

A MAGAZINE *from* BRIO LIVING SERVICES

Community

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

In Community



Brio team members join together for National Day of Service in remembrance of 9/11



Partnering Together

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

At Brio Living Services, “Community” is one of our Guiding Beliefs, and we strive to be good neighbors in the communities we serve. It is important for us to be trusted partners and to work together with families, community leaders, local service providers, and nonprofits who share our compassion for older adults. When we work together, all older adults benefit.

Whether through our traditional residential communities or our home- and community-based services, such as **PACE** (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly), **Home Health**, and **Avenues by Brio Living Services**, we offer a variety of options so individuals can age vibrantly, safely, and with the supports they want, where they want them. We provide an extra set of hands for family caregivers, offer support, and help strengthen intergenerational communities where older adults can thrive and participate.

As part of that, Brio is committed to collaborating with other like-minded organizations, such as the Alzheimer’s Association, Meals on Wheels, and Area Agencies on Aging to name a few that support older adults in our communities. For example, we have partnered with Emergent Health Partners to pilot a Community Paramedics program at **Chelsea Retirement Community**



Meadowlark Retirement Village - Sparta, MI

(CRC) to help residents avoid unnecessary emergency room visits. On average, this program is keeping at least one CRC resident per week from requiring an ER visit.

We are grateful for the collaborations we are able to nurture in the communities and regions that Brio serves as we partner to create a world in which all are empowered to age well. ■

In Service,



Steve Fetyko
President & CEO
Brio Living Services

The communities we reside in, or adopt as our own, become a part of us. How we view the world, and what and who we care about, shows up in our impact on the world. Sharing space and time with aging adults gives us the ability to appreciate their lived experiences and wisdom. It fully immerses us in the joys and challenges older adults face with varying needs and disparate backgrounds. All of us at the **UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation** are blessed to be in close proximity to seeing the mission fulfilled through our residents, care recipients, and care providers.

Community is defined in many ways; however, the common theme is that it fosters a sense of belonging, caring, and agape love—a selfless, unconditional love, an extension of oneself for the benefit of another. As we serve, we are ever mindful of those who are part of our communities, as well as those who could benefit from our care. It is the thing that propels us forward and makes our mission palpable and meaningful. All should be able to age well with dignity, care, and vibrance.

Partnering in the communities we serve is important to the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation’s Board of Directors, as well as our team. Each year, our Board awards several Community Grants to local nonprofits that care for older adults in the communities we serve (see page 9). I am so proud to serve alongside these dedicated individuals who recognize the vital work of local programs in providing care and comfort for older adults.

I am also grateful to you, our community of donors, for your continued commitment to enhancing vibrant aging for those we serve. Thank you! ■

Best Regards,



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



Thome PACE CNA, T. Johnson, enjoys a tasty treat.

Thome PACE team members enjoyed an Ice Cream Social, thanks to the Jackson Community Foundation! As a grantee, the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation and Thome PACE are grateful to JCF for supporting much-needed home repairs for Jackson area PACE participants.

Feeling of Community

Meadowlark: “A Trusted Resource”



Dori Steffens

“Growing up in Sparta, you could always go to your neighbors for anything,” says Dori Steffens, Life Enrichment Coordinator for **Meadowlark Retirement Village**. “It’s a true community where everyone knows everyone, and they’re always willing to lend a hand. I grew up

with a cornfield in my backyard — now where Meadowlark sits. It’s crazy to think that ‘my backyard’ is where I get the pleasure of working each day with my work family.”

Sparta, Michigan, a town of just over 4,000, is home to not one but two Brio Living Services communities. Meadowlark offers high quality independent and assisted living as well as memory care, utilizing the Household Model of person-centered care. Next door is **Harvest Way Affordable Living Community**, home to 45 independent older adults.

“At Brio we believe housing and health care happen locally,” says Nicole Maag, Brio’s Chief of Residential Services. “Being a trusted resource for older adults and their families in the Sparta community is a crucial part of who we are. In addition, we house the local senior center in the Harvest Way community space. This partnership with Senior Neighbors is a great example of local synergy, allowing us to serve all older adults in Sparta.”

“I thoroughly enjoy it here,” says Michelle Skogler, Residential Living Manager at Meadowlark. “It’s an extension of the community, a down-to-earth, comfortable, family setting. Many Sparta community members or their family members move here and multiple generations have been served here. Many of our team members are from Sparta, and they know the residents. There’s a feeling of love and connection here.”

“The best part is when someone comes through the door looking for a place to live,” says Dori. “Our arms are wide open, always trying to help find a solution. I’m delighted because, most of the time, I know the people who are walking in, and it contributes to the home-life feel that we strive for each day.”

Read more of the story on our Friday blog! [MyBrio.org/Blog](https://www.mybrio.org/blog) ■



Michelle Skogler with resident Joan Keiser: “I liked the feeling from the moment I walked in.”

