

MRC



SUMMER
2026

Life



A Message from MRC's CEO

The Spring issue of MRC Life is my favorite as we recognize some special people...our employee award recipients and donors who support the mission of MRC. As I have stated before, it is our people that make MRC a remarkable organization.

As you read about our ICARE Champions, it is easy to see why they were recognized by their peers as examples of Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence. These team members “get it.” Every day they go above and beyond to make life good for our residents and those around them; it is more than a job for them, it is purpose-driven work. Congratulations to our ICARE Champions!

Finally, I want to thank our 2025 donors who chose to support MRC in fulfilling our mission to honor and serve older adults as an expression of Christ's love. Through your generosity, we were able to:

- Grant financial support to 119 residents who could not afford their care through our Covenant Fund.
- Assist 22 employees facing unforeseen hardships through our Employee Emergency Fund.
- Provide day respite services at The Gathering Place in Huntsville, TX.
- Provide 65 educational scholarships to employees through resident-led programs.
- Complete a major remodel of Bunch Woodview Memory Care Center.
- Add additional emergency generator capacity on a campus
- Purchase new buses for resident transportation.
- Fund countless initiatives that make life better on MRC campuses.

Thank you, donors for making MRC a part of your charitable giving!



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alan Brown', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Alan Brown
President and CEO

Flower Grandmas



Long before “flower grandmas” became a viral wedding trend, Stevenson Oaks residents Shirley Bethford and Maria Andrade were already showing everyone how it was done.

The two women share a unique bond as co-grandmothers, connected through a blended family story rooted in love and new beginnings. Maria’s daughter, a divorced mother of three, married Shirley’s son, who later legally adopted all three children. Over time, what began as an extended family connection blossomed into a meaningful friendship between the two women.

Years later, when one of their shared granddaughters married in Fredericksburg, she chose to honor both grandmothers in a memorable way—asking them to trade traditional flower girls for “flower grandmas.” Together, Shirley and Maria walked the aisle, scattering petals and stealing hearts along the way.

Today, Shirley and Maria continue sharing life side by side at Stevenson Oaks. While they may no longer leave a trail of flower petals behind them, the same joy and charm that lit up the aisle on wedding day still has a way of brightening the path around them.



LIVING Adventurously

Most people slow down at 92. Patricia Smathers decided to go ziplining.

For Patricia, the adventure was more than a fun outing—it was a chance to cross something off her bucket list. After sharing the dream with staff at PineCrest, the team jumped into action, organizing the details to help make it happen. When Patricia mentioned the idea to friends, what started as one resident's dream quickly gained momentum.

Soon, Shirley Thornton, Judy Kocar, Joyce Snell, Cheryl Holsey, Josephine Allen, Jeanette Miller, Joan Rankin, and Sharon Daniel signed on, turning Patricia's bucket list moment into a shared adventure filled with laughter, encouragement, and plenty of memorable moments.

As the group suited up, there were excited smiles, a few nervous laughs, and no shortage of cheering each other on. Some stepped up to the platform with confidence, while others gathered a little extra courage—but every woman embraced the experience in her own way, supported by the friendships surrounding her.

For Patricia, the day meant checking off a lifelong goal. But perhaps even more special was seeing others join her for the ride, proving that adventure has a way of bringing people together.

At PineCrest, this ziplining trip became more than just an outing. It was a reminder that it's never too late to try something new, never too late to be brave, and never too late to inspire others to take the leap right alongside you.





THE LODGE

AT STEVENSON OAKS

GROUND BREAKING

Stevenson Oaks celebrated the groundbreaking of The Lodge on June 16, marking a significant milestone in the future of skilled nursing care in North Texas.

The Lodge at Stevenson Oaks will introduce an innovative household model featuring two small homes with 12 residents each. Rather than the traditional institutional setting, residents will enjoy private rooms, shared living spaces and the freedom to make everyday choices—from when they wake up to what they eat—while receiving the personalized medical care they need.

During the ceremony, President and CEO Alan Brown shared the vision behind the project, emphasizing that quality care should never come at the expense of dignity or independence. The household model is designed to ensure residents are known for who they are as individuals, not simply by their diagnosis.

