

WINTER 2009



SOARING

A Publication of Mennonite Home Communities



HOW DO YOU MEASURE
**ABUNDANT
BLESSINGS?**

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"There's more, much more, to Christmas than candlelight and cheer; it's the spirit of sweet friendship that brightens all year. It's thoughtfulness and kindness, its hope reborn again, for peace, for understanding, And for goodwill to men!"

- JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER



On the Cover

In a year where nearly everyone has faced challenges, we are reminded of God's faithfulness, the abundant blessings we as a community have experienced and the countless lives impacted by compassion. Our mission grows as opportunity abounds!

Pictured to the right in the Bluebird Friendship Garden are George and Mary Crook as they prepare the grounds for the 2009 Christmas season.

At Woodcrest Villa, one beautifully decorated area during the Christmas season is the Bluebird Friendship Garden, nestled in the corner of the Bluebird building.

Decorating this area for the holidays started several years ago by four residents and grew into a total community effort with new residents assisting each year. It takes a multitude of volunteers countless hours to plan and put up over 3,500 lights. The area is also decorated with various displays ranging from a Nativity scene to Santa and his sleigh. Volunteers set up the display in early December and it stays lit until the start of the New Year. However, work starts weeks before with residents testing all the lights!

Residents decorate community Christmas trees in the dining rooms, Hummingbird

library, the Community Center and the Welcome Center. The tree placed in the library displays Christmas cards for the enjoyment of all. Apartment doors, balconies and common areas appear, decorated beautifully—almost overnight!

A new tradition is the annual "lighting" when all the trees and the grounds are lit. A group of resident carolers go from one building to the next to usher in the holiday season. It is a lovely sight to behold!

Nativity scenes, poinsettias and Christmas flowers appear, goodies abound, soft instrumental Christmas music plays overhead and Woodcrest Villa is alive with the Christmas spirit. No matter what the season, the spirit of sweet friendships brightens Woodcrest Villa!



Christmas in the Households

The Christmas season always brings a smile and twinkle to the eye when residents discuss activities associated with this holiday. The households of Mennonite Home experience the atmosphere of this beloved holiday in much the same way as people in their private homes.

Residents are involved in both the planning and implementation of holiday activities in our households. Numerous volunteer groups provide music and help with decorating the various households. Last year on Goods Run, our residents decorated the tree with the help of students from Hempfield High School. Upon

completion of the tree trimming, residents and students joined in singing "Silent Night" as the lights on the Christmas tree were lit. There was more spontaneous singing later, when carolers stopped by for a visit.



"Grandma" Arlene Steffy and Caregiver Jamie Hodges share a special moment at Mennonite Home during the holidays.

Cookies are definitely a tasty part of the Christmas season. Some residents anticipate eating them warm, right from the oven! Others are saved for special family gatherings. The residents enjoy helping to bake their favorite cookies. They share memories of times they baked for their holiday celebrations throughout the years. The hardest part is trying to decide which of their many favorites to bake!

Christmas parties are another special event during the holiday season. Staff, families and volunteers provide special music, and sing-a-longs are popular. There is much joy on the faces of our residents throughout the holiday season.

Holiday Greetings

from our Receptionists

At the beginning of December, the packages, plants, fruit and flowers start to arrive. Extra tables are needed to accommodate all of the season's bounty. Everyone has the Christmas spirit! Residents and staff alike find joy in exchanging cards and gifts throughout the campus. To enhance the Holiday spirit, a beautiful tree adorns our Welcome Center for everyone to enjoy. It is the first of many festive trees our guests encounter. An increase in telephone calls, well-wishers and Christmas stamp sales are all part of the daily hustle and bustle for our Woodcrest Villa Receptionists.



Shown from left to right are Woodcrest Villa Receptionists Shirley Burkhardt, Nancy Parmer, Joan Horn, Dot Hess, Debra Lewis, Jane Sherts and Jean Snavely.



Telephone calls, room reservations and gift certificate sales abound for our Mennonite Home Receptionists during the holidays. Carolers and school groups use our Susquehanna Reception area as a hub for their visits. Mail, cookies and presents for our residents arrive in abundance to our reception areas throughout the Holiday Season. Families make holiday dining a tradition and meal tickets are purchased frequently from our receptionists. Holiday cheer and joy is evident in the daily duties of Mennonite Home Receptionists.

Shown seated from left to right are Mennonite Home Receptionists: Mary Herr, Doris Rudy and Anna Foster. Standing are Bonnie Mundorf, Janet Myers, Marge Farrell, Sharon Landis, Jean Snavely, Joan Horn and Betty Bartol.



Arthritis:

What is it Anyway?

Pain in the joints of the body is a common condition as we age. Many different conditions can cause pain, but arthritis is the most common. Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. There is no cure for osteoarthritis, but numerous interventions can help to alleviate the pain. Exercise, range of motion movements, physical therapy, topical creams, and medications help to improve function in individuals with arthritis.

