

JoMay and Paul Ives with Lola McHugh, Hilltop

We're All In This Together



The Fall 2020 edition of our Connections Newsletter is unlike any we've published before. Never in the history of our publication have we experienced a pandemic such as COVID-19. It has been the primary focus of all UMH efforts since the Spring newsletter. During that time, our staff has learned to adapt and adjust to the constantly changing routines and regulations. We'd like to thank our front line staff for all their sacrifices - seen and unseen. While we as an organization recognize and praise our employees, so too have our resident's families. Many have acknowledged the extraordinary efforts among our staff to keep their loved ones safe, cared for, and connected with them. We have received an outpouring of support from our residents and their families sharing expressions of gratitude in all forms -- phone calls, notes, special food deliveries for staff, and countless Facebook messages. Let's take a glimpse below at just a few of the encouraging words that meant so much during the most difficult of times for everyone.

"Thank you for all you do. You are kind, compassionate and hard working people! Thank you!"

"Can't say enough good things and how you all have given me peace of mind during these tough times. Prayers for you all to stay safe."

Remaining UMH Strong



A lot has happened since our Spring newsletter and yet, we're still in the midst of a global pandemic. As a result, there were many events that could not happen this year. Our annual Golf Tournament, the Friends of United Methodist Homes of PA's Spring Brunch at Wesley Village, and Open Houses were among many other campus special events and beloved daily routines that were disrupted.

I'm pleased to say that despite the hardships, we've seen extraordinary feats of selflessness and service in our staff.

They continue to give 100% to ensure that our residents are safe, healthy, and engaged. This can be especially frustrating when regulations and guidelines change on a daily basis. But each time, our staff rise to the occasion and make those changes for the good of everyone. Thank you, to all of our employees, who regularly go above and beyond. I could not be more proud of our team.

We strive to have complete transparency with our residents and their families regarding policy changes and status updates. We know how important it is for our families to be assured of their loved one's well-being in their absences. It's our goal to provide timely, thorough, and accurate information as soon as we have it. We appreciate their patience as we all navigate this uncharted territory. Because of the visitation restrictions, our residents have found creative ways to stay in touch through video chats and window visits. Many have been amazed at what technology can accomplish. These new experiences can be fun but we're grateful that safe, in-person visits have been able to resume. Each campus and level of care has established a safe reopening plan in accordance with CDC and CMS recommendations. Current information is always available at UnitedMethodistHomes.org/coronavirus-precautionary-information/.

None of us know when life will get back to "normal" but we're working to make this new normal as comfortable as possible. We will continue to work tirelessly providing quality and compassionate care to our residents. We will listen to their needs and do everything in our power to accommodate them. Thank you, to our UMH family, for your continued support. We remain UMH Strong!

Brian Picchini, President & CEO

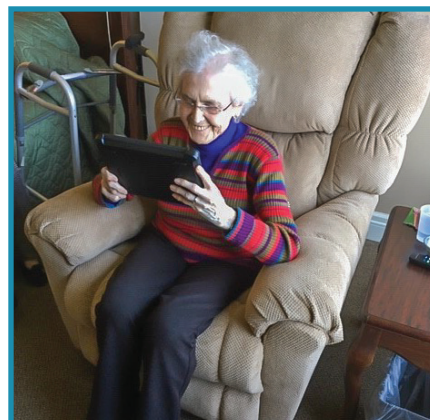


Lynn Machovoe, Hilltop

Activities Initiative

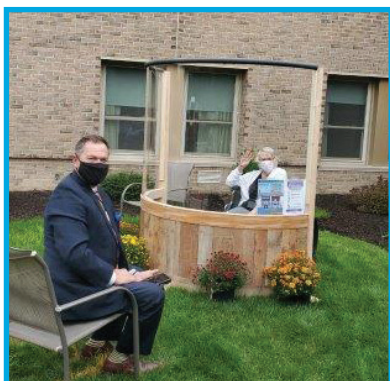
To safeguard our residents in our nursing and personal care areas from COVID-19, they must spend most of their time in their rooms.

