

MRC



FALL 2025



Dear MRC Family,

At MRC, the success of our organization has always been about people...mission driven employees working every day to make life good for those that live on our campuses. Throughout our history many employees have made significant contributions that have a lasting impact. Don Stephens, our retiring Chief Financial Officer, is one of those people.

For the last ten years, Don has provided wise financial leadership that has strengthened our organization and expanded our mission. The systems, processes, and practices he has put in place have us on a firm foundation for continued success. He has done it all while modeling servant leadership and building many friendships across the State. We wish him the best as he moves into retirement.

Change is a way of life in our world and change is coming at our Creekside campus. For over 40 years we have been a part of the Huntsville community. In 2013, we opened the current campus providing skilled nursing, assisted living and memory support. The COVID pandemic has changed health care forever and we are repositioning the Creekside campus to better serve the current needs of the community. More assisted living units, enhanced post-acute care, American Heart Association Certification, and caregiver support with elder day care in partnership with local churches are all a part of our new services in Huntsville.

Finally, MRC is committed to standing with our local communities to make them great places to live. Recently we learned that a data mining center was being considered in College Station near our campus. These developments have been detrimental to the communities they have been built in across the country. Stacey Nehring, Executive Director at The Langford, took the lead in articulating the deep concerns about this project to the city council. Ultimately, the project was not approved and we were able to support our neighboring community.



Alan Brown
President and CEO



MRC Mission:

We honor and serve older adults as an expression of Christ's love.



MRC Welcomes New Chief Financial Officer and Appoints New Chief Operating Officer

In mid-August, Methodist Retirement Communities was busy with exciting announcements. First, Lee Trumble accepted the position of Chief Financial Officer as Don Stephens retires from the role. Secondly, Matthew Currie was promoted to Chief Operating Officer.

Trumble brings more than 25 years of executive leadership and financial management experience to MRC. Most recently serving as CFO of LSU Health Foundation in New Orleans. His leadership included restructuring accounting functions to improve accuracy and efficiency, strengthening board and stakeholder trust, and establishing long-term financial sustainability. Prior to LSU Health Foundation, Trumble served as CFO for Christwood and Christwood Foundation, Silocaf USA, LLC and Pacorini USA, LLC.

A Certified Public Accountant licensed in Louisiana, Trumble earned his Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting from Loyola University New Orleans. Known for his servant-leadership style, he describes himself as a “player-coach” who empowers his team while fostering collaboration, transparency, and high performance.

“I am thrilled to join Methodist Retirement Communities, an organization with a rich tradition of faith, service, and excellence,” said Trumble. “I look forward to contributing to MRC’s mission.”

A native Texan from Franklin, Matthew is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1992. He went on to serve our country as a field artillery officer in the U.S. Army before beginning a distinguished career in senior living.

Currie discovered his passion for serving seniors in 2000, when he joined MRC Crestview as a part-time employee. His leadership quickly stood out, and in 2007 he was named Executive Director. Later, in 2018, he was promoted to the role of Vice President of Operations, only to be promoted again

in 2025 to the role of COO.

“I’m excited for the next challenge and the next step in my career,” Currie said. “To continue to be part of this organization and to be able to make a positive impact on our mission is incredibly rewarding.”



Touch 'em all!

In baseball, when the batter hits an out of the park homerun, it is common to hear the announcer say, "touch 'em all" as they round each of the bases. The phrase was originally made famous by announcer Tom Cheek who famously exclaimed, "Touch 'em all, Joe" as Joe Carter hit a World Series-winning home run in 1993 for the Toronto Blue Jays. The phrase now seems appropriate for outgoing Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Don Stephens who has certainly hit the proverbial homerun in his career.

Joining the team in 2015, Don and his wife Laurie relocated from Midland where he had formerly served as the CFO at Manor Park, a non-profit senior living community. Since that time, a great deal of growth has occurred under Don's careful watch. When he first arrived at MRC, there were only four market rate communities and five HUD subsidized properties. Now, MRC has thirteen communities in total, adding The Crossings, The Langford, Mirador, and Stevenson Oaks. He has also led the team through a multitude of financing projects to strengthen the organization, as well as restructuring the entire accounting team for im-

proved efficiency. "Don is a humble servant that has set a standard of excellence as our CFO. His work over the last 10 years has strengthened our organization and positioned us well to fulfill our mission for years to come," said Alan Brown, CEO.

Don's role as a key leader for the organization has required him to make difficult decisions, advise on major financial issues, and serve as interim CEO in 2019 before Alan joined the organization. "Don is the kind of leader you want to follow. He is careful with his words, mindful of his actions, and compassionate with his decisions. It's been a privilege to work alongside him all these years," shared Jill Janes, Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

Throughout his time, Don has certainly been known for his financial expertise, but the memories that are sure to remain with the MRC Family are the many humorous stories, silly quirks, and inside jokes that come with knowing Don.

You see, Don has a knack for pulling forward lesser-known information about a person. Whether it is your favorite sports team, television show, travel destination, or favorite snack, he would somehow



memorize these details, creating a little inside joke with each person on the team. Many have wondered if he has a secret spreadsheet with all of these fun facts cataloged as he is known to create spreadsheets for just about anything. But the truth is, Don knows these details about people because he cares for them, truly wishing to connect in a way that makes people feel special.

"I have so enjoyed working with Don at MRC. He has always been a shining light in every meeting, phone call, or budget meeting. His quirkiness is so refreshing! His retirement is a sweet reward for all the hard work he has put in all these years," shared Carol Chmielewski, Accountant.

Don, you have certainly knocked it out of the park, so in the spirit of the sport you love so much, we say to you, "Homerun!! Touch 'em all, Don!"





THE CROSSINGS

CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

It was 2015. The Houston Astros were just beginning to build a young, core team that would eventually win big in October. A Memorial Day flood dumped 11 inches of rain on the region. And in League City, senior living options changed for the better. "It's hard to believe it's been 10 years," said Debbie Zienty, Director of Marketing at The Crossings.

For Walter and Jane Wills, who moved in when The Crossings first opened, the sense of belonging was immediate. "The day we showed up, we had about 60 new best friends," Jane recalled. "The staff is incredible. Every one of them calls us by name. They are family." Walter quickly became involved by founding the community's woodworking club, while Jane joined the activities committee, fitness classes, and served as an ambassador for new residents. Their active involvement has helped shape The Crossings into the vibrant community it is today.

John and Barrie Swartwout, also residents for 10 years, say the true gift of The Crossings is peace of mind. "What makes it special is the amazing peace of mind for not only us, but especially for our children," said Barrie. "Living someplace where I can totally enjoy my older years is priceless. I don't have stress. I don't have worry. I have friends I didn't even know were out there!"



The couple values the close-knit, family-like atmosphere that comes with The Crossings' intimate size, as well as the opportunities to pursue their passions. Barrie, a former teacher, even creates themed bulletin boards near the community mailboxes. Over the past decade, The Crossings has become a safe haven for residents and staff alike—even serving as a refuge for employees and their families during Hurricane Harvey. Rooted in its nonprofit mission, the community has lived out its promise to provide not just senior housing, but a true sense of home.

Written by Jeff Bell

“We have never questioned our decision to move to The Crossings. We have enjoyed every moment of the past 10 years. Looking forward to another 10 in this happy place.”

-John and Barrie Swartout



“We watched The Crossings break ground. When they completed the wing where our apartment was ready for operation, we moved into our apartment on October 30, 2015. When we attended Church the next few Sundays, our friends would ask us about The Crossings, I would say ‘After we moved into The Crossings, we had 60 or so new good friends’ we did not know before we moved in.”

-Walter and Jane Wills



MRC Covenant Fund

Helen had lived with fear for a long time.

She had gotten up with it in the morning, and she felt its chill and unwelcome hand a hundred times a day. Far too many nights she stared wide-eyed at the ceiling, unable to sleep, because the fear was in her heart and mind and soul like a cancer.

She was weak, lonely and vulnerable and she was intelligent enough to know this. The world outside her shabby apartment was fast, tough, brash, crude and rude, and it would surely get her when the last of her money ran out.