Residents shared how the welcoming culture at Stevenson Oaks has shaped their experience. Independent living resident Barbara Coffey recalled an unwritten rule established when she first moved in: "You walk up to any table and say, 'May I sit here?'" Fellow resident Marilyn McClain described the community as having "an atmosphere of respect and cooperation. I call it the sweet spirit."

When completed, The Lodge will extend that same culture of belonging into skilled nursing, reflecting MRC's commitment to creating environments where compassionate care, meaningful relationships and personal choice remain at the heart of everyday life.



From Left to Right: Todd Partin, Matthew Currie, Alan Brown, Pam Haman, and Carol Shiery





The Art of Seeing Others



For most artists, a portrait begins with a face. For Mirador resident Betty Shamel, it begins with seeing the person behind it. An artist for as long as she can remember, Betty first discovered her love for art as a child before earning a degree in art and spending decades teaching in classrooms across the country, including Dallas, Stockton, California, Kingsville and several other communities. Throughout her career, she helped countless students learn the techniques of painting, but perhaps more importantly, how to truly observe the world around them.

After many wonderful years living in Rockport, Betty moved to Mirador and found herself at a crossroads. She had enjoyed a successful career as a potter, but the physical demands of working with clay eventually became too difficult. Rather than setting her creativity aside, she returned to painting.

At first, she painted scenes around the community. But it wasn't long before she realized her greatest inspiration wasn't the landscape—it was the people who filled it. That's when Betty began turning her neighbors into works of art.

Her first portrait was of her neighbor, John, and his little dog, Pepper. Betty always kept dog biscuits nearby for Pepper, and John's warmth and gift for storytelling made him an easy choice.

"John is a delightful person and a great teller of stories," Betty said. "I asked him if I could paint him and his dog, and he thought it was a great idea." The finished portrait captured John sitting on his porch with Pepper faithfully by his side. Soon, other neighbors wanted to be painted as well. Before long, what started as a single portrait became a growing collection celebrating life at Mirador.

Each portrait preserves more than a likeness. It captures a personality, a friendship and a story. After a lifetime devoted to art, Betty has discovered that one of an artist's greatest gifts isn't simply painting what people look like—it's seeing who they are. In sharing that gift, she's created more than a gallery of portraits. She's created a collection of neighbors, friendships and lives that make Mirador feel like home.





Betty painted a portrait of Arlene Long doing what she loves, playing piano.



Betty painted Janis Crowe in her floppy, teal hat enjoying beautiful flowers.



Laugh Therapy

MEET THE COMEDY DUO FROM MIRADOR



When the microphone turns on at Mirador's Open Mic, residents know they are in for something special.

That's because Al, 87, and Lois, 84, take the stage—not with a song or solo act, but with something entirely their own: a 20-minute scripted comedy routine filled with playful banter, well-timed jokes, and the kind of chemistry that only comes from decades spent side by side.

Married since June of 1960, the couple has perfected the art of making one another laugh—and now, they share that joy with everyone around them.

At first, Open Mic participants were limited to just 10 minutes, but it quickly became clear that Al and Lois needed a little extra time. Their routines, built around taking turns reading jokes and playfully bouncing off one another, became such a hit that organizers moved them to the end of the lineup so the audience could enjoy a longer performance.

And enjoy it they do.

HA
HA
HA



“They are hilarious” has become a familiar sentiment among residents who eagerly look forward to the couple’s appearances, knowing laughter is guaranteed.

For Al and Lois, the performances are about more than punchlines. The pair takes the stage, sharing a shared sense of humor that has underlined their partnership, carrying them through more than six decades of marriage. Together, they remind everyone in the audience that joy can still be found

HA
HA
HA

in familiar rhythms, shared memories, and simply showing up for one another. After all these years, Al and Lois are still doing what great comedy duos do best—keeping the crowd laughing and proving that laughter never gets old.

Laughter is Seriously Good for You!



Laughter boosts endorphins (your brain’s “feel-good” chemicals).



It can lower stress hormones and help your body relax.



A good laugh can even improve circulation—like a mini workout for your heart.

