

STONERIDGE

SPRING / SUMMER 2021

# Living

A StoneRidge Retirement Living Publication

Reunited  
Deanna Leshar  
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# In honor of the helpers



Each of us has a story to tell about what we experienced during the months of the COVID-19 pandemic. This issue of *StoneRidge Living* includes a few of those stories.

***The leadership of StoneRidge Retirement Living Communities and I remain grateful to each resident, staff person, family member, vendor, donor, and volunteer – for perseverance and teamwork during a challenging year.***

We remember those who died in the past year and we keep their family and friends in our prayers.

As we journey in 2021 in a “new normal,” may we be gentle and patient with one another as we come to understand and address the impact of the past year on each individual.

Rev. Fred Rogers said, “Anything that’s human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary. The people we trust with that important talk can help us know that we are not alone.”

Mr. Rogers also said, “Look for the helpers.” This issue of *StoneRidge Living* is in honor of all of the helpers. May we continue to be helpers to each other in the year ahead.

Steven J. Reiter, President and CEO

We could write a story about how each of our team members & vendors served during the COVID-19 pandemic. Join us in thanking all staff & departments: nursing, doctors, therapy, fitness/wellness, beauticians, dining & dietary, maintenance and renovations, landscaping, housekeeping, laundry, transportation, social services, activities, Chaplains, receptionists, admissions/sales, and all corporate office staff. Thanks also to our board of directors.

Special thanks to staff who work overtime during snow emergencies, including the snow removal team that served for very long hours this winter to clear roads, sidewalks, and cars.

*“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’”*

*– Fred Rogers*



## In remembrance

During National Skilled Nursing Care Week, we had a Day of Remembrance on May 14 in loving memory of those we said goodbye to during the COVID-19 pandemic and in honor of everyone who served.

## Grateful to Givers

**Thank you** to church members for faithful gifts to bless the residents of our communities.

In 2020, 14 **Churches of God** (plus Women’s Ministries and the Adult Fellowship) made 43 gifts totaling \$12,316—for the Forever Caring Fund and for the Church of God Home Fund.

In 2020, 68 **Evangelical Congregational churches** made 77 gifts totaling \$11,760—for the Benevolent Care Fund and for the General Fund.

The **Benevolent Care Fund & the Forever Caring Fund** help residents who have exhausted the means to pay in full for their care. In 2020, StoneRidge provided more than \$3.6 million dollars in Benevolent & Subsidized Care.

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Linda Glenn



## Ducks, Dogs, & Decorations



Linda Glenn says she enjoys coming to work at Church of God Home every day. She considers it her second home and her goal each day is to make people happy. She loves getting to know the residents and their families.

Linda began working at Church of God Home in 2013 in the laundry department. Five years later, she offered to be a housekeeper in Independent Living when temporary help was needed. She's been serving as a housekeeper ever since that time (and she helps in other levels of care and in the laundry department when needed).

In 2020 when families could not visit residents due to COVID-19 restrictions, Linda would assist with things residents needed – from picking up milk to helping to change a bandage. Dee Ann Garrison moved to Church of God Home in March of 2020 (right before the COVID lockdown and soon after the death of her beloved husband, Randy). Dee Ann explains that Linda says she considers the residents like her aunts and uncles. "She treats us that way and would do anything in her power to help."

Linda brings her dogs, Sassy and Molly, to visit residents on some of her days off. At Church of God Home, there are ducks that lay their eggs near the buildings. When one duck was on her nest outside of the Hobby Hut room, Linda brought duck food and provided a protective screen for the duck. Everyone was thrilled when the ducklings hatched and followed their mom to LeTort creek at the back of the Church of God Home property.

In early 2021, Linda suggested to residents that they decorate the Christmas tree for holidays – as a way to bring cheer after a difficult year. Residents and Linda donate items and funds (to purchase decorations at the Dollar Store). So far, the tree has been decked out for Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter. For Mother's Day, the tree features flowers, scarves, jewelry, aprons, cookie cutters, and more.



