

# MRC

## *Life*



SPRING 2025





## ***Dear MRC Family,***

Our people are what make MRC special... residents and staff coming together to form bonds that bring out the best in life. This is the time of year when we celebrate some very special staff members.

On their very first day of employment, our employees learn about our ICARE values (Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Excellence) and what that looks like as they serve and make life good for our residents. I am proud that you see this in action as you visit our campuses. Every year employees nominate peers that have been observed exhibiting these values consistently as they carry out the duties of their jobs. From a large pool of nominees, an independent committee selects ICARE Champions from each campus. Those champions are highlighted in the following pages and represent the best of the best in the MRC family.

Longevity in employment has become rare today. In this issue we celebrate several who have given decades in service to MRC and our residents. MRC is honored that these have chosen the purposeful work that can be found throughout our organization.

Finally, each of us has a unique life journey. What a joy it is every day to learn about the life journeys of our residents shaped by faith and divine appointments. Enjoy this issue of *MRC Life!*



**Alan Brown**  
**President and CEO**



***MRC Mission:***  
***We honor and serve***  
***older adults as an***  
***expression of***  
***Christ's love.***



## Story of a Hero

As was the case for many young men during the early 1940's, Bill McIntyre now 104 years old, was drafted into World War II. As one of the few centenarians in his generation, McIntyre feels it's more important than ever to share his account of the war.

McIntyre's journey began on November 2, 1942, when he was drafted and sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. After partaking in various required testing and procedures, he was asked what he wanted to do for the war effort. McIntyre explained that he was already working in finance, so he preferred to continue that work. Granted his request, McIntyre's story is one of accounting rather than battlefields – yet still harrowing.

"It was December of 1942, and I was placed on a train to Indianapolis where the Fort Benjamin Finance School was located," he recalled. "I completed military finance training there as well as basic training."

*Continued on next page...*



While in Fort Benjamin, McIntyre and 41 other men from the school were put on a train headed to Brooklyn, New York. From there, their destination was unknown. The men boarded a troop ship and journeyed for 15 days, dodging submarines and other ships along the way. It was a crash course in the dangers of the high seas during wartime.

Following a seemingly treacherous and eerie pilgrimage, the men finally reached Gibraltar and headed east. Landing in Oran, North Africa, McIntyre and the other men stayed in a replacement depot for several days.

During his stay in Oran, McIntyre and the other men discovered that the French Foreign Legion was headquartered there. This piqued McIntyre's interest because he had read about the Legion in high school. One weekend, the men traveled to the region where the Legion was officially located. Most of the soldiers scattered among the area, but McIntyre went directly to the Legion. He was met by a master sergeant there and was given a tour of the establishment.

Once finished with his visit, McIntyre couldn't find a way back to where he was staying.

"Out of fear of being considered AWOL, I decided to jump on an empty freight train car," he remembered. "I jumped off the train car when I reached a recognizable destination."

McIntyre finally began his promised finance work after arriving in Algiers. Although McIntyre was in the department he requested, he described it as a "terrible job." McIntyre had to handle casualty paperwork for pilots who were missing and/or killed in action. The job was depressing and put a heavy weight on his soul and mind.

McIntyre hoped to bring light to his dark assignment by getting the opportunity to fly during his year-long stay in Algiers. Unfortunately, he never got the chance, even though most men in finance did eventually get to fly. Instead of flying, McIntyre's commander requested that he take a Liberty Ship, on which he spent 11 days traveling.

Docking in Sicily where famous U.S. Army General George S. Patton had just been, McIntyre finished up his time of service.

"I was even blessed by Pope Pius XII in Rome before traveling as far as Venice when the war ended," he shared.

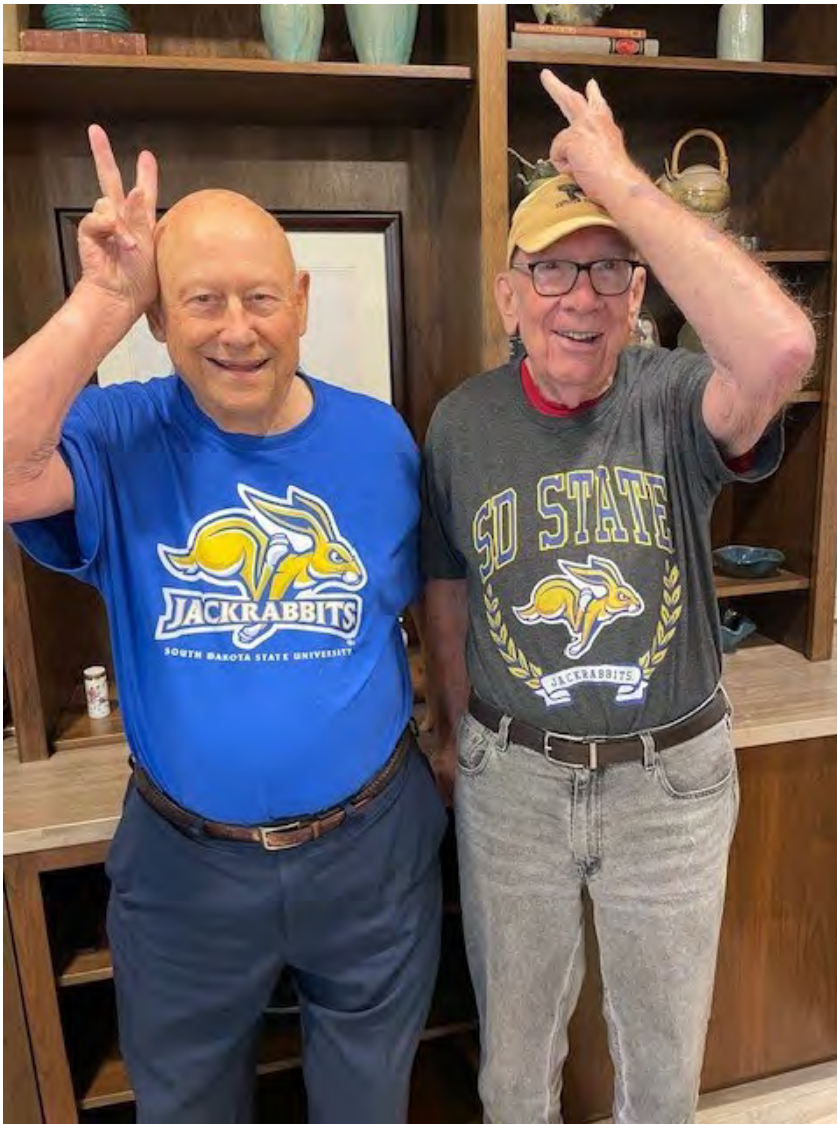
McIntyre was sent home to his family and friends on a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. He intended to work for the War Department, but never ended up going because Japan surrendered.

Finding his footing after the traumatic events of the war, McIntyre took advantage of the G.I. Bill and graduated with a degree from Oklahoma University.

*Written by Jeff Bell*



# South Dakota Serendipity



In the 1950's South Dakota's population was roughly 650,000 residents. Within that number was two strangers who would eventually become neighbors, Larry Bell and George Strong. With more than five hours of driving time between Larry's hometown of Doland and George's hometown of Rapid City, it is no surprise that their paths had never crossed in childhood. It was when they each chose to enroll at South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota that you might have expected the two to meet.

