

A MAGAZINE *from* BRIO LIVING SERVICES

# Community

*Special Edition:* AN AUTUMN UPDATE FROM BRIO LIVING SERVICES AND UMRC-PORTER HILLS FOUNDATION

## At Brio Living Services We All Belong!



Brio Living Services Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.



# Welcoming All

A letter from Steve Fetyko, President & CEO, Brio Living Services



"DEI encompasses all of the wonderful traits that make up human diversity. I'm honored to serve on the DEI Committee and find it to be among the most rewarding work of my career!"  
– Amy Genthe, Director of Quality and Compliance for Brio's Home Health Care

"**W**elcoming all." They're the first two words of Brio Living Services' mission: *Welcoming all, partnering together, enriching lives.* For us, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are more than words on a page. It's more than a committee. DEI is the fundamental way in which we strive to live out these words in our communities and services—for the older adults we serve, their families, visitors, and our team members across the organization. We are committed to making Brio a warm, welcoming, and safe place for all to live and work, where each of us can be our true, authentic selves.

DEI is embedded into each of Brio's Guiding Beliefs of Integrity, Wellness, Inclusiveness, Stewardship, Excellence, and Community. As a faith-based, nonprofit organization, we are dedicated to doing all we can to ensure that Brio Living Services is open, nurturing, and accessible to all we serve. This includes older adults of all income levels.

In 2022, we formed a DEI committee to advise our organization in the integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of Brio Living Services. The committee is made up of team members from across our organization, representing a variety of backgrounds and job types from our 23 locations and service lines.

While we have made great strides, we know this is just the beginning of our DEI journey. We hope you will join us in this important work that will help achieve our vision of *a world in which all are empowered to age well.* ■

In Service,



**Steve Fetyko**  
President & CEO,  
Brio Living Services



**M**ost of us are familiar with the primary dimensions of diversity. Those include things we can typically see, like color and age. However, there are secondary dimensions of diversity that are not always as evident, like socioeconomics, which disproportionately affect the growing population of aging adults every day.

At Brio Living Services and the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation, we are committed to caring for older adults of all income levels. Accessibility to high-quality care and housing is vital to ensuring health equity and social justice for those with limited means. *Of our 23 Brio communities and service lines, 20 provide care for low-income older adults.* This includes our seven affordable living communities in Grand Rapids and Detroit and five Programs of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), serving low-income older adults in rural and urban communities across 15 Michigan counties.

The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation’s four fundraising pillars also focus on the variety of socioeconomic needs of older adults and our team members. Through our **Life Enrichment** programming and **Capital**

growth pillars, we seek innovative ways to provide joy and care for all we serve. The **Team Member Support Services** fund gives colleagues opportunities to pursue their education through competitive *Scholarships*, with priority for our frontline staff, or financial assistance in times of crisis through *Emergency Aid*. Our cornerstone, the **Benevolent Care** fund, provides a safety net for qualified residents who outlive their resources.

We are grateful for the ability to serve our residents and team members with the help of our donors. Thank you for being an integral part of our work and supporting those whose unique, nuanced experiences and backgrounds help make the Brio Living Services community a home for everyone. ■

Best regards,



**Kelli Smith, CFRE**  
President & CEO,  
UMRC-Porter Hills  
Foundation



Berenice Folkert and resident.

*“Simply, DEI promotes and empowers our team members. Our ability to share and express what DEI means allows me/us to nurture, foster, and build loyalty with my team to create a positive working environment.”*

—Berenice Folkert, Property Manager,  
Walker Meadow Affordable Living Community

## "Leading With Love"

**T**he Brio Living Services DEI Committee has recently completed its own DEI competency building with Change Works, LLC, an Ann Arbor-based consulting group specializing in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Change Works has also provided DEI consulting services for the Brio Living Services culture leaders and Board of Trustees.

DEI Committee member Angela Edward, LMSW, Social Worker at Thome PACE, says that diversity has always been important to her, but she learned a lot through this process. "We worked with the consultant from the very beginning. A lot of learning had to take place among ourselves first," says Angela. "We had to learn how we are affected by our own biases and our own diverse lenses."

Robyn says being part of the DEI committee has "enriched my work life and my personal life. Learning from each other on the committee and learning about differences from others has created such powerful connections and relationships."

Angela agrees and adds: "There's a really big fear that DEI can divide instead of bringing a workplace together. As we've been led into this process, we've found that you **lead with love when you lean into DEI**, and it develops a sense of caring more about everybody. Our goal is to foster a culture of belonging, to make sure everyone feels like they belong. We're really committed to this not being a fad or a phase, but making it part of the overall culture at Brio Living Services so that it is sustainable."



