

STONERIDGE *Living*

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"...you did it for me"

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This photograph was taken at Kibiito Hospital in Uganda. Before AFCA arrived, the hospital was little more than an empty building. It had no equipment or beds or much of anything. The woman here has just given birth, and is lying on a bed and mattress donated by AFCA. She said that she had never been on such a comfortable bed, and she didn't want to go home.





"...you did it for Me."

In late October, StoneRidge Retirement Living replaced several nursing beds at the Towne Centre community in Myerstown. This left us with over three dozen good condition nursing beds that we wanted to donate to a non-profit medical charity where they could be used to provide relief to those in need. After some investigation, we discovered the American Foundation for Children with AIDS (AFCA), a medical charity headquartered in Harrisburg doing good work in Africa. The mission of AFCA is to provide critical support to HIV+ children and their caregivers. Since 2005, in collaboration with their in-country partners, AFCA has served tens of thousands of families in underserved and marginalized communities in Africa. Their areas of impact include medical support to children who are HIV+ as well as to the general population, nutrition, educational support and emergency relief to all. Currently, AFCA is transforming lives in Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Hope is a spark that changes lives, and AFCA is providing hope to thousands of people in Africa.

The beds were picked up by AFCA volunteers and taken to their warehouse in Lebanon, PA. Later in November, the

beds were loaded into a 40-foot shipping container along with other donations including examination tables, IV poles, gurneys, surgical supplies, gowns, gloves, crutches, walkers and much more. The container is headed to Holy Innocents Hospital near Mbale, Uganda. It is expected that the container will reach its destination in March.

Those wishing to get involved with the good work of AFCA should visit their website at www.AFCAIDS.org. They are always looking for local volunteers, donations of good condition medical supplies and funding to help get the shipping containers to their destinations.

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25:40, NIV).'"

A Bountiful Harvest of Serenity



From left, Karl and Doris Yochum, and Becky Williams
in the Poplar Run greenhouse

What turned out to be a major horticultural project began three years ago with a short notice posted on a bulletin board at StoneRidge Poplar Run in Myerstown. Ella Bennethum, then director of independent living, wanted to see if there was any interest among the residents in forming a garden group. A major renovation had just been completed at Poplar Run, and gardens and a greenhouse were possible activities for a few with green thumbs.

Residents Doris and Karl Yochum, Grace and Russ Brightbill, and Shirley and Hayes Girvin raised their thumbs, and formed the Garden Group in May of 2013. Becky Williams, who serves on staff at Poplar Run's Vistas restaurant, also joined the group. And recently, Barbara and Neil Gingrich came on board.

Perhaps Poplar Run didn't realize what it was in for. Doris and Becky are master gardeners who received their certifications from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) in 2000 and Penn State in 1992, respectively. "We have a great time," beamed Doris, 90, of the working relationship the two master gardeners share. She chairs the Garden Group. "We didn't stick with one small plot."

The gardens, planned by Doris' husband Karl, are situated on the southern and western sides of the community for maximum exposure to the sun. They are dedicated respectively to vegetables, herbs, and flowers. "Steve Reiter, the president and CEO of StoneRidge Retirement Living, wanted three locations," said Karl, 90, who holds a degree in mathematics and physics as well as a masters in information systems technology. "So I drew plans for three locations in scale where water is available to make a garden." And so, three years later, tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, wax beans, Swiss chard, rhubarb, zucchini, strawberries, red raspberries, peppers, peas, lettuce, kale, spinach, pumpkins, gourds and a variety of herbs and flowers are among the annual planting. "You plant what fits the environment," Doris said. "In the 1950s when we lived in the San Fernando Valley, a very dry climate, I planted succulents and cactus. For the lawn, we used native stone and rock."

