

A MAGAZINE *from* BRIO LIVING SERVICES

Community

Special Edition: A SUMMER UPDATE FROM BRIO LIVING SERVICES AND UMRC & PORTER HILLS FOUNDATION

Live Your *Best Life!*



Following Our
Purpose and Passion
at Any Age!

Ollie Lamb Sanders, Rhoda Nickerson, and Mary Wald participate in Glazier Commons Coffee Klatch.

Following your passion, no matter your age

A Letter from Ray Downs, The Cedars of Dexter Representative
for Brio Living Services Corporate Board

I have represented The Cedars of Dexter on the Brio Living Services corporate board for the past two years. I hesitated when I was first asked – I had never done anything quite like that before.

My work on the board, though, has become an outlet for me to serve; it satisfies my desire to be helpful in the community where my wife, Jean, and I now live. A chemist during my career, I've also been an active volunteer through our church and other nonprofits, including an overnight homeless shelter at our church in Ann Arbor, and Neighbors Helping Neighbors when we lived in Cumberland, Maryland. Helping others has always been important to me.

I see my role of representing The Cedars as valuable. Seeing how the Brio Living Services corporation operates gives me a good sense of the culture of the organization. Our board members are extremely professional and clearly care about our mission and the people we serve.

I'm especially proud of the organization's emphasis on caring for older adults who are low-income, through affordable housing and PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly). That's important to me, and I hope others feel the same way.

Jean and I enjoy living at The Cedars. Jean has had the opportunity to offer art classes both here and at Chelsea Retirement Community. It's a very caring community where we have made new friends. Though people may have their differences, we all get along and look out for each other. We appreciate that we are encouraged to follow our passions, no matter our ages, to make a difference in our community. ■

Sincerely,



Ray Downs
The Cedars of Dexter

Happy 30th Anniversary, Generations Child Development Center!

Ruth Stubbs saw the preschoolers on her first visit to Porter Hills Village. “The first thing I asked was if I could help read to them,” says Ruth. Today she lives at Porter Hills Village and is known as “Grandma Ruth” to a class of 3-year-olds who participate at the YMCA’s Generations Child Development Center located on-site. “You have to be flexible with 3-year-olds,” says Ruth with a laugh. “They don’t like to sit in one spot for long.”

Carol Gustavson and her husband, Bob, also volunteer at Generations. “The babies we rocked in the nursery are now in Kindergarten,” says Carol.

During their careers, Carol was a pediatric nurse and foster mom for newborns, and Ruth was a secondary English teacher. “I love to read to kids, tell them stories, and teach them nursery rhymes,” says Ruth. “No child can ever have too many grandparents.”

Danielle Vincent, Generations Program Director, agrees: “My favorite part of



The Gustavsons help with “Water Day” to the delight of these boys.

Generations is the connection with the residents of Porter Hills Village. It’s huge for the kids to know and be comfortable with older adults. I also love seeing the residents’ faces light up, especially our ‘grandmas’ and ‘grandpas’ who volunteer. They get to share and relive their stories with a new generation of children.”

The retirement community’s unique partnership with Generations has been “a great experience,” says Cheryl Van Bemden, Executive Director of Porter Hills Village, whose children spent time at the childcare center. “Generations has offered enriching, intergenerational experiences for children and our residents for the past 30 years! You can’t help but smile when you see them.” ■



Carol Gustavson, Danielle Vincent, and Ruth Stubbs

“Generations is a special component of the joy of living at Porter Hills Village.”

– Ruth Stubbs

LifeCircles PACE: Helping Participants like Joan 'Soar Like an Eagle'

A vital way that Brio Living Services lives out its faithful mission is *by serving the most economically diverse population of older adults in Michigan*, through programs such as affordable housing and home- and community-based services like PACE.

Joan Gitchel has been blessed with a positive outlook, says her daughter, Hattie Austin. "Nothing keeps her down."

Following a five-way heart bypass surgery, Joan began talking about moving to a nursing home. "She didn't want to be a burden on her family," says Hattie.

Joan did live with her daughter in Howard City while her son finished a lower level apartment for their mom. "At that time, I began navigating the elder care system, touring assisted living, nursing homes, and adult foster care," says Hattie. "It was rather overwhelming. I honestly couldn't envision Mom at any of the senior homes we visited."

After Joan received a pacemaker, Hattie remembers hearing about PACE. "I heard of the possibility for better health outcomes when folks can stay socially active within their families and communities."

At first, Hattie had misgivings and wasn't sure how to qualify Joan for PACE. But after one call, "the PACE enrollment team



Joan Gitchel gears up for ride.

handled everything," says Hattie. "We found the interdisciplinary team of healthcare providers to be very thorough, dedicated, and caring professionals."

Joan now lives with Hattie in Allendale and participates in LifeCircles PACE in Holland. "Mom gets her medications delivered to her door, physical therapy for her neuropathy, and meals and activities at the Day Center. PACE also provided an emergency call device for her."

Did you know...