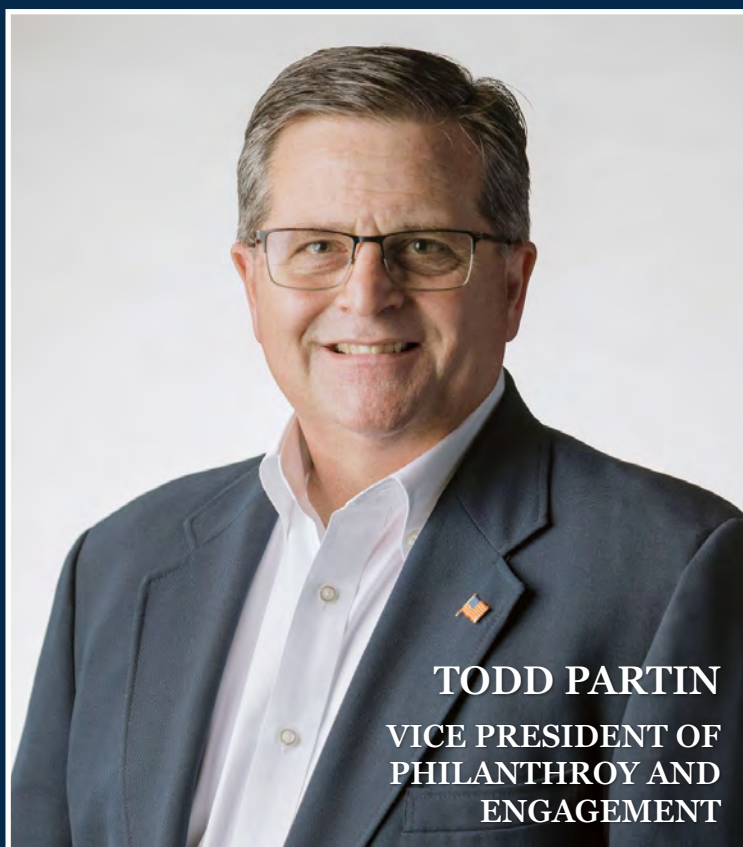
Helen was 75 years old and she had a small monthly pension and less than \$9,000 in her savings when the hand of God guided her to an MRC community.

SCAN HERE:



**Or, 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.**



TODD PARTIN
VICE PRESIDENT OF
PHILANTHROPY AND
ENGAGEMENT

She did not think what she had would be enough to allow her to live at the community, but the minister who had taken her there, had said simply, "We will see."

"It does no harm to talk. At least they may have some ideas," he said.

They did!

The community team welcomed the opportunity to see what could be done for Helen. With her little bit of savings, her small income, a bit of help from a nephew, her rightful participation in a state assistance plan or two, and a commitment of a subsidy from the Covenant Fund, Helen found a warm and comfortable place at the community with the assurance of future care as her needs may change.

There would be no more of the nameless, clutching fears. And no more loneliness. Never again that feeling that she had to cope with the tough, fast-moving, cold world outside – alone.

No one would ever know how much she paid at the Community. Nor would she know about the others. And she liked that.

Helen's is a true story and the MRC Community to which she moved was Moody House on Galveston Island, MRC's very first community. Helen's story was shared in an article in the Galveston Daily News on March 10, 1968.

The author of the article back then shared that her story illustrates two important and often least understood facts about Methodist Retirement Communities.

1) You don't have to be rich to live here.

2) The staff who run our communities are professionals in the business of taking care of older adults. They can see possibilities that a worried child, a devoted friend or a concerned attorney might overlook.

Those two things ring true today.

With assistance from generous donors giving to the Covenant Fund, even those who don't have enough can live here.

And the staff who lead MRC communities are professionals in the truest sense of the word and can see options where others may not see them.

Namely, we are committed to ensuring that some who are living in difficult situations, like Helen, can find a home so they never have to feel the fear of uncertainty, loneliness, or helplessness again.

** Helen's story is a slightly modified excerpt from The Galveston Daily News article by News Staff Writer, Brooks Keller, called, "Professional Staff Cares for 288 Moody House Residents" published on March 10, 1968.*

116

**...current
residents relying
on Covenant
Fund assistance.**

\$100

**...is the average
daily need per
resident
receiving
Covenant Fund
assistance.**

2180

**...days left to be
covered to meet
2025 goals.**

**As you plan your year-end
giving, will you please
consider a gift of \$100 or
more to fill the gap for a
resident like Helen for One
More Day, One More Week
or even One More Month?**

Bill Kukuk is the ultimate, unstoppable man. He is both a survivor and a fighter. Not only is he a veteran of the Vietnam War, he also fought and defeated lymphoma. If that isn't enough, at the age of 71, in November of 2013 he also suffered a massive stroke leaving his right side paralyzed.

The stroke came less than 24 hours after returning from a ski trip where Bill was tearing up the slopes. Bill's life has always been defined by strength and resilience. He is the type of guy that is always going, going, going. For most, this type of unexpected health event would sideline us from living an adventurous life. But not Bill, he just looked for ways to modify his activity, specifically turning to a three wheeled bike to keep his life moving in the fast lane. This bike has been adapted to meet Bill's needs and was made possible by the Outdoor Adventure Coalition in his home state of Ohio.

"Some people might scale back on their activity after an event like this, but Bill is always exercising and putting the rest of us to shame," reflected Debbie Zienty, Marketing Director. Bill dedicates time each day to lifting weights and riding the stationary bike in the fitness center.

There is no doubt, if the average person followed Bill around for a day, they might be exhausted after a morning of lifting weights, but Bill is only getting started. He spends time making laps around the campus on his custom tricycle.

Bill and Ellen are sharing Bill's story because they want people to know that there is life after a stroke. Bill and over 100 million stroke survivors worldwide are here to prove it.

Did you know?

- In the US in 2022, 1 in 6 deaths from cardiovascular disease was due to stroke.
- Every 40 seconds, someone in the US has a stroke and every three minutes and fourteen seconds, someone dies of stroke.
- Nearly 1 in 4 strokes happen to people who have had a previous stroke.
- Stroke is a leading cause of serious long-term disability.



The Unstoppable Man





WHEN WORK IS ALSO HOME

Employee Scholarship Recipient Returns to The Langford after Graduating

As an 18-year-old, fresh from leaving home for the first time, Faith Waters walked into The Langford at College Station hoping to secure a job she could do for a while as she attended school, first at Blinn College and then at Texas A&M. When she was offered the position, she thought she was getting a job that would help her pay her bills, get through with school, and then she would move on. What she got was so much more than that.

Faith wanted to attend college so badly that she was willing to work and put herself through school. She worked forty-plus hours each week at The Langford and attended classes. When the scholarship program became available to her, she saw the value and the benefits and took advantage of the opportunity. Semester after semester, Faith applied and each semester was awarded a scholarship that helped with

the expenses of her schooling. Faith says that each scholarship was a huge benefit to her. She still had to work, but the scholarships gave her a little breathing room each semester.

In addition to the financial support, Faith shares that her job at The Langford was so much more than just work. It was a place filled with a lot of adopted grandparents – residents who cared, supported, challenged, encouraged and made her feel loved. She calls the folks at The Langford her adopted family and says that everyday she was there, she felt cared for and valued. “I really appreciate the residents because I was 18 and leaving home for the first time. The residents made me feel loved and that I mattered. The way they treated me gave me a sense I was home.”

After spending over 4 years with the residents and team at The Langford, Faith graduated in May of this

year and left The Langford in pursuit of her first professional position. She was gone about 4 months when a professional position with the Dining Team at The Langford opened. Faith was approached about the opportunity and just recently has returned as the Dining Room Manager. "I loved working at The Langford as a student. So many residents invested in me financially and emotionally. Now I'm excited to come back as a professional!"

When asked what she hopes to accomplish in her new role, Faith said she hopes to bring the same loving energy and the same culture to the team that she experienced as a server. "I want to support and serve the residents in a similar way to how they supported me as a server. I want to make sure their dining experience is great. They deserve to have great food and have happy people serving them."

Faith's closing words were a great summary, "The whole experience has truly been a full-circle experience for me. I really didn't expect to be coming back to The Langford in the position that I am and I'm so grateful for it. I have never felt more at home than I do right here."

Welcome Home, Faith!

Written by Todd Partin



MRC CAREERS

When you join the MRC team, you get far more than a job...you get purpose! As a non-profit, faith-based organization, the impact you can make is tremendous. Which means you end each day with **more** fulfillment and **more** meaning.

Around here, we measure success in smiles. We believe that life is made up of moments, that's why we empower our staff to create moments that matter with the elders they serve.

If you are looking to invest your time, energy, and expertise in an organization that is committed to creating **more** connection, **more** growth, and **more** joy...you've found your new home. Here, work means **more**.

