

Angels in St. James

By Susan Harman • Photo by John Muuss

Do you believe in angels? Denise and Bill Hayes were college sweethearts, but they parted ways their senior year in college. Twenty years later, they reconnected through a college friend and have been married ever since.

Denise and Bill moved to St. James last year from New Jersey, where for 25 years they owned a pharmacy and gift boutique specializing in home care products. They were also EMTs in the Haworth (New Jersey) Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

Sharing a love for boating, they own a charter boat in Washington state and a smaller craft in St. James. And they share a passion for helping people.

Six years ago, while in the Ambulance Corps, Bill's co-worker, Barbara Gregory, talked about her plans to move to St. James with her husband John. But the move was delayed when Barbara announced she needed a kidney. Bill responded that if he were a match, he'd donate one of his — he was and he did.

With Bill's kind and thoughtful donation, Barbara and John fulfilled their dream and moved to St. James, where Barbara has become an EMT with the St. James Fire Department. Sadly, John passed away unexpectedly a year and a half ago — around the time Bill and Denise moved to St. James.

Denise is an angel of a different sort. A licensed North Carolina pharmacist, she volunteers as a pharmacist at



Denise and Bill Hayes

New Hope Clinic, dispensing prescribed medications. She is also a first responder with the fire department and a part-time instructor for pharmacy technicians at Brunswick Community College.

Denise also provides guidance to seniors on medication safety and reducing potential medicine-related problems. The average senior takes five or more medications and is 75 percent more likely to experience an adverse reaction. Bad reactions to medications comprise 12 percent of hospital admissions, and 50 percent of them are avoidable. She has provided guidance to a local Parkinson's group on the risks of taking certain foods and drugs alongside Parkinson meds. She helps St. James residents inventory their medicine cabinet contents, fill pill boxes each week, review over-the-counter drug recommendations and pick up and deliver pharmacy medications. She also attends physician visits as an advocate.

Denise conducts free seminars on "What Older Adults Need to Know About Rx Risks." The next one is scheduled for August 21 at the Community Center.

There really are angels in St. James.

An advertisement for Ileana Turner, a boat broker. The background is a photograph of a boat on the water. The text reads: "ILEANA TURNER", "Your fellow St. James Resident", "BOAT BROKER", and "(910) 713 - 4554 WWW.ROCKDABOAT.COM".

An advertisement for Island Way restaurant. The background is a photograph of a dining room with tables and chairs overlooking the ocean. The text reads: "Island Way", "Fine Dining Featuring Steaks & Seafood", "THE ONLY THING WE OVERLOOK IS THE OCEAN.", "Open for dinner at 4:30 pm & Lunch served Memorial Day thru Labor Day.", and "OCEANFRONT DINING".