

A MAGAZINE *from* BRIO LIVING SERVICES

Community

Special Edition: A SPRING UPDATE FROM BRIO LIVING SERVICES AND UMRC-PORTER HILLS FOUNDATION

Finding Purpose



Thome PACE team members bring joy to those they serve.



Teamwork, Family, and Dedication

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

As I'm writing this letter, the NCAA Basketball Tournament is just getting underway. "March Madness" displays the importance of teamwork, family, and dedication toward a common goal.

We recently celebrated the 10th Anniversary of **Thome PACE**, or Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, at its Day Center in Jackson. Fittingly, their theme was also "March Madness." PACE is one of the ultimate examples of teamwork toward the common goal of helping adults 55+, who might otherwise live in a nursing home, to be able to thrive and live independently, with the help of PACE services. It takes all our team members, representing clinicians, therapists, social workers, bus drivers, and home health aides, to name just a few. It also includes participants' families, volunteers, board members, and a host of local partners who believe in the value of the PACE model to provide the best possible care for adults in the communities they call home. What an amazing example of teamwork!

I am honored that **Brio Living Services** is part of five PACE locations in Michigan. In addition to Thome PACE, these include **Huron Valley PACE** in Ypsilanti, **PACE of Southwest Michigan** in St. Joseph, and **LifeCircles PACE** in Holland and Muskegon. We look forward to announcing two additional PACE sites in the months to come.



Robyn Abbey-Hardesty and Jade Clark at Thome PACE's 10th Anniversary celebration.

Our participants say it best. Suzy Wyatt shares, "PACE has helped with my communicating. I was buried in my own world. Socializing is better now. I have friends and team members at PACE to talk to. I feel so much happier!" Barbara Robbins agrees: "Since I have joined PACE, I have learned how to laugh again."

Thank you to all who help make our Brio PACE Centers such places of care, community, and commitment. ■



In Service,

Steve Fetyko
President & CEO
Brio Living Services

The Gift of Purpose

A Letter from Kelli Smith, President & CEO, UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation

For most, if not all, of us who make our careers at Brio Living Services, or in the **UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation**, our purpose is to help others. We want to make life better for the people we serve, whether they are the older adults who live in our residential communities or who participate in our PACE programs, or the team members who provide such wonderful care and services throughout Brio. The gift of purpose is knowing you are where you are supposed to be.

Our organization is blessed with other helpers as well—the more than 250 volunteers across the organization who are here because they want to make a difference in the lives of older adults. They may have family members living at one of our communities, or maybe they live here themselves and are seeking fulfillment and purpose by helping others. Maybe they had a special grandparent, friend, or teacher in their life who inspired them to share in the lives of older adults. Our Brio and Foundation Boards are also comprised of volunteers who are dedicated to our mission and bring their gifts of time, talent, and treasure, to make the world a better place for adults to age.

While the ‘why’ may be different for each of us, all of us connected to Brio Living Services and the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation share a similar focus. It is our mission: *Welcoming all, partnering together, enriching lives.* I feel fortunate to be an active participant in the work and care we give and to share in that experience with our volunteers and Brio Living Services community. It is an honor. ■



Thome PACE aide Nakeyta Battle shares a smile with participant Suzy Wyatt.



Resident volunteers fill Easter eggs at Chelsea Retirement Community.



Best Regards,

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

If you'd like to make a difference in the life of an older adult, volunteer!

[Visit MyBrio.org/volunteer-opportunities-michigan/](https://www.MyBrio.org/volunteer-opportunities-michigan/)

Volunteers Across Brio...

Chelsea Retirement Community's Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Robertson shares the importance of volunteering: "It connects us to our communities, fosters empathy, and drives real change. By giving your time and skills, you not only support others, but you also grow personally, creating a legacy of kindness and compassion."

April is National Volunteer Month, and Brio Living Services celebrates its volunteers who help to enhance vibrant living for our residents and PACE participants. Whether you're a student, a Board Member, or a resident, family, or community member, the talents you share make a tremendous difference! We're pleased to highlight a few of our amazing volunteers in this issue.