Visit www.mrcaff.org/careers
or scan the QR code
to learn **more**!



A Teacher Never Retires

From knowing where to go to figuring out how lunch works, the first day of kindergarten comes with its fair share of worries. And no one knows this better than Martha Farr, a retired kindergarten teacher who just re-lived those back-to-school jitters herself when she moved into MRC's Stevenson Oaks retirement community.

"It's funny because in the kindergarten classroom, the most important thing is building relationships. The kids want to have that feeling of connection and belonging," said Farr. "And it's the same thing when you move into a retirement community. You're suddenly in a situation again where you're looking for a good place to land."

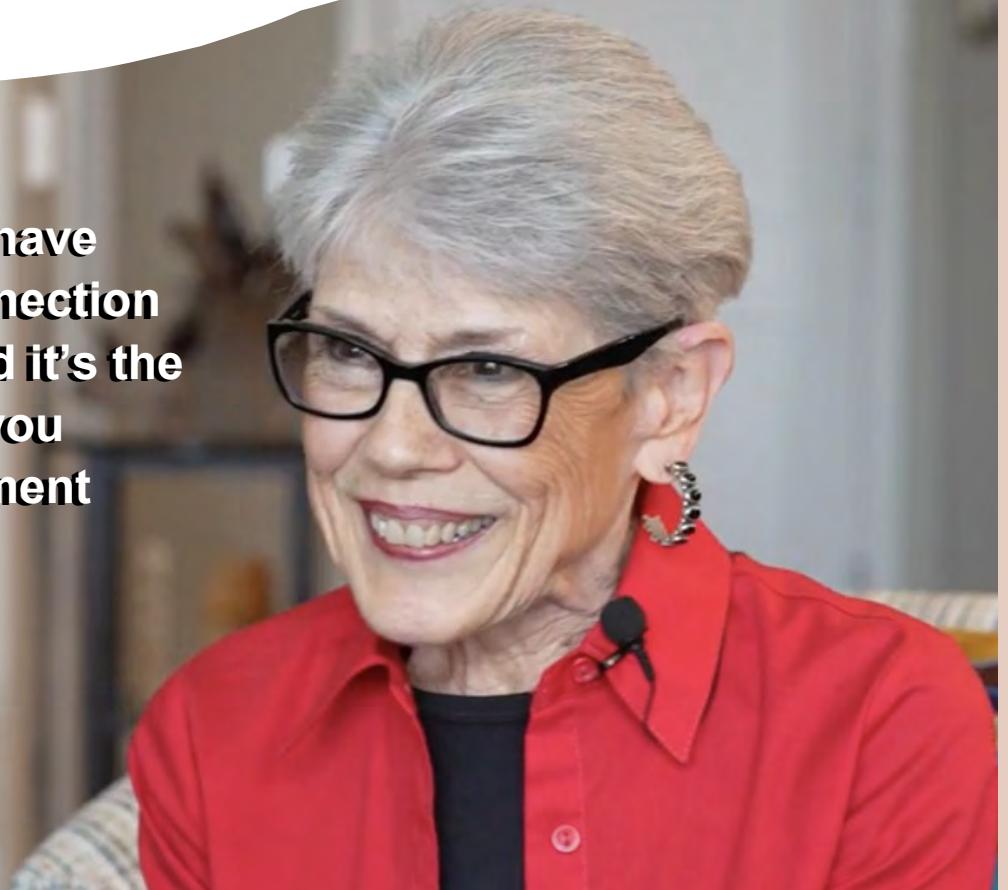
Farr spent 40 years teaching kindergarten while also serving as a college adjunct professor in the education department. "In my last year of teaching kindergarten, I had the great-grandchild of someone I taught my very first year. And I thought 'Okay, maybe it's time to move on,'" quipped Farr.

Although Farr recently fully retired from both positions, she's still heading back to the classroom this fall. "I'll be working as a reading tutor for first graders in Fort Worth's ISD. It's the same elementary school my grandchildren attended," said Farr. "My passion has always been working with early childhood students, so I'm grateful for this opportunity to still be able to contribute. It's making me excited about back to school again."

Farr has settled in nicely at Stevenson Oaks while realizing that when you're a teacher, sometimes you're a teacher for life. "I wouldn't have it any other way. I can't wait to get back at it!"

Written by Jeff Bell

**"The kids want to have that feeling of connection and belonging, and it's the same thing when you move into a retirement community."
-Martha Farr**



An Angel Among Us

In the Bible, angels are seen in the roles of messengers, warriors, and protectors. It's no wonder that Angel Johnson-Branch's parents gave her this name. Angel serves as the Director of Home Health at PineCrest, a role that allows her angelic qualities to shine.

It wouldn't take long in Angel's presence before you would see that she emulates each of these traits as it pertains to her role as a nurse, therefore living up to her name. Often nurses are required to deliver difficult messages to families, something she does with a heart of authenticity, compassion, and gentleness. Her calm demeanor, despite the circumstances, adds a sense of peace for both the residents and staff at PineCrest.

She also takes on the traits of a warrior, displaying impressive strength, highly sharpened skills, and an unstoppable spirit. "She is the kind of person you would want to follow into battle, because you can always be sure she is prayed up. And that's the kind of nurse she is too, focused and fighting for what is best for the resident," shared Victoria Hutto, PineCrest's Marketing Director.

An equally admirable quality is her protective instincts. It is common to see Angel making the rounds at PineCrest, checking on residents, giving extra time to those who need it, while tuning in to the unspoken needs that only an exceptionally skilled nurse may perceive. She is especially protective of the quality of life for those she serves.

Angel joined the PineCrest team in 2006 where she has loved and ministered to hundreds of elders and their families. In some cases, she has even served multiple generations.

As Angel turns the corner towards her 20th anniversary of employment, it is truly an honor to say that we have an Angel among us.



**Congratulations to
Angel Johnson-
Branch on
20 years of
employment at
PineCrest!**

A Refreshed Vision for Walker County



If you are familiar with Creekside's origin story, you know that we've been proudly serving the elders of Walker County for over 43 years. In the early 1980's, Huntsville Memorial Hospital had more than half of its beds filled with elders with nowhere else to go. The need for a nursing home in the area was evident, which compelled passionate advocates like Thomas Randle along with other locals to find a way to care for the aging population. Methodist Retirement Communities (MRC) was approached to develop a plan to renovate the old hospital building to become a care community called TownCreek.

Twenty years later, in the early 2000's, the needs of the elderly population in the rapidly growing community were again apparent. The area sorely needed assisted living and memory support services. Thomas Randle bequeathed his entire estate upon his passing in 2001 to MRC to bring these much-needed resources to his hometown. Other generous donors, Dr. and Mrs. Raymond and Winona Blalock, also came to the table to secure a future of quality care.

Finally in 2013, their dream was realized when Creekside (formerly known as TownCreek) opened its doors, with 32 Randle House Assisted Living apartments, 18 private suites in The Blalock Memory Support neighborhood, and 66 Skilled Nursing suites.

Now, twelve years later, the needs of the area are continuing to grow, prompting Creekside to strategically respond by repositioning the community to better serve the needs of the county. There are four key things happening at Creekside that will better serve the needs of area seniors.

The Gathering Place: FREE Monthly Caregiver Support and Elder Day Care Program

“We noticed a trend when it comes to caregivers. By the time these families arrive at MRC’s doorstep they are overly stressed, and exceptionally tired. For most, self-care has taken a backseat for far too long,” explained Todd Partin, Vice President of Philanthropy and Engagement. As a response, MRC launched a new program called “The Gathering Place,” where caregivers can bring their loved one for meaningful engagement with a group of well-trained volunteers from area churches while they can either stay and participate themselves or take a much-needed break. The effort has included a host of Huntsville area churches: First Baptist Church, First United Methodist Church, First Christian Church, and First Presbyterian Church, along with a large group of volunteers from around Walker County.

Add Economy-Size Assisted Living Residences: Renovation Soon Underway

The demand for additional Assisted Living residences comes with the surge of growth in Huntsville as well as surrounding towns. Certainly, the area needs more residential care options, but there is a large demographic of seniors in the region who find the standard costs of Assisted Living to be beyond their budget. That’s why Creekside will soon begin construction on a portion of the building that formerly provided skilled nursing care, to offer economy-size assisted living apartments at a lower than typical rate. The change will reduce the volume of Skilled Nursing Beds and transform the space to add 10 additional assisted living apartments instead, starting at \$2,795 per month.