With a student body of roughly 3500 at the time, it seems almost certain that the pair attended the same football games, walked the same hallways, and networked in similar circles, graduating only one year apart, Larry in 1958 and George in 1959. Despite the many assumed opportunities, they remained unknown to one another.

After graduation, they both stayed active in the SDSU alumni activities and even sponsored their own scholarship funds and yet, a friendship eluded them.

It wasn't until George moved in to The Crossings in 2024 that he met his new neighbor and fellow alum, Larry. "Shortly after George moved in, they passed in the hall and George noticed Larry's Jackrabbit shirt, asked where he got it, and a friendship was born," recalled Debbie Zienty, Sales and Marketing Director.

They were able to reminisce on the various traditions of the University, even giving the ol' Jackrabbit hand sign while sporting their team t-shirts.

Zienty quipped, "Maybe there is a special meaning behind our community name, The Crossings. Numerous 'small world' moments seem to happen as residents compare their experiences with one another. So many paths seem to have crossed and later come back together at The Crossings. Larry and George are a great example of this kind of serendipity."





# 2024 ICARE Champions



The 2024 MRC ICARE Champions and Service Award Recipients were honored at a Celebration Brunch in February where they were each treated to a day at a spa, along with the guest of their choice.

The ICARE Champions are nominated and later selected by their peers as standing out from the crowd when it comes to demonstrating the ICARE values in their daily work. Winners were also awarded \$1000 and recognized at their campus Christmas party at the close of 2024.

Earning the title of ICARE Champion is MRC's most prestigious award. In years past, members of the leadership team were not candidates for this honor. However, in 2025, MRC launched a new category where any leader can be nominated to compete against the pool of leaders across the organization. This year, the award was deemed a tie between Mike Richards, Physical Plant Director of all communities in the Bryan/College Station area and Tammy Fuller, Accountant at Creekside.

Additionally, service award members are those who celebrated a significant milestone anniversary with MRC.

"We are proud to employ lots of really great people. But the ICARE Champions are the cream of the crop. These are the individuals that are influencing a culture of excellence that has the power to change the lives of our residents for the good. They are raising the standard within their circle of influence making everyone around them better too," said Alan Brown, President and CEO.





**Mike Richards**  
Director of Physical Plant  
Bryan/ College Station

"Mike is excellence. Rain, sleet, snow, floods, day, night, weekends, you name it. If one of our Bryan or College Station locations has a problem- we all rest easy knowing Mike is here to take care of it."

"Mike is very trustworthy, reliable and has strong moral character. He will show up for any problem, no matter the time of day. Takes his responsibility seriously. He knows our building better than anyone here. He will drive in from out of town on a weekend if we are having any maintenance issue."

"He leads by example. He jumps in to train his team. He would never ask anything of his team that he wouldn't or isn't helping with or doing. He understands the value that just simply hanging a picture for a resident shouldn't be put off."

"He treats everyone equally and fairly. We have at time elders with more challenging requests or needs. While it's easy to get frustrated, he never shows it."

"There is never a time that Mike is not accountable. If you need him, he is there. If something happens, he fixes it. If there's conflict, he finds a solution."



**Tammy Fuller**  
Accountant  
Creekside in Huntsville

"If I call Tammy when I'm having a tough day or not feeling well, she is always there to encourage me. In addition, Tammy assists with various projects, such as the cost reports. During phone conversations, if she notices a resident looking through her window, she promptly informs me that she needs to pause our discussion to attend to that resident. She is consistently dedicated to being there for both her co-workers and the residents."

"Tammy acknowledges the strengths and accomplishments of her co-workers. She respects her fellow employees and supervisors and listens carefully when I share new ideas or suggest changes. Tammy values everyone's time and workload."

"Tammy exhibits great integrity in that she is very reliable and responsible. She is always there to answer any question and she is such a great team player. She is always willing to put in hard work and long hours to make sure all the work is done and is always there to help any of the other team members. She is the glue that holds her community together, taking care of so many different details that each make a difference."



***2024 ICARE Leadership Champions***



## Donna Whitehead

Home Health Nurse Supervisor  
Cornerstone in Texarkana

"Donna has such an encouraging personality that is shown to our elders and employees. She is always communicating changes to our staff and has that open door policy of them able to always call any concerns or questions they may have at anytime, no matter what. Her examples of ICARE values shine daily. She is a true example of what we strive for daily!"

"If she commits to something she always follows through with going beyond and above to make sure it's done."

"She truly cares about our elders and builds bonds with families! She is always available around the clock to answer any questions."

"Donna helps everyone in the entire building. She is the first to jump in and she is always the first to come in or stay late on her own time to help out"

"I have often heard families say to Donna, 'Now give me your honest opinion.' This shows me that she has gained trust and is thought highly of by Cornerstone families."

"She is a miracle worker!"



## Angela Goodman

Charge Nurse  
Creekside in Huntsville

"She's like a mom to some of the staff. She's a wonder!"

"She shows compassion by making sure the elders and staff feel safe. She's there to listen. She's there to give guidance and wisdom."

"Many elders love her. Many staff love her. I don't know if it's the desserts she brings all the time or what. But they always ask for her."

"If the staff is down or elders are down, she's going to stop and make sure their day starts and ends with a smile. She's always dancing and smiling with everyone. She loves them and sees them when they don't see it for themselves!"

"Even on her off days she comes to the job to participate in any of the events that the job has for the elders. She shows up even when she doesn't have to. She's phenomenal. She's beyond incredible."

"She's always encouraging staff to reach to be greater."







**Rosie Agirre**  
Staffing/Lead C.N.A.  
The Crossings in League City

"Rosie is compassionate and takes pride in her work making sure our residents are taken care of. Countless hours being on call 24/7 and always here with a smile, no matter what time it is."

"Everything that Rosie does she completes with the idea of providing the best care possible and the best support possible for all she works with and around. She truly leads by example and strives to be the best that she can in all situations."

"She works so hard everyday to make sure the residents are receiving 5-star care and the staff feels comfortable. She is always showing empathy, gratitude, and love for others."

"She relates to so many people in the building, is persuasive and has great communication skills. She loves her work and she does a great job."

"She exceeds her job expectation and goes above and beyond on a daily basis."

"Rosie is focused and goal driven."

*Pictured above with  
Greg Rossi, Execu-  
tive Director.*



**Vanessa Rivers**  
Certified Medication Aide  
The Langford in College Station

"She takes the responsibility of caring for residents to heart and always does what is asked of her."

"When I think of working with excellence this is the first employee to come to mind. She trains others and gets to know all team members and residents. She is always one to have a smile on her face and positive attitude. She asks us on the bad days. What are you carrying that you can change...? Nothing. So give it all to God and keep moving forward!"

"No matter how much more work it may cause to do the right thing she is going to do whatever is needed to help get things done right."

"She is a shining example of someone who gives 150% every day and takes the time to see what a resident may need. It is more than giving medicine, it is also giving of yourself."

"She worries about these residents as if they were her own family."





## Gene Torsell

### Maintenance Tech

### Stevenson Oaks in Fort Worth

"Gene comes in everyday with a can do attitude. A daily want to succeed. His mission to make a difference in someone's day. He is a man of purpose. To Stevenson Oaks, he is a mentor, a servant, a compassionate human being that wants nothing more than to do what he does best, not only maintenance, but a maker of change for the good of this world."

"Gene is always eager to help anyone from resident to staff. From helping to rescue someone from a spider (later teasing them) to helping a resident in ANY neighborhood with their TV, always with that bright smile and famous wink."

