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The FCAAEE Insider

Volume 10, Fall 2025



As we begin our 63rd year...

...we continue to grow, serve, and create classes and connections! YOU make it possible for FCAAEE to continue our decades-long tradition of offering enriching, welcoming, local adult enrichment programs. How? By your love of learning, your willingness to share your expertise, your thoughtful feedback, your help spreading the word, your creative new class ideas. Thank you for your invaluable help.

You won't find anything like FCAAEE in other neighborhoods. We are the *only* district-based adult enrichment program in southwestern Pennsylvania whose sole mission is providing adult education for the pure joy of learning and doing. Since we started in 1962, FCAAEE has welcomed all adults to join our community of learners! We're known for the wide variety of our classes and the quality of our instructors. And we are proud that we are also known for creating a place where all adults belong. Our nonprofit is committed to offering more than just classes in art, fitness, history, cooking, swimming, and more. We remain equally focused on creating a welcoming space where adults of all backgrounds can come together to learn, connect, and form friendships that extend well beyond the classroom. As we often say in our emails, FCAAEE creates a community where you can discover, learn, and thrive!

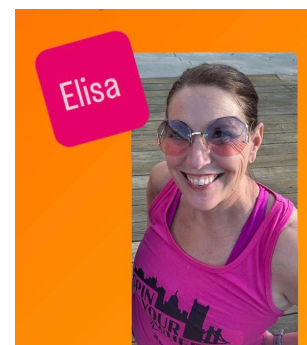
We are always looking for ways to keep our program offerings fresh and vibrant. You never know where ideas for new classes will come from. As you'll read below, new instructors join our community in many different ways. As much as we enjoyed meeting the Pirate parrot at a community event this summer, we loved meeting new fall instructors even more.

We are grateful to YOU—our students, instructors, and district personnel—for helping FCAAEE bring adults together, one class at a time!

Sue Goodwin, Executive Director

Margaret Haas, Assistant to the Executive Director

Our New Fall Instructors - Stories of Connections!



Hannah Wolfe

When Margaret joined FCAAE this spring, she immediately helped fill our long-standing opening for a [Watercolor Painting](#) instructor. Hannah is a talented artist who also happens to be Margaret's friend and co-teacher at Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church Preschool. Hannah teaches many childrens' art classes and is excited to share her passion with adults this fall.



Bill Sparks

An avid woodworker, Bill was so impressed with the woodworking equipment his daughter used in her FCASD class that he contacted FCAAE, asking if there was a way for him to teach adults to safely and effectively use these tools. What a perfect illustration of why FCAAE exists! Bill's initiative led to [Build An Adirondack Chair](#).

Elisa Vettier

FCAAE student Elisa visited our table during *Aspinwall's Big Night Out* to say hi. During our conversation, we learned that she now teaches [Zumba](#). Sue and Margaret immediately asked if she was available to bring this popular class back to FCAAE. We are so excited that everything fell into place for Elisa to share her energy and joy of movement with our students this fall!



Chris Skwartz

FCAAE swimmers may have seen Chris from time-to-time at the high school pool. An employee of the school district and the Certified Pool Operator of the high school pool, Chris is responsible for ensuring the pool is operating safely at all times. In addition to this behind-the-scenes work, Chris will now be a regular presence on deck. This fall, Chris joined FCAAE as our new [Swim](#) Supervisor. Chris brings an infectious smile as well as a wealth of knowledge to our program.

Melinda Guinn

We didn't just meet the Pirate parrot at Fox Chapel Day 2025. We met Melinda and fellow Borough of Fox Chapel Park Commission volunteer Jeff Beyer (see below). They used a break in their duties to visit and learn more about FCAAE. Our engaging exchange of information led to the creation of not one, not two, but three new FCAAE fall classes. We knew Melinda's knowledge of [Native Plants](#) and [Birding](#) would make fascinating fall classes - we're glad you agree!



Mary Lee Gannon

Mary Lee is a familiar face in our community, in part because she wears so many hats — among them friend of Sue Goodwin! As an executive coach, she has seen firsthand how unprepared we, as a culture, are for life's transitions. Wanting to share her expertise to help all adults navigate and thrive through change, she partnered with



Anne Melnyk

Having Anne join our program helped FCAAE fulfill many student requests for a [Mosaics](#) class. We have our crochet instructor, Amy Korb, to thank for introducing us to Anne. Fun fact: Amy joined FCAAE thanks to her cousin, Anita Alfonsi, our vegan cooking instructor! And Anita first connected with FCAAE after enjoying our *Mediterranean*



Susan Swarthout

A holiday gift to an FCAAE board member became a gift to our students as well. Earlier this year, a long-time board member received a gift to attend one of Susan's workshops. She enjoyed the experience so much that she invited Susan to share her talents with our students. A decades-long teaching artist,

FCAAE to create [Designing Your Next Chapter](#). We are grateful she chose to make time in her busy schedule for our community!

[Cooking class](#). We love how one connection sparks another and can't wait to see who will be next!

Susan was happy to create [The Art of Sashiko: Visible Mending](#). Best of all, Susan has many other creative class ideas. Stay tuned!

Focus on Brain Health: What is Ecopsychology? A Conversation with Dr. Jeff Beyer, PhD



I recently met with Dr. Jeffrey Beyer, an ecopsychologist, in the [Three Little Birds Cafe](#). He will be teaching a class on October 23rd called ["Healthy Nature/Healthy Self, Insights from Ecopsychology"](#). My goal was to find out what exactly [ecopsychology](#) is and how it might apply to me, or anyone for that matter.

Dr. Beyer (Jeff) explained to me that we have three overlapping categories or connections in our lives. One with ourselves, another with others such as friends, colleagues, family, and another with our environment, the natural world in which we live. In order to have a balanced mind, all three categories need to be nurtured. As Jeff explained, there is an increasing amount of research and evidence that connects a healthy mind with a good relationship with nature. If all three categories are nurtured and maturing, there will be less stress and anxiety—which we all feel...

This sounds easy and many of us think we do a pretty good job of 'getting out'. But when was the last time you purposefully got outside and smelled the fresh air, felt the wind in your face, hiked, walked, worked in the garden, or rode a bike? Connecting with nature in the process, allows your mind to free itself of the surface habitual processes that you go through every day and get in touch with the deeper part of your brain. Through guided reflection and outdoor-inspired activities, Dr. Beyer will help you learn to step outside your compartmentalized head and realize the connection of the depths of your interior world and the natural world around you.

Jeff, now retired, has spent the past 40 years in clinical practice, supervision, and teaching in community hospital systems, private practice, and at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. He has a B.A. in Philosophy, a B.S. and M.A. in Psychology, and a PhD in Existential Phenomenological Clinical Psychology. He has delivered numerous papers at the National Conferences of the American Psychological Association contributed articles to professional journals and books on deep human relations, ecopsychology, and the essential interconnectedness between psychological and ecological health and well being.

Lately he can be found with his hands in the dirt of his Pittsburgh community working with volunteers to nurture local human and nature ecosystems toward a more healthy, diverse, and sustainable trajectory



How can I get out and enjoy nature...even in the winter?

Here are some online references to help you create and maintain a relationship with nature. It may take time to find what you like to do regularly. And that is what it takes...doing it regularly.

- [3 Ways Getting Outside Into Nature Helps Improve Your Health](#), UC Davis
- [The Mental Health Benefits of Nature: Spending Time Outdoors to Refresh Your Mind](#), Mayo Clinic
- [10 Ways to Relax in Nature and Stress Less](#), American Heart Association

- [How to Enjoy Nature in the Winter Months](#), Well.org

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We would not exist without you!!**



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