SPONSOR: Rep. Briggs King on behalf of all Representatives & Sen. Pettyjohn on behalf of all Senators

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 61

HONORING CHEER, INC. FOR PROVIDING INVALUABLE AND IRREPLACEABLE SERVICES FOR OUR SENIOR POPULATION.

WHEREAS, CHEER is a nonprofit organization that has provided a full range of services for seniors through its centers throughout Sussex County for over half a century; and

WHEREAS, CHEER’s mission is to promote and maintain the highest quality of life and independence by developing and providing services that meet the continuing needs of senior citizens aged 50 and over; and

WHEREAS, CHEER was established on July 23, 1971, by Rev. Dr. Milton Keene, a Methodist minister and administrator of the Methodist Manor House in Seaford, as a private, nonprofit agency providing in-home health services; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. Keene’s original program still exists today through CHEER’s personal assistance services agency, which provides direct care workers to individuals primarily in their homes or private residences; and

WHEREAS, within a couple years of establishing in-home health services, the program was expanded to include a meal program, led by Founding Director of Nutrition, Madonna L. Perkins; and

WHEREAS, in its early days, CHEER’s meal service served 26,429 meals in 1974 and grew to serve 270,000 meals in 2015; and

WHEREAS, this growth has continued with CHEER’s meal service having served in excess of 2.1 million meals from 2015 to this date; and

WHEREAS, CHEER, Inc had outgrown its original kitchen by 2020 and broke ground on a new 5,100 square-foot kitchen expansion to its existing 26,000 square foot community center in Georgetown that, at a cost of $ 1.9 million, will provide new equipment, including refrigeration, storage, as well as food preparation and cooking space, which is designed to produce 2,625 meals per day to serve the needs of members and guests for decades; and

WHEREAS, CHEER has enjoyed continued success and growth requiring it to move or expand its several locations many times over the years to meet the needs of the communities it serves; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware Transportation Authority selected CHEER in 1983 to be the first recipient of buses purchased under a newly created federal program for nonprofit organizations. The eight new buses, coupled with operating
funds from the Delaware Department of Transportation, provided CHEER with the resources to start its own transportation
program, a service that continues today; and

WHEREAS, throughout the years, CHEER developed many other programs and projects, including Operation
Christmas CHEER, the CHEERful Crab Consignment Shop in the Rehoboth Mall, CHEER-Ups Clown Troupe, CHEERful
Notes Glee Club, CHEERmobile Mini Market, Phone-A-Friend, Visiting Friends, the Adult Day Program, and the Personal
Care Program which offers four distinct choices: personal assistance, housekeeping, companionship, and respite to
caretakers; and

WHEREAS, CHEER has hosted numerous special events including Beach Day, Frontier Festival, Car Show, Pet
Parade, Make a Difference Day, Trap Pond Fall Festival, Veterans’ Day Dinner, and Holiday Feast; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kenneth S. Bock, Chief Executive Officer of CHEER, has been tasked with leading CHEER into
its next 50 years of serving Sussex County’s senior citizens; and

WHEREAS, CHEER has continued to provide services during the global COVID-19 pandemic, finding creative
ways to ensure the physical and well-being of its members, including altering its traditional Operation Christmas CHEER
so that approximately 270 homebound senior clients received a holiday meal, gifts, and socially-distanced holiday greetings
on Christmas Day, and offering online activities to engage older individuals socially, intellectually, and creatively to help
fight depression during isolation; and

WHEREAS, the majority of CHEER volunteers are senior citizens themselves donating their time and resources to
help others in their communities throughout Sussex County; and

WHEREAS, during the pandemic, CHEER was able to quickly and effectively modify meal programs and
delivery methods to safely serve the changing needs of seniors; and

WHEREAS, during the pandemic, CHEER established and expanded emergency meal programs to include mobile
grocery store and grocery delivery programs; and

WHEREAS, during the initial period of the pandemic, CHEER established an extensive pantry and shelf-stable
food products for delivery to individual homes of senior citizens; and

WHEREAS, CHEER increased its local meal production capabilities and produced additional reserve meals which
were delivered to homes in advance of any potential delivery food and supply chain impacts; and

WHEREAS, CHEER’s multiple senior centers and quick response to the needs of its members during the global
COVID-19 pandemic provided vital services to members of the most vulnerable population.

NOW, THEREFORE:
BE IT RESOLVED by the House of the 151st General Assembly of the State of Delaware, the Senate concurring therein, that CHEER be recognized for its invaluable and irreplaceable services provided to Delaware’s senior citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 151st General Assembly presents a suitably prepared copy of this resolution to CHEER with the sincerest appreciation of and support for their continued work of promoting and maintaining the highest quality of life and independence to seniors in Delaware.

SYNOPSIS

This Concurrent Resolution recognizes the impact of CHEER, a nonprofit organization that has provided seniors in Delaware with critical services for over half a century.