Brio Living Services Earns EAGLE Re-Accreditation

Brio Living Services is thrilled to share that it has earned EAGLE reaccreditation with commendation from the EAGLE Accreditation Commission of the Methodist Ministries Network. EAGLE, or Educational Assessment Guidelines Leading toward Excellence, is the only faith-based accrediting body in the world that focuses on ministries for older adults and children. Brio Living Services is one of just eight older adult ministries in the nation to achieve EAGLE accreditation and the only one in Michigan.

“EAGLE recognizes organizations that voluntarily go above and beyond,” says Brio President & CEO Steve Fetyko. “This rigorous self-assessment and peer-reviewed accreditation process takes a holistic view of the entire organization and contains built-in methods to help organizations constantly strive for excellence.”

Prior to affiliation with Porter Hills, UMRC (United Methodist Retirement Communities) earned its initial EAGLE accreditation in 2016. Due to COVID, Brio

Living Services received a continuation of its accreditation through a shortened “bridge” review process in 2022. This year was the first time that Brio communities across the state were part of the full accreditation review and site visit in April 2024. Brio’s EAGLE reaccreditation is effective through April 2028.

Brio’s Vice President of Quality, Risk, & Clinical Strategy, Missi Latter says, “Brio received twenty commendations from the EAGLE Accreditation Commission and only one opportunity for improvement, or OFI. This is really remarkable and speaks to the great work of our team members.”

Brio scored 677.7 out of a possible 645 points, or 105%. One EAGLE Commissioner referred to Brio as ‘the gold standard!’

Mary Kemper, President/CEO for Methodist Ministries Network, said in her official announcement to Brio in August, “We commend Brio’s governing board and staff for their commitment to excellence. We celebrate your success and extend our thanks for your commitment to EAGLE!” ■



Supportive Techniques

Embracing Innovative Dementia Care



Chelsea Retirement Community PAC Team (not pictured: N. Vosters)

Brio Living Services cares deeply for its residents who live with dementia and their families. It's why we have embraced the Positive Approach to Care® (PAC) across the organization. Founded by Teepa Snow, PAC is an innovative, evidence informed, dementia education program. It is designed to improve the care environment through awareness, skills, and competencies that reduce stress for those living with dementia and their care partners.

PAC was implemented first at Towsley Village Memory Care Center at our Chelsea campus. This year, our team earned the PAC Designated Organization status at the Aware Level. **Chelsea Retirement Community (CRC)** is one of just two retirement

communities in Michigan to receive the PAC Aware designation.

“Integrating PAC skills into daily routines and broadening the range of activities that our team members can offer our residents living with dementia is invaluable,” says Linda Mammel, Towsley Village Memory Care Program Manager and PAC Certified Independent Trainer. “By using PAC techniques in support of our residents, we have seen a decrease in challenging behaviors of those living with dementia and an increased ability of our team members to deescalate situations.”

At **Porter Hills Village**, Dementia Care Specialist Stephanie Troeger is a certified

for Brio Residents and Community

PAC Coach and is committed to ensuring the Memory Care and Health Center care team members are trained and comfortable with using PAC techniques with residents living with dementia. This includes “PAC Skills Make the Difference” training in September, offered twice a day/two days a week, weekly huddle meetings, and other training on a quarterly basis.

“Overall, PAC training is helping team members know how to best approach and interact with residents living with dementia,” says Stephanie. “In turn, our residents feel more secure and are more willing to participate in their care.”

Dining team members are also encouraged to participate in PAC training. “People living with dementia may startle easily because their vision is greatly reduced,” says Stephanie. “It’s a real ‘a-ha’ moment when team members realize the importance of where to place a resident’s dinner plate, for example, so they can see it.”

Many Brio team members across the organization are involved in the community with the Alzheimer’s Association, including participating in the Walks to End Alzheimer’s®. Linda Mammel is a volunteer



S. Troeger and C. Vander Meer and residents of Porter Hills Village enjoy the Tovertafel or “Magic Table” interactive technology.

Community Educator with the Alzheimer’s Association and offers monthly meetings at CRC, each covering a different topic, as well as PAC training. Linda Madden, Towsley Village Social Worker, holds monthly support groups for family care partners. Both community members and resident families are invited with over twenty attendees each time.

Mammel adds, “Through better understanding of brain changes that are part of the dementia journey, PAC training helps to preserve positive relationships for both the care partner and the family member with their loved one, providing moments of personal connection and joy.” ■

Meet Our Donors

Will Epps Shares Passion for Affordable Living



Will Epps IV

Will Epps IV experienced what it means to have unstable housing as a child growing up in Flint. Today, affordable housing is a passion he pursues in his work in real estate as an operations executive

at McKinley and as founder of The Beetle Project, a real estate holding company dedicated to sustainable housing and philanthropy in Washtenaw County. Will also volunteers at his church and other local nonprofits, including service as secretary on the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation Board of Directors.

“Affordable housing is directly tied to stable housing,” says Will. “Stable housing is directly tied to a child’s ability to get a decent education, which allows them to support themselves and to contribute to their society. It helps break that generational cycle of poverty.”

