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*Photo attached*

## **Jefferson's Ferry Residents Collect Pennies, Donating \$1,000 to the Jefferson's Ferry Foundation**

*Foundation Help to Support Residents in Need*

**S. Setauket, NY...April 21, 2020...** The residents at Jefferson's Ferry Life Plan Community believe in the value of small gestures. They demonstrated this principle by raising in excess of \$1,000 in pennies in just two weeks, which they donated to the Jefferson's Ferry Foundation. Resident Art Romita, who writes for the community's "Ferry Tales" newsletter, initiated the drive in recognition of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. A lifelong teacher and volunteer, Art gets great pleasure out of making someone smile and otherwise brightening their day. In discussing his idea with his fellow Ferry Tales colleagues, they decided that the spare change of Jefferson's Ferry residents and employees could make a difference in the lives of their neighbors. The Jefferson's Ferry Foundation helps pay the monthly fees of residents who have outlived their assets or have otherwise experienced a shortfall of income through no fault of their own.

This isn't the first time Romita has organized a penny drive. Back when he was an elementary school teacher, the idea germinated as a fourth-grade math problem. The idea was to show students a million of anything. He enlisted the fourth grade to collect a million pennies. After more than six months of gathering, counting and hand-rolling, his class had collected 1,309,562 pennies. With the approval of the students, Romita donated the money to the planned construction of a Long Island Aquarium in Bay Shore. That project never came to fruition, however, as the location of the aquarium was switched to a neighboring community. Romita doggedly fought to get that donation money back to benefit not-for-profit organizations in Bay Shore. His efforts spanned seven years and ultimately, Romita was successful.

"I started volunteering in the fifth grade, and it's been a lifelong habit," says Romita. "I've always organized volunteer projects for my grade school students. These days, my "students" are Jefferson's Ferry residents. Although they are in their 70s, 80s and 90s, their enthusiasm has not diminished with age."

“The solidarity and generosity of the Jefferson’s Ferry community never fails to move me,” said Bob Caulfield, President and CEO of Jefferson’s Ferry. “We have an exceptional group of people who fully embrace the concept of community.”



**Photo caption:** Deemed “worth every penny” Jefferson’s Ferry resident and “Penny Fairy” Art Romita holds aloft the trophy residents of the Life Plan Community awarded him for his efforts leading a penny drive that raised more than \$1,000 for the Jefferson’s Ferry Foundation Resident Assistance Fund.

**About Jefferson’s Ferry** ([www.jeffersonsferry.org](http://www.jeffersonsferry.org)) Jefferson’s Ferry is a nonprofit Life Plan community for active adults age 62 and above, with Independent living cottages, apartments, assisted living, and a quality health care center all on one site. Located in South Setauket, a vibrant community along Long Island’s north shore, Jefferson’s Ferry is surrounded by various attractions, shopping, beaches, theaters, and a world-renowned university. Jefferson’s Ferry offers exceptional living and amenities, including restaurants, fitness center, indoor pool, computer center, library, recreational areas, gardens, and gazebos. A mix of cultural excursions, civic activities, and a community of residents who participate in shaping Jefferson’s Ferry’s future, ensures a spirited and engaged lifestyle.

The Vincent Bove Health Center at Jefferson’s Ferry earned a 5-star rating from The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and was named a “Best Of” nursing home by U.S. News & World Report. Jefferson’s Ferry as a whole received the industrywide Community Choice Award for resident satisfaction and engagement and Pinnacle Quality Insight’s 2019 Customer Experience Award. FitchRatings has assigned Jefferson’s Ferry a BBB+ bond rating. Locally, Jefferson’s Ferry has consistently been voted Best Retirement Community and Best Assisted Living on Long Island by The Long Island Press. Jefferson’s Ferry has also regularly been recognized for Excellence by the Hauppauge Industrial Association’s Business Achievement Awards program.