Robyn and Angela with Thome PACE participant.

Robyn Abbey-Hardesty, LMSW, Thome PACE Day Center Manager, who serves the Brio and Thome PACE DEI committees as well as the National PACE Association DEI committee, says, "It's really important for our committee to be

the leaders and to work with Brio leadership to be aware of unconscious biases. If you don't know you have them, you can't be open to other perspectives and experiences in life."

### The DEI Committee's accomplishments have included:

- DEI training for team members at Huron Valley PACE and Thome PACE, thanks to a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund;
- DEI consultation for Brio leadership, in conjunction with Change Works LLC;
- Updating Brio policies and procedures, including the Resident Code of Conduct, Team Member Handbook, website and onboarding for new team members;
- Participating in area events that celebrate diversity;
- Development of educational materials and presentations for Brio team members (coming soon!)

## Honoring Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Brio Living Services

**Diversity:** Honoring the myriad ways each of us is uniquely different, even as we are all human. These may be seen or unseen differences.

Brio Living Services' PACE centers provide care and services to more than 1,200 older adults across lower Michigan. While each of them has some traits in common—they must be 55 or over, live in the particular PACE service area, and be certified by the state as nursing home-eligible—there is great diversity among individual participants.

For example, walk into the dining areas at Huron Valley PACE in Ypsilanti on any given day, and you will hear the chatter of friends visiting and laughing together. What might surprise you, however, is the variety of languages that are spoken—twelve first languages in all!

In particular, Huron Valley PACE has seen an increase in the number of Chinese-speaking participants over the past year. To help make them feel welcome, the Huron Valley PACE team has translated its marketing materials into Chinese (in addition to Spanish and Arabic), hired an aide who speaks Chinese, and modified the menu to feature more Asian cuisine on days when most Chinese participants attend the day center. The PACE team also aims to schedule participants who speak the same language to attend the day center on the same days whenever possible to help build community and increase opportunities to socialize.

Huron Valley PACE serves older adults of the following ethnicities: 54% White/Caucasian, 34% African American, 4% Hispanic or Latino, 2% Middle Eastern, 1% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian, 4% other.



Huron Valley PACE physical therapist helps participant gain strength.

### Overall, our Brio Living Services PACE centers serve older adults who are:

- Low income and dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid
- 63% women, 37% men
- Living with an average of 5.8 chronic conditions, with vascular disease, depression or bipolar disorder, diabetes, congestive heart failure, and COPD rounding out the top five
- Living with dementia (44%)

# Being Our Best Selves



Charles Coleman visits with PACE participant.

**Equity:** Understanding that each person is unique with individual needs and ensuring that these needs are met.

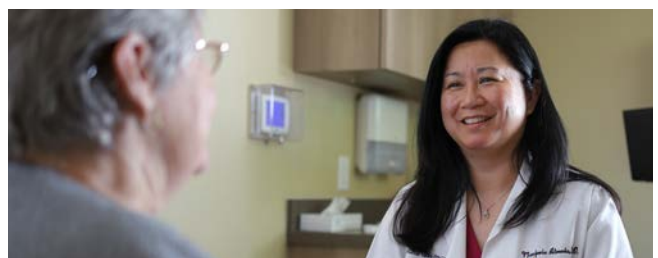
Charles Coleman, LLMSW, Social Worker at Huron Valley PACE, completed his internship there while a student at University of Michigan. “It was a good fit,” says Charles. “It really opened up my passion for the work PACE does.” In his role there, Charles serves as a case manager and leads a men’s group and substance use disorder group for PACE participants. “It’s important for our participants to see someone like themselves, especially for men of color. It becomes an issue of trust.”

Charles says he jumped at the chance to serve on the DEI Committee. “I feel I have a moral, ethical, and spiritual responsibility as a social worker to promote DEI. This was a vehicle I could get on as a person who values a diverse, inclusive community. It addresses many issues that are core values of mine.”

Communicating the difference between equality and equity is also important to Charles. “In many situations, people are behind right out of the gate and have to catch up. It’s vital to offer health equity for the older adults we serve at PACE and also to provide the tools our team members need so we can be our best selves, no matter our role.”

Huron Valley PACE was featured earlier this year in an article by the National PACE Association, highlighting its DEI work which benefits not only PACE participants but team members as well. “When people feel that their well-being is taken care of, when they feel like they’re appreciated for who they are, where they come from, and the richness of who they are as individuals, they can spend their time here at work more effectively, being more creative and more collaborative,” says Huron Valley PACE medical director Marjorie Almeda, DO. “That’s success.”

