



## *A Capsule History of the V.I.A.*

Founded in 1895 by a small, but inspired, group of fourteen Doylestown ladies, the Village Improvement Association was the first Women's Club in Bucks County. The first meeting was held April 26, 1895. Mrs. Mary L. DuBois was elected Chairman and chaired the April meeting and the meetings on May 10, May 21 and May 28. The constitution was adopted at the May 21st meeting. Mrs. Richard Watson was elected President at the May 28th meeting. Since that time the V.I.A. has grown in size and scope to its present membership of approximately 415. The V.I.A. joined the Federation of Women's Clubs in 1898 and participated in both State and General Federation activities for 98 years.

The community is the primary concern of the V.I.A. A wide range of programs has been initiated and supported to enhance the quality of life in Central Bucks County.

The V.I.A. is nationally recognized as the only Women's Club to own and operate a community hospital. Doylestown Hospital was opened in 1923 after years of planning and preparation. Like the V.I.A., Doylestown Hospital has grown in size and services to the present 198 bed full-service, acute care facility with a Medical Staff of more than 360 physicians in over 45 medical specialties.

In November 1985, the V.I.A. membership approved a plan for corporate restructuring that created the V.I.A. Health System. This plan took effect in March 1986 and has enabled the V.I.A. and Doylestown Hospital to operate more efficiently and with greater diversification.

In 1992, the V.I.A. acquired the Pine Run Community and Health Center and in 1998 added a separate assisted living complex known as Pine Run Lakeview.

In May 2001, the Health & Wellness Center by Doylestown Hospital was opened in Warrington. The Center houses physicians' offices; diagnostic services; a fitness center, day spa, health resource center and library; an outpatient surgery center; and a café, among other amenities. The V.I.A. Health System has grown from 8 beds in 1923 to 483 beds in 2006.

Throughout its history, the V.I.A. has continued to be forward looking, while maintaining the original goals of the Association which are to promote "every proper means of improving and beautifying Bucks County...improving the health and welfare of the residents," and "supporting a community hospital and other health care facilities for the benefit of all persons." Each year members rededicate themselves to these commitments made in 1895.