



FEBRUARY
2023

NEUSE NEIGHBORS NEWS

Helping Our Members Age in Place

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

When Patty and I moved to Oriental, I asked myself, 'how can I make a difference here?' My work as a CPA involved helping non-profit organizations with taxes, audits, and other financial issues. However, I knew I wanted to be on the other side - to be part of a passionate team supporting a mission. So last year Patty and I became NNN volunteers and we both signed up to provide transportation. I also volunteered to do odd jobs around the house. I'm pretty handy, and I figured I could fix stuff. I've had so much fun meeting and helping new people. Accepting the role of NNN's next President represents a brand new challenge. During my career I was often the CFO, the #2 in the firm, supporting the president. That gave me a chance to observe different leadership styles - to see what worked and what didn't. As NNN's new president, I appreciate that each member of NNN's team has their own specialty and experience, and I don't want to dictate what the team members do. I have their back, and I want to learn how best to support them. It's a question of working together to achieve the mission in the best possible way. We're all volunteers, and our time is precious so I also want us to be as effective and efficient as possible. The thing about NNN is that the need will continue and we have to learn how to sustain the mission - how to keep it going. NNN plays an important role in our community, and my challenge will be to leave the organization even stronger than I found it.

- David Tikkala, President.



WELCOME TO NNN's NEW PRESIDENT, DAVID TIKKALA

David Tikkala spent most of his professional life working as a CPA in the D.C. area, but "I didn't want to retire there. The traffic, the politics, everything was haywire," he says. Meanwhile, his wife, Patty, had begun to research retirement locations up and down the East coast. In 2007, when a postcard from River Dunes landed in their mailbox promoting a weekend getaway, the Tikkalas needed no urging. "We came for the weekend and put in an offer on some land almost immediately," David recalls. Their attraction was not surprising. David and Patty love the outdoors, and enjoy hiking, kayaking, fishing, paddleboarding, cycling, and just watching the sunrises. "The water and the land are central," David says, "it's so beautiful here." For a few years, David and Patty visited their future home as often as possible. "We brought our rescue German Shepherds with us so they could run around and meet other dogs," he says. After their new home was built and the move to Oriental was permanent, they even added a mother-in-law suite so Patty's mom could come for extended visits. Does he have any reflections on the decision he and Patty made to move here? "It's exceeded my expectations," David says, "We've made so many new friends here. It's truly wonderful."

VOLUNTEER CONNECTIONS



THANK YOU JAYNE!!

Inspired by the book, *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande, Jayne Demers and a small group of friends got together in 2017 to discuss the idea of forming an organization that could help local seniors "Age in Place". After a year of intense research, they formed Neuse Neighbors Network. Jayne was persuaded to accept the role of President for the fledgling organization, an undertaking that would require establishing operational policies, building data bases, creating digital platforms, training volunteers, and of course, attracting members. Although Jayne would be quick to insist that she could not have done all this without a team of dedicated supporters, it is her countless hours of hard work, unfailing good humor and gift for gentle persuasion that made NNN the strong, financially stable organization it is today. As of 2023, NNN has grown to include 140 members and 100 volunteers. She also oversaw the launch of NNN's Sponsorship program, providing financial assistance to deserving neighbors who need a little help paying membership dues. Our community is better off, thanks to Jayne's relentless commitment. For those of us who had the privilege of working with her these past four years, we treasure the friendships we forged. After serving in the voluntary role of President, Jayne stepped down last January, passing the leadership baton to the capable hands of David Tikkala. While Jayne will continue to serve NNN as President Ex Officio for one year, she will now be able to spend more time traveling, gathering with friends, *and* perfecting her golf game!

THANK YOU JAYNE!



John recalls that the first time he and Ellen drove over the bridge into Oriental, they both said, "Wow"! Although they lived in Raleigh at the time, they'd been looking for a "weekend" home on the coast. When they found Oriental, they found what they were looking for. After retiring, the Chappells moved to Oriental full time and discovered that volunteering for NNN was the perfect fit, allowing them to contribute to their new community and still indulge their love for travel. "It's nice to be able to help out when we can, and not feel guilty when we're away," Ellen says. Ellen and John are among NNN's most active volunteers, each finding ways to put their talents to good use. John is an engineer by profession. "I change a lot of light bulbs, make small household repairs, and swap out filters. It's very satisfying" he adds. Ellen enjoys providing members with transportation. "We have nice conversations on some of the longer rides," she says. "I wish there had been something like this around when I needed help with my mother." Reflecting on their experience as NNN volunteers, Ellen is quick to advise others, "If you'd like to do things to help your community, I'd tell them to jump right in. Go for it!"