"I was born on a farm in Heidelberg Township," Doris said. She graduated from Sinking Spring High School in 1943 and went on to get her nursing degree from the Reading Hospital School of Nursing in 1946. Doris retired from nursing on her 63rd birthday in 1988, having worked those last 11 years with a private urology group in Annapolis, Maryland. One month later, she entered the

University of Maryland as an anthropology/archeology major. "It got to the point that I was only 63," Doris said. "I wanted to do something totally different. I wanted to go to college."



Doris shows a Dianthus bloom from one of the garden plots. It was a pleasant surprise to learn how wonderfully fragrant Dianthus can be.

Her archeology studies took her to digs around Maryland and one summer semester in Israel with 120 fellow students at the dig of Caesarea Maritima, an ancient city and harbor built by Herod the Great. "Archeology gives you a sense of the new and different all the time," Doris continued. "I loved every minute of it."

Three years after getting her degree in 1992, Doris landed a job at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in Virginia as a guide interpreter for tours within the mansion. It was about this time that she decided she wanted to become a master gardener and began her studies at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA, while she and Karl were living at Lake Monticello. Since she was doing some serious study about gardening, Doris approached Peter Hatch, the director of grounds and gardening at Monticello, with the idea of leading garden tours. "He gave me a notebook two inches thick," she recalled, "and told me, 'Read it. Study it. Then you'll be ready.'" It wasn't unusual for Hatch to quiz Doris when she least expected it. "One morning he pointed to a flower, an English Daisy," she said. "But he wanted the Latin name, *Bellis Perennis*. We had to know the common name and the botanical name of each plant in the gardens."

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After 15 years at Monticello, Doris, then 85, said, “That’s it.” She and Karl headed back to Lebanon County, arriving at StoneRidge Poplar Run in 2011. Her assessment of the soil around Poplar Run is, in a word, “rough.” When the Garden Group began planning in 2013, Becky Williams took a sample of the soil from the grounds around Poplar Run and sent it to the Penn State Extension for analysis. Based on the analysis, Karl explained that the group “coordinates what plant goes with what soil” ever mindful of pH levels. “We took out the top four inches, especially for the flowers and herbs, and put in top soil,” said Doris of this different type of dig. “It makes a world of difference.” With the help of Bob Long, director of maintenance at Poplar Run, mushroom soil is added to the top soil as needed. “Mushroom soil is very rich,” Doris pointed out. “We work it into the soil so that it gives better soil for growing with more nutrients.”

The Garden Group begins planning for planting in January. But way before a single plant takes root, and during the cold, bleak days of February and March, Doris and company do their gardening indoors in Poplar Run’s greenhouse. “We do not buy plants,” emphasized Doris. “We start from seeds.” She further stated that hybrids don’t have a place in the gardens at Poplar Run. “Becky and I get many heirloom seeds,” Doris said. Both master gardeners like the fact that heirloom seeds stay true to form. “They’re not genetically modified,” Becky said. “They’re tried and true and proven over many years.” Among the seedlings are a few “old” seeds from the gardens at Jefferson’s Monticello. “These seeds are from plants that Jefferson listed in his garden book,” Doris said with a hint of pride in her knowledge from Monticello. “These are flowers from the 18th century.”

During those winter days, they start seeds in small paper pots lined up in the greenhouse. As many as 35

plants including three varieties of heirloom tomatoes occupy the large work table. Karl pointed out that the seedlings need moisture. “They need moisture on a daily basis to germinate,” he said, “and good potting soil.” Keeping an eye on the calendar, Doris and company are very careful not to introduce the seedlings to the outdoor plots until the soil is warm enough. “If you start too early,” she said, “you get leggy, tall and skinny plants. And you can’t put them out in the cold because if we get a late frost, they would die.”

As any dedicated gardener, master or otherwise, knows, gardens need tender loving care. Doris and Karl are out in the plots every day during growing season and through the early fall. “There’s always weeds to pull or something to stake,” she says, “or a bug to swat.” It is important to note that the Garden Group does not spray its crop. “We simply don’t do it,” continued Doris. “We’re all organic. No chemicals. No herbicides.”