Our Activities Staff has been working tirelessly to keep residents mentally engaged, joyful, and connected. Our staff is using the technology and resources they have to connect residents to loved ones and provide alternate means of offering wellness, spiritual, and recreational opportunities.



Simone Mann, Wesley Village

To assist with this mission, the Foundation asked our Activities Directors to send us their "wish lists" of items they needed to make this happen. Over \$6,400 was raised during the first ever NEPA Gives regional day of giving in Northeast PA. With those funds, in addition to support from the United Methodist Homes Foundation Activities Initiative, the facilities were granted approximately \$60,000 toward new equipment and supplies across the four campuses.



Sandra Saccoccio with her son, Lawrence Harris, using the "chat room" at Hilltop.

Thanks to a generous donation, families at Wesley Village have the option to use a specially designed "chat room" called the Communication Pod. Additional donors have stepped forward to support a similar pod at the Hilltop campus. We're so grateful to be able to offer this innovative and safe way to visit in person.

If you would like to donate to help us purchase additional "wish list" items, you can choose the "Activities Initiative" on our website, UnitedMethodistHomes.org/giving.

We've All In

Continued from cover

"I would just like to thank you and all the staff for keeping the families updated. Also to let you know that I am EXTREMELY happy with the way you have been handling this Covid-19 situation. I appreciate you keeping my loved one safe!! I know it has been hard on everyone. BUT, the most important thing is that everyone is healthy! Keep up the GREAT Work!"

"Thank you so much for all you do. I have much love for all of you. God bless you. Thank you also for giving my mom kindness and respect."



"Really speaks to how our loved ones have been cared for with kindness and compassion during this excruciating time and the difficulties the nursing home staff have endured."

"Such commitment is needed for CNA's and even much more so during this challenging time. I'm so thankful for the care my mother is getting and I am confident her needs are being met. Blessings to all the staff. You are all special angels."

"They are the best! I appreciate all the care my husband has gotten."



"The staff is doing a wonderful job caring for our loved ones during this crisis. Please know, it is greatly appreciated. Stay well!"

"Thank everyone for the care of my husband and for being so nice to me during this difficult time."



Thank You sign (Center Circle) created by Connie Bennett, signed by the residents.

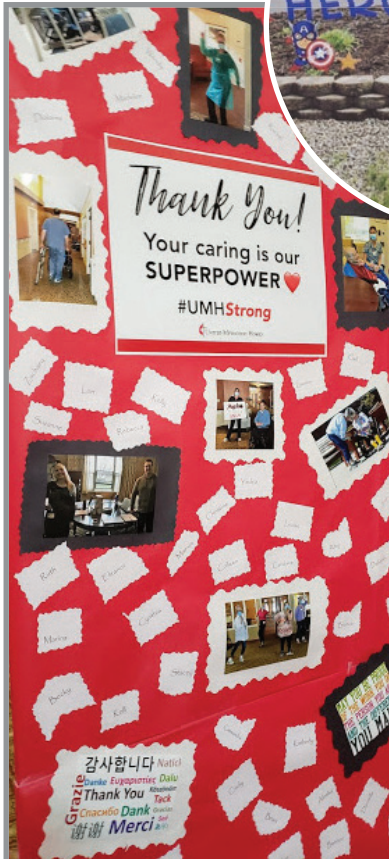
Students from Pittston Area Middle School made posters to thank our nurses and nursing home staff for their service. Holding the student's posters are back row left to right are Gloria Loch Activity Leader, Tami Chesneak Activity Director, and Ann Marie Alba LPN.

