Congratulations are due to the Village Improvement Association of Doylestown as it celebrates its 120th Anniversary. Over the past 120 years, the VIA of Doylestown has been very active in the community, supporting its mission to enhance the quality of life in the Central Bucks County community through service and education. The organization’s efforts reach beyond health services. It offers one-time grants to community efforts; educational scholarships for outstanding high school seniors pursuing health-related careers and women seeking professional careers; and, through its Welfare Committee, a variety of support for those in our community with emergency needs such as medication, housing costs, and even child seats to bring home newborns delivered at Doylestown Hospital.

About the VIA
Concerned about their community when dusty Bucks County roads caused a variety of health-related issues, 14 women gathered on April 26, 1895 and formed the Village Improvement Association to be dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Central Bucks community. Early on, the group arranged to eliminate dust in the streets and later established the first visiting nurse service in Doylestown. In 1923, they founded Doylestown Hospital.

The VIA was the first Women’s Club established in Bucks County. Throughout the year, VIA committees work to fulfill the organization’s responsibilities to meet its mission, oversee hospital development, maintain the James-Lorah Memorial Home, and explore mutual interests.

The VIA has grown in size and scope to its present membership of more than 350 women, many of whom are also a vital presence at Doylestown Hospital. The VIA also oversees Pine Run Retirement Community and Pine Run at Lakeview.

The VIA is proud to call the James-Lorah Memorial Home at 132 North Main Street in Doylestown its headquarters. The 17-room residence, its contents, and a trust fund for maintenance were bequeathed to the organization in 1954 by Sarah M. James, a charter member of the VIA. Today, the Federal-style building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Bucks County Designer House is an annual fund-raiser that supports VIA Community Projects and Doylestown Hospital. A spacious home is made available by a homeowner, completely redecorated by interior designers and landscapers, and later opened to the public for tours.

Historical Highlights of the VIA
• 1895 – Village Improvement Association founded
• 1916 – Visiting Nurse Service established
• 1923 – Doylestown Hospital established (Oakland and Pine Streets, Doylestown)
• 1939 – Doylestown Hospital relocated to a larger facility (Belmont and Spruce Streets, Doylestown).
• 1954 – James-Lorah Memorial Home is bequeathed to the VIA (132 N. Main Street, Doylestown).
• 1971 – The first Bucks County Designer House opened as a fund-raising project.
• 1975 – Doylestown Hospital relocated to current facility (595 W. State Street, Doylestown).
• 1976 – VIA debuted the second Bucks County Designer House, making it a year-round fund-raising event benefiting Doylestown Hospital and the mission of the VIA.
• 1980 – VIA wins a first-place prize in a national competition for outstanding community-improvement project.
• 1985 – The VIA membership approved a plan for corporate restructuring that created the VIA Health System.
• 1992 – VIA acquired the Pine Run Community and Health Center.
• 1998 – “Through Their Eyes”, a story of the VIA and Doylestown Hospital, was published. The VIA celebrated the hospital’s 75th anniversary.
• 1998 – VIA acquired what is now Pine Run Lakeview.
• 2000 – VIA opened new Heart Center in Doylestown Hospital.
• 2003 – VIA began expansion of the hospital campus by breaking ground for the medical office building, the Pavilion.
• 2005 – VIA continued campus expansion when the Cancer Center opened in the Pavilion.
• 2007 – VIA renewed its participation in the annual VFW Memorial Day Parade.
• 2007 – VIA initiated a $16m campaign for the new Emergency Department.
• 2010 – VIA officially opened a new 39-bed Emergency Department on April 6th.
• 2011 – Hospital campus expansion continued with the Cancer Institute Pavilion and Penn Radiation Oncology.
• 2011 – VIA announced a $1 million pledge for renovation of the newly named VIA Maternity Center at Doylestown Hospital. The funds will be raised over five years by the VIA’s Bucks County Designer House & Gardens Committee.
• 2011 - VIA honored as the #1 Women’s Business in the Philadelphia Area by the Philadelphia Business Journal.
• 2011 – “A Treasured Legacy: Stories of the James-Lorah Memorial Home,” written by VIA member Kathryn R. McKenna, was published.
• 2012 – VIA honored for the second year as the #1 Women’s Business in the Philadelphia Area by the Philadelphia Business Journal.
• 2013 – The newly renovated, updated, and expanded VIA Maternity Center opened in September.
• 2013 – VIA celebrated the 90th anniversary of Doylestown Hospital.
• 2014 – VIA fund-raising campaigns include: 3T MRI with Ambient Experience Sound, Endoscopic Bronchial Ultrasound (EBUS), and the VIA Maternity Center.
• 2015 – April 24, 2015 marks the 120th Anniversary of the VIA.
• 2015 – In April, the VIA’s Designer House Committee opens its 40th Bucks County Designer House and Gardens at Villa d’Braccia.

We the VIA Make A Difference In Your Community:
• The VIA of Doylestown has given nearly $1.4 million to worthy causes since 2007.
• We help to provide financial and other aid to those in need.
• Members enjoy new friendships, benefit from varied programs, and participate in community events.
• Our work really matters and makes a great impact in the community we serve.

For more information about the VIA of Doylestown including how to become a member, please visit our website, www.via-doylestown.org or call the office, (215) 345-2347.

Photo by: Allure West Studios, www.allurewest.com