Charles knows that there is much work to be done and says he is pleased that Brio has moved ahead with its commitment to DEI, which he understands can make people uncomfortable. “Sometimes beliefs are deep-rooted, and you can’t expect them to jump on the bandwagon right away, but it’s important to build awareness so that it becomes the norm. The seed has been planted.”



Dr. Almeda offers compassionate care at Huron Valley PACE.



# Creating Safe Spaces

**Inclusion:** Inviting and welcoming all to the table and recognizing and embracing each person's unique journey.

Inclusiveness is a key element of Brio's Guiding Beliefs. We want all "to feel welcomed, embraced, and invited to participate."

Tammy Lane, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant at Chelsea Retirement Community, joined the DEI Committee this year, in part, because of her experience with her oldest son who is autistic. "People with disabilities are often overlooked due to implicit bias in the workplace," says Tammy. "We had to advocate for him to accomplish his goals. He now owns a house and has a job where he is welcomed and has opportunities to succeed. That's my passion, to give that chance to others."

She adds, "In occupational therapy, we meet everyone where they are and equitably provide them with the skills and techniques to succeed. At Brio, we work with residents and team members of all income levels, all walks of life, and many diverse cultures. Our goal is to create an environment where it's ok to be the person you identify as and where each individual can thrive."



Jean Koorndyk and Katie Eitzen.



Tammy (right) with husband, Ken, and mother-in-law, Mary, who lives at Kresge Center.

Katie Eitzen, Wellness Guide at Porter Hills Village, agrees. "Our work is to make it very visible that DEI exists within Brio Living Services. We want all people to know it's a safe, inclusive space."

In particular, Katie looks at DEI through the lens of her youngest child who is transgender. "A lot of people say that older adults won't understand trans rights, but I'm finding in my conversations that they want to understand," says Katie. "Because I have a good relationship with the residents, I have this platform as a DEI Committee member to share about LGBTQIA+ rights. The residents know I provide a safe space to ask questions, and I'm pleased at the positive response."

Porter Hills Village resident, Jean Koorndyk, whose daughter is gay, says she would welcome more opportunities for residents to learn about DEI. "Our daughter was totally accepted from day one, but that's not always the case," says Jean. "Even today, it's not a subject that's talked about very much. More discussion can help. Our daughter has a wife and two beautiful sons. We are all created by God, and we should all be accepted and accepting." ■

## Scholarship Spotlight: Manda Riley

**M**anda Riley of Onsted, Michigan has worked at Chelsea Retirement Community's Kresge Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center for nearly five years as its Assistant Director of Nursing. She has always wanted to continue her studies to become a registered nurse—like her aunt. But, “I didn't want to put that financial burden on my family,” says Manda who is married with three children.

Thanks to many generous gifts to the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation's **Team Member Support Services Fund**, Manda is now realizing her goal of becoming an R.N. Last spring, she received her first scholarship from the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation and recently won a second scholarship for the Fall semester. She will complete her program in Spring 2024.

Manda enjoys her work with older adults, including her grandmother who lives at Kresge Center. “You just become part of their family, they appreciate you, and you make a connection with them,” she says.



Manda Riley and her grandmother, Carol.

*“I love being able to advocate for our residents and their families and help make sure their needs are being met. The geriatric field is very rewarding and makes you look at the world in a different light.”*

Manda feels that “Brio Living Services is family-oriented and always encourages us to strive to do better.” She is grateful for the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation: “It is wonderful to have this scholarship and to be supported in this way.” ■

The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation is honored to support our hard-working team members across the state. To learn more about how you can support our **Team Member Support Services Fund**, **Contact Leah Tremaine at 616.577.2297.**



# Improving Quality of Life for People Living with Dementia



An innovative dementia care model founded by Teepa Snow, PAC provides practical skills to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia and their care partners.

Cassy DeMoss, Maddie Andersen, and Maegan Garlock prepare for Porter Hills Village Alzheimer's Walk.

**B**rio Living Services and the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation continue to support Positive Approach to Care® (PAC) training across the organization to provide the utmost in care for our residents living with dementia.

Most recently, Porter Hills Village team members received PAC training, including Cassy DeMoss, Wellness Guide in Memory Care. Almost immediately, Cassy had the opportunity to put her training to practical use.

“I was getting residents together for an afternoon concert in the Meeting House,” Cassy shares. “One of the certified nursing assistants that day let me know we had a new resident and asked me to stop by his room to invite him to the concert.”

