

# connections

L I F E   A N D   N E W S   F R O M   W E S L E Y   W I L L O W S

*A Faith-Based Community*

SPRING 2020

## Hello Dolly!

Every year, it is a tradition to come together as a Wesley Willows family to enjoy the Box Office Benefit; the largest fund-raising event we have for the Good Samaritan Fund. We know that this summer will be a little different, but we are still moving forward and hoping for the best. We had originally scheduled the benefit for June 28th and are now postponing the date to either late July or sometime in August. We don't have an exact date yet as Starlight Theater is still waiting to see if they will even be able to continue with their 2020 season. We will keep you posted and will send out an invitation with our traditional response envelope as soon as we have a date secured.

The reason that this event is so vital to the Good Samaritan Fund at Wesley Willows is because it serves an average of 40 residents a year, providing ongoing and personalized care to those who have outlived their financial resources. Gifts to the Good Samaritan Fund guarantee a lifetime of care to our residents at Wesley Willows. This commitment that we make to our residents provides peace of mind, understanding and confidence that they will receive care for the rest of their lives here at Wesley Willows.

It will be a grand celebration when we can all gather together in a safe, public environment. We will be able to not only enjoy a fabulous show of Hello Dolly! by the cast at Starlight Theater but enjoy the traditions of delicious refreshments, meeting the cast, preserving memories at the photo booth and sharing laughter with one another. The show must go on! We look forward to our summer tradition and we are eager to give you a new date soon.

Please connect with Paula Capone, Director of Fund Development with your questions at 815-316-1512 or email her at [paulac@wesleywillows.org](mailto:paulac@wesleywillows.org).



Pictures from the 2019 Box Office Benefit.



Bill Pratt, President & CEO

“We have so much richness because of the people that are part of the Wesley Willows family.”

I have the pleasure of sharing information about Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows in a variety of places and ways. Our Connections newsletter and The Journey, our annual report, are just two of them. So many incredible things happen on our campuses, with our residents, staff and Board, that it is never difficult to find something positive or fun or impactful. The COVID 19 coronavirus has changed that a bit.

During the last month, as a Long-Term Care provider of programs and services for Seniors, we have been “living in the COVID 19 coronavirus”. By that, I mean each day we are spending time determining what our next step is to protect, as much as possible, our residents, staff and families. Once those decisions are made, we are working on communicating those changes to residents, staff, families and others who are impacted by the changes.

Over a month ago, we closed our campuses to visitors and began screening and monitoring residents in all of our healthcare areas. Since then we have suspended all group activities and events and we screen and monitor all staff at the start of every shift. We implemented a quarantine protocol for anyone visiting the hospital or doctor’s office as well as for those who have returned from a leave of absence – our many snowbirds.

These are just a few of the precautions we have implemented and yet we all know that the transmission of this virus is insidious and despite anyone’s best efforts it appears. The more we learn about it, the more we are able to plan and react to prevent the spread.

It’s easy to be totally absorbed in what the virus means to our residents, families and staff on our two campuses and in our community. But, part of what we work on everyday as well is how to remember LIFE that is still happening despite the virus. As the Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows families, we are finding ways to continue to celebrate life and relationships.

Last week our staff helped a couple celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary. Our culinary team made them a fabulous meal and our care staff helped them both dress up and take the opportunity to celebrate – despite unusual circumstances. On Easter, our Chaplain was able to send out worship information to all residents; posted an online “sermon”; and did an Easter service over the PA system at Wesley Willows. On April 15th we celebrated an employee’s 40th anniversary at Wesley Willows. Each of these is different than they would have been before the COVID 19 coronavirus, but they are still celebrations that remind us LIFE and RELATIONSHIPS continue.

We know how important it is during this time to support our staff and their families. We were so happy to present each staff person with a gift certificate from Lino’s for a meal that would feed their family. There was a twofold benefit to this as we were able to support a local business in the process. We have been grateful for the commitment of our staff and blessed to have received orders of PPE to ensure, as much as possible, their safety.

As an organization, always looking forward, we will continue to find joy and look for the positive in each day. We hope you and your families and friends are able to do the same. We are looking forward to the days in which we can open our campuses and welcome family and friends once again. We’ll see you then! Be safe, be well, and GO wash your hands!