"When Gene takes on a task, he fully embraces the responsibility of completing the task. If he cannot complete the task as anticipated, he will own up to it and look for other ways to meet the needs of the residents."

"Excellence could be Gene's middle name. He does not accept anything but the best from himself and strives to encourage his teammates to do likewise. There isn't a job that he is not willing to attempt."



## Amanda Goode

### Service Coordinator

### Affordable Housing

"Amanda develops and fosters meaningful relationships with all the residents at Bayview. Amanda always makes sure to celebrate even the smallest of resident victories."

"Bayview has historically depended upon a large donation from a local company to maintain resident activity expenses. It was announced recently the amount funded would be drastically reduced. Amanda has a lot going on personally and has still taken the time to find new funding resources so the Bayview residents don't have to give up anything from their current programs. One of the biggest undertakings was writing a grant proposal for the community."

"All the residents feel welcome as soon as they move in which makes them more likely to receive services in a timely manner."

"Amanda provides unbiased feedback and point of views and I know this is appreciated by both staff and residents."







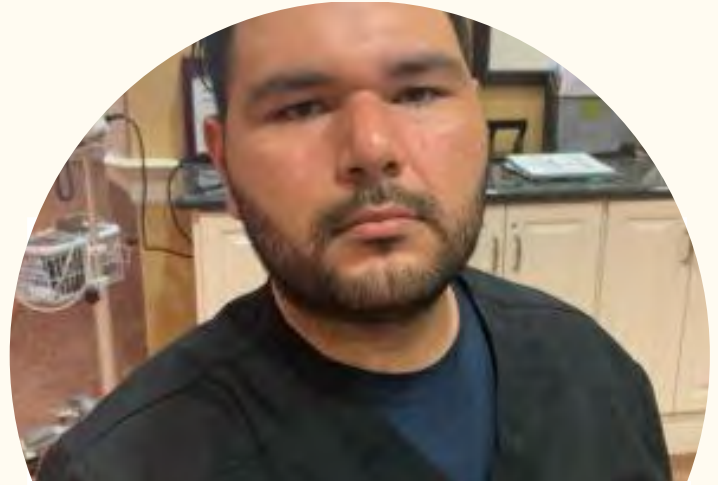
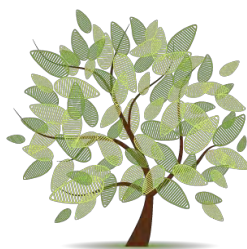
**Michael Troy**  
Concierge  
Crestview in College Station

"Michael is very compassionate with our elders during all interactions with them. When our elders show signs of loneliness while visiting at the front desk with him, he always listens intently and converses with them while completing his other duties trying his best to lift their spirits."

"Even if the elder is having a rough day and unintentionally directing it towards him, he never lets his demeanor change and does his very best to calm them and the situation. All our elders genuinely appreciate him and what he brings to the community."

"Our elders depend on him, and he is truly missed on his off days. He is known for providing excellent service. I receive many compliments from our elders about Michael and about how much they value and appreciate him."

"Michael genuinely cares about what our elders have to say and what they are going through. He makes everyone feel important and a priority when he interacts with them."



**Javier Soliz**  
Charge Nurse  
Mirador in Corpus Christi

"Javier makes every effort to be completely transparent and honest in all he does. His level of ethics has developed to a point where he questions automatically what is or is not ethical when necessary. He is honest about situations where he failed as well. Admitting his mistake, and taking correction to become a better nurse."

"Javier shows incredible respect for residents and coworkers. In every interaction I have with him, he shows professional respect, making sure to answer all questions thoroughly, offer feedback, and receive it as well."

"Javier is the first to admit his shortcomings and strive to correct them. He also takes the lead in holding his coworkers accountable for theirs."

"Javier has shown excellence by being consistent and rising above challenges. He is always striving to be the best he can be, always delivering, and doing it all without complaint."





## Rauquel Brown

### Accounting Coordinator Central Support Services

"Rauquel is trustworthy and reliable. Her actions are consistent with her words; if she says she is going to complete a task, she will do it. She communicates honestly and openly, and she completes her work in a timely manner. She is a no-nonsense person who sets deadlines for her tasks and meets them. Rauquel does her work quietly and without complaint, often going unnoticed."

"She is compassionate towards others. She is always willing to help our communities out with questions on any of her accounts she keeps up with. She is not afraid to take on more work and it will always be done perfect. And she knows and has told us that we are here because of our residents."

"She is a leader with huge determination and belief in who she is. And this is why she is such a great employee that deserves this award."

"Rauquel is a valuable employee at Methodist Retirement Communities. She performs her work with no complaints and very few errors. She is proactive, always staying one step ahead in her responsibilities. She is truly a blessing to MRC."



## Samantha Powell

### Concierge PineCrest in Lufkin

"When assisting residents with whatever the issue of the day is, she is always concerned with the entire individual and everything they are going through, not just the issue they have presented her with. The fact that she cares is clearly shown in every one of her interactions."

"Samantha is a hard worker. I have never heard of her shirking her responsibilities. If a job needs done, she doesn't complain but instead jumps right in and deals with it with a smile."

"Definitely a model for others to follow. Always here and ready to help all residents as well as any employee needing assistance."

"Always kind and caring to the residents whenever she sees them."

"Samantha is committed to excellence in every way. She takes pride in the job she performs and is always willing to accept additional responsibilities and performs them to a level above and beyond set expectations."







Melissa Byrd  
30 Years- Creekside



Mike Adams  
30 Years- Crestview



Carolyn Sweet  
30 Years- Crestview



Lisa Haynes  
30 Years- Crestview



*2024 Service Award Recipients*



Denise Madison  
25 Years– PineCrest



Marian Curtis  
25 Years– Creekside



Charles "Chuck" Lewis  
25 Years– Cornerstone



Melissa R. Skog  
25 Years– Cornerstone



*2024 Service Award Recipients*





Heath Foust  
25 Years– PineCrest



Todd Partin  
20 Years– Central Support  
Services



Sandra Love  
20 Years- Crestview



Thank you for years of  
dedicated service to  
MRC's mission!



*2024 Service Award Recipients*



# MOVING BACKWARDS



As the pair of siblings pulled into the Cornerstone parking lot, Cece Tye cringed at the thought of moving into a “nursing home.” As she toured with the community representative, there was a frustration building inside of her. In fact, she was more than annoyed, more than frustrated, she was angry. At the time she felt her daughters unwanted intervention was taking away her independence.

Things initially began to change for Cece after she lost her husband. The loss caused her to withdraw from routine activities and outings. Then came the pandemic of 2020. Her world would shrink to the size of her living room and bedroom in her big empty house. Before long, the changes to her emotional and social well-being began to manifest in her physical wellbeing as well. Not only did she find her endurance had declined, she was also less steady on her feet. Her daughters were watching carefully, noting each change. Although they were worried, they didn’t step in until Cece had a scary fall in her home.

For Cece, it would be this one fall that would change it all. As far as her children were concerned, the biggest change needed to be a change of address. They could see something Cece couldn’t, how the loneliness and boredom had changed her from the inside out. While the change in health was concerning, they were more concerned to see how their mom had lost her signature sparkle. They had watched their mother slowly decline at home alone and took the chance, even if it made her upset, to force the move and hope for the best.

As a result, whether she liked it or not, Cece found herself signing on the dotted line to take one of Cornerstone’s available Assisted Living apartments. “While Cece didn’t come kicking and screaming exactly, it was pretty darn close,” recalls Carrie Trusty, Marketing Director.



