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Friends of the Hall hosting virtual series ?Community Speakers Corner?

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The Horning Mills Community Hall has always acted as a central hub for community members to come together, but with the COVID-19 pandemic it's been forced to close leaving many residents feeling isolated.

Looking for a way to reconnect, volunteer-based community group, Friends of the Hall launched a virtual series called ?Community Speakers Corner'.

?We knew there was a need for something during COVID, we just didn't know what it was,? Ruth Plowright, a member of Friends of the Hall and board member for the community hall, tells the Free Press.

When the community hall closed, Friends of the Hall, which is run by four volunteers, created and released a survey to all members. The survey asked about different community hall activities the members would like to see including information nights, wellness classes, social connections, and activities for teens and children. A total of 80 responses were collected.

?We took those responses and we came up with the Speakers Corner,? said Plowright. ?You can't do anything physically with people, but we can do Zoom calls. From the survey we found that people had certain interests and we tried to fill in those interests.?

From there the group began to contact volunteers with a range of specialities to be guest speakers. Since its launch, Friends of the Hall has hosted virtual sessions on taxes for seniors as well as financial planning and is scheduled to host a discussion on artist Tom Thompson.

Plowright adds that they've received offers for lesson on photography, gardening, and fitness.

?There's just been so many different things that people have been willing to help us with and just bring the community together,? said Plowright.

Upcoming events, Plowright said, will be focused on health and wellness offering tips on posture, breathing, stretching, and snacking in preparation for a community hike when it is safe to gather in small numbers.

While ?Community Speakers Corner' was started as a way to reconnect during COVID-19, Plowright said they plan to continue doing the events once restrictions are lifted, working with the Horning's Mills Community Hall. Friends of the Hall is also looking to start doing specific events geared towards a variety of age groups.

Friends of the Hall will be hosting their next event on May 4, called ?Make Art Not War'. Events are emailed and posted on the Horning's Mills Community Hall Facebook page, and are free to attend.

Those interesting in presenting or sharing at the Speakers Corner can email Friends of the Hall at friendsofthehall@gmail.com.