Improved Experience for Post-acute Rehabilitative Care

The second phase of these renovations will include a reimagined and dedicated space for post-acute rehab patients. An entire hallway of guest suites, specifically dedicated for those who are receiving post-acute care and rehabilitative therapy services. The space aims to provide a tranquil environment to enhance the healing process and will feature a dedicated dining room and seating area for guests and their families to enjoy.

Specialized Certification in Heart Failure from the American Heart Association®

The leading cause of re-hospitalization in Walker County is primarily related to heart failure or other cardiac related issues. That’s why Creekside has partnered with the American Heart Association®, the world’s leading voluntary organization focused on heart and brain health, to obtain a specialized certification in heart failure. The certification provides an evidence-based framework for evaluating skilled nursing facilities against the American Heart Association’s rigorous science-based requirements for heart failure (HF) patients, including program management, patient and caregiver education and support, care coordination, clinical management and quality improvement.

Alan Brown, President and CEO said, “As always, we are honored to serve the seniors of Walker County and look forward to seeing how these much-needed renovations and programs will further our mission to *honor and serve older adults as an expression of Christ’s love.*”





“ I always ask myself, “What would Jesus do?” and then the answer is simple. He would reach out and help.”

- Alyce Anne Baggett

Thank You Alyce Anne

Members of MRC's Executive Team can count on finding a little handwritten card of encouragement in their mailbox every month with the same name written at the bottom of the note, Alyce Anne Baggett. Alyce Anne has played a major role in the MRC organization since she joined the volunteer Board of Directors in 2010. During her time on the Board she served on many committees and even served as Vice Chair, as well as Board President.

But Alyce Anne has been an influencer at the local level for even longer than that. As a Lufkin native, she first got involved at PineCrest in 2003 when her mother became a resident. At the time, she was living four hours away working in Austin and recalled how comforting it was to know her mother was safe and cared for at PineCrest, "PineCrest is unlike any other place in the area because the employees who work there are fully bought in to the mission statement of MRC. It's not a job, it's a calling. They always treated my mother like she was their mother. That's why I had such peace knowing she was there. To me, PineCrest is love! It represents love, care, and protection for those I love."

Alyce Anne describes her own calling to serve MRC as a way to pay it forward saying, "I wanted to serve on the Board because I knew that this was my opportunity to give back to other families, all across the State, what PineCrest had given to me. The same sense of love, care, and protection."

Alyce Anne recently completed her term as Board President, which prompted a time of recognition and gratitude at a recent Board meeting. Alyce Anne was presented with an engraved gavel along with kind words of appreciation from Alan Brown, CEO, "Alyce Anne has seen MRC through seasons of growth and change. Her wisdom and passion have been a source of steadiness for the organization; we are so thankful for her many years of dedicated service."

Thank you Alyce Anne!

The Right Time

Roy Ayers, musician and composer famously said, "The true beauty of music is that it connects people. It carries a message, and we, the musicians, are the messengers." This type of magical connection is the story of David and Mary, two people who were otherwise strangers, now forever bonded through music.

David Moore has been working as a member of Cornerstone's maintenance team for more than a decade. David's title is Maintenance Technician, where his job is to help maintain the building with minor repair work and perform preventative maintenance. But his unofficial job, is to sit at the grand piano in the atrium during his breaks to play the piano, often singing along in his smooth soulful voice. The residents who live in the Independent Living area, closest to the Atrium look forward to David's breaks that are often spent at the piano. David's gift has always benefited the residents of Cornerstone, but a new resident would be moving in soon that would connect with David's music in a way no other resident ever had before, a soul connection.

That new resident's name is Mary Shears. Mary came to live at Cornerstone after living with two debilitating conditions, both dementia and total blindness. Mary was once a fifth grade music teacher but has always counted herself a soul singer and piano player.

"I started very young with the itty-bitty pianos they used to buy the children and went on to the bigger piano. I took lessons for years from a lady in Maud, and I majored in music in college."

After graduation, Shears married a music major from Lufkin. They celebrated 53 years of marriage before he passed away.

"I played piano, and he played saxophone. I love all music, but my favorite is blues. He played a lot of jazz, though, because that's what the saxophone will do if you know how to do it. And he knew how to do it." Singing the blues had been such a core part of Mary's life before Cornerstone, before blindness, and before dementia.

One day, shortly after Mary moved in, the staff called for David to come to the Bunch Woodview Center to play for Mary, knowing it might be something she'd enjoy. They told Mary there was a man coming to play piano for her, so she asked to be guided to the piano bench where David joined her.

After brief introductions, he began to play a familiar song made famous by Ray Charles, *The Right Time*. David sang out and in no time, Mary joined him in perfect harmony.

"I just decided to sing along," said Shears. "I'd never met him before, but I just had to sing." "It blew us all away. Everyone there absolutely loved it," said Alexandra Smith, Senior Living Counselor at Cornerstone.

In that moment, the music connected two strangers that would create a meaningful connection... at just *the right time*.





Standing Up and Speaking Out

Executive Director of The Langford in College Station delivers an impassioned speech to City Council to defend the residents' quality of life

Have you heard of a data mining center? For most people, the concept is brand new. Residents and staff of The Langford; however, became especially acquainted with the term in early September when the city of College Station was considering selling a plot of land in the mid-town area for this purpose, placing the building only 800 feet from The Langford.

Certainly, City Council members are charged with helping develop the city by entertaining these types of proposals.

However, this particular proposal was vastly different than a restaurant or boutique. You see, data mining centers require a great deal of natural resources from the area, approximately 560 billion gallons of water annually. This is a particularly concerning component for residents of the area who are actively being asked to observe mandatory water restrictions due to high demand and severe drought conditions.

An equally concerning condition of having a neighboring data mining center is the noise. *TIME* recently covered the issue in a piece titled, "*We're Living in a Nightmare: Inside the Health Crisis of a Texas Bitcoin Town.*" The occupants nearest the data mine report a myriad of symptoms brought on by the constant low hum of the nearby computers. The tone and never ending nature of this noise is plaguing the residents of the area with new ailments like complaining of earaches, headaches, vertigo, seizure, hearing loss, fainting spells, hypertension, and depression.

Stacey Nehring, Executive Director at The Langford, didn't get too far into her research before she had made up her mind. "As soon as I heard about it, I knew I needed to stand up and speak out for our residents," said Nehring. Within only a few days of getting this information, a City Council meeting would be held where citizens were invited to speak. Nehring was among 70 College Station residents who spoke at the meeting that went well into the night.

As Stacey took her place at the microphone and started her speech by reciting the City Council's own mission statement saying, "On behalf of the citizens of College Station, home of Texas A&M, the city council will promote and advance the community's quality of life."

She went on, "I'm especially intrigued by the opening phrase...on behalf of the citizens...but what is it that you are doing on behalf of the citizens? Look to the final phrase...promote and advance the community's quality of life. It is a noble thing to care for others...to improve and even defend their quality of life. I'm in a similar leadership position, you see, my name is Stacey Nehring, and I am the Executive Director of The Langford where I am responsible for the quality of life of 140 older adults who will live within 800 feet of the proposed data center. While the scale of my responsibilities is much smaller than yours, I too am anchored to a mission statement that guides my steps. Which is why I am here talking to you today. I take my mission to care for these elders as a sacred calling, I trust that you also take your mission statement to heart."

She led the council to explore several points in their 2025 strategic plan promoting the following initiatives:

Good Governance: the expectation for transparent, efficient, and accountable governance on behalf of its citizens.

Core Services and Infrastructure: to maintain the citizens' health, safety, and general welfare.

Neighborhood Integrity: see that the City's neighborhoods are long-term, viable, safe, and appealing.

Diverse and Growing Economy: to generate high-quality, stable jobs that strengthen the sales and property tax base and contribute to an exceptional quality of life.

Sustainable City: to reduce energy and water consumption.

In only the three minute timeframe she was given, she punched every point, weighing it against the standards they have set for themselves in the mission and points from their own strategic plan. Perhaps the punchiest portion of her speech came at the end when she said, "Please study the data, then come back and tell this body of citizens why you not only want to bring a data center like this to College Station... but you want to place it within 800 feet of a senior living community! In closing, I must ask you, on behalf of the citizens, will this city council promote and advance the community's quality of life? The whole city of College Station is watching. We now have your mission statement and strategic plan top of mind. All eyes are on you. Please...fulfill your mission. Our quality of life depends on it, the very thing you took an oath to protect."