It wasn't long before things begin to change, starting with her attitude. "I fell in love with Cornerstone! I couldn't have been more wrong about all of the stereotypes I believed," said Cece. As her attitude changed, her physical wellbeing also changed. She was almost fully restored to her condition prior to her fall. Her improvement was so significant that the Cornerstone team approached her about transitioning out of Assisted Living and into an Independent Living apartment.

While it is common for the team to advise residents that it might be time to move to another neighborhood in the community, to see their needs better met, it is not often the recommendation includes moving backwards through the continuum. Trusty explained, "Most people start in Independent Living and move through the continuum of services like Assisted Living or Long-Term Care as their health declines. It's not often that we get to move people in the other direction."

Cece described the shift as nothing short of a "total shock." She is now a key contributor to the fun and vibrancy uniquely found at Cornerstone. It only takes you a few brief moments with Cece to recognize that she is a barrel of laughs, which comes naturally from her engaging personality. To put it simply, her sparkle came back, a shine that had dulled in her previous condition of loneliness and boredom in her home.

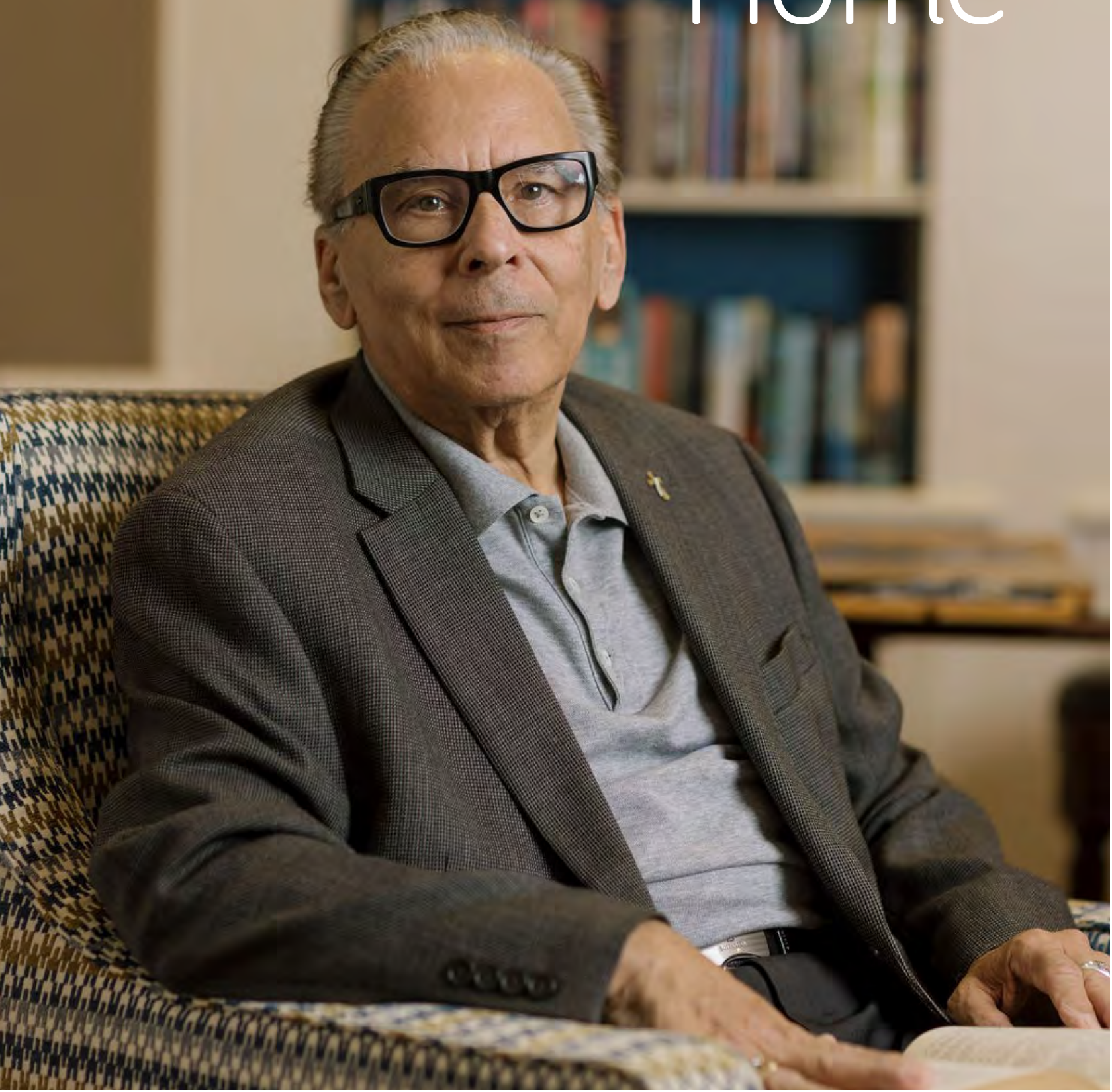
When asked how she might encourage someone who gets dragged to Cornerstone's front door by their children, her response was immediate saying, "It is the best thing I've ever done." CeCe credits her new home with pulling her out of a lonely, depressed state, and giving her a renewed sense of purpose. "I am alive again," she explained.

In most circumstances, the idea of moving backwards is not positive, but for Cece, moving backwards was an exceedingly positive milestone in her aging journey that underlines the power of a supportive community.





# Finding Home





Have you ever made a promise that altered the entire trajectory of your life? For Loni Lugo this promise was made at the altar when he looked his beautiful bride, Dee, in the eyes and swore to care for her, no matter what life would bring.

After a half-century together devastating news would shake the foundations of their world, Dee was diagnosed with uterine cancer. One of the first things to change would be Lugo's work routine. He was the Chief Marketing Officer for a Regional Insurance Company which required him to travel between Texas and Florida. "When my wife was sick, I moved into a consultant role where I could care for her at home," he explained.

Soon, the inevitable finally happened, Lugo said a final goodbye to his wife of 53 years as she passed away peacefully in their home. In the midst of the grief and loss, a new promise surfaced. But this time it was a promise he would make to himself, to live life to the fullest, while also continuing his work as a Roman Catholic Permanent Deacon.

But what would this new life without Dee look like? There were many options in front of him. His first consideration pointed him towards the possibility of a low-maintenance condo. But his grief seemed to enunciate something he knew could be a growing concern, the pain of aloneness. "I knew that if I chose to move to a condo, I would put myself in a position to be alone. I knew that wouldn't be good for me," he explained.

With that option decisively marked off the list, it was time to put out inquiries to several places in the area, including Mirador. "I was familiar with the location because I had visited members of the church as a Deacon to bring them communion," he recalled.

Although he toured a multitude of senior living communities in the Coastal Bend area, Mirador stood apart. "I met with Vanessa and Mirador was instantly set apart because it requires an economic investment to live there, which separates someone who is only in the mindset of borrowing a place to live versus someone who has an economic interest," he shared. Lugo is referring to the largely refundable entrance fee which is required upon entry into Mirador's Independent Living apartments. This upfront deposit unlocks significant savings as residents may progress through the continuum of services. An attractive fea-

ture he hadn't encountered at other area communities.