Church of God Home residents  
(standing left to right): Anna Cook, Helen Milliron, Evelyn Chilcote, & Jim Miller  
(Seated): Sylvester Baum & Dee Ann Garrison  
Masks are worn but were removed briefly for the photo.







Teri Bixler and  
Ella Bennethum

## A team for all seasons

Ella Bennethum has served Poplar Run independent living residents for 31 years and Teri Bixler has served for 19 years. Teri and Ella take care of the “front of the house” (waitstaff/servers) and Executive Chef/Manager, Nate Schumacher, is in charge of the “back of the house” (food and kitchen staff).

Everything changed in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic when Vistas dining was closed and service as usual came to a sudden halt. Initially, the staff thought that the “lockdown” would last for two weeks.

Ella explains that the front and back of the house worked together to deliver daily meals to independent living residents. She and Teri agree that Nate was a strong leader as a system was developed to manage pick-up

and delivery service for 160+ cottage and apartment residents. Nate continually kept the team updated on all COVID-related protocols.

Waitstaff called residents every day for their meal order. The team always tried to stay up-beat when calling as they could hear discouragement in some voices as time went by. Like all StoneRidge staff, team members were dealing with personal and family concerns related to the pandemic while wanting to remain positive for the residents and sensitive to their needs.

A production line of cooks filling entrée orders and waitstaff gathering sides, packaging bags, and delivering meals became the temporary new normal. Two weeks turned into five months.

When Vistas dining room finally reopened in August of 2020, there were new protocols due to COVID-19 precautions. For Ella, the most difficult change has been having to wait until the end of the meal service to clear tables and not being allowed to clear between courses. Ella explains that some of the staff are new and working as servers for the first time. They will need to be retrained on the five-star serving expectations when regular service resumes. Wearing masks and face shields is also challenging and frustrating, but it’s what the team has to do.

For senior living communities across the U.S. (as for employers in other fields), there are staff shortages for dining, housekeeping, nursing, etc. This led to concern when Teri, Ella, and another waitstaff had to quarantine for 14 days in October because they had contact with a resident who tested positive for COVID-19.

Ella feels that God provided an unexpected but much needed rest in October. Teri and Ella are grateful that everyone is okay and for how the kitchen staff came to the rescue of the very limited remaining waitstaff to transition back to meal delivery for two weeks while three team members quarantined.

Teri and Ella say the thing they like most about their work is the friendships they enjoy with residents and staff. They become like family. Teri shares that she looks forward to seeing smiling faces (when mask wearing is no longer required) and to giving hugs.

**Poplar Run and StoneRidge are thankful for the partnership they’ve had with Sodexo for many years – to provide food service to residents.**

**A recent Independent Living resident marketing survey gave very positive reviews to the food and dining services department at Poplar Run.**







Left/Below: Randall and Darlene Schwalm were able to visit in person at Towne Centre in March of 2021 (after many months of virtual or window visits).

In August of 2020, they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.



## Remembering my Aunt & Uncle

A nephew made a generous and anonymous gift for the Benevolent Care Fund after his Aunt died in 2020. She had been a resident of Towne Centre.

The nephew shared, "My aunt and uncle were wonderful people who helped my mother raise me and my siblings through some pretty difficult times. They never hesitated in sharing their home and resources. They were part of a great generation that put family and community first."

"Many of my cherished memories from childhood are from traveling to Lebanon County to spend a few weeks with my aunt and uncle in the summer."

The nephew wrote, "I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the staff at Towne Centre for taking such good care of my aunt and uncle for the years that they lived there. Nothing that I can contribute to your benevolent fund comes close to what my aunt and uncle gave to me."

*We thank this donor & everyone who makes a gift to bless the residents of StoneRidge Retirement Living Communities.*

"They were part of a great generation that put family and community first...."

Nothing that I can contribute to your benevolent fund comes close to what my aunt and uncle gave to me."



Left: Deanna Lesher's granddaughter, Jennifer, took the photo on the left on the day in March 2021 when she saw Deanna in person for the first time in a year. Jennifer says that she was so happy to be able to see Deanna again.



