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## Photo display of local seniors celebrates Older Americans Month

As a photojournalist, Ellen Ozier was “always drawn to stories that spoke to the human spirit,” so it’s not surprising that she eventually decided to switch careers and pursue social work, eventually becoming a social worker at **Piedmont Health SeniorCare**. But she retained an interest in photography.

When Ozier found out that May was **Older Americans Month**, she realized it was an opportunity to combine her current job with her old love. Ozier created a photo essay of participants in the SeniorCare program.

“As people age, we tend to forget the richness of their stories and what they have meant to the community and to their families,” Ozier said. “I thought this would be a good time to celebrate older adults.”

Ozier put together a series of portraits of participants in the SeniorCare program, together with text telling their stories. The exhibit, entitled "Aging Gracefully: Portraits of Piedmont Health SeniorCare Participants" will be launched **Wednesday, May 22**, at the program’s Annual (Luau) Picnic. The picnic will be held at **1214 Vaughan Road in Burlington** from **11 a.m. to 1 p.m.** and will include games, food, music and fun.

Community members interested in attending the event may preregister by calling 336-532-0000.

The picnic is also designed to raise community awareness about Piedmont Health SeniorCare, a Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)— a growing trend as the government and individuals try to keep down health care costs. PACE programs offer comprehensive services designed to allow senior citizens who might ordinarily move to a nursing facility to remain at home instead, where they may be happier and more comfortable and can receive care at a lower cost. The care is coordinated by an interdisciplinary team – including social workers, like Ozier – that formulates a personalized plan for the program’s participants.

Participants in the program must be at least 55 years old. Ozier, who began her project about a month ago, took portraits of 14 patients and their caregivers in a variety of settings, ranging from a makeshift studio at the SeniorCare facility to their homes to churches they attend. She said the photo subjects, who ranged from 60 to 96, were very open to getting their photos taken and telling their stories.

“It seemed to be therapeutic for them,” she said. “It was amazing to hear their stories.”  
The exhibit will remain on display at Piedmont Health SeniorCare.

*To learn more about Piedmont Health SeniorCare, visit [www.piedmonthhealthseniorcare.org](http://www.piedmonthhealthseniorcare.org)*