*Bill Pratt*

President and CEO

## Peterson Meadows-the acquired land



February 1, 2020 marked the 6th anniversary of Peterson Meadows joining the Wesley Willows family. In those six years, the Peterson Meadows campus, residents, staff, and friends have all experienced repositioning and a transition of change and growth.

We are excited to embark on our next big project at Peterson Meadows - the addition of ten new duplex buildings. Eight of those will be built on the four-acre property to the west of Peterson Meadows the other to be built near the east entrance of Meadows Circle. On February 27, 2020 we received the first deposit for new construction!

We are thrilled to be able to continue to work with our partners, our contractor Steve Zentz, Benson Stone, Maney’s Landscape, and everyone else who contributes to the process of helping residents design their new custom home. In addition, we offer our Smart Move Program which gives prospective residents who have made the decision to move to Peterson Meadows, or Wesley Willows, resources to help in the process, and sometimes overwhelming feat of the physical move. The Smart Move Program includes: Matt Humpal-Remax Realtor,

Nana’s Treasures Estate Sales, and Rachel Force-Smart Move Coordinator.

With the new construction beginning on campus, whether it be the homes, the Dick and Pat Nyquist Family Chapel with Fitness Center, renovations to existing homes, or remodeling of apartments, it has sparked a new level of interest in the Peterson Meadows community. This “spark” sent a clear message that Peterson Meadows is indeed an active Senior Living community where residents enjoy a care - free lifestyle. We have taken a creative approach to understanding what current and prospective residents desire and need and how to make it happen.



## Conversations with our Chaplain



We are very happy to introduce you to our new Assistant Chaplain, Reverend Allen J. Shuler, Jr.

Chaplain Shuler is a native of Macon, Georgia; but comes to us from Rock Island, Illinois where he has been pastoring a church since 2013. Allen is married to Constance and together they have seven adult children and eight grandchildren.

Allen served 25 years in the U.S. Army, retiring in February 2013 after which he became the Pastor of Olivet Baptist Church of Rock Island, Illinois. With a heart for empowering and equipping the youth in the community, Rev. Shuler also served as a Youth Specialist for the Youth Hope Center of Moline, IL.

With a heart that was searching for the next step in his life of service, Allen saw our advertisement for an Assistant Chaplain. He made several trips to the campus after his initial phone interview with our Chaplain Tom DeWitt, subsequently meeting with our CEO and COO and spending more time with Tom, even experiencing a chapel service.

Allen's life of service and focus on relationships made him a good fit for Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows. His education, including a Bachelor of Science in Public Management from Austin Peay State University; Master in Theological Studies from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary; Master of Divinity from Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity; and completed 1 unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) with the Unity Point (Trinity) Hospital Chaplain's CPE program ensured the right credentials for the position. When we learned that Allen had also received numerous awards for his meritorious service to our nation to include the prestigious Legion of Merit and the esteemed Bronze Star (w/1 Oak Leaf Cluster) we had a sense of how committed he was to the responsibilities he has accepted throughout his life.

Allen and Constance decided it was a good fit for them as well and decided to make Rockford their next home. In mid-May, Allen and Constance will move temporarily to the Wesley Willows campus as they search for a home in the community. They would have arrived more quickly, but Allen had commitments to his church to complete. To us, that was an exercise in Integrity – Wesley Willows first Core Value.

Apart from serving in ministry, Allen enjoys being with his wife, Constance, and their family. As often as possible, Allen likes fishing, physical fitness, reading and traveling. Allen has a ready smile that will invite you to get to know him. He is a compassionate and devoted leader who is passionate about teaching all humanity about experiencing life abundantly and looks forward to getting to know our residents and staff and how he can make an impact on the lives of others as a member of his new family at Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows.