Our PACE Programs serve over 1,100 older adults annually!



Thome Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) in Jackson opens its expanded clinic space and welcomes new Medical Director, Michael A. Foust, MD. Dr. Foust has specialized in family medicine for more than 25 years, including primary care for older adults. Thome PACE Executive Director Sue Decker says: "With the renovated clinic and the addition of Dr. Foust, we have greatly enhanced our ability to provide for and manage the complex clinical needs of our participants."

One of Joan's sons is physically disabled and he, too, receives care from Community PACE of Newaygo.

Hattie says, "It gives such peace of mind for all of our family, knowing Mom and my brother are both receiving excellent and compassionate PACE care and services."

At 94, Joan enjoys joining her family, the "Gitchel Gang", for rides on a three-wheel motorcycle. "She accepted it as a dare initially," Hattie says, "but she found she actually loved 'soaring like an eagle!'" Joan hopes to travel to Green Bay to ride motorcycles there, too.



Joan with her son, Clint

"Mom is more active and engaged with the support of PACE," says Hattie who hopes that Joan's story will inspire others. "PACE has been a life saver." ■

Sprouting Joy and Purpose at Chelsea Retirement Community Gardens

Prairie Cottages resident Fred Junger was walking through Dancey House at Chelsea Retirement Community (CRC) when Independent Living Life Enrichment Coordinator Hazel Mead asked him, “What do you know about chickens?” “Absolutely nothing!” was Fred’s reply. But he decided to give it a try.

Three years later, Fred is known fondly as the “Chicken Man” among many CRC residents and team members for the caring he provides for approximately 8-12 chickens in the CRC Garden, located behind the Kresge Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center.



Chickens at CRC

Each day in the summer, Fred feeds the chickens, changes the water, and collects the eggs – usually 7 to 8 each day.

In addition to chickens, the CRC garden is home to a hive of Italian honeybees. Kate Collins, Chief Project Development Officer for Brio Living Services, serves as beekeeper. “They are good honey producers and quite gentle in temperament,” says Kate of the bees which can be seen throughout campus “feasting on the many flowers in our lovely gardens.” About 20 to 30 pounds of honey



Kate Collins serves as beekeeper.

is harvested per year. The raw honey, along with fresh eggs, are popular items at the CRC resident store.

The CRC garden also contains more than 40 raised garden beds for residents to plant and tend. Fred and his wife, Terry, both retired teachers, grow an assortment – from rhubarb to onions. “The gardens give us something to talk about,” says Terry. “What did you plant? How high are your peas?”

Residents from all over campus enjoy the garden space. “There’s seating, and it provides a place to bring our families and enjoy it together,” says Fred. ■

To learn more, visit
ChelseaRetirementCommunity.org

Saying Thank You; Supporting our Dedicated Team Members

Four years ago, Fred and Terry Junger made the move to The Prairie Cottages. “Living here is like a luxury,” Terry says. “We don’t have to worry about a thing, and people really care!”

Those caring people include our dedicated team members. “The staff is incredible!” says Terry, whose mother and sister were both nurses. “They were especially amazing during COVID, bringing our meals and groceries, offering outdoor exercise. The team members really went out of their way to make sure we had everything we needed.”

It’s why the Jungers support the UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation’s **Team Member Support Services** program, including competitive *Scholarships* for team members wishing to pursue their educational goals, and *Emergency Aid* for those experiencing a temporary financial hardship. ■



Fred and Terry Junger

“Because the team is so needed and has done so much for all of us residents, we feel it’s really important to help.”

Learn more about **Team Member Support Services** and ways you can make a difference in the lives of our devoted team members at www.Foundation.UMRCPH.org/Employee-Support

Investing in Team Members' Futures

UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation Hosts Scholarship Reception

On May 4th, the UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation hosted its first Scholarship Recipient Reception. This event honored both the hard-working team members who have received competitive scholarships through the Foundation's **Team Member Support Services** program, and the generous donors who have helped make their educational and career goals a reality.

"We were delighted to bring together our donors, board members, and team member scholarship recipients for this first-ever event," said UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation President Wendy Brightman. "What better way for our donors to see the impact of their gifts than to meet the team members whose lives they have touched!"

Scholarship recipient Linda Mammel, employed at Chelsea Retirement Community, shared her testimonial of losing her mother at

the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the difficulty of her job during this time. Needing a positive outlet, Linda decided to pursue her Master's degree with the assistance of the Foundation's Scholarship program. Today, she is the Memory Care Program Manager for Assisted Living.



Scholarship recipients
Linda Mammel and
Christina Miskowski

Said Linda, "I am incredibly grateful to the Foundation and its donors. Your investment in my future will be a great asset to our community, I will make sure of that. Thank you for your support and your confidence in my future."

Since the Scholarship program first began in 2014, well over \$469,000 has been awarded in scholarships for team members. "The stories our team members share melt our hearts and those of our board members. We are so proud of you," Wendy said to the group.

