

## Feels Like Home

According to the Alzheimer's Association, six out of ten residents with dementia will wander. Studies show that keeping these residents occupied relieves anxiety and stress and increases safety, dignity, and independence. However, it's important to allow residents the ability to move freely while decreasing the tendency to wander to exit doors. Armed with this information, Activities Director Kathy Micha was inspired to remodel the memory unit at Elizabeth Church Campus. She said, "Keeping in line with our mission of exceptional person-centered care, my goal for this unit is to make it as home-like as possible for our residents. I'm hoping to improve the quality of life for our residents with dementia by enhancing the environmental design to feel more like a home or neighborhood. I'm hoping these enhancements will increase social interaction, help our residents feel at home, and rejuvenate our staff by being involved in the process of improving the unit."



Micha's plan incorporates disguised exit doors, interactive wall murals, and guided stations, all with a Montessori approach to keeping residents not only occupied but giving them a better quality of life by staying engaged. All resident doors on the floor will be wrapped in a unique door vinyl to simulate a door they might see at home and assist with wayfinding. Various non-interactive windows have also been incorporated throughout the hallway, contributing to that neighborhood feel. Montessori is a method of education based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning, and collaborative interaction. Incorporating this philosophy into the unit's design reinforces a person-centered approach at ECM.



# Spring Ahead



I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all of our residents, families, employees, and Board of Directors for their ongoing loyalty and support over the last two years. We all continue to traverse the ups and downs posed by the lingering effects of the pandemic. However, we are incredibly blessed and honored to serve our residents who have entrusted us with their care and remain steadfast in our mission of providing a wide range of senior living services with exceptional care and compassion.

We are in a different place than we were earlier on in the pandemic. I am witnessing a renewed sense of hope as we spring ahead and embrace where we have been, what we have learned, and where we will go from here. Some sense of normalcy is returning on each campus, beginning with the loosening of restrictions that enabled open and ongoing visitation at all times, along with dining and activities programs returning. Festivities are being planned, and we are getting back to the lifestyle that we had enjoyed and been accustomed to pre-pandemic. Our campuses also began welcoming back volunteers and entertainers, further advancing us along in our journey back to normal.

"Back to normal" also means there continues to be great commitment and dedication to the strategic planning process by our leadership and Board. In our last issue, I discussed strategic planning and how vital it is to the sustainability of our organization, ensuring that we not only meet the needs of today but plan for the needs of tomorrow and well into the future. As we continue to plan for what is on the horizon for UMH, at its core is our mission and sustainability to remain the provider of choice and employer of choice, attracting the top talent in our communities. I believe we have extraordinary employees who continue to demonstrate great strength, compassion, and ongoing dedication during the most challenging times. I believe that we are incredibly strong, and I am encouraged as we move forward together.

In appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Picchini". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Brian Picchini, President & CEO



# Feels Like Home

*Continued from cover*

Research has proven that communities with more engaged residents have more satisfied families and greater employee retention. Throughout this transformation, Micha worked very closely with Melanie Riese, an inspirational Activity Leader on the Dementia Care Unit. The pair recently completed their Montessori for Dementia Care Certification, immediately applying concepts learned to use in their programs and the unit redesign. This will provide UMH an opportunity to become a leader in Montessori Dementia Care.

"I'm hoping to create areas around the unit for residents to congregate, families to visit, and spaces throughout the unit for residents and staff to utilize - whether it's a bus stop for a resident who "has to get home", or the nursery area for some of the ladies that like to hold babies, these areas will allow residents to have unrestricted movement and a purpose to their wandering," says Micha. More active residents tend to have fewer negative behaviors, fewer falls, and improved self-esteem.



*"The bright new touches on mom's floor are such a treat! Her beautiful blue door makes her room so homey. When we walk in the halls, mom touches & talks about the flowers in the "windows." Thank you, Elizabeth Church Manor, for brightening mom's and our family's days!"*

**- Linda Griffin, Resident Daughter**

Micha and Riese quickly started installing the new "doors," "windows," and murals, instantly creating a fresh new look. Working closely with the maintenance department and direct care staff on design ideas and installation, they created the bus stop, nursery, and laundry area, in addition to interactive murals. Gordy Gardner, Director of Maintenance, built the "Laundry Area." He and his team assisted with installing the door wraps and hanging wayfinding signs. These cosmetic changes lay the foundation for the next step in designing various interactive stations to fully incorporate the Montessori Approach to Dementia Care to the Dementia Care Unit.

