gone out of their way to help during COVID-19, their service began long ago and has taken many forms.

IP residents help those in need, having contributed more than 1,000 pounds of food to the Sharing Center of Central Brevard during their last food drive. Currently, with social distancing rules in effect, many residents send money directly to the organization to pay for food. They annually donate to the House of Hope Food and Clothing Ministry to support their toy drive and increased food needs at Christmas.

IP residents also help the young by partnering with the Adopt a Teacher campaign at MILA Elementary School, providing supplies to classrooms. Reaching out to even younger children for more than five years, a group of ladies have knitted and crocheted complete baby sets for newborns at Cape Canaveral Hospital. Others make lap robes for hospice and nursing home residents to keep them warm.

IP residents also help the environment by taking part in Keep Brevard Beautiful by picking up trash. Many continue the task all year.

Humans aren't the only beneficiaries of IP residents' generosity. They help animals, too. Debbie Martini started



Judge Susan Stacy

Therapy Dog Work a decade ago, regularly visiting nursing and hospice facilities, hospitals and libraries with her pup. Patients, residents and staff appreciate Martini's efforts.

“The feedback from residents and staff is so motivational,” Martini said.

The dogs provide comfort and reduce stress and anxiety. Aiding in courtrooms, Martini's dogs help women and children who have been victims. During COVID-19, Martini and Bosco have been doing window visits, bringing smiles to people's faces and warming hearts.



Sue Johnson

“It's a simple thing to do to make people happy. It makes the dogs happy. It's a joyful thing,” Martini said.

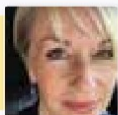
Resident Sue Johnson devotes her time to stopping cancer by supporting the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, participating in marathons, bike rides and endurance hikes to raise funds for the society. “Sue has raised more than \$55,000 to fight blood

cancers, and her friends are always there to support her,” Livermore said.

“I really want to stop blood cancer in its tracks,” said Johnson, who became involved in 2006 when her daughter ran for a friend diagnosed with cancer. That is when Johnson ran her first marathon. In 2013, Johnson's great niece was diagnosed with leukemia at age 9. Johnson has never stopped fighting to raise funds.

“They are finding more and more therapies that aren't as destructive as they used to be; that's why I keep going,” Johnson said, adding that this year they did a virtual fundraiser due to COVID-19 and raised \$12,000 for the fight against cancer.

Whether fighting cancer, helping victims, or simply sending cards to first responders, quarantined individuals or nursing home residents, the spirit of volunteerism continues year-round for many residents. “The entire IP community has a service attitude,” Livermore said. 🐾



A long-time Brevard County resident, Patty Smith is the assistant editor for Live Vine Media and a freelance writer.