"We are so grateful to our team members who are working by day, studying by night, balancing childcare and families. What you do makes a difference in the lives of older adults." ■



Scholarship recipient Dawn Buchbinder (left) visits with Board member Mike Shore and his wife, Lonnie.

Porter Hills Women's Board: 50+ Years of Service

The Porter Hills Women's Board is disbanding after more than 50 years of faithful service to the residents of Porter Hills Village. Its purpose was "to work in a volunteer capacity to give service, supply a personal touch, and aid in promoting the general welfare and happiness of the residents of Porter Hills."

Over the years, the Porter Hills Women's Board has enriched the lives of residents in myriad ways, including driving residents to appointments, organizing the first beauty shop, decorating for holidays, running the PX store, and setting up the library. More recently, they helped with the purchase of the bus and renovations for the YMCA Generations Child Development Center. Their fundraising efforts have also supported the Benevolent Care Fund at Porter Hills Village.

"What we all liked was the personal touch and really making a difference in the lives of the residents," says Lexy McCulloch, the group's current treasurer. Both she and her sister, Suzanne Moore, joined the Women's Board in 2004. As Library Committee Chair, Lexy purchased books, and she and Suzanne brought a book cart to the Health and Rehabilitation Center (HRC) twice a month. "It was really wonderful to introduce new books to the residents," says Lexy.

Becky Verker, the current Women's Board president, has served the group for four years and is a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church. "Many of my friends served on the Board, and I knew several people living at Porter Hills Village."

Becky coordinated the monthly HRC resident birthday celebrations. "All residents were invited, and every month we chose a theme and music for the party," says Becky. "Some residents who couldn't communicate very well really responded to the music and would sing or dance."

Porter Hills Village Executive Director Cheryl Van Bemden says, "We are so grateful for the Women's Board's commitment and the many contributions they have made over the years. Their willingness to volunteer their time and their compassion for the residents has made such a difference." ■



Porter Hills Women's Board

Gift of Fountain Adds Beauty to Cook Valley Estates Wetlands

Phil Battershall's favorite place to be was always near the water, whether during summers with his grandparents on Pine Lake, near Plainwell; walking on Daytona Beach on vacations; or at his family cottage on Big Brower Lake in Rockford, Michigan.

While living at Cook Valley Estates with his wife, Shirley, and in his later years at The GREEN HOUSE® Homes, Phil continued to love being near the water – this time at the community's wetlands area. "Whenever the weather was good, we would take him on the wetlands path to visit the pond and the gazebo," says his son, Jeff. "He really enjoyed it there."

When Phil passed away in September 2021, his family wanted to make a meaningful gift in his memory. "That's when we came up with the idea for the fountain," says Jeff. Working with the UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation, Shirley contributed to have a water fountain installed in the wetlands area at Cook Valley Estates.



Battershall Fountain at Cook Valley Estates

"The addition of the fountain in our wetlands is truly a blessing," says Community Manager Kelly Mockerman. "It's such a serene and calm area where residents can sit, relax, and enjoy. The fountain also protects the health of the water and reduces overgrowth."

Shirley continues to live at Cook Valley Estates, her home for over 20 years. "Cook Valley Estates has been great for my parents and, when it became difficult for my dad, The Green House® Homes provided him with awesome care," Jeff says. "We hope our gift in Phil's memory will bring joy to residents for years to come." ■

The UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation team is happy to work with you to make a gift that is both meaningful to you and to our residents, while following the strategic direction of the organization. For more information, contact **734.433.1000 ext. 7502 (east) or 616.577.2297 (west).**



Brio Living Services *lives out its faith* through the care and services we provide for more than *8,000 older adults annually*, representing the *most economically diverse population of Michigan's older adults!*

The Faith-Based Not-for-Profit Difference

Continuing Care Retirement Communities
Affordable Living
Home- and Community-based Services

- *20 of our 24 locations and service lines serve low-income older adults*

- *Benevolent Care*

Your gifts ensure that qualified residents who have outlived their savings always have a home where they are loved and cared for.

- *EAGLE Accredited*

The only faith-based accrediting body in the world, focusing on ministries of older adults and children.



At Brio Living Services, our faith-based commitment to excellence ensures older adults live their best lives.

LEARN MORE AT www.MyBrio.org



Brio Living Services Recognized for Excellence

Recently, Brio Living Services has received accolades that our team members, older adults, and families we serve have long known – that our communities and services are great places to live and work! These honors include:



- West Michigan's Best and Brightest Companies to Work For® Winner 2022 *for the 20th consecutive year!*



- Best and Brightest Companies to Work For® in the Nation Winner 2022



- Certified Age Friendly Employer (CAFE) by the Age-Friendly Institute

- Brio Living Services is also **EAGLE accredited** by



the United Methodist Association.

The only faith-based accrediting body in the world, EAGLE follows a rigorous self-assessment and peer-reviewed accreditation process that offers a faith-based distinction and sets us apart among other U.S. senior living agencies. ■

To learn more about our faith-based, not-for-profit difference, visit MyBrio.org.

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