

Virtual Settings

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and creative painting lessons online.

Using the Zoom application, studio manager Nicole Linkhart is helping people paint beautiful pictures from the comfort of their homes. After logging into the password-protected meeting, customers leave the "lobby" and get ready for their lesson.

The response has been great, said owner Dorothy Ferlanti. People are having fun and staying connected despite not being able to be physically together. Mothers and daughters are signing up for classes for Mother's Day to celebrate together, but physically apart; others are using this to have private birthday and bachelorette parties.

"We're giving people who normally couldn't paint together unless they got on a plane," the chance to "paint together and see each other because we're using Zoom," said Ferlanti. "People have been really, really happy about it. They're having a great time."

VETERANS' CEREMONIES

While some might think of May as the start of the summer season, others think of it as a time of remembrance. With NJ Remembrance Day celebrated May 7 and Memorial Day May 25, the public can honor those who served our country through virtual ceremonies.

For Memorial Day, the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and Vietnam Era Museum will hold a live broadcast at 11 a.m. across its social media platforms. It will be posted afterward

on its website, njvnmf.org. During the ceremony, viewers will hear a benediction, welcoming ranks, the National Anthem, scholarship presentations and a host of remarks on what Memorial Day means to New Jersey Vietnam veterans.

"Thank you for remembering those that lost their lives while serving in the United States Armed Forces," the 501(c)(3) nonprofit posted on its website. "We look forward to seeing you on the 25th."

COVENANT HOUSE'S ANNUAL SLEEP OUT

While we complain about being stuck in the house during this pandemic, it's important to realize how lucky we are; the homeless are out there unprotected from the virus, the elements and much more.

To support that population, the Asbury Park-based Covenant House homeless shelter is changing its annual "Sleep Out" fundraiser to a virtual one Friday, June 26. For the night, registrants will be "a little out of" their comfort zone as they are asked to pick a spot in or around their home to spend the night and get a feel for what it's like to be homeless.

Anyone interested is invited to register and fundraise to support local youth living at the Covenant House. Staff members and children will be in solidarity with the thousands of children who call the shelter home, the organization wrote. To register, contact Sue Monteiro at 973-286-3543.



COURTESY IMA

Abby Daly of Bridge of Books sorts books to be delivered to IMA's senior population.

IMA AND BRIDGE OF BOOKS

Reading can be an important mental escape for many people from the doom-and-gloom on the news lately. With that in mind, Bridge of Books and Integrated Medicine Alliance (IMA) teamed up to put books in the hands of senior residents across New Jersey.

Before the pandemic, Bridge of Books had been donating books to students across the state. Once the stay-at-home orders took effect, its focus shifted to collecting books and delivering them to patients in three state "pop-up" hospitals caring for COVID-19 patients, as well as seniors who could not go out to get books themselves, according to a press release. That's when the organization's director, Abby Daly, reached out to IMA – which has branches in Middletown and Shrewsbury.

"Since libraries are closed and many seniors don't have e-readers, we thought this would be a great way to safely bring books into our patients' homes so they did

not have to go out during the stay at home," said IMA president Roger Thompson, M.D., of Middletown.

"Even though our mission is to provide children's books, I was happy to leverage the Bridge of Books name and our tremendous network of supporters to put out a call for adult books," said Daly. "The response was beyond overwhelming. Thinking about how many other Monmouth County seniors are isolated right now with little to no access to books, I reached out to IMA to see if we could work together to get an offer to deliver books out to their senior patients."

From there, IMA contacted its senior patients and let them know it was offering a book drop-off on front porches, up to five books each. The two groups have also received help from River Road Books in Fair Haven, which has donated books for delivery. As of Monday, about 40 seniors were on the list to receive books.

Any IMA patients who wanted books had to provide Daly with the genre, title or type of books they wanted. Selections were chosen from that information.

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