THREE FUN FACTS ABOUT LAUGHTER:

1. Your brain responds to laughter before you even consciously “get” the joke.
2. Laughter is contagious because your brain is wired to mirror others.
3. People are 30 times more likely to laugh in a group than when alone.

SENIOR TO SENIOR

At Creekside Senior Living and PineCrest Retirement Community, two generations of “seniors” recently came together for a lively and meaningful exchange of insight, encouragement and shared experience — senior citizens and seniors in high school. Students from local National Honor Society chapters visited each community for a “Senior to Senior” round-robin event, designed to connect high school seniors with senior living residents through intentional, one-on-one conversations.

Structured similarly to a speed-dating format, each student was paired with a resident for five-minute discussions before rotating. These brief but impactful conversations created space for sharing life lessons, career guidance, and perspectives shaped by very different stages of life.

At Creekside, Jennifer Nickell, Marketing Director, shared that one resident participant told her, “Wow, this made me feel so important!” She also noted that a New Waverly ISD teacher attending with the students remarked, “I’ve never seen these students more engaged.”

At PineCrest, the afternoon was described as one filled with moments that truly touched the heart. Residents visited with a wonderful group of Hudson High School seniors, sharing stories, laughter, wisdom and life experiences that bridged generations in meaningful ways. While residents reflected on the journeys that shaped their lives, students opened up about their dreams, goals and hopes for the future — a reminder that connection has no age limit. Community leaders at PineCrest expressed gratitude to Hudson High School for sharing their students for the afternoon, calling the experience a true blessing for everyone involved.



Victoria Hutto, Marketing Director at PineCrest shared, “One of our residents told me that out of all the things they’ve ever done here, this has been their favorite.”

Though separated by decades, both communities discovered how quickly barriers disappear when people simply take time to listen to one another. In just a few minutes at a time, stories were shared, perspectives were shaped and connections were made — senior to senior.



The Seven Domains of Well-Being



Experiences that bring generations together—like our “Senior to Senior” events—strengthen every domain of well-being, reminding us that purpose, connection and joy can be found and shared at every stage of life.

All MIXED UP

Real moments, real people, and the mix-ups that made us smile.
Enjoy this collection of kookie mix-ups where things didn't quite go as planned.

Annette



Well...that escalated quickly: The Escalator That Goes Up and "Down"

We were off to visit the beautiful Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs during Christmastime. There was delicious food, gorgeous decorations, lovely trees, and a concert featuring George Frideric Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. Everything promised to be magical. Surely nothing could dampen the Christmas spirit.

One cold day, bundled up for a tour, I wore my long black wool skirt. The concierge led the way down the escalator, and I followed close behind. About three-fourths of the way down, I felt a tugging on my skirt. I turned to my husband and said, "You are stepping on my skirt." He denied it, but the tugging grew stronger. Suddenly, I was being pulled backward—and off came the skirt. Holy moly!

The escalator stopped instantly, and people came running from every direction. One woman whisked me away, saying, "Honey, I have never seen anyone come out of a skirt so fast." I was just happy the escalator only claimed my skirt and not the rest of me. My dignity did not even bother putting up a fight.

The staff retrieved what remained of the skirt while everyone else continued the grand tour. My husband and I stayed behind to be interviewed by hotel management. Another "assadent," as my little nephew would say. "You sure make life interesting and humorous."

Maria



My daughter used to wander next door to visit our neighbor, Mrs. Clark, who always seemed to have some sweet treat waiting for any child who

crossed her threshold. One afternoon, my daughter marched home proudly carrying a plate with a thick slice of cakelike bread. Handing it to me with great importance, she said, "Mrs. Clark told me to bring this to you."

I had never seen bread quite like it, so I asked, "Honey, what kind of bread is this?" Without hesitation, she proudly announced, "It's BANANA BUTT BREAD!" I had never heard of banana butt bread, but I was not about to question anyone's baking traditions. I took a bite, and it was delicious—moist, sweet, perfect. Naturally, I had to get the recipe.

I walked over to thank Mrs. Clark and asked, with complete sincerity, "Could I please get the recipe for your banana butt bread?"