The next step was to bring in his own expert advisor, more specifically his son. One of his two sons, Joseph, worked for the US Government (HHS) as a Director in the AOA Administration on Aging. Lugo explained, "He came down and toured the entire facility. In his work he leads a team whose job is to visit places all over the US, trained to look more deeply into the operations and set up." He went on, "After his tour to Mirador he told me this place is five star all the way!" He also recounted how his son was impressed with the long tenured employees and low turnover.

His other son, William, had a similar response after investigating. "My two sons are polar opposites," he laughed. William is a sociology and criminology professor at the University of Connecticut, so he looked at Mirador through the lens of people's interactions. He also agreed that Mirador was the best in Corpus Christi. Both William and Joseph had offered to let him come live with them in their large homes but he felt it was not a good arrangement to infringe on their lives in a way that could be disruptive. "I have watched people who transition through the various stages of aging and I don't want to put that on my sons," he shared. For him, the promise he made to himself to live well including an independence from burdening his son and their families with his future care and housing needs.

Besides, as he spent more time at Mirador, he found there was something just under the surface that caught his attention giving him an unexpected sense of calm. "I think I was unknowingly drawn to Mirador without even realizing it because so many of those living here have also experienced the loss of a spouse, or find themselves alone. There is an unspoken understanding about where we are in life, an understanding that I didn't expect to find. Feeling understood...that part wasn't in the brochure," he laughed

He went on, "I am not alone, it's like there are others living in the same book as me, but everyone is on their own page."

Today, Lugo has fulfilled his promise to live life to its fullest after finding the unexpected, a place where his grieving heart is at home. For him, finding home was finding Mirador.



# Stitching Smiles



Roma Wells has been crocheting since she was about seven years old. “For as long as I can remember it’s been a part of my life,” said Wells, a resident at Creekside in Huntsville. Now 92 years old, she could certainly be considered a professional. While Wells has always enjoyed the hobby, it seems her interest grew even more after making the move to Creekside 5 years ago. She now crochets with one of her neighbors in mind, carefully stitching their name into the customized piece. “I embroider their name into anything I make,” she said. While lap blankets are her most common handmade gift, she is also known to make lovely winter hats as well.

When asked why she has embraced the hobby with such passion she answered instantly, “I love to make people smile.” While her focus is on giving to others, the truth is, she is getting quite a bit in return too. According to scientific studies, the way Roma enjoys her hobby by giving her creations away as gifts is especially beneficial to her overall health and well-being. For starters, crocheting alone is known to reduce stress, help with depression, improve self-esteem, aid in sleep, and even lower the risk of dementia as an activity that requires a great deal of cognition to accomplish. Crocheting is like a workout for your brain!



But that's not all, the act of gift giving to others has it's own set of benefits too. Primarily, the experience known as the "helper's high." According to the National Library of Medicine, the helper's high is a term that gained popularity in the 1980's describing the rush of positive emotions and boosting endorphins that come after an act of selfless service to others. Individuals who benefit regularly from the experience get boosts of self-esteem and happiness while lowering the risk of depression. Most impressively, those who live a lifestyle of giving to others tend to live longer than those who do not make a practice of giving and volunteering.

Another term for what Roma has embraced is called purpose. Fyodor Dostoevsky famously wrote, "The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for."

It is notable, when pressed to explain why she spends her time making these gifts, Wells didn't say she loves making blankets and hats, instead she said, "I love to make people smile!" Perhaps that is the difference between a hobby and purpose, the motive behind the action. For Roma, she isn't stitching together blankets, she is stitching together smiles.



“ I love to make  
people smile!”

-Roma Wells  
Creekside Resident





## *Thank you Deborah!*

Deborah Nugent officially rode off into the sunset and into retirement at the close of 2024 after a long and impressive career serving seniors. Deborah was initially hired as the Healthcare Administrator for Mirador when the doors first opened in 2011. In this role, she led the clinical teams in Assisted Living, Memory Support, Long-Term Care, and Short-term Rehabilitation. Later, in 2017 she was promoted to the role of Executive Director. While Deborah was a shining star in every role she held, those who know her best would say this is where her unique collection of skills merged to best showcase her enormous, loving heart.

One of the more notable milestones in her role as Executive Director would be the transition in ownership in 2019 as Mirador joined the MRC family. "She was an advocate for the residents and for the staff at every turn. She cared for Mirador as a whole, but she also cared for each individual at Mirador," recalled Jill Janes, MRC Vice President of Sales and Marketing. This account of her character is a common one found amongst those who worked closely with her. In fact, the staff at Mirador would often refer to Deborah as their "work mom," a title that indicated the level of trust they had in her along with a nod to how she seemed to nurture each of them as individuals.

"Whether it was a question about home life, mom life or work life and we just couldn't figure it out, "mom" always made her self available to us if we needed advice or just needed someone to listen to us. She almost always had an answer to whatever it was we needed," shared Jonina Soliz, Executive Assistant.



Nearing the end of 2024, the community held a reception to celebrate her retirement. The event was designed to allow both staff and residents to come and go. However, seemingly as a testament to Deborah's meaningful impact on attendees, everyone came, but no one wanted to go. Each individual stayed from the beginning to the end to share special memories throughout the years from an open mic.

Dozens shared their thanks along with their most treasured memories with their friend. The atmosphere of the event could only be described as family, not a workplace, but a family gathering to celebrate one of their own.

One by one, stories were shared of how Mirador was a place of transformation and how Deborah had specifically played a role in their journey. From staff who had benefited from her mentorship and encouragement, to residents who leaned on Deborah's steady shoulder through some of life's greatest losses, it seemed they were describing something far greater than a career, they were describing a purpose.

Methodist Retirement Communities and Mirador wish to express the deepest gratitude to Deborah for embracing her purpose so richly and passionately through her role as Executive Director at Mirador. As a result, many lives have been greatly enriched as evidenced by the great outpouring of love at her retirement reception. A showing that only represents a fraction of the impact she has made over the course of her work.

While one can retire from a career, one can never retire from purpose. We are certain that Deborah will embark on new adventures while holding on to the purpose that she so evidently lives by, to care for others.

Deborah, we are made better for having known you and worked beside you. As you think back on your years with Mirador, we pray the feeling that was so palpable at your party revisits your heart with each remembrance, the feeling of family. Thank you for everything.





# Fostering Love





One Sunday morning, Win and Sandy Heinrich found themselves drawn to a couple who sat nearby, beaming with pride as the Pastor of their church presented a young child for baptism. There was something magnetic about the joy the pair of strangers were emitting from their smiling faces. Following the service they caught up with the couple to introduce themselves. It was soon obvious why they radiated such joy at the site of this child's baptism, the couple had once fostered the child. This is the moment the Heinrichs point back to as the "aha moment" when their souls were stirred towards fostering babies. They had always discussed doing some sort of ministry, but they had never felt a clear leading in which direction, until this preordained meeting.

At the time, their three children were in elementary school and they absolutely loved the idea of having a baby coming into their home. There were many steps that the family had to take before they could receive their first baby, one of the most critical steps would be the home study. Win laughed as he shared, "Sandy was so particular about making sure the house was perfectly clean! I remember all five of us got on our hands and knees to clean the baseboards with toothbrushes."

After going through the steps to get qualified with the state, there was only one final thing the pair needed before they dove in head first. They were hoping to get some sort of final confirmation that this is really what the Lord was calling them to do. They didn't have to wait long before the answer was clear. Win's employer had a big event where spouses were invited to attend. Sandy recalled, "There were lots of door prizes up on the stage to be given away. We saw a little baby lamp as one of the prizes. So we told ourselves, if we win the lamp, we'll know we are supposed to foster. Sure enough, our name was called, we won the baby lamp!"