The doors, windows, and murals came from Creative Art Co., based in Canada. Name Plates & Wayfinding Signs came from The Care Home Designer, based in England. Funding for the redesign was approved through the UMH Foundation, made possible by a very generous bequest to Elizabeth Church Campus. There are still opportunities to support campus improvements similar to this project. The Foundation is always happy to work closely with donors on meaningful gifts, major gifts, or memorials. We remain incredibly grateful to all of our donors whose generosity enriches the lives of those we serve.

For more information on how you can make a difference, contact [giving@umhwc.org](mailto:giving@umhwc.org). We will be hosting a grand opening in the near future, welcoming you to our beautiful new neighborhood. Stay tuned!

Cover - Top: Carol B., Middle Left: Ray "Tom" E., Middle Right: Melanie Riese & Kathy Micha

Above: Kathy Micha



# Brooks Estates Travelers

Residents of Brooks Estates are looking forward to a full year of day trips throughout the region thanks to the Brooks Estates Travelers, a special standing committee of the Resident Association. Residents at Brooks have enjoyed organized travel since 2005. However, the planned trips came to a halt during COVID. After the break, this group came together for a reboot of the Brooks Estates Travelers. This new committee format includes residents from Brooks and the Brooks Expansion, which was completed during COVID. There are about a dozen members, but



all residents can attend planning meetings, and suggestions are always welcome. By working directly with entertainment venues and transportation companies, the Travelers are able to offer unique options at a much more affordable rate than public travel companies. "It takes a lot of time and effort to plan these trips," says member Joe Andrews. "Marion does a lot of the coordinating, and we're very grateful for her hard work." Once the bigger day trips were planned, committee members enjoyed reminiscing and brainstorming about easier, more local opportunities as well - such as baseball games, Knoebels, and the Bloomsburg Fair. The Travelers attended Sherlock Returns at Hunterdon Hills Playhouse in Hampton, NJ, on March 8. The play was their second big trip of the 2021/22 travel season. This year, other exciting trips include the Spirit of Philadelphia luncheon cruise, Atlantic City, Silver Birches fall foliage train ride, Penn's Peak, and the Fulton Steamboat Inn. The committee is currently working on a survey for all Brooks



residents to help them plan for 2023. "We're trying to offer a variety of opportunities, so there is something for everyone," Marianne Wolf remarks, "We'll listen to all ideas - big and small!"

## Upcoming Events

**Friday, August 5 - Rail Riders - Fireworks**

**Wednesday, August 24 - Atlantic City Day Trip - Thunder Over the Boardwalk**

**Monday, September 26 - Bloomsburg Fair - Senior Day**

**Wednesday, September 28 - Silver Birches Fall Foliage Train Ride**

**Thursday, October 13 - Penn's Peak - Island in the Stream A Tribute to Dolly & Kenny**

**Thursday, December 8 - American Music Theater - Home for the Holidays & Lunch at the Fulton Steamboat Inn**



# Cozy Quilts for a Cause

Karen Williams, Night RN Supervisor at JGJ, worked with a resident who was always cold. This would often make it difficult for him to settle for the evening. In trying to think of ways to help the resident, Karen remembered she had a quilt she made for her father years ago because he would also get cold when he was sitting and watching TV at night. Her father passed away about five years ago, so Karen asked her mom if she could take her father's quilt for the resident. The resident's wife was a former coworker of Karen's mom, Joyce Mayes, and he knew Karen's father, so the gift was not only practical but meaningful. He and his wife were very appreciative, and it helped him be more comfortable. Shortly after that, Joyce had a conversation with her niece, who makes quilts and donates them to Project Linus, a nonprofit with the mission of providing new handmade blankets to children in need. Inspired by this idea, Joyce decided she was going to make quilts but wanted to donate them to the nursing home residents. Her goal is to make one a month and donate them in memory of her family members who have passed or in honor of family members with birthdays that month. She started the project using scrap materials from making masks, having completed over 1,000 since the pandemic began. Since then, Joyce's friends and family have donated materials for her to use once they learn about her plan. Two quilts have already been completed in memory of Joyce's father and grandfather. Karen is thrilled to bring these quilts to work and see their impact on residents. She plans to help her mom continue this project throughout the year.