The room fell silent. Then everyone burst into laughter. People were wiping tears and holding their sides while I stood there smiling politely, unsure if I had told a joke or committed a crime. Finally, Mrs. Clark caught her breath and said, "Oh Marie... it's banana nut bread, not banana butt bread. Do you know what butt means?" Then she pointed to my backside. I was mortified. I thanked her, gathered what little dignity I had left, and went home to finish my banana butt bread.

And yes, I eventually learned to make it myself. But to this day, I still call it Banana Butt Bread. Some names stick because they are funny. Others stick because they carry a memory. This one somehow manages to do both.

Mary



The year was 1972, and Fort Worth was showing off. Spring had arrived in full color: the kind of day that makes you feel young and

light and ready for anything. My husband (at the time) and I decided it was the perfect afternoon to take our tandem bicycle to the trails at Trinity Park. We rode for hours, laughing, wobbling, and finding our rhythm the way only a tandem bike can force you to. Near the Trinity River, a man with a camera waved us down. He introduced himself as a photographer for the Star-Telegram, out on assignment to capture people enjoying the sunshine. We said sure, smiled, and pedaled on, thinking nothing more of it.

Then came Monday morning. There we were — front page, above the fold — smiling like we'd been hired to advertise springtime itself. And that's when the embarrassment hit me like a cold splash of water. I was a young middle school teacher, just one year out of college. And it was the early 70s, which means you already know what I was wearing: hot pants and a halter top. Perfectly appropriate for a carefree ride through the park. Not exactly the outfit you want your students, their parents, and your principal to see on the front page of the newspaper. I was mortified. Teachers were expected to look conservative, respectable, and covered — not like they'd stepped out of a fashion spread for "Youthful Summer Fun."

Today, no one would blink. But fifty years ago, the word "inappropriate" carried a lot more weight. I marched into my principal's office, heart pounding, ready to explain. He smoothed it over with kindness and a little humor, and life went on. Still... I have to admit it now, with a smile...I did look pretty cute!





Quilters for Valor

Inside a room filled with fabric, conversation, and the steady rhythm of sewing machines, something meaningful is taking shape at Stevenson Oaks. Known proudly as the “Quilters for Valor” —this dedicated team of residents gather regularly to measure, cut, iron, and sew Quilts of Valor, handmade quilts awarded to veterans who have been touched by war. Each member works at their station with assigned roles, all eventually coming together to create a patriotic quilt that communicates gratitude to the recipient.

Founded in 2003, the Quilts of Valor program began with a simple but powerful mission: to cover service members and veterans with comforting, healing quilts as a way of recognizing their sacrifice and thanking them for their service. Today, thousands of volunteers across the country contribute to the effort, creating handmade quilts that are formally awarded to veterans in moving ceremonies filled with gratitude and recognition.

At Stevenson Oaks, that mission has found a home among residents who have turned quilting into something much more meaningful than a pastime.

For the Quilters for Valor, quilting is about more than fabric, patterns, or perfect stitches. It is about honoring those who served, giving back in a deeply personal way, and creating something made entirely by hand for men and women who sacrificed for their country.

“By no means are we the best quilters in the world, but we just love what we are able to do for our guys and our girls who have served our country,” said resident Janice Marut.

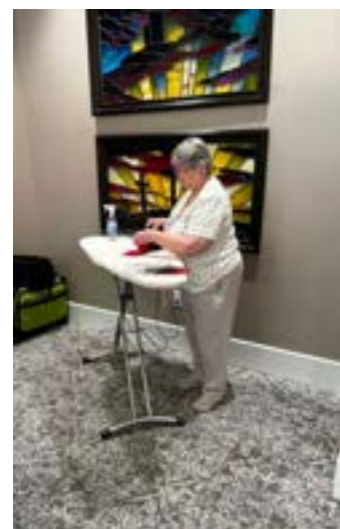
That humility is part of what makes the group so special. The focus is not perfection—it is purpose.

During gatherings, sewing machines hum while conversations flow easily between friends. Stories are shared, encouragement is offered, and fabric pieces slowly become something larger than anyone could make alone. With every stitch, the group creates not only quilts, but connections—with one another and with the veterans who will someday receive their work.