As she turned, from the podium to return to her seat, the crowd cheered in support with many extending words of encouragement and adoration for her courage. As the meeting came to a close nearing the midnight hour, the City Council finalized their vote to reject the data mining center proposal.

The following day when she walked into work she was met with applause and hugs. Then, as the day went on, she received many emails from residents expressing appreciation.

"Our prayers were answered," said Stacey, "our voices were heard."

The Impact of Noise Pollution on Wildlife

In addition to the many harmful impacts of noise pollution on a human's quality of life, the impact can also be devastating for wildlife. For most animals, they depend on sound for communication, navigation, and even mating. Those living in these conditions can begin to alter their behavior as the chronic noise exposure increases their stress. Birds are especially impacted in this way, often abandoning their nests, ultimately resulting in a shift in the species' population over time. Many species of wildlife will avoid overly noisy areas making hunting and foraging more limited. Even plants are impacted negatively by consistent noise, but it is not because they can hear the noise, they endure the vibration which in turn deters pollinators and seed dispersers who are necessary for reproduction. Over time, areas with dense noise pollution will have significantly reduced plant density and biodiversity.



Meet
Lucy Lou



The impact of pet therapy is well documented. Having a four-legged companion is known to reduce stress, worry, anxiety, and boredom while even distracting from pain. Pet therapy is also shown to improve mood and engagement. While a pet can be a boost to just about anyone's day, those with dementia are particularly impacted by this type of interaction. That's why The Langford at College Station has a very special gal on their staff. Meet Lucy Lou.

Lucy Lou's only job when she comes to work is to spread smiles and give cuddles. Her handler is Katie Tyler, the community's Life Enrichment Director who shares her office with the furry co-worker. Katie's office is equipped with lots of toys and a soft bed for when she is off the clock. When it's time to work, Lucy Lou puts on her harness and follows Katie to the memory support neighborhood where her biggest fan club awaits her visit, each getting as much one-on-one time as they wish.

This is a very rare arrangement to find in senior living, but a common thing to find in Eden Alternative Certified communities, a distinction each MRC community holds, where the connection to animals is celebrated and encouraged when possible. PineCrest in Lufkin also has a puppy on staff named Ollie who lives in the Skilled nursing neighborhood but is known to roam the entire campus to spread sweet puppy love.

Recently, Katie was approached by the local news station, KBTX, to be featured in their Promoting Positivity segment. Katie, who tends to be a bit shyer about this sort of thing, turned to Chaplain Gabe Montez to be her on-camera partner. "Gabe is my emotional support human," laughed Katie, "that's why I asked him to go with me."

During the interview, Lucy Lou sat perfectly throughout the entire interview. However, those who were watching closely may have noticed she was consistently offering Gabe a handshake or nuzzling her nose into his leg.

"My pockets were filled with chicken nuggets," laughed Gabe, "I wanted to have treats to make sure she behaved while on camera." The trio shared with the news correspondent, Lauren Margolis, all the benefits Lucy Lou brings to the residents of The Langford. Gabe shared, "The residents light up when Lucy comes in the room, she just has that impact on people. To see her when she is giving the friendship and the comradery that brings joy to their lives, it's something we are really proud of."

Between residents and employees alike, it's entirely possible Lucy Lou is the most favored employee at The Langford. But one thing is for sure, she is the only employee who is paid in chicken nuggets.



Remembering NAM

Veterans at Stevenson Oaks share their stories from the Vietnam War



A secret Mission

Major Mike Golas, US Air Force

After graduating from the USAF Academy in June 1966 I went to pilot training at Laredo AFB for one year. I was fortunate to have done well enough in pilot training to get assigned to the F-4 Phantom II, but for some silly reason they put new pilots into the back seat of the Phantom, so after checking out in the F-4 back seat I went to Vietnam.

In this one-year tour, mid 1968 - mid 1969, I was assigned to three different bases in Vietnam, starting off at Cam Rahn Bay, going to Danang, then to Phu Cat air bases. My missions were primarily close air support of our ground troops in the south, interdiction of enemy supplies heading from North Vietnam to their troops in the south, and destruction of combat supplies and factories in the north where I either protected B-52s from enemy fighters or conducted bombing missions in an F-4.

Since I was young and invulnerable, I volunteered for a second one-year tour to go straight into the front seat and then to Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base in northern Thailand, where I spent all of 1970 flying combat missions

in Vietnam and Laos. It was here that I had one mission that I will never forget. While flying F-4 Phantom fighters at Udorn RTAFB (Royal Thai Air Force Base) in 1970, my next day's schedule said that I was part of a small group who were told to get some sleep and come back for a midnight mission. In the preflight briefing, we were told to go a bit south of Hanoi in North Vietnam and orbit until called on to intercept any enemy fighters that might get in our area. There was no other information about why we were there or what else might be going on, as that was top secret information.

During this mission, I did not intercept any enemy aircraft but observed a bright fireball heading towards Thailand, which turned out to be one of our aircraft that had been hit by enemy fire and was attempting to reach friendly territory before bailing out. I did some serious maneuvering while circling the area to avoid ground-fired anti-aircraft missiles from locking onto me. After receiving instructions that the mission was completed, we returned to Udorn base.

When I was accomplishing my post mission debrief, the debriefer said he could finally tell me what the secret mission was. He said I was protecting a mission to rescue some of our prisoners of war in a POW camp in the Hanoi area. This was the greatest high I have ever felt as most of these POWs were my fellow aviators putting up with terrible conditions and cruel treatment by the North Vietnamese. Regrettably, the next thing he said was that the prisoners were not in the camp. They had evidently been

removed a week or two before this mission occurred. This was one of the greatest lows that I have ever felt.

Although initially disappointed, I later learned that our mission proved to the North Vietnamese that we had the intelligence and the capability to raid their POW camps at will. They became very concerned and began treating our POWs much better. Knowing this made the effort worthwhile and a mission that became my most memorable.



H-E-L-L-O Vietnam

CWO4 Robert Williams, US Army

After finishing Flight School and knowing that I was the best pilot out there (at least in my mind), I departed from Travis AFB (CA) for a 20-hour, two fuel stops flight to Vietnam. We landed in Saigon where the flight attendants asked us to disembark. The outside conditions were unbearably humid, with temperatures and smells that I had never experienced before but that I was soon to learn would be the new norm for me during my two tours (24 months).

After getting off the plane I was immediately transferred to a bus that took me to Long Binh, approximately a 30-minute drive. The side windows of the bus were covered with heavy-duty mesh, which I later learned was to prevent grenades from being thrown into the bus and not to keep me from escaping the bus as I had envisioned. I arrived at Long Binh safely, and somewhat sound, although mentally, I was confused and unsure of what to expect next.

I was taken to a "Replacement Center". (Yup, that means just what it sounds like.) At the "Replacement Center," I would be replacing individuals either going home or not returning. My stay at the center lasted two days before I received my orders. Shortly thereafter, I, along with two or three other pilots from flight school, were in the back of a Huey, receiving an overview of Vietnam..., "a grand tour" as the pilot announced. However, our destination was Cu Chi, located roughly 35 minutes northwest of Saigon by a Huey helicopter.

Upon arriving at Cu Chi, which was larger than anticipated, we observed numerous Hueys and Chinooks. Shortly after arrival, we were escorted to speak with the Battalion Commander. Standing tall and keeping our mouths shut, we waited in his outer office. We began to interact with his clerk, a pleasant E-5 who provided valuable information. He informed us that some personnel would remain at Cu Chi while others would be assigned to a "safer" location at Tay Ninh. He stated that Tay Ninh experienced much fewer rocket and mortar attacks. Consequently, I, along with several others, decided that Tay Ninh would be our preferred destination.

Shortly thereafter, we were summoned to the office of the Battalion Commander. Given his busy schedule, he greeted us briefly and granted me and

two others our preferred location at Tay Ninh, which made us happy. On that same day, we boarded another Huey and traveled to Tay Ninh. I commenced flying missions the next day. There was indeed much for me to learn. During my first day of flying, our aircraft sustained multiple hits, which was quite an unexpected introduction and quite a rude awakening. No more long hours of training, this was the real stuff!

Over the next several days and nights, we unexpectedly experienced continuous rocket and mortar attacks in our compound, certainly more than "the occasional attacks" so described by the "nice guy" Battalion Clerk. This led me to question whether the clerk had been entirely forthcoming.

