

suburban life

Dunwoody residents prepare for the Holiday Bazaar, an annual event overseen by the Residents' Association.

+ Also Inside:
Top dentists,
leading women,
and more

The Residents' Association at **Dunwoody Village** helps shape a vibrant, supportive environment where every resident can flourish.

pg. 56

Dunwoody residents make preparations for the Holiday Bazaar, an annual event overseen by the Residents' Association.



Stronger Together

The Residents' Association at **Dunwoody Village** helps shape a vibrant, supportive environment where every resident can flourish.

Steve Ruzansky has always been the kind of person who likes to get involved—an organizer, a self-starter, a doer. In addition to spending more than four decades working as a schoolteacher and school counselor, he held the role of Judge of Elections for many years. Retirement has helped him find more time to focus on activities that enrich his life and the lives of others, such as bringing fellow musicians together for weekly jam sessions.

In May 2021, when he moved to Dunwoody Village, a continuing-care retirement community in Newtown Square, his reputation as a community leader preceded him.

"They saw me coming," he jokes. "Some of



the people here knew of me, because I had been involved in a lot of things, and they approached me. So I got involved and I don't regret it."

Ruzansky is the current president of the Dunwoody Village Residents' Association and co-chair of the annual Holiday Bazaar. He oversees Dunwoody Village's dozens of committees designed to enhance the quality of life for residents, though he avoids becoming too involved in any particular committee or event. Rather, he sees his role as a facilitator or organizer-in-chief, someone who can "make a meeting and say 'go,'" as well as a liaison between the administration and the residents.

"All the skills I learned as a teacher, communicating to students and their parents, have prepared me for this job surprisingly well," he says. "It's also a matter of learning to delegate and letting quality people do what they do best."

His two-year term as president will expire in January. Under his watch, the Residents' Association has created a tech team to help residents with their smartphones, computers, and other devices. Nascent initiatives include a program he calls "the wheelchair-a-teers," in which residents become certified in transporting other residents in wheelchairs, and the "package posse," which works with administration to identify, sort, and even deliver to residents the many packages that arrive at Dunwoody Village.

He also takes great pride in the continued success of Dunwoody's Holiday Bazaar, an annual event held every November that requires months of preparation and the contributions of countless residents. For the event, Dunwoody residents create floral arrangements, wreaths and centerpieces, various works of art, woodwork and needlework, jewelry, and baked goods, among other offerings, all available for purchase. Proceeds of the event, which is open to the public, enhance resident entertainment and other programming through the Residents' Association.

"The Residents' Association gives a certain kind of autonomy to the residents," he says. "In many places, an RA is beholden to the administration for entertainment and activities. Here, we raise money for ourselves to bring in the entertainment we choose."

He credits the Residents' Association's success to the diversity of the resident population.

"We have a community of people who have been very successful in their own lives, and many of them are people who are looking for something to be involved in," he says. "You don't lose the urge to get involved once you retire. The saying is that you don't retire *from* something; you retire *to* something. Our residents have a raft of talents and skills, and it's been wonderful to see many of those people put their talents to good use."

One of them is Marjorie "Marge" Smink, current vice president of the Residents' Association and, as of January 1, 2026, Ruzansky's successor. Smink and her husband, Bob, moved to Dunwoody Village in September 2020. Much like Ruzansky, it didn't take long for her to contribute.

Smink, who is a retired librarian, led an initiative to create an online system to catalog the approximately 8,000 books in the Dunwoody library. She was then asked to run for recording secretary to maintain official minutes and records of in-person meetings, followed by chair of Dunwoody's nominating committee. Ultimately, she was asked to serve as



Save the Date

Holiday Bazaar

Thursday, November 20
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



For the Holiday Bazaar, Dunwoody residents create floral arrangements, various works of art, needlework, and baked goods, among other offerings, all available for purchase. Proceeds of the event enhance resident entertainment and other programming through the Residents' Association.

vice president of the Residents' Association.

"I have done a lot of organizational work in my life—I call it student government," she says. "In everything I have been involved in, I had a leadership role; it's not unusual for me to say yes. Having a leadership role in the Residents' Association requires a four-year commitment. Not everyone wants to jump in, but I've enjoyed it."

"My primary job is to shadow the president and to support him," she continues. "We do a lot of decision making together, and we meet weekly with the CEO, Maureen Casey. The Residents' Association has 37 committees. So much is happening in an organization as dynamic as this, and the Residents' Association plays a key role in planning and coordinating many of the residents' programs and activities."

Smink enjoys having a hand in the community's direction and using her time and talents to contribute to the quality of life for her peers. At the same time, she has the flexibility to prioritize other aspects of her life, including spending time with Bob, who now resides in Dunwoody's memory-care wing.

"It's wonderful that I can see him every day and still have a full life," she says. "I look at the glass as half full. My life is enriched because I live in a community of caring people who are supportive and excited to get involved. ... Being on the executive board has helped me understand the complexity of running a CCRC, because it is very complex. As independent residents, we see our world as the center of the universe, but it's only part of the universe. We're here to keep people safe, secure, and moving forward as we go through this stage of our lives."

Ruzansky believes Smink's creativity and eye for detail will enable her to excel as president of the Residents' Association. Although he looks back fondly on everything he has helped the association accomplish over the past two years, he looks forward to passing the baton so he can have more "me time." Jamming with other musicians will be a priority, and he also hopes to establish "Bluegrass Saturday" at Dunwoody.

"I spent a long time trying to convince my wife to come to a place like this," he adds. "I think people need to come into CCRCs sooner so they can enjoy everything that's offered. Personally, coming to Dunwoody has helped keep me young. People tend to think of retired people as struggling to exist. From what I've seen here at Dunwoody, people come here to flourish." ■

Dunwoody Village

3500 West Chester Pike
Newtown Square, PA 19073
(610) 359-4400 | www.dunwoody.org