This Together

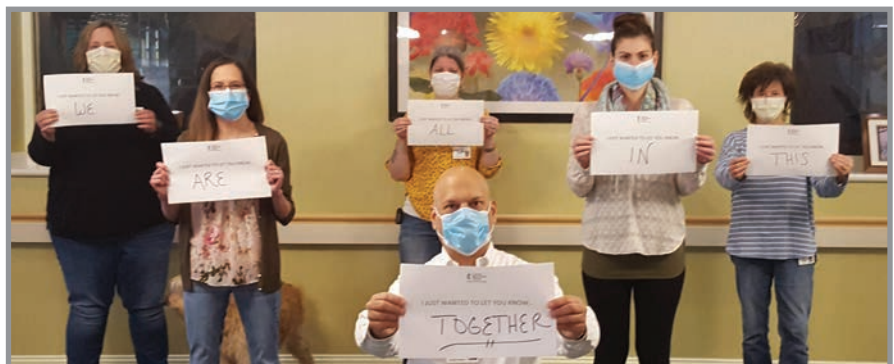
"Our friends at United Methodist Homes have been doing an absolutely amazing job, working hard around the clock, to keep their residents safe and healthy! You are all HEROES! THANK YOU for everything that you do! The staff, your families, your patients, and their families are all in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time! Keep up the amazing work...we are cheering you on!"

"Had a window visit today and it was so hard for mom to understand all this! Thank you to all the staff for taking care of our loved ones!"

"I would like to commend [the staff] on the fabulous job they are doing through this pandemic. My mom has been living there for almost 2 years and is happy and healthy thanks to the wonderful staff of nurses and aids. They are amazing! I FaceTime with her once a week and she's doing well because of the phenomenal staff. They go above and beyond to take care of their residents. I would highly recommend UMH to my friends with elderly family members. I am 100% satisfied with the care my Mom is getting."



"We want to thank them [the staff] for the wonderful job they do. Unable to visit or communicate with our mother during this pandemic has been extremely difficult. Providing consistent and reassuring communication with the families of residents is more important now than ever. We also thank you and your leadership for your continued efforts to safely navigate through these hard times."



Pictured Bottom Right, from left: Kate McHugh, Kayla Valls, Stacy Elliot, (front) Ron Patti, Ashley Shea, Linda Utyro

Campus

Wesley Village - Wesley Village Activities Staff and residents have been taking advantage of their internal television channel to create special theme days. The channel streams movies, trivia games, and music all based on the same topic such as sports or westerns. Staff and residents have the opportunity to dress according to the theme. The Activities Department has taken recommendations from both staff and residents on the themes, giving everyone the chance to participate!



Pictured left to right: Maria Dorton, Tami Chesneak, and Ashley Jacobs

The team has used the channel to meet the spiritual needs of residents, as well. Catholic Mass and the

Rosary have been streamed on a regular basis. Chaplain, Rev. Gene Sperazza, has streamed his services so residents can continue to remain connected to their faith throughout the restrictions. Wesley Village Campus was awarded Best Nursing Home and Best Personal Care / Continuing Care Retirement Community in the Times Leader Reader's Choice Awards. The campus was also nominated as The Best Nursing Home and One of the Best Retirement Communities in the Citizen's Voice Readers' Voice Awards. Congratulations to the team for their hard work!



Elizabeth Church - With Spiedie Fest in limbo, staff at Elizabeth Church Manor still wanted its residents to enjoy the fun of the festival, even

on a smaller scale. Elizabeth Church Manor is right down the road from Otsiningo Park and every year on the first weekend of August, the residents look out their windows and see the colorful hot air balloons take flight. However, this year the festival was postponed from its original date in August due to the pandemic.



That's why Elizabeth Church Manor Activities Director, Kathy Micha, decided to plan her own little Spiedie Fest. "I just thought it would be a fun idea to see if we could get any balloons to lift off from our parking lot, so our residents can see the balloons," said Micha. "Then, hopefully we can have some spiedies,

Highlights

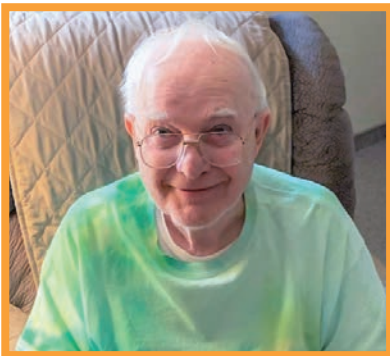
some music, and just do our own little Spiedie Fest right here on the campus." This idea took flight on July 31. Residents were able to watch balloons rise and fly past the campus in spite of COVID-19.