The couple was so enthusiastic, they woke their children when they got home that night to share

the clear sign, in the form of a lamp, that their family was indeed called to be a foster family.

"It was definitely a family ministry," explained Sandy. The babies would be taken home around 36 hours old and would be cared for until the birth family was able to make a decision about adoption. The couple's children each took their role as foster siblings very seriously, each learning how to properly hold, feed, and burp a newborn baby. The family not only bonded with the babies, but they also forged special relationships with the adoptive families too. The couple made a book for each baby, writing in it every single day to journal anything that might have occurred in the baby's life. The book also depicted photos of the child to preserve every single experience. Win and Sandy would present the book to the baby's parents who were unable to witness these moments themselves. These bonds have stood the test of time as they have stayed connected with these children who have since gone on to find success, get married, and have children of their own.

Over the course of many years, the family cared for a total of sixty-two babies. "They all had their own stories and they each took a part of our hearts with them. But we learned very quickly how to be so excited when they were placed with a family because they were with their forever home and that's where they needed to be. There always was another waiting for our home, to be cared for and loved." The couple keeps a collage of photos which now hangs in their home at Stevenson Oaks of each and every baby they once cared for.

Each of these precious babies, now turned adults, once slept in a room where a little baby lamp stood nearby. This little lamp once acted as a sign that they should pursue the ministry of foster care. Today, when seeking confirmation of their calling, the Heinrichs look no further than the sixty-two sweet faces on their wall.

From the moment Stevenson Oaks was conceived, the name of the community was a major consideration. We knew it would be important to identify a name that would connect this brand-new senior living community to the rich history of the city of Fort Worth.

After researching the city's origins, it would come apparent there were shared faith roots between MRC and the city. Namely, Rev. William Stevenson, a pioneer Methodist preacher who would share the gospel from horseback in the early 1800's. According to his autobiography, he became the first protestant of any denomination to preach within the bounds of what is now known as Texas territory but was, at the time, part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain.

Stevenson's coming to faith story began when he was eight years old when a horse ran away with him, ramming him directly into the branch of a tree where a snag, roughly the size of a man's finger lodged directly into his right eye. He remembers crying out to God asking for healing, eventually his eye would heal, and sight would be restored. Later, he fell from a ridgepole during the raising of a log cabin around the age of ten years old. He was sitting atop a log where the ridgepole was to lie but as the group of men tugged on the rope, it snapped, causing the log he was sitting on to turn over and toss him headfirst in-between two joists. He tells how, with some maneuvering, he was able to walk away from the experience unharmed, yet forever changed. He shares how he rode home, approximately two miles with his mind reeling from his now second brush with death. He describes a feeling of hopelessness as he considered how he might have met his untimely end that day.



# *The Circuit Rider Rides Again*



Shortly after this experience, he would ride ten miles to hear a new kind of preacher called a Methodist. He sat with the crowd under a group of trees to hear the man preach. Following the event, he and the young man who attended, riding alongside him, spoke of what they heard, both feeling compelled to surrender their lives to Christ. Following his own salvation experience, and into his adulthood, he felt a great burden to guide others to repentance, taking every chance presented to share his testimony, yet he still had not considered becoming a preacher.

Later, in adulthood he attended a night meeting where the designated preacher for the evening did not show up. Knowing him to be a well-studied student of the gospel, he was asked to speak as an alternate. Soon after, he was ordained by none other than Francis Asbury and William McKendree, both giants in the origin of the Methodist movement.

From that day forward, Rev. Stevenson's ministry, riding horseback from one region to the next, would have a civilizing effect in the area. These church meetings would gather small groups of pioneers together on a regular basis, helping small communities to develop.

Stevenson Oaks now carries the Reverend's name just like he carried the message of hope to the Fort Worth area centuries ago. To further commemorate his impact, a metal sculpture of the circuit rider was erected at the entry of the building as a permanent fixture and nod to how his story intertwines with Stevenson Oaks. Additionally, an art piece is now featured in the main hallway connecting all Stevenson Oaks neighborhoods.

Much like Rev. Stevenson carried a powerful message of hope that resulted in community, we pray that this community results in a sense of hope for all who call Stevenson Oaks home.

**Larry Beck poses alongside Kristi Baird, Executive Director, and Alan Brown, President and CEO, in front of the art piece that now hangs in the hallway that connects the community's neighborhoods.**

**Beck was instrumental in placing the image of Rev. Stevenson in a place of prominence.**



# Texas A&M Traditions Celebrated at The Langford



Back row: Terry Rosser, Myrna Rosser, Linda O'Leary, Barbara Landers, Dave Ruesink, Janice Haynes  
Front Row: Jean Ringer, Ruth Weidenbach, Carol Grable, Zanna Bickham, Joe O'Leary

Texas A&M University is steeped in rich traditions that bind its students, alumni, and community together with a shared sense of pride and heritage. I recently sat with one Aggie of many who are residents at The Langford. Mr. Joe O'Leary III said that it is known, "Once an Aggie, always an Aggie." He agreed to lead me through the history of A&M as he repeatedly said, "There are so many more here you should talk to." Still, he was very proud of his accomplishments as well as his family and friends, especially when speaking of A&M. I wish I could share more, but here are just a few memories, traditions, and mentions Mr. O'Leary shared with me of life in the pride and joy of College Station.

For a freshman today (known among the A&M confines as "fish"), stepping onto the expansive campus can be overwhelming. Texas A&M University has a student body of more than 77,000 and more than 5,200 acres on the College Station campus alone. Yet, in the 1960s, the year Mr. O'Leary attended, there were 9,000 men (women weren't admitted until April of 1963). He told of how the university became coeducational through the years under the leadership of James Earl Rudder.

The first-year student would expect to attend "Fish Camp". This would be an orientation experience well before the academic year. "Fish would learn in "Fish Camp" all that is expected of them, what they might expect of A&M, and learn about its values and history. It's during this camp that they are introduced to "Howdy!" (the



traditional greeting of an Aggie), what a frog is (a transfer), and even who the highest-ranking member of the core is. Her name is Reveille, the mascot and First Lady of Texas A&M.

Central to the description from Mr. O'Leary's memories seemed to be the Corps of Cadets. The military-oriented student discipline then, seems to have formed the heart of the University's traditions today. The presence of the Corps on campus is felt in the form of cadet parades, ceremonies, and traditions. These traditions have had a profound impact not only on the university but also on the broader community such as Bryan/College Station and further into neighboring towns. One other resident mentioned how he has gone all over the world and knows the consistency of the A&M brotherhood when seeing a ring on the finger in countless business, and government sectors.

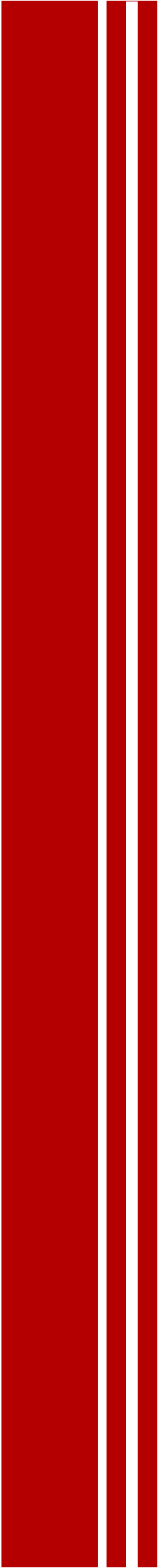
For the Aggie community, certain phrases and slogans are a part of the daily vernacular, terms that only an Aggie truly understands. Examples include "Gig 'em Aggies," a battle cry that originated in the 1930s when an Aggie football player used it to signal the attack. Mr. O'Leary also mentioned code names for items in the Mess Hall such as "sky" meaning water, and "cow" for milk. Mr. O'Leary also emphasized the ring ceremony and how it has become much more than it used to be.