There are many possible causes of arthritis, including gout, infection, and rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatoid arthritis is an inflammatory disease in which the body reacts against itself and creates an abnormal immune response. It occurs most commonly in middle age, but can present in the older patient. Symptoms include joint pain and swelling, fatigue, and especially morning stiffness lasting for 1-2 hours. Blood tests often help to diagnose rheumatoid arthritis.

Osteoarthritis (OA) is also called degenerative joint disease. The breakdown of the cushioning material between the joints (cartilage) allows the bones to rub against each other, causing stiffness, pain and loss of movement in the joint. The stiffness often resolves after 5-10 minutes of movement. Osteoarthritis usually affects certain joints such as hips, hands, knees, low back and neck. It is less common in wrists, elbows, shoulders, and ankles. Over 50% of older individuals will have some amount of osteoarthritis.

Symptoms of OA typically begin after age 40 and progress gradually. Pain and reduced joint motion are the first signs of OA. Later, joint instability and muscle atrophy (wasting) occurs. Eventually difficulty in the use of hands, and unsteady walking limit normal life function in some patients.

The exact cause of osteoarthritis is not known. Your risk of developing OA increases with family history, being overweight, joint injury, repeated overuse of certain joints, lack of physical activity, nerve injury, and just by being older.

X-rays are sometimes used to help diagnose OA, but are not always needed. There are no current blood tests that diagnose osteoarthritis. Any significant joint pain that limits your activities and life function should be discussed with your doctor. The goal is to establish the cause of pain, and formulate a plan for treatment.

The treatment of osteoarthritis depends on the severity of symptoms, and should focus on both decreasing the pain and improving joint movement. This may include use of medications, rest, physical activity, joint protection, heat or cold application, and physical or occupational activity.

Dr. Kraybill and Dana Aldinger, Director of Assisted Living at Mennonite Home, discuss arthritic aids for patients.



Too little activity causes joint stiffness and pain. Too much activity causes overuse, and joint inflammation. Regular daily exercise is essential, but in an amount that is comfortable and done with common sense. Avoid exercises that repeatedly overstress any of the joints. Activities such as walking, swimming, tai chi, and biking are frequently tolerated better than exercises like jogging, high impact aerobics or tennis.

Weight control can help to prevent or slow the progression of OA. Studies in overweight individuals show that a weight loss of 15 pounds can cut knee pain in half.

Application of either heat or cold to the painful joint can help to relieve discomfort. Individuals should use the modality that provides the most relief. Some people use topical products such as Aspercreme, BenGay, Icy Hot, or Capsaicin. They have limited proven benefit, but are usually safe to try.

Joint injections can help to manage pain. Steroid injections are used most commonly, but other products are sometimes administered by orthopedists. None of these injections usually give relief for longer than 4-6 months, but are reasonable and appropriate interventions. Several injections per year may be preferable to surgical intervention.

Surgical joint replacement does often relieve severe osteoarthritis pain. Individuals can consider surgery when other interventions (medication, therapy, injections) have failed and pain limits the routine activities of life.

Treatment of osteoarthritis at the Mennonite Home includes all of the above approaches. Regular exercise is encouraged before and after arthritis symptoms develop. Exercise classes, fitness equipment, and pool therapy are available. In-house physical and occupational therapists evaluate residents and recommend specific rehabilitation programs. Assistive equipment, such as walkers or specialized eating utensils, is recommended when recovery of function is not possible. The attending physician assesses the cause of the pain, orders appropriate tests and x-rays, and recommends on medications and injections.

Osteoarthritis is a common condition in older patients, and can cause significant debility and loss of function. Fortunately, with appropriate attention and treatment, most individuals can receive pain relief and continue in their normal life function.

- Leon Kraybill, MD, CMD
Geriatric Specialists

Arthritis Aquatics

The buoyancy of water is amazing! Arthritis sufferers, who cannot stand on land, can stand and even walk when in the water.

Sue Edwards, Therapy Pool Coordinator, is a real help to those with arthritis. The Arthritis Foundation certified Sue as an instructor for their Arthritis Aquatics and land-based Arthritis Exercise programs. Many residents begin with pool therapy and later progress to land-based exercise, preparing them to return to an increased range of motion.

Sue explains, "Water provides a calming and therapeutic effect on the body and actually stimulates circulation, increasing blood flow by as much as 30%. As you stand in chest-deep water, you can move with little effort. Increasing the speed of movement increases the beneficial effects of the exercise."

Arthritis sufferers need a doctor's clearance to begin the Arthritis Aquatics program. The Therapy department is frequently involved in specifying the exercises used and overseeing the results of this unique form of therapy.

Mennonite Home is blessed to have both a therapy pool kept at 88 degrees and a hot tub kept at 96 degrees. A lift can assist residents into either or both of these amenities. Swimmers use very little equipment within the pool. Wrap-around "noodles" or dumbbells occasionally supplement the more usual stretching exercises.

Our pool therapy programs are open to local area community residents as well as MHC residents and staff. Many report decreased stiffness and pain when they participate. They depend on the therapy to help them cope with their arthritic pain.