Ginnie Hartman

Ginnie Hartman, a resident at **The Pines** in Chelsea, a Brio Living Services community, retired after forty years in private practice as a therapist, in addition to working in treatment centers like the Betty Ford Clinic. "I have an extensive

background in helping with addictions, women's issues, group work, and couples," says Ginnie. "I loved it."

She moved to The Pines to be near her daughter and family who live in Chelsea (she also has a daughter in Italy and a son in Colorado). In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ginnie began volunteering at the Chelsea Senior Center, offering her time

to visit with anyone who needed someone to talk to. "I was available once a week for people to walk in. Many were experiencing anxiety and just needed a place to go and talk. It was good for me, too," she says.

Since then, Ginnie continues to help with two weekly groups at the Senior Center, including "Loss and Healing," which she co-leads, and one for caregivers called "A Moment for Me."

"Our caregivers are the most unsung heroes of our society," says Ginnie. "It's a real sense of satisfaction for me to see people be able to share and to let out some of the pain and struggles of caregiving and dealing with grief."

Ginnie is grateful to have a place where she can still do her work. "I did miss it," says Ginnie. "This keeps my skills going, and I enjoy it."

...Build Lasting Connections



Susan Armour

Susan Armour of Manchester has been volunteering at Chelsea Retirement Community since 2022 when her mother, Marguerite Fisher, moved to the community. “Mom made many friends here,” says Susan. “Before she passed away at 100, Mom made me promise to keep volunteering to keep that connection with her friends.”

“Susan is always willing to help wherever she’s needed,” says April Hurst, Life Enrichment Manager. “She does manicures, makes cakes and door wreaths for residents’ birthdays, plays cello for our residents in Assisted Living, and anything else the Life Enrichment team might need.”

“Half of it is just listening,” Susan says warmly of her time spent with residents — approximately 20 hours per week. “I get great joy out of it.”

“I love teaching,” says **Norm Coffman** who worked as a clinical chemist at a hospital for thirty years and also taught medical technology students. After retiring, he served as a docent at Meijer Gardens for 14 years.

It’s no surprise, then, that last year, Norm began organizing the *Discussions* lecture series at **Porter Hills Village**, where he and his wife, Petrea, have lived for three years.

“It just sort of happened,” Norm says of how the series started. Having learned about art from his mentors at Meijer Gardens, Norm offered a class on “What is Art?”, followed by “Art Styles.”

“To my surprise, I noticed that people started talking about the nature of art and seemed to gain a greater appreciation for the artwork at Porter Hills Village,” says Norm.

He invited Kristen Kimball, Music Therapist at Porter Hills Village and **Green House[®] Homes**, to talk about her role, then began inviting his friends to talk about their careers and hobbies. “I wish I could take credit for it,” says Norm. “The credit goes to all the interesting people here at Porter Hills Village.”



Norm Coffman

The twice monthly Discussions series has grown from about 20 to approximately 60 attendees each session. Norm says, “It’s gratifying to see people talking about the presentations later. We’re a coterie of people that want to support our friends. It adds to the spirit and atmosphere of living at Porter Hills Village.” ■

A Decade of Service

Thome PACE Celebrates 10 Years of Changing Lives!

Thome PACE celebrated its 10th anniversary at a “March Madness”-themed Open House at its PACE Day Center in Jackson, Michigan on March 12. Thome PACE is a partnership established in 2016 by Brio Living Services and WellWise Area Agency on Aging, serving older adults in Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale counties. Since opening its doors, Thome PACE has grown from 30 to 118 team members and has served more than 650 participants and their families.

Guests at the anniversary event included Michigan State Representatives Jimmie Wilson, Jr. (District 32, Ypsilanti), who also serves as a member of the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation Board; and Kathy Schmaltz (District 46, Jackson) who chairs the House Families and Veterans Committee. Both representatives work closely with issues affecting older adults. Representative Schmaltz presented a State tribute to Robyn Abbey-Hardesty, Executive Director of Thome PACE, recognizing its ten years of service in the area.

“We want to congratulate you on ten years,” said Rep. Schmaltz. “It’s so wonderful what you’ve done here at Thome PACE, how you’ve grown and, more importantly, how many people you have helped during this time. As our population ages, we will need even more people to help with that. We cannot congratulate you enough.”