Tunkhannock -

Residents enjoyed creating their own unique tie-dyed t-shirts and modeling them for the camera.



Jean Dewolfe



Karl Heinz-Koopmann

The residents sent a picture of themselves via old fashion mail

along with a note to let families know they are missing and thinking of them. Their photos were also shared on Facebook and received a great deal of attention and comments. What a hit!

Hilltop - The Memory Maker Project's Summer Concert Series came to visit Hilltop Campus and entertain the residents. During one concert, Kristen Carter brought tears to everyone's eyes with folk, oldies, and show tunes. More than 50 residents at UMH Hilltop swayed their hands, sang along, and tapped their feet in their rooms while our team and the UMH staff danced on the lawn,



Kristen Carter

spreading some (goofy) cheer! Hilltop residents also got to celebrate Christmas in July. Staff made a traveling train from scratch, with a team from Activities, Maintenance, the Chaplain and residents. The Christmas train offered all types of surprises - frozen cocoa, candy canes, Santa brownies, Christmas bracelets, peppermint aromatherapy, Christmas music and other holiday candy. This event was so much fun to plan and brought so many smiles and much needed laughter to the residents and staff!



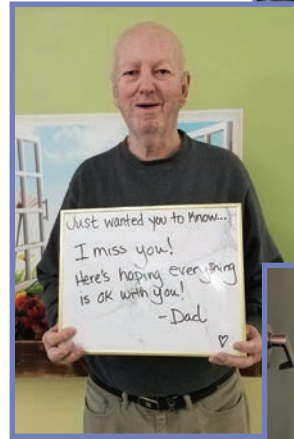
Nicole Gregg

Seniors on Social Media

Social media isn't just for younger generations anymore. Our seniors embraced the power of social media with messages of hope and happiness through the spring and summer restrictions. In March, April and May, residents held personalized signs stating "Just wanted you to know..." with notes to family and friends. Some were very personal and others were good wishes for the general public. Each resident had their own flair.



Barbara Roberts, Elizabeth Church



Jack Denmark,
Elizabeth Church



Tom Boback, Elizabeth Church



Jean Malchak, Hilltop



Kathy Mosier, Elizabeth Church



Emma Jones, Wesley Village



Jean Dewolfe, Tunkhannock

The feedback from these posts was amazing. Likes and shares on Facebook began soaring. Beginning in July, we started the "Seniors of UMH" series. Our residents are extraordinary, with life stories that need to be shared. Many were featured on our blog and social media accounts, sharing their stories as only they can tell them.

To see the photos and stories on social media, visit:
[Facebook.com/UnitedMethodistHomes](https://www.facebook.com/UnitedMethodistHomes)
[Instagram.com/unitedmh](https://www.instagram.com/unitedmh)

The UMH Legacy Society



In 1958, United Methodist Homes opened their doors for the first time to 16 residents. Through decades of dedication and support from many who support the legacy of our founders, United Methodist Homes has continued to grow and thrive. The UMH Legacy Society is a new initiative of the United Methodist Homes Foundation to encourage a sense of community among our major donors. The Society

is an interdenominational group in recognition of individuals who have made a lifetime contribution totaling at least \$10,000, remembered the Foundation in their estate plans, or established a legacy gift. If you would like to establish a bequest for United Methodist Homes in your estate plan please contact us to let us know. We would like to thank you and recognize you for your generosity.

Brooks Expansion Update

Naturally, the pandemic has impacted our Brooks Independent Living Expansion project halting construction and requiring the suspension of tours of the model unit. Fortunately, when Luzerne County transitioned to "green" status related to cases of COVID-19, construction activities and limited touring were able to occur once again with infection control and safety protocols implemented.

