



For Immediate Release
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UMRC Foundation and Porter Hills Foundation Launch Mini Campaign to Support Team Member Support Services Fund

Chelsea, MI/Grand Rapids, MI, Mar. 8, 2021 – Team members at United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) & Porter Hills will have additional opportunities for learning, growth and emergency support, thanks to a new campaign announced by the organization’s foundations.

The UMRC Foundation and Porter Hills Foundation have recently launched a joint mini campaign to raise funds for the Team Member Support Services fund. These funds support competitive scholarships and emergency aid for eligible team members.

“Our outstanding team members at UMRC & Porter Hills go the extra mile every day to make life the very best it can be for the older adults we serve,” said Wendy Brightman, president of UMRC Foundation and Porter Hills Foundation. “Our foundations are proud to offer these programs with the help of friends and donors.”

Turnover rates among direct care workers in senior living organizations is alarmingly high, ranging from 40 – 75 percent on average.

“There is a nationwide shortage of caregivers and a multitude of positions available in healthcare today,” said Brightman. “Reducing turnover not only saves our organization money – as much as \$5,000 per lost employee – but, more importantly, results in better continuity of care for older adults and their families. Trusting relationships are paramount for the health and well-being of those we serve.”

The UMRC Foundation launched a Scholarship and Emergency Fund program in 2014.

“As UMRC and Porter Hills affiliated in March 2019, many best practices were shared throughout the organization and its foundations, including these programs for team members,” said Brightman. “We were delighted to emulate our UMRC Foundation Team Member Support Services program for our dedicated team members at Porter Hills in 2020.”

Seventy-one percent of scholarship recipients since 2019 remain actively employed at UMRC & Porter Hills. Average tenure among scholarship recipients is nearly four years.



“Our compassionate culture and unique approach to empowering team members has resulted in UMRC & Porter Hills’ lowest turnover and highest retention rates in the past five years,” Brightman said.

Since these programs began, over \$384,000 in educational scholarships have been awarded to 115 team members to take classes or complete their degrees. More than \$91,000 in emergency aid has helped to ease the burden of a temporary financial hardship for 119 team members.

“Programs of this magnitude are virtually unheard of in the senior living industry,” said Brightman. “We are thrilled to be able to provide these programs which benefit our team members and their families and, in turn, the older adults we serve at UMRC & Porter Hills.”

A recent scholarship recipient is Erica Pledger of Albion, Michigan. This mother of two has worked full-time as an LPN at UMRC & Porter Hills while also going to school full-time to earn her Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) degree. The Team Member Scholarships she received helped her to complete her degree in December 2020. She will take the test to be a registered nurse later this month.

“It has been a four-year journey of working toward my degree,” Pledger said. “The Team Member Scholarship program has been life-changing for my family and me.”

To learn more about the Team Member Support Services fund, and how your gift can make a difference for team members at UMRC & Porter Hills, visit umrcfoundation.umrcph.com or porterhillsfoundation.umrcph.com.

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*Building on a foundation of 165 years of combined service to older adults, **United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) & Porter Hills** is a faith-based, nonprofit organization whose mission is: Welcoming all, partnering together, enriching lives. Its vision is: A world in which all are empowered to age well. Together, UMRC & Porter Hills represents the second largest nonprofit senior living organization in Michigan. With a tradition of exceptional quality and a commitment to cutting-edge care, UMRC & Porter Hills and its affiliates combine to serve more than 6,700 older adults each year, from 24 locations and service lines, across 22 counties in Michigan’s lower peninsula.*
umrcph.com/734.433.1000 | [616.949.4975](tel:616.949.4975)

*The **UMRC Foundation** is the charitable arm for United Methodist Retirement Communities, with headquarters in Chelsea, Michigan. Since its inception in 1998, the UMRC Foundation has provided over \$18,500,000 through its Benevolent Care Fund to help UMRC residents remain in their homes when they outlive their resources. The mission of the UMRC Foundation is to promote the wellness, dignity, and independence of seniors by supporting UMRC residents, staff, and the communities UMRC serves. With a focus on the health and well-being of older adults, and education and retention of our outstanding staff team members, the UMRC Foundation’s four priority initiatives include: benevolent care, team member support services, capital improvements, and life enrichment for older adults.*
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Porter Hills Foundation is the charitable arm for Porter Hills, with headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1995, the Porter Hills Foundation was officially established as a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Its mission is to raise, invest, and monitor the funds that support Porter Hills in providing a continuum of high-quality communities and services. With a focus on the health and well-being of older adults, and education and retention of our outstanding staff team members, the Porter Hills Foundation's four priority initiatives include: benevolent care, team member support services, capital improvements, and life enrichment for older adults. Porterhillsfoundation.umrcph.com|616.577.2297