From left to right: Steve Fetyko, President & CEO, Brio Living Services; Kelli Smith, President & CEO, UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation; Robyn Abbey-Hardesty, Executive Director, Thome PACE; Luke Reynolds, Chief Home & Community-Based Services, Brio Living Services; State Representative Jimmie Wilson, Jr. (Dist 32); State Representative Kathy Schmaltz (Dist 46).

“Over the past ten years, our team has accomplished some remarkable things,” said Robyn. “We have served more than 650 participants and provided thousands of medical visits, therapy sessions, home care services, and more, helping our participants live with dignity, independence, and the support they deserve. *Behind every number is a person, a story, and a family whose lives have been supported by our team. The work we do is deeply meaningful and it truly changes lives.*” ■

Problem-Solving Superpowers



Julie Nixon

We are delighted to feature Julie Nixon, Database Manager and Development Associate for the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation. Julie has a great deal of history with the Foundation, having worked in her role since 2010. Her “superpowers” are maintaining a “clean,” error-free database; processing gifts; and assisting the Foundation team with all its data needs. Julie sees her purpose as “using my strengths to create opportunities for others on the team to promote positive change and impact.”

“I enjoy working in the Foundation because of the positive impact we can have on residents’ lives through our fundraising initiatives, like Benevolent Care,” says Julie. “It’s incredibly rewarding knowing our initiatives contribute to improving all our Brio communities and services, providing support to those in need and much more.”

Says Kelli Smith, President & CEO of the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation, *“Julie possesses genuine curiosity, a penchant for fun, and exceptional problem-solving skills. Her extensive experience with the organization, combined with her care, compassion, and deep knowledge, makes her an incredible person to know.”* ■



Thank You, Sponsors!

The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation is grateful to its Platinum Sponsor, Huntington Bank, and Silver Sponsors, Midwestern Consulting and The Architectural Group, Inc. Their generosity is helping bring our vision to life of *a world in which all are empowered to age well*. Learn more at: Foundation.UMRCPH.org/Live-Life-with-Brio/

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Special Notice:

Thank you to all our wonderful donors, including Mary A. Wagner, who was not listed in our recent **Annual Report**. We wish to acknowledge Mary and thank her for her generosity and leadership she has shown over the years to Brio Living Services and the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation. ■

Impact of Benevolent Care: 'I Want to Help'

Natalie Brown's father suffered a stroke at the age of 67. He could no longer care for himself, nor could his family provide the care he needed. They made the decision to move her father into a long-term care center. One of his best friends transferred there to be her dad's roommate, where their friends and family could visit with both of them. He thrived there for two years.

But then the bottom dropped out. Natalie's father had private retirement insurance, which did not cover his care. Her family had to relocate her dad, away from his friend and the home he had come to know. He lived in the new place for just a week before requiring hospitalization. He passed away that night.

"I truly believe the stress of having to move him and having to leave his best friend shortened his lifespan," says Natalie. "I believe he would have lived much longer had he been able to stay. My mom is now at the age where we are looking for a retirement community for her. Her number one fear is running out of money because of what happened to Dad."

Natalie, Vice President of Human Resources for Emergent Health Partners in Ann Arbor, joined the Brio Living Services Board of Trustees in 2024. This is when she learned about the Benevolent Care Fund, the cornerstone of the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation, thanks to generous gifts over Brio's 120-year history.



Natalie R. Brown, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

"I was just floored," says Natalie. "I've never heard of anything like it anywhere. It makes me very loyal to the organization. I want to be here, and I want to help. The mission of Brio is so important to older adults."

Natalie's uncle, for whom she and her brother have guardianship, lives independently in Ypsilanti, thanks to participation at Huron Valley PACE. "He absolutely loves it," says Natalie. "He calls me all the time to share with me what activities they've been doing. It's a really positive experience." ■

Cindy Pine: 'Volunteering Fills My Cup'

In 2014, Cindy Pine, a resident of **The Cedars of Dexter**, a Brio Living Services community, answered a “random” email about a women’s mission trip to Costa Rica. It inspired her to try something new after the passing of her husband, Rick, in 2013. Twelve years later, Cindy has completed 21 mission trips throughout Central and South America through Mission Opportunities Short Term, or MOST, a Lutheran nonprofit based in Ann Arbor.