Presently, all cottages are fully constructed with finishing touches and landscaping remaining. We have had a tremendous amount of activity including calls and tours over the last few weeks.



We continue to receive very positive feedback on the cottages and have welcomed 44 new residents with future moves planned. Approximately 67% of the units are now spoken for and we anticipate that we will be approaching full capacity in the near future.

For a virtual tour of the project visit: UnitedMethodistHomes.org/independent-living-expansion-project/

To arrange a personal tour of the model unit, one must schedule in advance with Lindsey Maslar at lmaslar@umhwc.org or call 570-655-2891 ext. 5230.

Senior to Senior Wisdom



Wesley Village graduating employees, from left to right: Madeline Gallagher, Caitlyn Howell, Lauren Galli, Kassidy Narsavage, Alysa Bulford, Amanda Baloga, Joey Wruble, and Samantha Wright.



Senior year is often bittersweet for many. There is the excitement of special events, graduation, and new adventures but there is also the nervousness that comes with any major life change. For senior students this year, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the experience is uniquely theirs. Their year was cut short and many traditions were abruptly canceled. Wanting the best for their students, local communities have rallied together to recognize these achievements in new and creative ways. The communities at United Methodist Homes campuses have also taken this opportunity to honor their graduating staff members and provide wisdom to senior students everywhere.

Activities, Dietary, and Admissions Departments collaborated at Wesley Village Campus in Pittston to present graduating seniors with Certificates of Achievement along with puzzle shaped key chains stating, "You are an essential piece of the puzzle". A small graduation ceremony was held outside with "Pomp and Circumstance" playing on the outdoor speaker. Words of wisdom were gathered from senior residents and presented in special Wisdom Jars for each of the graduates. Some key advice from residents includes:

"Words from my high school graduation address in Kentucky 1944: Seek. Sing. Sacrifice. This was spoken during the time of WWII and never forgotten. It was difficult then too." -Peggy E., Independent Resident

"It is our responsibility to take care of one another." -Nancy B., Independent Resident

"Speak up for yourself; speak up for someone else." -Ann I., Independent Resident

"Always aim high, work hard, and care deeply about what you believe in." -Mary M., Independent Resident

"Take vitamins." -Emma J., Independent Resident

Residents at Tunkhannock Campus also wanted to share advice with graduating seniors. Activities Director, Terry White, enjoyed interviewing the residents and capturing the context of their sentiments. Words of Wisdom from Tunkhannock include:

"Keep working at what you want. NEVER give up!" - Helen B. took care of her family until age 36 then earned her nursing degree and practiced nursing for 18 years.

"Always keep your FAITH. Follow your dreams." -Dolores H. worked alongside her father at a young age learning what it was to run a small business. Later in life, she & her husband began a small family-owned gas station that is currently celebrating its 3rd generation of operations.

"Use "YOUR" own talents to the Fullest! Do what suits "YOUR" personality! Enjoy who "YOU" are!" - Karl K. worked from a very young age making money to help his family. He became a successful businessman despite many odds & obstacles.

Across the border in New York, residents at Hilltop Campus wrote their words of wisdom on a dry erase board to be shared on social media. In addition, graduating staff were recognized with a special campus graduation ceremony. Graduates were recognized for their hard work and celebrated with fun photo ops and cupcakes.



Joan Powell, Hilltop

Residents at Elizabeth Church Campus want students to know "Have Fun!!"; "Marry a nerd! (advice I followed and am very happy)"; "Make time for friends & family"; "Study Hard"; and "Congratulations, the world is yours, chase your dreams".

Even though the experiences of 2020 graduates are very different from previous generations, the emotions associated with transitioning to "young adulthood" are universal. On behalf of all our senior residents, UMH would like to congratulate the graduating class of 2020!