Kathy Eberly coordinates the pool activities at Woodcrest Villa and she is also certified by the Arthritis Foundation. This provides continuity between the two therapy pools.

Please call Sue Edwards at 390.7169 for information about our arthritis exercise programs.



Sue Edwards and resident Anna Mary Varner work in the pool to lessen the effects of arthritis.

Mennonite Home Communities Open House Celebrations



Our guests enjoy the skills of our Dining Services staff in the Lititz Run country kitchen.



The speakers for the Open House ceremony assemble. Ron Barth, President of PANPHA, John Sauder, VP Health Services, Nelson Kling, President, John C. Bear, State Representative 97th District, and Glenn Weber, Chairman, Board of Directors.



Resident Anna Estok and Nelson Kling cut the ribbon to officially open Jackson Run and Lititz Run, our final two Person Centered Care households.



Jennifer Hollinger, Meg Vanaskie, Mindy Morrie and Brandi Rager of the Admissions and Social Work staff prepare to greet our guests and explain Person Centered Care in households.



In 2009, Mennonite Home Communities remained focused on the completion of the Person Centered Care program. During the renovation of our skilled nursing facility, we placed 20% of our beds out of service. During that period, even though our revenue decreased, we still had fixed expenses, utilities, etc., to pay. This resulted in a \$1,079,480 operating loss. The construction is now completed and we are in the process of admitting residents to our new households. The new P.C.C. model places Mennonite Home on the leading edge of new ways to provide care for our residents.

To reflect more accurately the value of our stocks and bonds, the Board of Directors adopted a new accounting standard on how to recognize unrealized gain or losses on investments. This resulted in recognizing the net loss of \$1.6 million on unsold stocks and bonds as of June 30, 2009. This represented 10% of the value of the stocks and bonds owned. In addition, at the end of the year, interest rate swap agreements from prior years decreased in market value by \$1.1 million. These interest rate swaps fixed a portion of our interest on our long-term debt. This protects us from unstable interest rates in the next few years.

Both of the above would only be realized if we sold the financial instruments. During the first three months of this current year, the value of the unsold stocks and bonds increased by \$1.0 million.

Thanks to everyone who supported us this year as we moved towards the completion of our Person Centered Care renovations.



Nelson Kling, President

RESIDENT SERVICE REVENUE:

Gross billings for room, board and ancillary services	\$34,225,719
Amount written off for required contractual allowances and inability of some residents to pay	(4,172,297)
NET RESIDENT SERVICE REVENUE	30,053,422
Pennsylvania nursing home assessment	405,135
Other revenue	556,250
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	31,014,807

OPERATING EXPENSES:

Salary, wages and outside services	14,046,345
Payroll taxes and employee benefits	3,931,290
Food, medical supplies and other expenses	7,639,698
Pennsylvania nursing home assessment	133,686
Depreciation and interest	6,343,268
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	32,094,287
RESULTING IN A NET LOSS FROM OPERATIONS OF	(1,079,480)

OTHER INCOME:

Unrestricted contributions	245,922
Investment income	309,033
Unrealized investment loss from adoption of SFAS No. 159	(1,647,830)
Change in fair value of interest rate swap agreement	(1,121,470)
EXPENSES IN EXCESS OF REVENUES AND GAINS	(\$3,293,825)

Mennonite Home Communities

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If you would like to receive information about **Residential Living at Woodcrest Villa**, call Linda at 717.390.4103.

If you would like to receive information about **Assisted Living or Health Care at Mennonite Home**, call Mindy at 717.390.7979.

If you wish to have your name removed from our mailing list, call Betty Ann at 717.390.4105.

Where There is a Will, There is a Way

"Nearly 60% of Americans don't have a basic will."

(USA Today, October 28, 2009.)

Here is another astounding fact about wills. Although over 80% of Americans make charitable donations during their lifetime, only about 10% make charitable gifts in their will. Why would we tithe to faith-based organizations during our lifetime and then forget charitable principles during our last opportunity to influence this world for good? Why would so many people fail to create a lasting legacy?

I encourage you to make provisions for those faith-based organizations that serve important needs. Perhaps Mennonite Home Communities has served someone in your family and you would like to help future generations who need care. Your will is an effective mechanism to make that gift.



There are three types of gifts possible in your will. You may specify a fixed dollar gift, a percentage of your estate, or a percentage of the residual left after other bequests are honored. Given the uncertainty surrounding final expenses, the residual approach can be very helpful.

Please talk with your attorney about specific language. Your attorney can easily modify an existing will through an amendment called a codicil. It is good to review your will periodically.

Please consider including Mennonite Home Communities in your will. We fulfill an invaluable role for area families, serving as their hands and hearts in meeting the needs of their seniors. We believe that the best possible care for seniors is a scriptural imperative, as well as our mission. By "adopting" MHC in your will, you can express both gratitude for past service and your concern for future generations of residents.

Finally, including us in your will qualifies you for membership in our Legacy Society.

Please call Greg Pierce, Director of Development, at (717) 390.4903 for further information.