The bounty from Poplar Run’s gardens is available to all its residents in independent living. In particular, herbs, kale, spinach and lettuce are used in the community’s kitchen. Though Lebanon County dealt with drought conditions this past summer, Doris reported that the tomatoes were exceptional, and the peppers, wax beans and peas did well, too.

This past summer, the group entered several flowering plants, herbs, vegetables and house plants at the 162nd Reading Fair in Leesport, and brought home 10 ribbons including “Best of Show” for a crown of thorns house plant and five first-places for a cleome spinose, a nasturtium, white globe onions, dill and basil.

She is not the only serious gardener in her family. Karl confessed that he spent one week with Doris at an elder hostel at the Botanical Gardens in Norfolk, Virginia. “It was all about planning and gardening,” he said of

A Bountiful

the experience. As far as Doris being either his mentor or teacher, Karl replied, “All the above. My asset is in planning. We’ve been married 70 years and work very well together.” Echoing her belief that a person never loses interest in gardening, Doris points to one reason. “It maintains your serenity,” she said. “There’s nothing like gardening by yourself in God’s world, not man’s. It gets you back in touch. It’s quiet and comforting.” And there’s no need for ear buds or smart phones. “I never bring music with me,” she nicely stated.



When other residents walk about the grounds at Poplar Run, they can’t help but notice the work of the garden group. “Many of the women were gardeners,” said Doris. “They always stop and comment, ‘Oh, I grew that.’ That makes us feel good.” Becky enjoys when she, Doris, and Karl put their heads together to discuss and plan for the gardens. “It’s fun,” she said, “and I have learned a lot from them.” For as St. Paul said in his letter to the Galatians (6:7, NASB), “...for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.” Just ask Doris Yochum and the StoneRidge Garden Club.

This story was adapted from an article written by Fran Odyniec that appeared in the November 21 edition of the Lebanon Daily News.

Harvest of Serenity

Anchored in Hope to fight



A Visit from Miss

Local first-time author Donna Jean Paff visited StoneRidge Poplar Run this fall to discuss her book whose story had its birth at a Berks County retirement community. “A Visit from Miss Marvin” (Aperture Press, 2016) tells the true, heartwarming story of how a cat, who happened onto his property one day, changed the life of Mr. Smith, who had recently lost his wife. After a fall forced Mr. Smith to leave the life he knew at home and enter an assisted living community, he assessed all he had lost; however, with the help of his cat, Miss Marvin, he saw this next chapter of his life not as an ending, but as a new beginning. As the story relates, there is joy in every stage of life, and every new beginning, even that which at first seems like a difficult transition, is truly a blessing.

Alzheimer's Disease

This fall, the staff at Schoolyard Square, a StoneRidge Retirement Living Community located in Pine Grove, participated in a fund raiser in support of the Alzheimer's Association. The association's goal is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research, to provide enhanced care and support for all affected and to reduce the risk of dementia by promoting brain health. Staff donated money, and received special Purple Ribbon "Anchored in Hope" tee shirts that they had the option of wearing to work on Fridays.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, an estimated 5.4 million Americans of all ages have Alzheimer's disease. The overwhelming majority are age 65 or older, and 200,000 are under age 65 and suffer from early onset Alzheimer's disease. Aside from Alzheimer's disease, the Purple Ribbon also represents other diseases and causes such as pancreatic cancer, lupus, attention deficit disorder, cystic fibrosis, Crohn's disease and animal abuse.

Photo caption: Some of the staff members who participated in the Alzheimer's Purple Ribbon fund raiser display their "Anchored in Hope" tee shirts showing their support of the Alzheimer's Association and those 5.4 million Americans who suffer from the disease. From left, Tanya Steffey, dietary aide; Tammy Lengel, billing specialist; Leanne Kemmerling, director of nursing; Lori Kemmerling, accounts payable and Tiffany Eichert, administrative assistant.