# Walking Familiar Halls

Kara  
Lynn  
and  
Justine  
Kayes

In 1956, Marlin Stump was part of the last class to attend when Schoolyard Square was a high school in Pine Grove. After the building transitioned to senior living, his parents were residents at Schoolyard Square. Before becoming residents of Schoolyard Square, Marlin and his wife, Dolores, visited many church friends who were residents at Schoolyard Square.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dolores planted flowers in the outside planters to “brighten up our corner of the world.” Dolores, like other residents at Schoolyard Square, is especially thankful for staff member Kara Lynn (Personal Care Assistant). Dolores appreciates how Kara listens.

Another resident, Justine Kayes, shares that Kara “goes above and beyond the call of duty to keep the residents well cared for and happy.” Kara does laundry for residents, transports them to doctor appointments, and much more. She and Terry (former maintenance staff) even clear the snow from the cars of residents.

After it was a high school, Schoolyard Square was an elementary school which Kara attended. She’s worked at Schoolyard for nine years. She says, “**I have a lot of years walking these halls and wouldn’t trade it for anything. I truly LOVE working here.**”



Betty Jane  
Wentling



## Janie's Legacy

Betty Jane Wentling and her husband, Dale, founded Dale E. Wentling Plumbing, Heating, and Air Conditioning in Myerstown. Betty was a member of Zion United Methodist Church and an eight-year resident of Poplar Run (personal care & skilled care) before her death in January 2021.

In their aunt's obituary, Janie's family invited gifts for iPads for Poplar Run – to be used for virtual family visits. Betty Jane's niece, Trudy Gass, shares how meaningful it was to be able to visit virtually with her Aunt Janie during the COVID-19 restrictions.

Trudy is grateful for the recreational therapists and activities assistants who facilitated the visits.

Eight new iPads were purchased and are being used for virtual visits. Trudy explains that her Aunt Janie was a very social person and would be thrilled that the gifts in her memory will help to facilitate many memorable conversations now and in the future.

## ..... Your Gift Will Bless Residents .....

We invite you to make a tax-deductible gift to bless the residents of StoneRidge Retirement Living Communities. In addition to welcoming gifts for Benevolent Care, items on our **Wish List** include:

- **A video streaming system for Theatre on Main at Poplar Run** so that worship services and other programs can be live-streamed (and broadcast later) to residents in their rooms and apartments (for those who can't attend in person). Towne Centre and Church of God Home currently have this system. Cost is \$18,800.
- **Patio Furniture for Common Areas**
- **Flower Planters for Common Areas**

Please note that if a project is already funded when a designated gift is received, funds will be used for the next most needed item on the **Wish List**. Checks can be made payable to “StoneRidge Retirement Living Communities” and mailed to: 440 E Lincoln Ave, Myerstown, PA 17067. Or you can give online securely at [www.StoneRidgeRetirement.com](http://www.StoneRidgeRetirement.com).

Please contact **Mindy Fetherman, Director of Development & Public Relations**, if you have questions about giving—including about an IRA QCD, Charitable Gift Annuity, or bequest. [PublicRelations@StoneRidgeRetirement.com](mailto:PublicRelations@StoneRidgeRetirement.com) or 717.866.3241.



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StoneRidge Retirement Living Communities, Inc. is the parent company of five retirement communities in South Central Pennsylvania. StoneRidge Towne Centre (717.628.5500) and StoneRidge Poplar Run (717.866.3200) are in Myerstown. Church of God Home (717.249.5322) is in Carlisle. Schoolyard Square (570.345.4075) is in Pine Grove. Countryside Christian Community (717-866-3200) is in Annville. Visit us online at [www.StoneRidgeRetirement.com](http://www.StoneRidgeRetirement.com).



# Thank You!

Join us in thanking CVS and Brocke Pharmacy for providing the COVID-19 vaccine for residents & staff.

Some Poplar Run residents received the vaccine on St. Patrick's Day. The vaccine continues to be available for new residents & staff.



Dolores and Harry Fisher



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