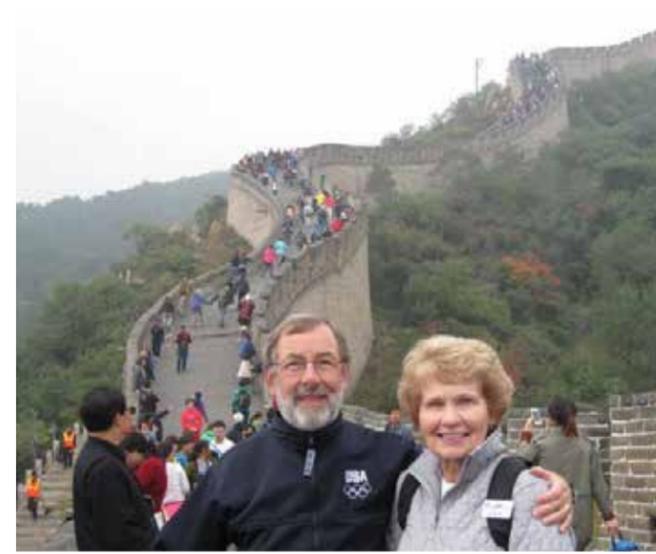
### OUR MISSION

*We promote active secure lifestyles for Seniors through ongoing personalized care.*

### OUR VISION

*Wesley Willows will be the leader in providing exceptional programs, services, and amenities for Seniors.*

## Resident Testimonial from Phil and Jan Meyers



In the five years Jan and I have lived at Wesley Willows, we have never once regretted moving here. Sure, there are some things we miss about our last home of 18 years, but not enough to wish we were back there.

In our previous house, we had done most of our own maintenance, including the lawn and snow removal. After we retired, there was not a day we didn't feel like there was something we should be taking care of inside or outside the house. In retirement we wanted to do less work and have more fun.

Our house here at Wesley Willows is both spacious and comfortable. If there is a maintenance issue, or we leave for an extended period of time, we know all is taken care of and that's very comforting. The services that are available to us during this coronavirus epidemic are very reassuring.

We also feel very secure and value the fact that should anything happen to either of us, medical care is available. And, when one of us passes, we know the other can continue to live at Wesley Willows with a comfortable, secure lifestyle. That would not have been the case in our previous house. Our children have peace of mind knowing that we are well cared for at Wesley Willows.

Wesley Willows provides us both privacy and more than enough social life. We both continue to do the things we've always enjoyed and have found new interests and friends too! Between all the socializing and volunteering we do here, the joke is "We want to get a job so we can get time off."

All kidding aside, we're glad we made the move while we were still in good enough health and able to make our own decisions and finally, enjoy all that Wesley Willows offers.

### Staff Commitment 20+ years!

Karen Williamson - Dining Services/PM  
Denise Good - Nursing  
Beverly Johnson - Nursing  
Andrea LaTorre - Nursing  
Kelly Sharp - Nursing

May 2019-April 2020

### Staff Commitment 40 years!

Lori O'Hearn

# Virture Sense-Erica Figurine



It is estimated that 1 in 4 Americans at the age of 65+ years old falls every year. Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for seniors. As a leader in providing exceptional programs for Seniors, Wesley Willows has added Virtusense Technologies *VSTBalance* program to its campus offerings.

*VSTBalance* is an automated fall-risk assessment tool that utilizes a preventative approach to care. This system uses artificial intelligence and machine vision to objectively identify deficits in balance, gait, and function – the three leading indicators of fall risk. Following each assessment, the system will generate reports and based on the results, our Wesley Willows *VSTBalance* team will develop an individualized wellness plan tailored to each resident's specific area(s) of need. These wellness plans may include: physician consultation of

results, skilled therapy, personal fitness training, restorative therapy, fitness programs, and at-home exercises. After the resident concludes their individual wellness plan or if there is a change in condition, they will be re-assessed and a new wellness plan will be implemented. Overall, Virtusense Technologies have seen a 73% reduction in falls with injury and 85% average improvement in mobility in senior living communities since utilizing *VSTBalance*.

Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows serve over 850 residents, this *VSTBalance* program supports our Mission of Promoting active secure lifestyles for Seniors through ongoing personalized care and was launched at Wesley Willows in February. Residents in all lifestyles will have the opportunity to participate in this program and we are excited to see the program continue to grow. In the future, we hope to offer it to non-resident Seniors in the Rockford community and surrounding areas as well.