I have learned with my visit with Mr. O'Leary and while in the community that many of A&M's traditions have evolved. While the university retains a strong military tradition, it has increasingly become a school sought after for all professions, welcoming students from all backgrounds. The Corps of Cadets, though still seemingly central to A&M's culture, now represents a broader range of individuals, and many of its historical practices have been adapted to meet the needs of a modern student body. Despite this evolution, the essence of the traditions—values like loyalty, respect, and service—remains unchanged, ensuring that A&M's legacy will continue to thrive for generations to come.

*Written by Chaplain Gabe Montez*







# puree with a purpose

Written by Jeff Bell



Imagine the decline in your ability to enjoy food if you suffered from dysphagia – difficulty swallowing. It impacts as many as one-third of adults over the age of 65. That's why Carlos Alvarado, chef at The Crossings senior living community in League City, prides himself on finding innovative ways to make "food taste like food again."

It's all part of the Puree with a Purpose concept, which seeks to elevate the dining experience for those who require pureed food. Most people living with this issue may blend a meal of spaghetti and meatballs, for example, into a paste like consistency and then eat the bowl of mush from a bowl. Instead, Carol takes the meal and carefully pipes the pureed noodles to look like noodles and the pureed meatballs to look like meatballs. Then, the well-blended sauce is added to the top of the dish, tastefully plated to resemble every other plate of spaghetti served across the dining room. In doing so, dignity for these elders is restored and their dining experience is elevated with food that is appetizing to each of the senses.

Alvarado, who worked in restaurants for many years, said he chose to work at The Crossings as a way of giving back through his culinary talents. "I love to cook, and I think for people who need a puree, being able to use my skills to brighten their dining experience is what it's all about," he said.

Alvarado recently entered a competition where he was able to put his skills on display. He reached the semifinals of the Puree with a Purpose contest, traveling to San Antonio to compete. "It was a great experience and hopefully helped to spread the word about this important concept," he said. "What we're doing here at The Crossings is making a difference for residents who need it."



# It's Pickleball, Y'all!



Many have taken note of the new sport that has captured the hearts of both the young and old called pickleball. But the sport isn't all that new. In fact, the origin of the game dates back to 1965 when a few friends, Joel Pritchard, who would go on to become a Washington State Congressman, and friend Bill Bell found their families sitting around with nothing to do.

There was an old badminton court nearby but there were no rackets or balls, so they opted to play with ping-pong paddles and a wiffle ball. The family was thoroughly entertained the remainder of the weekend. Eventually they roped in another friend named Barney McCallum, soon the three men were creating rules and standards. Only two years later, the first permanent pickleball court would be constructed at Joel Pritchard's neighbor's house. Today there are roughly 30 countries who play the official sport and more than an estimated 50,000 pickleball courts with the demand outpacing installation with an estimated 36.4 million players worldwide.

The popularity of pickleball has prompted many to replace the formerly popular tennis courts in metro areas with pickleball courts. Meanwhile, entrepreneurs are

creating pickleball themed restaurants and social clubs. Even some senior living communities are including the courts in their construction plans. This was the case for Stevenson Oaks in Fort Worth who officially opened their courts last year to an enthusiastic group of residents who have already kept the courts busy.

So, why the pickleball craze? It seems the sport launched into popularity due to the low threshold for participation. Just about anyone can play which makes it a sport that welcomes all ages! Plus, there is a whole host of benefits to your wellbeing.

If you are curious about this pickleball craze sweeping the nation, just swing by Stevenson Oaks for a friendly game with some of the community's most avid pickleball athletes. But

here's the dill,  
don't be a sour  
loser if they  
beat you.





# Five Wellness Perks of Pickleball

1

## LOWERS RISK OF HEART DISEASE

One hour of pickleball, roughly three times per week can lower your cholesterol and improve blood pressure levels.

## SHRINKS RISK OF DEPRESSION

2

Exercise is a proven mood booster, increasing endorphins and reduces feelings of stress. Exercise can be an excellent way to release stress and distract from worry.

3

## BUILDS NEW HEALTHY HABITS

For some, going to the gym isn't an especially exciting activity. However, pickleball is both exercise and entertainment. Pickleball seems to bring participants back over and over again to reap the benefits of the sport. Before you know it, a new healthy habit has formed.

## REDUCES FEELINGS OF LONELINESS

4

Pickleball depends on a partner or group to enjoy the game. Therefore, it is a naturally social sport that often leads to deepened friendships and a reduction in feelings of loneliness.

5

## EXTENDS INDEPENDENCE

The many mobility benefits of pickleball like improved reflexes, steadier balance, and greater range of motion all add up to the probability of extended independence. Pickleball has even been shown to minimize some arthritis symptoms that may otherwise prevent elders from completing everyday tasks.



# Right Place Right Time

Have you ever been in the right place at the right time? June Scott would tell you that she found herself in this situation shortly after moving to PineCrest in 2019. Scott, an 86 year old widow, made the difficult decision to move from her home, downsize her belongings, and transition into the unknown world of senior living. While she was positive about the revolutionary life change, she had no idea what the future would hold and how these experiences would alter her perspective forever.

Only four months after her move, she had a fall that resulted in a dislocated shoulder and torn muscle. As a result, she connected with the community's in-house therapy team and rehab services to regain full use of her shoulder. Nearly five years later, in 2024, she was enduring intense back pain, so debilitating that she was depending on a walker to get around. After a year long journey of therapy and injections, she consulted with Dr. Baraa Al-Hafez who advised she go into surgery. "I woke up from surgery with no pain in my back, legs, or hips," beamed Scott. After three days in the hospital, she was welcomed back to PineCrest with the nursing and therapy team ready to get her on the road to healing. Scott shared, "Thank goodness for the time I was able to stay in the care of the excellent nurses and rehab personnel."

As her healing journey continued, it seemed the entire community pitched in. "The Maintenance team moved my lift recliner to my rehab room, and I slept in that for the next 30 days. The PineCrest transportation folks took me to my doctor appointments. Also, my good friends went with me, did my wash, and supplied excellent support as I needed it," said Scott.

After 30 days in the rehab, she was released to go back to her apartment, but the support she got from PineCrest did not end there. Scott worked with the community's in-house Home Health team to bring additional support to her apartment three times per week. "They continued helping with anything I couldn't handle. They also taught me to use special tools, so when the doctor released me, I could care for myself," she said. After another 30 days, of out-patient therapy, which also took place in her apartment, she had successfully rebuilt her strength and confidence.

Scott ponders the type of experience she may have had if she had not been at PineCrest during this especially difficult time saying, "If I would have been living by myself, I would have had to find the help I received here. All the different departments had a part in my recovery."

Scott now preaches to others who cross her path that when it comes to a health crisis, you want to know you are at the right place at the right time. For her, that was only possible by choosing to move proactively. "Don't wait," urges Scott, "you never know what the future holds. The right place is PineCrest and the right time is now!"







