



SPONSOR: Sen. Pettyjohn & Rep. Briggs King  
Sens. Ennis, Hansen, Hocker, Lopez, Paradee,  
Richardson, Wilson; Reps. Collins, Dukes, Hensley,  
K. Johnson, Morrison, Osienski, D. Short

DELAWARE STATE SENATE  
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 46

RECOGNIZING CHEER FOR 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO DELAWARE SENIORS.

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

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

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

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

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

12 WHEREAS, Ms. Perkins and her paid staff of 4 served their first Christmas dinner of 800 meals by preparing 32  
13 oven-roasted turkeys, 160 pounds of peas, 22 gallons of gelatin salad, 66 dozen rolls, and 100 apple pies in a leased kitchen  
14 behind the Diamond Motel on Rt. 13 in Laurel; and

15 WHEREAS, the meal program moved to the Adams State Service Center in 1977, where a kitchen was added so  
16 CHEER could handle the growing program; and

17 WHEREAS, the growth and span of CHEER's meal service is astonishing. In its early days, CHEER served  
18 26,429 meals in 1974 and 221,000 meals in 1984. In the 5 years from 2010 to 2014, CHEER provided over 1,000,000  
19 meals, and 1,000,000 meals in the 3 years from 2015 to 2017; and

20 WHEREAS, by 2017, producing 1,700 meals per day – 331,764 per year – was no longer feasible in CHEER's 40-  
21 year-old, 2,272-square-foot Adams State Service Center kitchen with equipment that was 2 times beyond its designed  
22 service life; and

23 WHEREAS, the *Cooking for Sussex Seniors Capital Campaign* began in 2017 and, on October 27, 2020, CHEER  
24 broke ground for a new, 6,376-square-foot community center in Georgetown that will house a \$1.4 million kitchen with  
25 new equipment, including refrigeration, storage, and food preparation and cooking space, all designed to produce 2,625  
26 meals daily and serve the needs of members and guests for decades; and

27 WHEREAS, the new kitchen is named the Florence Mason CHEER Central Kitchen, to honor Ms. Mason's 26-  
28 years as CHEER's Director of Nutrition until 2019; and

29 WHEREAS, Arlene S. Littleton became the executive director of CHEER in 1986 and, under her leadership, new  
30 services were constantly added and membership continued to grow; and

31 WHEREAS, CHEER has enjoyed success and growth requiring it to move or expand its several locations many  
32 times over the years to meet the needs of the communities, each location enjoying its own storied background:

33 (1) The Georgetown CHEER Center first met in March 1974 in the basement of St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
34 on Pine Street, where it operated until Director Iva Hedges and her 30 active members moved to its present location in  
35 the Adams State Service Center; and

36 (2) The Milton CHEER Center started in Slaughter Neck Church in 1974, where it remained for several years  
37 until it moved to the old Betts Feed Store on Reynolds Road and moved again in 2011 to a new, 6,000-square-foot  
38 Milton Healthy Lifestyle Center on Broadkill Road; and

39 (3) The Roxana CHEER Center was established in the late 1970s and shares the Edward W. Pyle Center with  
40 state health offices and a child care center; the Roxana space includes a small commercial kitchen and a large meeting  
41 room for members to enjoy activities and meals; and

42 (4) The Lewes CHEER Center, originally located in the annex of Huling Cove on Savannah Road, moved in  
43 2002 to a 3,600-square-foot building on Woods Edge Drive in the center of the Harbour Town apartment complex,  
44 where it was renamed the Harbour Lights Center; and

45 (5) The Ocean View CHEER Center opened in 1992 at the Church of Christ and, according to Mrs. Littleton,  
46 was the center that relocated the most. After just a few months of opening, it outgrew the facility and moved into Town  
47 Hall. In 1998, the center relocated the old Kwik Chek Restaurant in a renovated building that Representative Gerald  
48 Hocker loaned to CHEER. Finally, after a successful capital campaign, a new center was built in 2005 next to a 55-  
49 and-over community and renamed the Coastal Leisure Activity Center; and

50 (6) CHEER's most recent addition, the Long Neck CHEER Center, held its grand opening in 2005 at its  
51 location in the Shoppes at Long Neck Shopping Center on Pot-Nets Road. The Long Neck center expanded into the  
52 next door space in the summer of 2020, increasing its size by another approximately 1,800 square feet; and

53 WHEREAS, the Delaware Transportation Authority selected CHEER in 1983 to be the first recipient of buses  
54 purchased under a newly-created federal program for non-profit organizations. The 8 new buses, coupled with operating  
55 funds from the Delaware Department of Transportation, provided CHEER with the resources to start its own transportation  
56 program, a service that continues today; and

57 WHEREAS, in March 1998, construction began on the Warren L. and Charles C. Allen, Jr. Multi-Purpose CHEER  
58 Community and Adult Day Center on Sand Hill Road, a few miles from the Georgetown CHEER Center. The community  
59 center includes a large multipurpose room that can seat up to 700 people auditorium-style or 410 people for dinner, or be  
60 divided into smaller rooms that can comfortably seat 150-200 people; and

61 WHEREAS, throughout the years, CHEERS developed many other programs and projects, including Operation  
62 Christmas CHEER, the CHEERful Crab Consignment Shop in the Rehoboth Mall, CHEER-Ups Clown Troupe, CHEERful  
63 Notes Glee Club, CHEERmobile Mini Market, Phone-A-Friend, Visiting Friends, the Adult Day Program, and the Personal  
64 Care program, which offers 4 distinct choices: personal assistance, housekeeping, companionship, and respite to caregivers;  
65 and

66 WHEREAS, CHEER has enjoyed association with the Delaware Senior Olympics, which Mrs. Littleton helped  
67 begin, and the Sussex Tech High School JROTC Cadets, who raised almost \$100,000 for senior citizens during its 15-year  
68 association with CHEER; and

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

71 WHEREAS, Mrs. Littleton retired in 2016 and turned over CHEER's reins to her deputy of 10 years, Kenneth S.  
72 Bock, who is now the Chief Executive Officer and charged with leading CHEER into its next half century of serving  
73 Sussex County's senior citizens; and

74 WHEREAS, CHEER has continued to provide services during the global COVID-19 pandemic, finding creative  
75 ways to ensure the physical and mental well-being of its members, including altering its traditional Operation Christmas  
76 CHEER so that approximately 250 homebound senior clients received a holiday meal, gifts, and socially-distanced holiday  
77 greetings on Christmas Day, and offering activities over the internet to engage older individuals socially, intellectually, and  
78 creatively, to help fight depression during isolation; and

79 WHEREAS, in July 2021, CHEER will celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> years of service to the seniors of Sussex County, a truly  
80 commendable achievement, which it will celebrate with a 50<sup>th</sup>-anniversary gala, making appropriate accommodations for,  
81 but not being stopped by, the pandemic; and

82 WHEREAS, CHEER's golden anniversary is the perfect time to recognize its ongoing commitment to bettering  
83 the lives of Delaware seniors.

84 NOW, THEREFORE:

85 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the 151st General Assembly of the State of Delaware, the House of  
86 Representatives concurring therein, that CHEER is recognized for 50 years of service to Delaware seniors.

87 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 151st General Assembly presents this resolution to CHEER with the  
88 sincerest appreciation of and support for their continued work of promoting and maintaining the highest quality of life and  
89 independence to seniors in Sussex County.

#### SYNOPSIS

This Concurrent Resolution recognizes the 50th anniversary of CHEER, a nonprofit organization that has provided seniors in Sussex County with critical services for half a century.

Author: Pettyjohn, Brian (SR)