*Richard C., Hilltop*



*Karen Williams and her mother*

*Opposite Page - Top Photo: Joe Andrews, Mary Millington, Barbara Springer, Marianne Wolf, Nancy Bartle (President of Resident Association), Jane O'Connell, Walter Klepaski, Steve Englot, Marion Heycock. Committee members not pictured: Sue Keller, Ruthann Jeffery, Maria Englot)*

*Opposite Page - Middle Photo: Marilyn Alvatar, Marion Heycock, Clyde Sipler*

*Opposite Page - Bottom Photo: Justin Perry, Joe Andrews, Marianne Wolf*



# Resident Spotlights

## Patricia Gunton - Tunkhannock Campus



At a time when women were usually married by the time they were 21, Tunkhannock resident Patricia Gunton led a different life in her early years. Pat put herself through school at the University of Scranton Evening College, studying Sociology, simultaneously working days for a large book manufacturing company in Scranton, PA. Here she was employed in Labor Relations and Personnel and assisted - from the management side of the "table" - with contract negotiations involving ten unions, testing and hiring personnel, coordinating the benefits program, etc. She spent 16 years with that

company, facing many challenges as a woman in management. She was one of only two women promoted to management positions during this time. While working at the book manufacturing company and attending school, she also worked part-time evenings and weekends for a Nanny agency.

While attending college, Patricia became friends with her history professor and his wife. The professor and his family eventually moved to Canada so he could pursue his career at the University of Ottawa. Over the years, Patricia and her friend would visit the professor and his family, and he would set them up with his students for dates. In 1967, Patricia visited and attended the 1967 International and Universal Exposition, a World's Fair held in Montreal. It was considered the most successful World's Fair of the 20th century.

In 1970, Patricia traveled to Europe with Thrivent, a Lutheran Church Group. They visited 11 countries, including Denmark, Norway, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, and Lichtenstein. During that trip, she met up and spent time with a friend who was a former exchange student who had also attended the University of Scranton.

Patricia recently used her notes and photos to write up the story of her trip to Russia in 1976 with the Motor Club. Copies of the story circulate at Tunkhannock for fellow residents and staff to enjoy. According to their guides, she recalled that it was a very "relaxed time" in Russia, who told them that they had more freedom than other groups they had led. One of her fondest memories from Russia was going with a friend to see the changing of the guard at Red Square at 2 AM during a snowstorm. Patricia recalled that the guards were a group of young, good-looking boys!

Patricia met her husband, who also studied Sociology, at the University of Scranton. After getting married at 35, she and her husband moved farther away from Scranton. With the added distance to work and the gas shortages of the '70s, she left her job at the book manufacturer and decided to take on more work at the nanny agency. More women and mothers were joining the workforce at that time, so most of the nanny work was during the day. Several families, with whom she was employed, have kept in touch with her. She's proud to have helped raise two psychiatrists, two attorneys, and a college professor. One of the mothers she worked for eventually became one of her best friends. They keep in touch and spend time together to this day.



# Resident Spotlights

## Pearl Webb - Hilltop Campus



Pearl told us, "I've been up and down, but I've been very blessed with great experiences and wonderful friends." For many years she owned a business in Endicott, NY. Pearl was also on the Communications Committee for the American Cancer Society and the board of Handicap Children Association and Willow Point Nursing Home. Although Pearl was born and raised in Johnson City, NY, she is grateful she's been able to travel the world during her lifetime.

We reminisced about her trip to Peru in 1967 as an Ambassador to a Foreign Country through the Experiment in International Living organization. You had to apply, and once accepted, participants had to go to Putney, VT, for two weeks of intense Spanish classes. With no prior foreign language experience,

Pearl admits that she didn't learn much. For six weeks, she stayed with a doctor and his family in Trujillo, Peru. His wife didn't speak a word of English, and Pearl joked that she "...matched her in Spanish". The trip offered a lot of interesting experiences. She went with them to visit relatives who lived in the mountains. Cows had to be cleared from a pasture so their plane could land. At dinner, as the guest of honor, she was given soup with the head of the chicken. After a few bites, she gave the excuse of not wanting to fill up, but the next course was raw fish and onions! She remembers not eating much on that trip. Next, they traveled on to Lima and then to Machu Picchu, where they spent the night so they could enjoy the sunrise. According to Pearl, nothing compares to what a sight that was.

The family had two sons, and due to Pearl's poor Spanish speaking skills, she didn't know that she had agreed that the sons would come to visit her in NY! On New Year's Day, her father called and said that the operator was trying to contact her with a message from the family in Peru - the boys were going to be landing the next day at Kennedy Airport. Living with her parents, they didn't have the room or the time to have young children in the house. Pearl arranged for the boys, ages 11 and 13, to stay with a friend who already had four children around the same age. The boys, who were supposed to stay for two weeks, ended up staying for two months. Although it was winter here, it was summer in Peru, and the boys didn't come with any clothing appropriate for winter weather. Pearl spent a lot of money on winter clothing and taking care of the boys. They went to school while they were here and made friends with many local children. Although it makes for a great story, in the end, Pearl was glad to see the boys head home because it was very taxing for her to care for them.