# IS DEMENTIA PREVENTABLE? NEW STUDY SAYS YES!

There is a paradigm-shifting in the way experts are viewing dementia. For years dementia has been perceived as an inevitable part of the aging process, especially if genetics are not in your favor. However, a new study by the Lancet Commission on Dementia reports dementia could be prevented, with an estimated 50% of cases worldwide that could be either fully prevented or delayed.

How? Researchers point to fourteen modifications, mostly behavioral, one can make to address the key risk factors of the disease. The best news for some is that these modifications can be beneficial, despite the perceived genetic risk.

## **The 14 risk factors for Dementia:**

- lack of physical activity
- cigarette smoking
- excessive alcohol consumption
- obesity
- hypertension
- high cholesterol
- diabetes
- social isolation
- depression
- untreated hearing
- untreated vision loss
- low educational attainment (associated with low cognitive engagement)
- traumatic brain injury
- air pollution or poor air quality

While many of the items on this list have been reported in the Lancet Commission on Dementia's previous 2020 report, two items have only been added to the list this year; high cholesterol and vision loss.

While items on the list like air pollution may rely on public policy and are largely out of an individual's control, the bulk of the risk factors can be improved. Experts suggest that those who wish to take action on dementia prevention should work closely with healthcare providers as they are modifying their behavior while also seeking treatment for existing conditions. Of course, regular health screenings are a key component to reducing the risk of dementia.

# When Life Takes an Unexpected Turn ...



Bill Quinton was a man whose wife and daughters thought could do just about anything. At age 73 he was still busy working 10 hours per day at the financial planning firm he founded years prior. "Until that day in August, Bill was as big as Texas," said Kay Quinton, his wife and caregiver. August 7, 2023 was "that day in August" when everything changed. Bill Quinton underwent a procedure meant to prevent future strokes. Instead, he had a stroke on the operating table. "A nightmare is what followed," Kay explained. "An absolute nightmare." Bill Quinton was unable to sit on his own. To make matters worse, he developed an infection during rehab. Eventually, the infection was cleared up, but the hospital discharged Bill Quinton. "They said they'd done all they could do for him," Kay shared. "We were despondent. Bill most of all." Then, Kay explained, everything began to shift. "It was our 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary when he was discharged and we couldn't have been any lower," she said. "That's when we took him to Mirador." Mirador, a continuing care retirement community in Corpus Christi, offers rehab to patients coming from hospitals needing everything from physical therapy to other forms of care. "Bill had speech, physical and occupational therapy," Kay said. "Let me tell you, those Mirador people are angels on earth. Truly." One individual, in particular, Kristina Navarro, became Bill's "guardian angel," according to Kay Quinton. "She taught him how to be proud again. She taught him how to be valuable again. She taught him never to give up fighting." Today, Bill Quinton walks on his own, occasionally using a cane if he walks long distances. He's still taking speech therapy but has improved dramatically. "He's regained his sense of who he is and his zest for life," Kay said with a smile. "Mirador gave us our Bill back." Quinton agreed to be interviewed for this story because she wants other stroke victims and their families to know that hope is out there. "If things aren't going well with one hospital or rehab facility, don't give up," she cautioned. "There are places out there like Mirador who can make all the difference in your journey. Hope may feel lost, but it isn't." Two months ago, Bill and Kay celebrated 50 years together just one year after he left the hospital feeling like his life may be all but over. "it wasn't over," Kay said. "In many ways, it was just beginning." *Written by Jeff Bell*

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## Physical Therapy



## Occupational Therapy



## Speech Therapy



## KNOW THE SIGNS OF STROKE

### B E F A S T

Balance:	Eyes:	Face:	Arms:	Speech:	Time:
Loss of balance, Dizziness	Vision Changes	Facial Drooping, Severe Headache	Weakness, Numbness	Trouble Speaking, Confusion	Rush to Call 911

According to the American Heart Association's 2023 report, stroke is the leading cause of serious long-term disability and the leading cause of death among Americans.





# *Affordable Housing Communities Receive Support from Local Groups*

**La Porte Rotary Club recently donated \$1,500 in Kroger Gift Cards to stock the food pantry shelves and other activities for both Oakview and Bayview residents.**

**Back Row from Left to Right:**  
Terri Cook (Rotary Club Public Image Chair), Rick Rawls (Bayview Resident), Kim Randell (Oakview Service Coordinator), Derick Meadows (Rotary Club President), Amanda Goode (Bayview Service Coordinator), Sonja Baumgardner (Entertainment Chair), Brenda Thompson (Community Service Director)

**Seated from Left to Right:**  
Bayview residents: Joyce Rico, Suzanne Sperry, Alvetta Bihms, and Marie Rice.



**Nancy Anderson poses with Teresa Smith, Meals of Love volunteer from First United Methodist Church in Bryan.**

“Most people don’t realize there’s a wide range of situations that qualify you for affordable housing,” said Nancy Anderson, a resident of Crestview Place. “I qualified, but there are others who are part of our community who truly would be in a tough spot without the mission of MRC. When Anderson moved to Bryan from Houston to be closer to family, she became a member at First United Methodist. “One of the ministries I had learned about was Meals of Love,” she explained. The ministry delivers hot, home-cooked meals twice per month to residents of MRC’s Affordable Housing communities, Crestview Terrace, Crestview Place and Crestview Unity.

Anderson continued, “Once I found out I’d be moving to one of those communities, I was more inspired than ever to help out wherever I could.” Anderson, who still receives her own meal twice per month from Meals of Love, now helps deliver meals to her fellow residents. “I never had time to volunteer when I was working,” she explained. “Or, if I did, it wasn’t very much time, so this has been so rewarding for me as a person of faith.”





**Do you know an MRC  
employee who deserves to  
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for a job well  
done?**

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### ***On the Cover:***

Reyes Galindo Saldaña was born in 1933, the eighth child of nine born to his parents on a little ranch called San Antonio de Fernández in Jalisco, México. He grew up working at a very young age but now enjoys the leisurely lifestyle he is provided at Bayview Apartments in La Porte. At 91 years old, this cancer survivor can be found along the bay, just outside the community, riding his bike or simply enjoying nature.

Married since 1960, he and his wife, Maria, share nine children, 30 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. His daughter Alex shared, "He is the most compassionate and kind person on earth, always thinking of others before himself. He takes it very seriously to be forgiving of one another and he is always ready to help somebody in need."

*Photography by Ryan Price*



# THANK YOU 2024 DONORS

MRC donors made some amazing things happen during 2024. During the year, MRC was able to provide 4.8 million dollars in charitable assistance to older adults in need to ensure they had a safe home, care, and services. Our donor partners made it possible for over \$70,000 in scholarships to be awarded to our hard-working employees and almost \$38,000 to be given in assistance to employees experiencing a financial hardship due to an emergency or crisis. In the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, over \$43,000 was given to bless residents and staff who were negatively impacted by the storm. Gifts were also made for much needed medical equipment, for resident programs and for improvements to the buildings and grounds of our communities. Fulfilling our mission to honor and serve older adults as an expression of Christ's love is only possible as we work hand-in-hand with our generous, devoted donors. We are thankful for each one! Send a donation by mail to Methodist Retirement Communities 1440 Lake Front Circle Suite 140, The Woodlands Texas 77380 or online at [www.mrcaff.org/giving](http://www.mrcaff.org/giving).



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**Vice President of Philanthropy and Engagement**

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