Opening Doors Meeting

Minutes 4/30/2026

Opening Doors: Our mission is to be a trusted source of information and support to empower people to make connections in our community

Present: Joan Motyka, Greg Miller, Mary Seidner, Karen Geisler, Ariana Eaton, Michael James, Laurette Klier, Laura Mooney, Eleanor Sutton, Christy Zelek, Jeremy Crisp, Karen Conniff, Melissa Fournier.

Guest speaker: Laurette Klier **Nana's Books/NostalgiaWorks**

Meeting Started at 2:10pm

Laura Mooney introduced the guest speaker Laurette Klier.

Ms. Klier was present to discuss her work in dementia care as an advocate for both patients suffering from the disease and providing support for caregivers. Her current career is to provide interactive materials to engage patients at levels that are intellectually appropriate, for taking away the stigma often associated with mental health issues and for empowering caregivers who historically run a higher risk of developing the disease themselves due to factors associated with isolation and stress. Klier congratulated the group on their efforts to relieve loneliness and isolation in Lyme and surrounding areas through their commitment to "Opening Doors'

Ms. Klier explained how she personally became involved in area of memory care after leaving her position as a teacher, noting that elements of "multi-tasking" associated with teaching can cause stress and that stress is a key component for developing dementia. She explained that Covid has had an adverse impact on the three social spaces, home, work and interest groups, such as sports and gardening, where we develop our social skills. We have lost many opportunities for social interaction and intellectual stimulation, a loss which places a negative impact on cognition. Ms. Klier explained that 1 in 3 people develop dementia; the high rate of longer life spans and the present risk factors in American culture such as stress, isolation, feelings of inadequacy, depression and lack of purpose, are key elements and influences in developing dementia. Studies show that the more an individual has a "purpose" the less likely they are to develop symptoms of the diseases of memory loss. One of the keyways to help patients and caters is to take away the stigma associated with mental health diseases and to work at supporting individuals by normalizing mental health issues. We need to develop community resources and human connections in this respect.

Ms. Klier spoke about her efforts in conjunction with the Library Director, Ms. Fournier to make the Lyme Library a Memory Café staring in the autumn to provide weekly support programs for caregivers and patients in an environment that will be welcoming and non-stigmatizing. She suggested to the group that individuals might be interested in receiving training to become recognized as "Dementia Friends". Many members at the meeting committed themselves to do so and a date will be selected that is convenient for all.

A question-and-answer period followed Ms. Klier's presentation with questions, comments and sharing by the individuals present.

At the conclusion of the presentation Ms. Mooney spoke briefly about the fact that the Lyme Library's website now has a special page for "Opening Doors" but the imbedded links to other organizations associated with the group don't have any information on their sites as to what they are doing for "Opening Doors" and suggested that they look at their sites and make changes as needed.

It was agreed that the group values presentations. Future speakers suggested could be from Ledge Light, Brian's Healing Hearts, our town nurse and our local pastors.

The next meeting of "Opening Doors" was scheduled to take place on June 25th with a presentation spearheaded by Karen Geisler given by representatives from "URCommunity Cares", an organization that focusses on the care of older adults and individuals with disabilities, two groups we have identified as needing greater community connections.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20pm