

Collaboration provides more slices for seniors, veterans

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FORT PIERCE -- The coronavirus has made us all get used to a different way of life.

One group hit particularly hard has been seniors. In addition to being high risk to catch the virus, the many months of isolation and social distancing have taken a toll, leaving many residents in assisted living and nursing care facilities feeling lonely and forgotten.

Fortunately, there is a group who refuse to allow seniors to feel lonely or forgotten, and they've come up with a delicious and creative way to help fill tummies and brighten days for nearly 3,000 St. Lucie County seniors so far.

A recent collaboration between Treasure Coast Hospice and Seacoast National Bank will expand the program and make it possible to brighten the lives of more seniors, especially seniors who are military service veterans.

Scott Van Duzer, owner of Big Apple Pizza, created a Slices for Seniors program in April. Van Duzer joined local philanthropist Dr. Shamsher Singh, and each week they pack a vehicle with fresh, hot pizza, garlic knots, cookies, and commemorative T-shirts and head for local assisted living and nursing care facilities.

The program started small but has quickly grown and has provided nearly 3,000 seniors with pizza deliveries through the Slices for Seniors program.

Treasure Coast Hospice, Seacoast National Bank and the Van Duzer Foundation have now joined to expand the popular meal delivery program by providing Slices (and smiles) for Seniors with a special focus on veterans. Work-



Scott Van Duzer, Dr. Shamsher Singh, Agnes Palmer, Angella Williams, Robert P. Barfield, and Craig Perry. MARYANN KETCHAM



Scott Van Duzer, Joseph Massey, Boomer Milton, Ronny Laneve. Front: Charles Sarullo and Nathan Klatt. VAN DUZER FOUNDATION

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ing with local veteran organizations, Treasure Coast Hospice and the Van Duzer Foundation will identify veterans living in both Martin and St. Lucie counties and arrange meal deliveries to show appreciation for those who have served the nation.

Van Duzer says that the

Slices for Seniors program is one of the most rewarding things he's ever been involved with. "Maybe it's because of my mom, Patsy," Van Duzer says, referencing his beloved mother who passed away a few years ago. "I love that this simple gesture brings so much joy. Whenever we deliver a pizza

and a Slices for Seniors T-shirt to a senior, we also deliver a handmade card created by local schoolchildren, many of whom are now learning from home and may be feeling a little isolated themselves. This program makes us all feel connected, and I am thrilled that Treasure Coast Hospice, Seacoast

National Bank, and Boomer Milton have joined the effort to share slices and smiles with our veterans and seniors."

If you're interested in donating to the Slices for Seniors program, please contact Van Duzer at Big Apple Pizza and Pasta in Fort Pierce by phone at 772-466-8303.