## Brett Erickson

Wesley Willows employee, Brett Erickson, works in the Maintenance Department-Level 4. Recently, Brett was awarded the Strive and Thrive Award by Leading Age Illinois. Brett started his career with Wesley Willows as a dishwasher in 2013 and he eagerly moved to the Maintenance Department in 2014. After taking classes at Rock Valley College and receiving maintenance certifications, he is now at the highest level of the Maintenance Department. He makes a difference in the resident's lives as he goes above and beyond the call of duty. We are very proud of Brett and what he has accomplished and that he makes our mission happen every day - Promote active, secure lifestyles for Seniors through ongoing personalized care. Congratulations Brett!



## WELCOME HOME

We are excited to welcome these individuals\* to our growing communities! (Sept. 2019-Feb. 2020). We welcome them to our Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows families where they will experience active and secure lifestyle for Seniors. It is a blessing to have them join us!

### WESLEY WILLOWS

Liz and Edwin Stirlings  
Pat Wakeley  
Don and Barb Pelletier  
Lory Winterhalter  
Dolores Deitrick and Barb  
Mary Nuebel  
Audry Egler  
Gene and Lola Gustafson  
Richard and Pam Iacullo  
Martha Roper  
Joe and Joella Warner  
Marita Fennel  
Sue Christensen  
Carla James  
Carolyn Conrad  
Beverly Schoff  
Art and Sally Tammes  
Curtis Bliss  
John Sundtedt  
Thom Rosa & Robert Bates  
Jim and Mary Smith  
Kavin and Lynn McWhirter  
Alex and Ruth Artisick  
Mary Beale  
Shirley Ahrens  
Frank Baker  
Ann Hawkins  
Sandy and Gary Miller  
David and Shirley Richardson  
Kathy Koblas  
Shirley Holzwarth

### PETERSON MEADOWS

Irving Perala  
Jay & Barb Beauvais  
John & Marilyn Bendixen  
Jean Erickson  
Loren & Linda Schafer  
Bill & Kathy Hoffman  
Janice Smith  
Connie Swanson  
Ted & Lori Peterson  
George & Paula Hayward  
Forest & Cindy Riordan  
Richard & Phyllis Brynteson  
Jim & Kitty Rhodes  
John & Mary Thiesing  
Charlotte Weber  
Harriet Roll  
James & Kathy Rehwald  
Kean Fiorenza  
Larry & Carol Sunke  
Karen Jones  
Claire MacLaren

*\*This list does not include residents who wish to remain anonymous.*



## HIGHLIGHTS

To learn more about events that are happening at Peterson Meadows or Wesley Willows, find us on Facebook at WesleyWillowsSeniorLiving, PetersonMeadowsSeniorLiving, or visit us on the web at [www.wesleywillows.org](http://www.wesleywillows.org) to see our Full Community Calendar.



For more information on how to make Wesley Willows your home, please call 815.316.1500

## Community Volunteer-Sue Spitzer



Sue Spitzer is a long-time volunteer at Wesley Willows, over **20 years** that is! Sue started volunteering when her mother, Eleanor Kemp came to live in Willows Arbor in December of 1997. Sue has volunteered in many different areas on the campus, but the one that she has been doing the longest is wheel chair transport for the residents. She now comes in on the second Wednesday every month from 8:30-12 noon. She says that she loves talking with the residents and hearing their life stories. *"I get so much out of it; they have really good stories".*

Other areas that Sue has volunteered over the years include the following:

Volunteer Wheel Chair Coordinator (8 yrs.)

Chair Person for the Ice Cream Social

Helped revamped Timeless Treasures

Helped decorating the Christmas Trees and dismantling them

Helped with the dedication of the Art Center to her mother, Eleanor Kemp

Sue not only volunteers at Wesley Willows but she recruits volunteers too! She has recruited many friends, and her dear friend Kate still volunteers with Sue.

When Sue is not volunteering at Wesley Willows, she is enjoying her family, especially her two grandsons.

We are so grateful for volunteers like Sue, she is what makes Wesley Willows extra special and extraordinary. We thank you Sue for your dedication and passion to be a part of our Wesley Willows family even when members of your own family have since passed on. Your dedication is to be admired. Thank you!