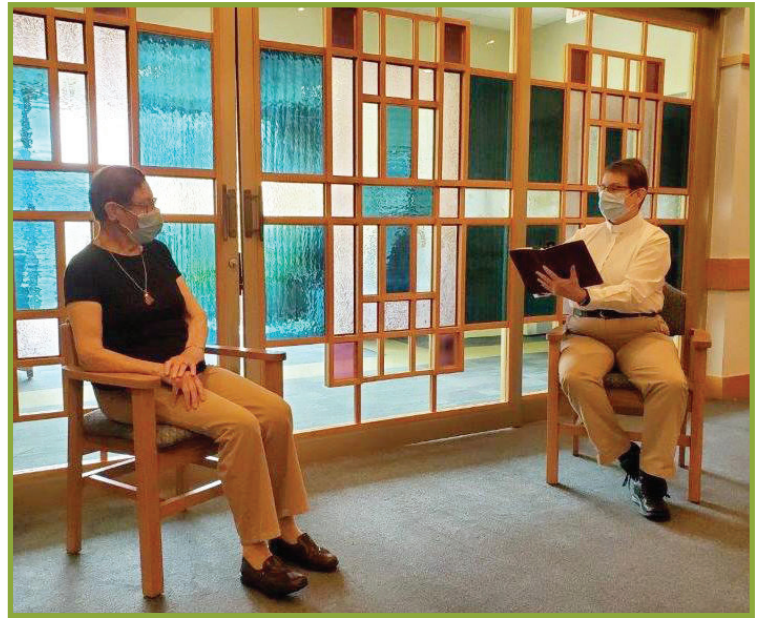


Pictured on the left, Hilltop graduating employees, from left to right: Selena Kasmarcik, Jacob Atkinson, and Joshua Levene.

Ministry in the Time of COVID

A great deal of focus has been spent on the physical and mental well being of residents during the COVID-19 restrictions. As a faith-based organization, our chaplains have continued to care for the spiritual needs of residents, as well. Here, Rev. Abel and Rev. Harding share their reflections on ministry in the time of COVID.

"Do not be afraid," we're told over and over in the Bible. It's been a time of fear as we continue best practices to keep COVID out of the Homes. We've dealt with visitation restrictions, no outside visitors and wearing masks. Since mid-March, outside ministers and priests have not been allowed in. But ministry continues here at Elizabeth Church and St. Louise Manor. I've been printing out my sermon and a bible study, and handing them out weekly. I continue daily visitation, and I've led some hallway activities, including bible trivia, and biblical hangman. The residents and I take walks outside. Services are held three times a week, in the various areas and kept very small and very spread out. I just blessed a new resident's room, and anointed another resident who was very ill. We are all looking forward to the easing of restrictions, but we understand that we're all trying our best to stay safe and healthy. Ministry continues, God is with us and as in the words of Psalm 49, "Therefore we will not fear even though the earth should change...God is our refuge and strength." Submitted by Rev. Janet Abel



Rev. Lea with resident Magdalena "Lanie" Nilsen

"When Gov. Cuomo shuttered businesses in New York many churches moved to virtual worship and on-line services. It was quickly decided that such an approach would not be effective here at Hilltop. The decision to go much more low-tech was made by Faye Clark, Director of Campus Life and myself. Each week I write a brief meditation based on the Lectionary readings that includes a prayer and a puzzle of some type. It is printed and distributed at the end of the work week at both Hilltop and JGJ. This approach has been very well received with many telling me how much they look forward to the next edition.

The second way of staying spiritually connected to the residents has been a daily scripture and prayer read over the intercom each day at 4:30 PM. The scripture is typically a single verse or two, also from the Lectionary readings, which is then followed by a short prayer. Five days a week I do the reading and the two days I have off someone else reads it in my absence. The residents have come to expect the daily readings and listen for them. Those who are interested have found a speaker near their rooms where they can specifically go to hear the daily message.

This time of pandemic has not been easy for anyone. Many have asked when we can go back to having in-person worship services. I do not have a quick answer to that question that is satisfactory. What I do know, without a doubt, is that we need not meet in person in order to stay connected to our God and to one another. So, keep the faith! And stay in love with God." Submitted by Rev. Lea Harding.