For older adults, Will says affordable housing is essential. “Affordable housing becomes even more critical for low-income older adults who are such a vulnerable part

of our population. My connection with the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation takes the passion I have always had and has helped enlighten me on the impact of affordable housing for older adults.”

Will notes, “In the next ten years, the number of people 65 years or older will increase by 50%. That’s got to be a wake-up call, a siren for us to get seriously into action.” He says it has been “eye-opening” to learn what Brio Living Services is doing to serve “our most economically vulnerable older adults,” including Programs of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and affordable living, even Benevolent Care for older adults who outlive their savings. “They are on an equal footing and deserve the same attention and care,” says Will.

He adds, “I am thrilled to be an ambassador for the Foundation and Brio Living Services and to advocate for affordable living opportunities for older adults through my contacts with local leaders and state representatives. I serve on the Foundation Board because it lines up with my core purpose: to serve others for the glory of God. This role allows me to do just that and learn a lot along the way.” ■

You can help support affordable living and Benevolent Care for the older adults we serve. Contact the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation at [734.433.1000](tel:734.433.1000) ext. 7397 (east) or [616.577.2297](tel:616.577.2297) (west) to learn more.

Growing at LifeCircles PACE

LifeCircles PACE, with locations in Muskegon and Holland, is a godsend for low-income, nursing home-eligible older adults living in Muskegon County and portions of Ottawa and Allegan counties. A community partnership of Brio Living Services, Trinity Health, and Senior Resources, LifeCircles PACE was just the third PACE center to open in Michigan and has served nearly 2,000 individuals and families since it launched in 2008.

On October 10, LifeCircles PACE held an Open House ribbon cutting event to celebrate the expansion of LifeCircles' Day Center at 12330 James Street in Holland.

"This expansion represents our ongoing commitment to enhancing the quality of



LifeCircles PACE represented at PACE Day at the Capitol in Lansing.

life of older adults in our community," says LifeCircles PACE Executive Director, Heidi Gras. "Our new state-of-the-art facilities include a spacious physical therapy gym, versatile recreational therapy areas, and person-centered care spaces for individualized treatment." ■

Foundation Focus

In this issue, we are delighted to feature Rachel Webster, UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation's Director of Philanthropy at **Cook Valley Estates**. Rachel has been an integral part of our team for two years. Among her many duties and talents, she has been "instrumental" in working with the Shoreline Music Society, residents, and family members to help launch the **Foundation**

Concert Series at Cook Valley Estates. Rachel is also a dedicated member of Brio Living Services' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.

"Rachel is a positive force on the Foundation team who cares deeply about our community," says Foundation President & CEO Kelli Smith. "Serving alongside her and seeing the joy she brings to others is inspiring." ■



Rachel Webster

Community Grants

Foundation Partners with Local Nonprofits to Serve Older Adults



Chelsea Main Street Park Alliance shares concepts of multigenerational park space.

Each year, the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation Board of Directors awards **Community Grants** to support local nonprofit organizations who serve older adults in the areas where Brio Living Services has a presence. The Foundation’s 2024 Community Grants, totaling \$30,000, were awarded to:

- Dexter Senior Center
- Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan
- Alzheimer’s Association — Greater Michigan Chapter, West Michigan Office
- Chelsea Main Street Park Alliance

Joe Ziolkowski, member of the Board of Directors of the Chelsea Main Street Park Alliance, shares that this grant “will help develop an intergenerational park where community members of all ages and abilities can gather. The early support of the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation will be instrumental in the success of the project.”

Dexter Senior Center (DSC) Executive Director Anne Williams adds, “Our board and staff are redesigning programs and services and re-imagining aging, making a positive impact on not only our members, but the community at large, now and for future generations. The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation support and partnership is helping to create transformation for DSC and the community.”

Foundation President & CEO Kelli Smith says she is proud to serve alongside the members of the Foundation Board. “They recognize the vital work of local programs in providing care and comfort for older adults, whether it’s creating intergenerational outdoor spaces, providing support for care partners whose loved ones are living with dementia, or offering a nourishing meal and companionship for older adults. We are grateful to partner with these incredible organizations, providing much-needed resources to improve the lives of older adults in the communities we serve.” ■

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Give the Gift of Vibrant Living

With your Individual Retirement Account qualified charitable distribution (QCD), you can make a powerful impact and support aging adults TODAY!

If you are 70 ½ or older, you can contribute up to \$105,000 to UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation to ensure vibrant living for the older adults we serve. Your IRA gift:

- **Impacts Our Mission Today:** Your gift will immediately impact those we care for and serve, helping to improve their quality of life.
- **Provides Tax Benefits:** Your contribution, up to \$105,000, made directly to UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation, can help you avoid additional taxes and potentially reduce your taxable income.



- **Meets Your Required Minimum Distribution:** Your gift can fulfill your required minimum distribution (RMD) in the year you turn 73.
- **Making a QCD is Simple:** Contact your IRA custodian to transfer funds directly to UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation. ■

To learn more, visit Foundation.UMRCPH.org
or contact 734.433.1000 ext. 7397 (east) or 616.577.2297 (west).