A few days later, the Viet Cong launched even more rockets and this time destroyed our warm water shower building. I was beginning to think they had a vendetta against my roommate and me because they also blew up and destroyed our "hootch" with both of us inside! So much to our dismay, we both had earned a Purple Heart. However, my biggest lesson learned from Vietnam...DO NOT ever trust a Battalion Clerk!!

Vietnam Era Engineer

Captain Ken Bottoms, US Air Force

Upon graduating from college during the Vietnam War, my first employer indicated they could secure a draft deferment for me due to the nature of the national security projects I would be working on. However, the draft board in my small East Texas hometown declined their request. Consequently, I explored opportunities with each branch of the military. Uninterested in serving in the Army or Marines wading through rice paddies or treading through jungles, and unable to swim, which precluded the

Navy, I found appeal in the Air Force recruiter's offer. He assured me of an "exciting electronics design job in California" a promise that ultimately proved to be false. Nonetheless, I enlisted on April Fool's Day, 1968 and subsequently departed for Officers Training School (OTS) in San Antonio.

Anne and I got married two days after I graduated from OTS. Her mother was a nervous wreck thinking that I might have to leave immediately for my first duty station after graduation and all the wedding plans would fall apart. The Air Force gave us about a week for a honeymoon and then we loaded up our worldly possessions in the back of my red Mustang convertible and headed to Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City (not California as promised by the recruiter).



My job for the first two years at Tinker AFB was to correct design flaws in weapon systems which were not working properly in Vietnam. Most of my projects were to improve the reliability of electronic circuitry. However, one assignment was to reduce the failure rate of the inertial navigation guidance

system in the AGM-28 Hound Dog Missile. When the missile is launched from a B-52 bomber, its navigation system guides it to a target such as an anti-aircraft site on the ground. This complex system was failing in flight, resulting in missed targets. It turned out that gyros inside the missile were the cause of the failures. I found that small ball bearings inside the gyros were freezing up. I told my supervisor that I'm an electronics engineer, "I know nothing about ball bearings." He said that was no excuse. "Fix it." So, after some research, I learned that the most respected ball bearing expert in the country was a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). So, I traveled to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and he helped me come up with a fix for the problem.

I had many other interesting projects, especially in my last two years when I worked on the Air Force Worldwide Airborne Command Post electronic systems. The Air Force keeps a General in the air 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with all the electronics and crypto gear needed to launch nuclear missiles and fight World War III without landing. I was the project engineer for installation of the first minicomputer on the Command Post aircraft. It was required to establish a data link from the aircraft to a computer in an underground complex near Washington, DC...but that was for National Defense, not for the Vietnam War!

Cold War Formation Flying

Colonel Ed Roberts, US Air Force

Reconnaissance has been a part of military operations since the beginning of conflict. The story is told of two cave men battling daily from opposite sides of a river. Every day the men came to the river to get water. They threw rocks across the river to drive the other combatant away and claim all the water for himself. The battle



ensued until the warriors ran out of rocks that were available along the bank of the river. One day one of the fighters ran out of rocks well before his opponent. He was forced to retreat. Not one to give up the fight the battered cave man wondered what happened. He knew the river current only brought in a limited number of rocks each day. Why did he run out of rocks while his opponent still had ammunition? That night he slipped across the river hoping to answer the question. He found that his opponent was gathering rocks from all around and moving them into position for the next day's battle. Reconnaissance paid off, the next day both men had an ample supply of rocks ready for the battle. History does not record the outcome of this conflict. But it does show that reconnaissance has been around for a long time.

During the Cold War, the United States used many methods to learn about potential enemies and their capabilities. One of these was Airborne Electronic Reconnaissance. We flew near the borders of the country of interest and listened to any electronic emissions we could receive – radar, radio, etc. I was a part of this effort in the 1960s. Our squadron was equip-

ed with specially configured C-97 aircraft.

On one mission, we were "on station" flying over international waters – won't say which waters but if we had bailed out, we would have found that the waters were very cold.

The pilot informed those of us working with the various receivers that we had company. A couple of us went to the bubble window of our aircraft which allowed for 180 degrees of viewing. There, flying in perfect formation with us was an interceptor aircraft. The insignia on the interceptor was somewhat different from the insignia on our aircraft. We had a white star inside of a blue circle. The interceptor insignia was a plain red star.

Our intelligence officer had given the crew leader a 35 mm camera to use in case we were intercepted. One of our crew positioned himself in the bubble window to take a picture of the interceptor. As he zoomed the camera in on the accompanying aircraft, he reported that the "backseater" in the interceptor had his camera focusing on us. Everyone does reconnaissance!

Special thanks to Larry Beck for gathering and submitting these stories to honor these brave veterans.

These stories and many more can be found in a series titled, "Who Be Us," a project resident Larry Beck spearheads. The series now has several editions, each with a different topic that highlights the lives of those who live at Stevenson Oaks.

NASA Veterans Honor Contributors to the American Space Program

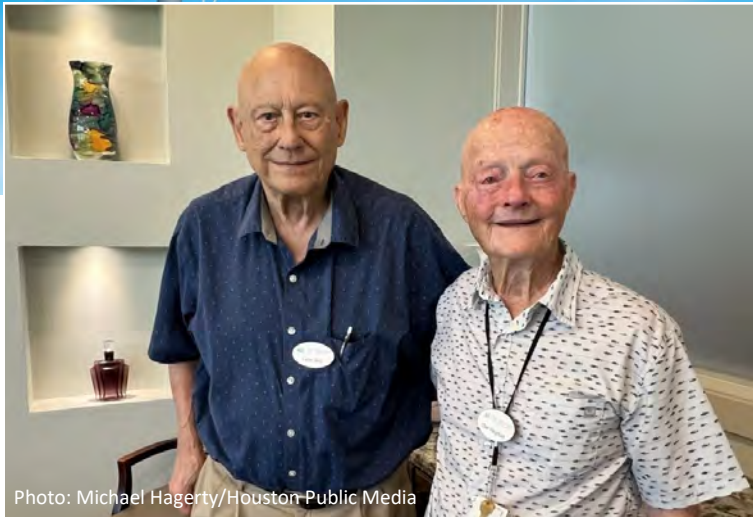


Photo: Michael Hagerty/Houston Public Media



Houston is so well-known for its connection to NASA, even its MLB and NBA team names tie into it. The legacy of this long-standing institution can be seen almost everywhere you look - including local retirement community, The Crossings. Larry Bell and Chet Vaughan are two of several NASA retirees who call The Crossings home. They both worked at NASA during the heyday of the moon missions; now they're working to make sure NASA retir-

ees are properly honored when they pass. "When someone who worked at NASA passes, NASA lowers the flags at what was that employee's headquarters. They also help provide a flag ceremony where people outside of NASA can pay tribute to that former employee, and we want to make sure the families know that recognition is available," explained Bell.

Vaughan most recently officiated the ceremony this past July for fellow The Crossings resident and 30-year NASA veteran, Jack Johnson. "NASA families are so incredibly proud of their loved one's service to the space program. You could see it meant a lot to Jack's daughters to see him get the recognition he deserved," said Vaughan.

"We're just so grateful we have the opportunity to do something like this for our residents," said Debbie Zienty, Marketing Director for The Crossings. "They did amazing things during their lives and to be able to honor that when they pass is really at the root of our mission."

Larry and Chet's story was featured in the *Galveston Daily News* as well as a *PBS* affiliate in a feature called *Houston Matters*.

Written by Jeff Bell



BIG Career Moves: From CNA to Property Manager

**Affordable Housing in Bryan welcomes
Detra Steels as Property Manager after
serving at Crestview for seven years**

If you visit Crestview Place, you will likely hear one of two things echoing through the halls, laughter or singing. As you get closer to the source of the joyful sounds, you'd undoubtedly find Detra Steels.

Detra was recently named the Property Manager for the Affordable Housing community. But Detra isn't new to MRC, she has been employed by the parent company since 2018. She was first hired as a Certified Nursing Assistant at Crestview, working in the skilled nursing neighborhood where her signature laugh and playfulness made her a standout among residents and staff alike.

Cassidy Currie who now serves the Affordable Housing group as the Associate Executive Director, also cut her teeth at Crestview. Currie shared what it was like working alongside Detra saying, "Detra was always so much fun to be around, singing to the residents, or making them laugh. Detra is nothing but good vibes. She is an inspiring person, with a passion for the mission. That's why I knew she'd be such a good fit for this role. We are so glad to have her on the team."