Marvin

The author met Mr. Smith while working as an energy therapist at an assisted living facility, and learned about Miss Marvin and the blessings she shared with Smith and many other residents. Hearing Mr. Smith's wonderful story about Miss Marvin inspired Paff to write her book.



Fall Fashion Show & Luncheon



Left: Joan Noll, a Poplar Run resident and fashion show model, displays a lovely contemporary fall blouse, one of the many presented at this year's show.

Over one hundred guests mingled at StoneRidge Poplar Run's Theatre on Main in October for the Fall Fashion Show and Luncheon. The annual event, which is a highlight of the fall season, was hosted by Poplar Run and was open to the public. Sarah Ott, proprietor of Taylor Marie's Apparel of Doylestown, PA who provided the fashions, emceed the show as the models, all StoneRidge Poplar Run residents and staff, walked the runway and displayed the apparel. One could hear excited whispers throughout the room as each new fashion was modelled for the guests. The designers included in the show were Alfred Dunner, Ruby Rd., Erin London and Keren Hart, and included contemporary designs for the fall and winter season.



Porketta



This porketta recipe comes to us from Church of God Home Chef Manager, Michael Haus. It is a very simple, yet flavorful roast pork. Chef Haus tells us that “Pork belly, which is underutilized for anything other than bacon, provides a moist, delicate meat delicious for a family meal or festive occasion. This particular recipe infuses rosemary and garlic in a perfect combination of classic Italian tastes. Recipes vary from family to family where mothers have passed the tradition on from one generation to the next. Porketta is best served simply with mashed potatoes or a creamy risotto rice.” Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole boneless, rind-on pork belly, about 12 to 15 pounds
- 2 tablespoons whole black peppercorns
- 3 tablespoons whole fennel seed
- 1 tablespoon crushed red pepper
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped rosemary, sage, or thyme leaves
- 12 cloves garlic, grated on a microplane grater
- Kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

PREPARATION

Place pork belly skin side down and score flesh in a crisscross pattern, not going through the skin, approximately 1” apart across entire belly.

In a sauté pan, toast peppercorns and fennel seeds over medium-high heat until fragrant. Approximately 3 minutes. Grind in a mortar and pestle.

Combine peppercorns, fennel seeds, red pepper, herbs of your choice and sliced garlic. Rub into the belly flesh side only, into all the crevices and nooks.

Roll belly into a cylinder wrapping and tying together using kitchen twine. Once cylinder is rolled, refrigerate 3 hours, overnight is best. You can also freeze the roll at this point for future use.

After resting in the refrigerator, combine salt and baking powder. Coat the outside of the meat, the skin side, liberally.

Roast in a pre-heated 300-degree oven for 2-2 ½ hours until internal temperature is 160 degrees, basting every ½ hour with the pan drippings.

At this point, raise the oven temperature to 500 degrees and allow the skin to crisp and become bubbly. Remove from oven, and allow it to rest for 10 minutes. Slice and serve with pan drippings and finish with butter.

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StoneRidge Retirement Living is the parent company of four retirement communities in South Central Pennsylvania. These communities include StoneRidge Towne Centre (717.866.6541) and StoneRidge Poplar Run (717.866.3200), both in Myerstown, Church of God Home in Carlisle (717.249.5322) and Schoolyard Square in Pine Grove (570.345.4075). Visit us online at www.StoneRidgeRetirement.com.



Left to Right: Milesetta Hess (2nd), Helen Hauer (1st), Jessie Lehman (5th), Kendall Lehman (4th) and Melissa Fisher (3rd).

An Uncommon Blessing

StoneRidge Towne Centre resident Helen Hauer had a pleasant surprise when her family came to visit and brought along her new great-great-granddaughter, Jessie Lehman. What made this gathering even more unique is that they had five generations gathered together all in one place. Jessie's dad, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother surrounded her with love. This was truly an uncommon blessing!