Her singing talent led her to join the local Sweet Adeline's singing group. Little did she know that she would spend 47 years singing as a member of that group! She was a member of several quartets over the years, and the last one she sang with even won some awards, placing 2nd one year and 3rd the following year in competitions.

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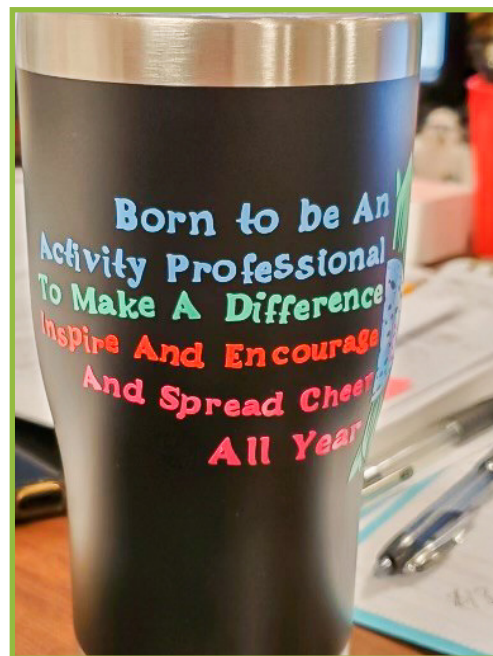


She sang up and down the east coast as an Adeline. Pearl and six other members were invited to join a men's chorus from CA on a cruise in Alaska through the Sweet Adeline's. Another time, she and three other members went to an international convention in Australia. She feels so blessed to have had the opportunity to travel with Sweet Adeline's.

*Pearl on the left with Sweet Adeline members*

## Activities Professionals Week

National Activity Professional Week was January 23-29, 2022. Established by the National Association of Activity Professionals (NAAP) in 1984, National Activity Professional Day was created, later turning into a week-long celebration known as National Activity Professional Week (NAPW). At UMH, our Activity Professionals have risen to the occasion of providing meaningful and engaging moments for their residents through a very challenging and uncertain time. We're so grateful for continually going above and beyond for our residents. At Elizabeth Church Campus, the team was treated to lunch at Mooneys and shirts that read, "Not all superheroes wear capes. Some call BINGO!" Hilltop staff received inspirational tumblers.



At Partridge Tippet Nursing Facility (Wesley Village), they celebrated a new Activities Coordinator. Long time employee, Tammy Hadsel, has gladly accepted the role saying, "I've always had a passion for event/activity planning and have a background in it. I've been a wedding planner/party planner and have a background in Project Management. In addition, one of my degrees is in Hospitality Management. I'm all about social events and creating an atmosphere that gives our residents a better quality of life through individual activities or group events. I also want to promote a cultural change and sense of ownership/accountability with our staff by honoring them in ways with special treats and recognition on days like National Caregiver Day, Popcorn Day, and call-outs on the Telagenda for Registered Dietician Day, Social Worker Month, etc. I'm currently completing my certification from the NCCAP and participating in Facilitator Training for Alzheimer's Support Groups, Greater PA."



*Lauren Taylor, Activity Leader  
Elizabeth Church*

Thank you to all of our Activities Teams from all of us at United Methodist Homes. We are so grateful for their tireless efforts to keep our residents active and engaged.



# EQUAL Grant at NY Campuses



EQUAL Grant at NY Campuses: The NY Department of Health offers grant funding annually through their Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living (EQUAL) Program. This program aims to enhance the quality of care and life experience for residents. Funding is utilized to improve or expand services and/or enhance the facility's physical environment. At the Hilltop Campus, assisted living residents were asked at Resident Council what ideas they had for the grant application. One idea, in particular, came to fruition when the funding was received, and they

purchased a campus golf cart. For those that haven't visited the Hilltop Campus, it's a sprawling facility with beautiful grounds and green spaces. However, those in assisted living don't often get to appreciate the scope of their surroundings because it's too far to walk. With the new golf cart, residents can take rides around campus, visit new spots, and fully enjoy the outdoors at Hilltop. A few warm winter days allowed for some joyriding, and they are looking forward to adding this as a regular activity on the calendar in nicer weather.