Joy Keels, Vice President of Affordable Housing added, "I think she is wonderful and she is a fast learner. She is a solid person who completes the team. She has been the perfect person to add to this team! She loves MRC and what we stand for which makes her the right fit."

Detra developed a reputation at Crestview as an employee with a huge heart and an unstoppable level of resilience. Despite challenges, Detra's smile somehow wins out each time. Perhaps it is her sense of gratitude that results in such obvious, contagious joy.

"It is both an honor and a privilege to work for a company that encourages their employees to grow. Real happiness, comes when we seek for it in a focus outside of ourselves; I was always told that the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person. Therefore, I am excited for this journey and honored to have this opportunity to grow and learn from the best," shared Detra.

“ It is both an honor and a privilege to work for a company that encourages their employees to grow. Real happiness, comes when we seek for it in a focus outside of ourselves; I was always told that the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person. Therefore, I am excited for this journey and honored to have this opportunity to grow and learn from the best. ”

-Detra Steels
Crestview Place's
Property Manager



Kroger Stocks Bryan Food Pantries

Each Affordable Housing property has a food pantry that supports the needs of the residents. The communities rely on donations to keep the pantries open. That's why the Bryan teams were delighted to receive large pallets of non-perishables from Kroger. "Our residents are on a fixed income, so having these resources available, just down the hall where they can take what they need discreetly, significantly boosts their quality of life. We are so thankful to Kroger for their support," said Cassidy Currie, Associate Executive Director of Affordable Housing.

Annual School Supply Drive in La Porte

Each summer, the La Porte residents host a school supplies drive in anticipation of the upcoming school year. Their goal is to fill backpacks for students who might otherwise come up short of what they need. The effort is to not only provide the student with supplies, but they also hope the effort results in students receiving a boost of confidence as they receive all new materials, packed neatly in a brand-new backpack. For low income students, having new materials can give them a major boost to kick off the school year. In return, the residents also get a sense of purpose as they give back to these students in need.



Determination seems to define Irma Caballero's life from one season to the next. Irma grew up in a home where her parents worked hard but still had financial challenges. When she turned eighteen, her mother urged her to attend college. When she asked how she would pay for college, her mom said she had to find a way. So Irma did. The phrase her mother uttered that day, "you've got to find a way," became the source of determination and work ethic that carried her through each up and down of life.

Irma went on to find great success in her post graduate career with the help of incredible mentors placed in her path. She met many mentors along her journey, the female Retired Lieutenant Colonel, County Judges, fellow teachers, Elected Officials, and many more who each influenced her and helped her grow. Many were struck by her hard work and dedication resulting in a number of impressive opportunities, far exceeding what her family ever thought possible. She held the title of Teacher, Social Worker, Director of Economic Development for Corpus Christi, and Vice President of HR, to only name a few.

"I think I got those opportunities because I simply worked hard," she explains. For Irma, there was no challenge she wasn't willing to stretch into, approaching each opportunity with a relentless drive to learn all she needed to learn to be successful...to find a way.

She met her match when she married the love of her life, Servando, who was also a student of life, taking every opportunity to learn from those around him. Together the pair led an exceptionally adventurous life of travel and purpose.

Now, living as a widow at Mirador, she is moving forward with this same sense of curiosity to learn from others and determination to lead a full life. "I love the people at Mirador, they are interesting and kind," said Irma.

Irma took her mother's words to heart, finding a way to succeed, find purpose, and give back at every stage of life. Now, Irma says she is so thankful God allowed her to find her way to Mirador.



Finding a Way

Of Magnolia and Mesquite



Gay Thompson has had a longtime love affair with cooking. "It has always been my go-to escape," she shared, "I came from a family, and married into a family of excellent cooks, our family has always gathered around the table." After all three of her children had grown and married, she discovered a common theme among this age group who all seemed to need help creating menus which inspired her to develop a cookbook.

But Thompson says the true origin story goes a bit further than that. "Suzanne and Jim Porter moved from Mississippi to become our neighbors, so I brought them a loaf of bread." As the story goes, Suzanne gladly received the bread and called Jim at work shortly after tasting the bread saying, "You have got to get home and try this bread." Later on, the two couples would sit down to enjoy a dinner together when Jim exclaimed, "Everything we have eaten tonight needs to be in cookbook!" Gay and Suzanne both reacted to this statement by confessing that they had each dreamt of doing that very thing. "We didn't realize that night we were starting a business," recalled Gay with a laugh.

All in all, the ladies would end up selling 26 thousand of these custom cookbooks, printing the book six times to continue to fill the demand. Initially the pair ordered only 5,000 thinking this was sufficient to sell among family and friends, but the book sold out in the first week prompting them to order more, a pattern that would repeat again and again. Gay admits, "There was never really much profit in it, it was really just more fun than anything else."



They thoughtfully named the cookbook, *Of Magnolia and Mesquite*, filled with their own recipes from their families. Gay explained, "There really isn't a bad recipe in there!" The book was organized a bit differently than most cookbooks that were in print at that time. The book was categorized into four parts: breakfasts and brunches, lunches, dinners, and special events with the menus fitted to the number of people you'd be serving. Whether you were serving two or two-hundred, the recipes were easy to follow. The other unique component in the cookbook is the additional poems that can be found throughout the publication. "I have always loved piddling around with poetry," she said. She went on to explain the similarities between cooking a meal and composing a poem saying that both are born from love.

"For me, it's always been an expression of love," she said with a smile.

Farewell Yvonne



Yvonne Seifert has served as Vice President of Clinical Services after first serving as the Director of Nursing at Cornerstone in Texarkana, all in all, she has been a member of the MRC family for 13 years. Yvonne holds a Masters degree in Nursing from UT and has approximately 25 years of specialized experience in long-term care and geriatric care.

In late September, Yvonne announced that she and her husband will be moving out-of-state which prompted her resignation. "Yvonne's leadership has undoubtedly made life better for the elders of MRC. She has been a key influencer in rolling out The Eden Alternative Culture, acting as an advocate for person-directed care which dramatically improves the daily life of the elders. Yvonne holds an exceptionally high standard for the clinical teams while leading with MRC's mission at heart. We are so thankful for all she has done and wish her well in the future," said Alan Brown, CEO.

As the news of Yvonne's resignation spread to the local teams, a flood of team members shared their heartfelt congratulations while also celebrating her many accomplishments. But the common theme was team members acknowledging the impact she has made in their own lives and careers. Farewell Yvonne, thank you for everything.

"I wish you all the best! Will miss you greatly. Thank you for all your help and guidance over the years."

James Logan
Executive Director
at Creekside



"I am so happy for you, but I am sad that you are leaving. You have been a huge support system for us all, as well as a mentor and someone that I can call for advise and guidance, I've learned so much from you, and I am thankful for the years that I've worked under your leadership. You will be truly missed! Best wishes to you and your family."

Jennifer Lavalais
Director of Nursing
at Crestview



"You are irreplaceable! You will truly be missed. You have been a great mentor to me over the years! I wish you and your family the best with your move to Pennsylvania."

Hannah Pierce
Administrator
at PineCrest



Doubly Blessed

Residents at Arbor Oaks and Crestview benefit from having two highly qualified Chaplains on staff

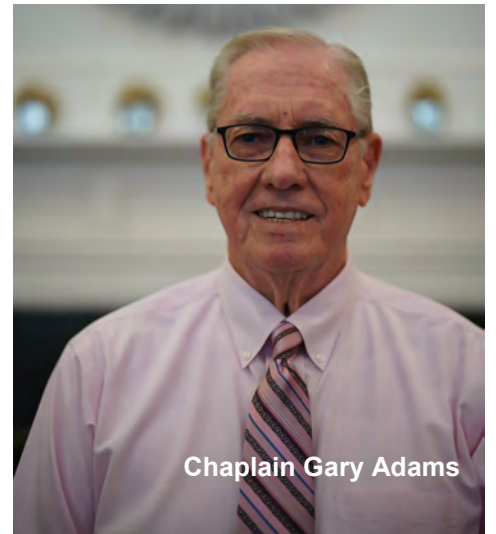
Rev. Gary Adams has been serving at Arbor Oaks and Crestview since 2007 after an exceptional ministry that stretches all the way back to his ordination in 1979. He found the chaplain role to be a perfect blend between his clinical experience as a certified registered nurse anesthetist and his experience in active pastoral ministry when he founded Cross Mountain Church in San Antonio. Now, after 18 years in the Chaplain role, he has a partner, Rev. David Henry.