When Cassy entered his room, “Fred” was sitting on his bed and his family was visiting. Cassy had no background information about Fred’s diagnosis, but approached him using her newly acquired PAC skills.

“I got into his field of vision, introduced myself, extended my hand, and asked what his name was. He did not respond immediately, and I waited for what, in the moment, felt like an eternity. About 20-30 seconds later, he stated ‘Fred.’ In just a few words, I invited him to the concert and said, ‘let’s go!’ He got up immediately and came and enjoyed the concert.”

Fred’s family later told Cassy that they hadn’t heard him speak in weeks and were amazed that he said his name to her. “In the weeks since Fred’s move, I have found that, by my interactions when using the PAC approach, simplifying choices, and allowing time for response, Fred has continued to be able to answer my questions with 1-2 word answers.” ■

**Learn more about care services at [www.MyBrio.org](http://www.MyBrio.org)**

## Meet Our Donors – Jim and Marie Preston



Jim and Marie Preston.

**J**im Preston says his first knowledge of Porter Hills Village was walking by it on the 16th fairway while golfing. However, he and his wife, Marie, would soon become intimately involved with Porter Hills, now Brio Living Services.

Jim was invited to serve on the Porter Hills board in 1998 by friends he had become acquainted with through the Grand Rapids Rotary and other civic organizations. In 1999, Jim and Marie gained a family perspective on the importance of Porter Hills when Marie's parents and aunt needed care.

"The three of them were living in Florida at that time," shares Marie. "While my mom was still in good health, my dad had early stages of Alzheimer's disease and my aunt required nursing care. My mom was trying to care for both of them. We made the decision to move all three of them to Porter Hills Village where they could each receive the level of care they

needed. They could all be on the same floor so Mom could easily visit them. During their stay, we used nearly every service at Porter Hills. The way the staff loved all my family was the most important thing."

Marie adds, "The team members show such dignity to the older adults they care for. It says, 'you matter and I see you.' The team members give so much of their love, care, and skills. They deserve to have the same dignity shown to them."

For this reason, Jim and Marie have been long-time donors to the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation, including to the Team Member Support Services Fund, and have made a planned gift in their estate. Jim also provided 28 years of faithful service on both the corporate and Foundation boards. Jim says their gifts and personal involvement are their way of giving back to the organization that took such good care of their family.

"Part of the reason we give is to be a good example," says Jim. "Worthy causes can only exist with the support of donors." ■

### *Leave a Legacy of Care!*

Now is the perfect time to give the gift of care with a planned gift to support aging adults. Whether you are thinking about making a gift through your IRA, Donor Advised Fund, required minimum distribution (RMD), or including UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation in your estate plans, your generosity can support the needs of older adults and our team members—now and tomorrow! **Contact Dustie M. Wiggins, Director of Legacy Giving, to learn more at [DWiggins@UMRCPH.org](mailto:DWiggins@UMRCPH.org) or call 616.737.6328.**



**Brio**  
LIVING SERVICES

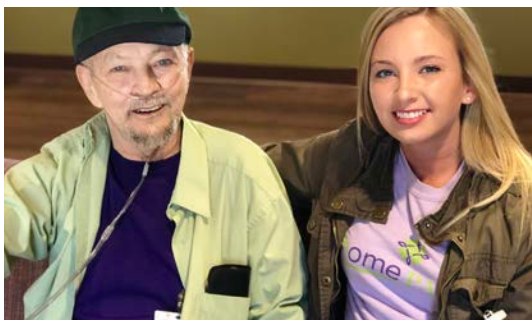
# There's more to Brio Living Services than meets the eye!



We offer a wide array of living options and services to meet the needs and desires of approximately 8,000 older adults annually across Michigan.



Our faith-based, nonprofit organization encompasses not only traditional, market-rate residential communities for older adults, but affordable living and home- and community-based services as well. ***Brio Living Services serves the most economically diverse population of older adults in the state!***



Brio Living Services provides a variety of care and services through 23 distinct locations and service lines to help older adults - ***at all income levels*** - to live their best lives.

To learn more about **Brio Living Services** and the many ways we provide outstanding care and services for older adults, visit **MyBrio.org**.





## *Giving Gratitude* Events Support Team Member Support Services!

**T**he UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation thanks all who attended and sponsored our *Giving Gratitude* events in October! All proceeds support Scholarships and Emergency Aid as part of our statewide **Team Member Support Services Fund!** By caring for our team members, we also provide the best possible care for older adults! ■