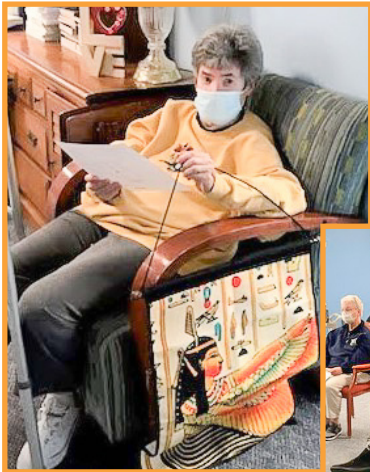
Elizabeth Church Campus was also awarded funding through the EQUAL grant. The Activities Department worked with the Administration and Maintenance Departments to complete this room over several months. The game room doubles as a kitchenette and has become the location for several new programs. One of those

is "Make n' Take," where residents can prepare a selected appetizer or treat on the spot. Residents now have supervised access to an ice cream maker, bread machine, air fryer, and professional-grade stand mixer, to name a few.

Likewise, the game room has a poker table, chess table, full-size shuffleboard, and skee ball machine. Over the past few weeks, residents have competed in a skee ball tournament. This game is brand new, but they're already competing like pros! Since its completion, staff and residents have gotten so much out of this new addition. Residents are leading game groups and love that they can play and talk with no excess noise or interruptions. A few residents recently started doing activities from their past simply because they enjoy the space so much.



# Campus Highlights



Barbara S.



**Elizabeth Church Campus** - Activities Director, Kathy Micha, takes residents on virtual tours of different countries around the world in her Adventure Awaits program using all their senses. In January, they "traveled" to Egypt. Through the magic of Powerpoint, residents can view videos and photos of their destination. Kathy makes traditional food and includes an artifact or picture that a resident can win. In this particular Adventure Awaits, each resident had their name written in hieroglyphics, ate basbousa, and Barbara won the tapestry. Residents have traveled to Italy, France, Spain, China, "Christmas Around the World," and Egypt. This continues to be one of their favorite programs on the Activities schedule.

**Tunkhannock Campus** - Residents at Tunkhannock Manor have been enjoying the company of a new "staff" member, Schatz, better known as "Shotzi." His name is German for "sweetheart," and he certainly lives up to his name. Shotzi spends a great deal of time snuggling with residents and enjoys being a part of the action. He's so good at his job that some nonverbal residents have started speaking when he's around. What a good boy!



Teresa W.



Sophie P.



Residents gathered for Christmas



# Campus Highlights

**Wesley Village Campus** - Happy 102nd Birthday to our longtime resident, William Cordy. William has lived at the Wesley Village campus for over eight years. He is an Army Veteran and member of the Scottish Rights in Scranton, PA. Family, friends, and members of the Scottish Rights Group were pleased to celebrate William in the Friendship Room at Myers Manor.



*William celebrating with Scottish Rights Group members Luke Schofield (L) and Lou Naro (R)*



**Hilltop Campus** - Playing in the snow isn't just for kids! Residents of JGJ got to relive the experience of playing in the snow with the comfort of being indoors. Thank goodness for mittens to keep hands warm. Even if they didn't want to play in the snow, everyone could enjoy the cheerful snowman view.



*Gail H.*



*Almira C.*



## News & Announcements

Heather Murphy, Director of Development, has accepted a fully remote fundraising position with a national K-12 nonprofit educational organization. Heather shared that since returning to the workforce full-time over nine years ago, she desired an opportunity to work from home. We wish Heather the best in this new chapter of her career. The Foundation is always here for our residents, staff, and donors. In the interim, please feel free to email us at [giving@umhwc.org](mailto:giving@umhwc.org) or contact Betsy Vannatta, VP of Marketing and Sales or Rick Runyon, VP of Investments and Trusts at (607) 775-6400.

Jim Silkworth, VP of Human Resources, resigned from his position at United Methodist Homes to pursue an opportunity with an Information Technology company. Having served many years of his career in the healthcare industry, including six years here at United Methodist Homes, Jim expressed that he desired to transition outside of healthcare into a new and different direction. While we are sad to see Jim depart, we appreciate all his hard work over the years and wish him the very best in his future endeavors. Please work on HR issues through your campus HR Director or Karen Smith at Corporate. Please contact Betsy Kosick regarding Risk and Insurance issues and Vicky Morabito for Compliance.

***Connections is designed for easier readability. Contact Abbie Evans at [abevans@umhwc.org](mailto:abevans@umhwc.org)***

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