Cindy’s interest in other cultures began at sixteen while living with a family in Guatemala. Cindy earned her master’s degree in anthropology and worked for USAID “off and on” for ten years. “My training and experience taught me how important it is that aid projects be culturally appropriate,” says Cindy. She worked in Honduras and in Turkey for two years each, and learned three languages — Spanish, Portuguese, and Turkish.

Cindy says she had not considered mission work until she received that email from MOST in 2014. “Then I realized the Lord had prepared me through my years of learning languages, my study of anthropology, plus my Christian upbringing, to do this service.”

With Cindy’s experience, she has become a team leader, training other team participants for project work, overseeing travel and safety, and serving as a translator when needed.



Cindy Pine visits with Kuna woman in Panama.

In November 2025, Cindy led a team that distributed eyeglasses to four communities in Panama. “On this trip, we lugged 3,000 pairs of eyeglasses. We visit people in less developed areas because that’s where the need is greatest.”

For example, Cindy shared the importance of good eyesight for the Kuna tribal group in Panama. “The women make beautiful, intricate embroidery work for their livelihood, using tiny stitches. Providing them with glasses helps them provide for their families.”

This summer, Cindy will lead a medical team to Honduras. “It’s been a lifesaver for me,” she says about her experience. “You’re never totally prepared for life without your spouse. Without a purpose, you can give up on yourself. This has inspired me to keep going every day. Volunteering has filled my cup.” ■

In Memoriam

With gratitude for their service, Brio Living Services and the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation remember the following team members and board members

who passed away during the last year. May their light continue to shine and inspire our mission of caring for older adults.



Cynthia Buckner
PACE of Southwest Michigan

“Cynthia was a caregiver for over 30 years, and she loved what she did,” says her niece, Charnisea Lusk, who is also a day center aide at PACE of Southwest Michigan. “She always had a smile on her face at work, and she loved making others smile.”



Katelyn Pajot
Meadowlark Retirement Village

“Katelyn was a bright presence at Meadowlark,” says Amber Forbes, Residential Living Manager. “Though her time with us was brief, she demonstrated a positive attitude and a genuine willingness to learn. She approached her work with kindness and an open heart. She will be remembered for the light she brought to our community.”



Sister Mary Aquinas Weber
Emerita Porter Hills and Porter Hills Foundation Board member

Sister Aquinas passed away in December at the age of 102. Among her many acts of service, she joined the Porter Hills governing board in 1990 and, in 1995, became a charter member of the Porter Hills Foundation Board. Her passion was building the Benevolent Care Fund. “Our population is living longer,” Sister Aquinas said in 2021. “We have to think beyond today to look at what older adults will need in the future.”

Rev. Jack Giguere
Emeritus UMRC Board member

Served as the representative to the UMRC Board from the Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church.

David Mehney,
Emeritus Porter Hills and Porter Hills Foundation Board member

Provided Board service from 2001 to 2016. ■



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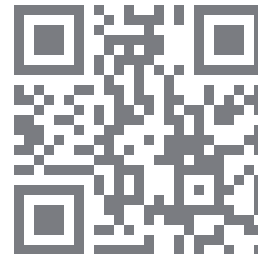
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Celebrating Leave a Legacy Month



Mike and Lonnie Shore

May is Leave a Legacy Month, and the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation is grateful for the vision of our **Legacy Society** members! Our Legacy Society honors individuals who have made the Foundation a

beneficiary of their will, living trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy, or a life income gift.

One such couple is Mike and Lonnie Shore of Jackson. A retired Consumers Energy executive, Mike has served on the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation Board and Brio Living Services Board, previously as Chair.

“I was quickly caught up in the amazing work being done here,” says Mike. “It was then I knew that, besides my time, Brio and the Foundation were also worthy of our financial support. It is important to Lonnie and me to serve those organizations that align with our own personal beliefs. With pride, passion, and purpose, we support the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation as Legacy Society members.” ■

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