At Wesley Village, Pastor Gene Sperazza has streamed his services and offered his assistance in many different departments. Tunkhannock Manor welcomed Robin Fillmore as their new chaplain. Pastor Fillmore has been taking this time to get to know the residents.



"I am very happy here and I feel very well protected. Everyone that works here goes out of their way to make me feel at home." -Viola C., Wesley Village

There's No Place Like Home

"Home" has taken on a new meaning in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March, home is where many of us have remained for months in an effort to keep ourselves, our family and our friends safe. Despite the many challenges that we have faced so far in 2020, we're all in this together. We are the employees, the residents, the families, and we are the donors. We are a community of people that believe in the meaning of home and the importance of providing the best to those we love.

As we've witnessed, unforeseen circumstances arise. An unrestricted donation allows the staff and Foundation to discern the best possible use of those funds when the unexpected occurs.

Your gift today provides the comforts of home to residents now and in the future, regardless of what's going on around us.

Return the enclosed envelope or give online today with your unrestricted gift - or program of your choosing - to support the many ways United Methodist Homes is home for close to 1,000 senior adults. Thank you for your continued generosity.

Recurring Gift Program

Donors can make an ongoing monthly donation through our Recurring Gift Program. This is an easy and affordable way to continually make a positive impact on the lives of our residents all year.

For more information or to enroll in the program, contact Heather Murphy at the Foundation at (607) 775-6400 x1281 or hmurphy@umhwc.org.



Vicky Morabito & Beau

2020 WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S

Team UMH came out for our community on September 26, participating in the annual Walk to End Alzheimer's. Due to COVID-19 this year's walk looked a little different, with walkers participating on their own or with their families instead of

coming together at a central location. Even though we were unable to walk together, that didn't stop our 19 team members from walking and raising \$3,565, which included 3 Champions who each raised \$500 or more! Staff at Hilltop even erected a mini Promise Garden. As this year's Platform Sponsor for the event, UMH President & CEO, Brian Picchini, kicked off the virtual event by speaking at the opening ceremony.



Alice Clark, Hilltop



Steve & Darlene Kanuk, family members of a resident at Elizabeth Church.



Heather Murphy & Family

News & Announcements

Staff Updates

Tunkhannock: Sean Walton was promoted from Plant Operations Director to Tunkhannock Campus Administrator. Walter Ropraz Jr. is the new Plant Operations Supervisor. Robin Fillmore is the new Chaplain.

Wesley Village: Michael Perlock is the new Partridge - Tippet Nursing Facility Administrator. Shannan Lord is the new RN Unit Manager at Partridge - Tippet. Iva Ruthowski and Tracy Wielgopolski are the new RNACs at Partridge - Tippet. Amy Graber is the new Director of Rehab at Partridge - Tippet.

Elizabeth Church: Miari Vasquez and Melanie Dalglish are the new RN Unit Managers at Elizabeth Church Manor. Lane Duger is the new Director of Rehab at Elizabeth Church Manor.

Hilltop: Colleen Ashworth was promoted from RN supervisor to Assistant Director of Nursing at JGJ. Lori Canfield is the new RN Supervisor at JGJ. Samantha Laine is a new Administrative Assistant at Hilltop. Roseann Race is the new LPN Employee Health Nurse at JGJ. Melissa Wasco is the new Director of Rehab at JGJ.

Did you miss it?

In April, Elizabeth Church staff members and residents put a video together to encourage social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic. To see it, go to [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search "United Methodist Homes Don't Stand Too Close To Me."

Sign up for monthly bulletins!

Do you want to know what's happening between newsletters? Of course! Send an email to giving@umhwc.org with the subject "Sign me up" to start receiving the NEW monthly Good News Bulletins. We'll be sharing inspiring stories about our residents, staff, and donations at work.



Caring. Connecting. *Community.*

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