Rev. Henry is an especially gifted musician and singer. For 48 years he used his talents to serve in the United Methodist Church as a music minister. When the word got around that he was considering slowing down, the team at Crestview didn't hesitate to reach out. The relationship was one that had been building since 1999 when Rev. Henry first started visiting parishioners who lived at the community. "I had worked with him for many years trying to get him to join our team. We always knew he would greatly enhance the spiritual care of our elders with his contributions. It was just a matter of timing," said Rev. Adams.

"We began to look at the opportunity creatively and found a way to bring him on as well. They are both part-time in their roles, but work well as partners, each with their own gifts," shared Mike Adams, Executive Director, "we are doubly blessed."



Chaplain David Henry



Chaplain Gary Adams

Teams Across MRC Celebrate Five Star Ratings



Team members at Crestview proudly display five stars to acknowledge the accomplishment.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) provides ratings to care communities offering Skilled Nursing. They gather this rating by closely evaluating Quality Measures, Health Inspections, Staffing and RN Staffing. The highest possible ranking available is five stars.

Methodist Retirement Communities is proud to announce that the following communities have a five star rating:

PineCrest in Lufkin

The Crossings in League City

Mirador in Corpus Christi

Crestview in Bryan

Creekside in Huntsville



Resident at The Langford Hosts Fundraiser to Benefit MRC's Covenant Fund

Jean Ringer was a member of the Charter Member group of residents, a group who acted as pioneers, advancing the concept of The Langford long before construction had even begun. Jean is what you might call a visionary, someone who is able to see the possibilities and bring them to fruition. One of the visions Jean had begun many years ago was hosting a Festival of Holidays at The Langford in order to raise money for MRC's Covenant Fund, a fund that ensures residents who have outlived their money, through no fault of their own, can continue to receive the care and housing they need until the end of their life.

Each year, the event features just about every major holiday on the American calendar with a table assigned to each. From there, the tables are transformed by their designated host or hostess to reflect their assigned festive theme. Each host or hostess also curates a specific dessert for their guests that matches the theme. Some of the

guests even joined in the fun by dressing to match their tables décor. For example, the St. Patrick's table wore green in fear of getting pinched, while the ladies at the Thanksgiving table wore matching shirts for the event.

The highlight of the event was the musical entertainment provided by David Henry, Chaplain at Arbor Oaks and well-known local musician. All in all, the event raised approximately \$16K to support the Covenant Fund. A special thanks to Jean Ringer and all of the participants of this year's Festival of Holidays.







FALL PREVENTION: Safety Tips for Older Adults

Home Modifications

1

- Keep pathways clear from clutter, cords and unnecessary furniture.
- Install grab bars near toilets, tubs, and showers. Don't forget non-slip mats!
- Either remove rugs or secure them with non-slip backing or rug tape.
- Ensure bright lighting, especially in stairways.

Medical Considerations

2

- Visit the eye doctor regularly to keep up your prescription.
- Get regular hearing tests and keep up with hearing aid maintenance.
- Be vigilant about side effects with medication that may cause dizziness or drowsiness and report back to your physician.

Footwear and Mobility Aids

3

- Wear well-fitting, non-slip shoes indoors and outdoors.
- Use canes or walkers as needed and make sure they are well maintained.

Exercise and Daily Activity

4

- Exercise regularly. Consider walking, Tai Chi to improve balance and increase strength.
- Work with a physical therapist to better understand specific exercises designed for fall prevention.

Emergency Preparedness

5

- Keep your emergency contacts accessible and easily available for those who may assist you.
- Use a medical alert system for immediate assistance post fall.

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES?



We would likely all agree that senior adults have a higher risk of experiencing a life altering event than a younger adult. These events might be losing a spouse, facing a health crisis or new diagnosis, or even making a major move. For a younger senior, under the age of 70, these experiences are spaced out with many years in-between. However, statistics reveal that this seems to change after the age of 70. At this point, the frequency seems to pick up with most seniors facing life altering events every three to five years. So what are the chances seniors will endure various life altering events?

Health Crisis: 1 in 3 adults over the age of 65 have a major health crisis each year. 80% of older adults have at least one chronic condition with 77% having two or more.

Falls: About 1 in 4 Americans, over the age of 65, will fall each year.

Loss of Spouse: By age 75, nearly half of women and about 15% of men are widowed.

Downsize: 1 in 5 seniors downsize after 75.

Quit Driving: 1 in 5 seniors stop driving due to vision, cognitive decline, or physical limitations by their late 70's.

Cognitive Decline: The risk of dementia doubles every 5 years after age 65; nearly 1 in 3 over age 85 have dementia.

Financial Hardship: Up to 30% of adults 65 and over worry about running out of money in retirement.

However, if you broaden the definition of life changing events to include other factors like losing a friend, changing a medication, enduring major home repair, or even a change in social opportunities, the frequency becomes even more startling. When factoring in these life events, experts estimate seniors are facing major change nearly every six months.

Certainly, the way older adults experience these occurrences is largely based on their health, support systems, and living environment. Therefore, older adults should proactively evaluate how they are presently equipped to face any of these life altering events.

Many have found a great deal of calm in an otherwise tumultuous time in their life by becoming a resident of a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). While placing themselves in this setting doesn't necessarily slow the frequency of life events, it just fortifies them when it happens. For example, those facing a dementia diagnosis are comforted by the on-campus care neighborhoods to see them through their journey with memory loss. If a fall or surgery slows you down, the onsite therapy team and fully equipped gym are great partners to get you back to your previous routines. If one social club comes to an end, there are a half dozen more options to keep you connected and engaged. Things like home repair and transportation are now marked off the lists of worries altogether. Most impactfully, if you must face the loss of a spouse, you are literally surrounded by a group of peers, many who are walking the same path, each eager to walk with you.

Perhaps one of the lesser-known perks of making a move like this is the concern over future finances. Many non-profit groups offer a benevolent care program to care for their residents if they should run out of money. Naturally, this requires a financial approval process upon admission, but paperwork hassle is well worth the exchange. The peace-of-mind this type of program can bring to the mind of an older adult is not found anywhere else.

Ellen Goodman once wrote, "Age is an accumulation of life and loss." The truth is, life altering events will come for all of us, the real question is, will you be ready when they do?



MRC Brought Back Summer Intern Program in 2025

After such a good experience hosting Hallie, 2024's MRC Summer Intern, the organization decided to do it again in 2025. After sifting through multiple applicants, the decision was made to extend the opportunity to Alison MacLeod.

Alison was heading into her junior year of Pre-Med at Baylor University when she stumbled across the program. With a degree plan that was already aligning with elder care, it seemed to be a good fit. "I have my Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and have worked as a geriatrics

medical assistant, so I'd seen the clinical side of things, but I was really interested in how the business side functions. This internship with MRC let me put those pieces together," said MacLeod.

Alison now admits that she wasn't quite sure what to expect from the experience which is why the first day was so shocking as her preconceived notions were immediately shattered. "I was expecting to walk into communities where residents were in their rooms and there wasn't really much going on in the buildings," she explained. "But I was really surprised by how outgoing and active everyone was. The residents were volunteering in the community, going to museums and teaching at local colleges. It was a change in expectation for sure."

Also surprising to Alison was how welcoming everyone was. "My day-to-day was a lot of socializing, getting to know the residents and staff members at the different MRC communities. There was a group of ladies at Stevenson Oaks that invited me to sit with them at dinner, and it was like they were all my grandmas, taking me in. It was a really touching moment to feel so welcomed by the residents when I was just an intern doing my job," Alison recalled.

While Alison is still undecided on her med school specialty, her summer at MRC has given her a fresh perspective to take back to school. "It does give me a greater understanding of the geriatric population and what life looks like for them, and that matters so much because it plays such a key part in their health," said Alison.

If you or someone you know might be interested in the Summer 2026 Internship Program, contact Kelly Tittel at ktittel@mrcaff.org.



Approximately 20% of college students participate in an internship program which translates to over four million students annually across the nation.

More than 65% of Students who participate in an internship secured a job after graduation averaging \$15K more in annual earnings than their peers.



On the Cover

Rong-Sen Shen, PhD has been living at The Crossings in League City with his lovely wife, Lily Shen, since 2015.

The pair joined the community as Charter Members and were among the first ever residents when the community opened its doors 10 years ago.

Dr. Shen worked at UTMB as a highly respected Biochemist and also taught at the UTMB Health - University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.





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