For many veterans, receiving a Quilt of Valor can be an emotional experience. Draped around their shoulders, the quilt becomes more than a blanket. It becomes a visible expression of appreciation, comfort, and acknowledgment—sometimes years after their service ended.

At Stevenson Oaks, the Quilters for Valor continue to give their time and talent freely, creating something both beautiful and meaningful for those who served. Stitched together with gratitude.

For more information about the Quilts of Valor Foundation, including how to nominate a veteran, request a quilt, volunteer, or support the mission, visit www.qovf.org.



Making Waves:

The Fast-Paced Story of Arlen Crouch

Most people spend their lives trying to slow down. Arlen Crouch once spent his trying to go faster than almost anyone else on the water.

Back when boat racing drew crowds and roaring engines echoed across Texas lakes, Arlen was out there chasing speed—testing limits in lightweight hydroplanes that skimmed across the water at breathtaking speeds.

A lifelong boating enthusiast and self-proclaimed “river rat,” Arlen earned recognition for record-breaking speed during his racing career, including a documented F Hydro speed record of 90.090 miles per hour—an impressive accomplishment in an era when drivers relied as much on instinct and mechanical know-how as horsepower.

For Arlen, racing was never simply about speed. It was about mechanics, innovation, and understanding exactly what made a boat perform at its best. The same curiosity and determination that fueled his time on the racecourse eventually shaped his professional life as well.



After his racing days, Arlen went on to build Bryan Marine, a family business that became a trusted name for boaters across Texas. What began as a passion for engines and performance grew into

“

*You've got to
remember
now, I'm a
river rat.*

-Arlen Crouch

”

a business serving generations of families, helping people get out on the water to fish, ski, cruise, and create memories of their own.

But if you ask Arlen, the records and recognition are only part of the story. Behind the speed was someone who simply loved the water—the sound of an engine, the challenge of making something run better, and the unmistakable thrill of flying across the surface at full throttle.

Some people make a mark.

Arlen makes waves.





MRC's Covenant Week

34
Events
Hosted

483
Donors

\$3K
Average
Gift

At MRC, home means more than a place to live, it means security, dignity, and peace of mind. That's the heart behind MRC's Covenant Fund.



Life does not always unfold according to plan. Sometimes older adults outlive their financial resources through no fault of their own due to unexpected health changes, loss of a spouse, or simply living longer than anticipated. Through the Covenant Fund, MRC honors a promise that no resident will be asked to leave their home because of financial hardship beyond their control.

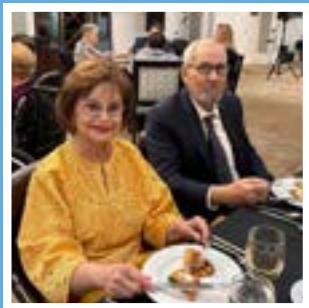
Made possible through the generosity of donors, the Covenant Fund helps bridge the gap between what a resident can afford and the actual cost of care and services, ensuring older adults can continue receiving the support, friendship, and comfort they deserve.

For more than 60 years, this ministry of compassion has reflected MRC's mission to honor and serve older adults as an expression of Christ's love—offering not just assistance, but hope.

During our second annual Covenant Week, teams across MRC held a multitude of events and opportunities to engage donors, yielding over \$213,000.

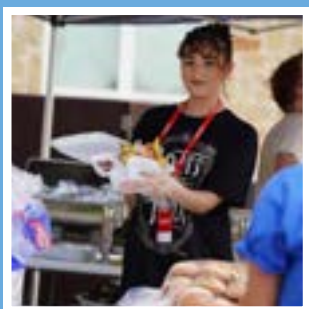
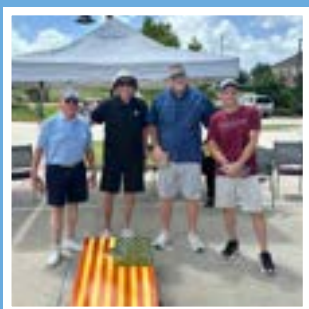
Todd Partin

VP of Philanthropy and Engagement



\$213K

Raised during Covenant Week



Did You Know?

- Waffle cones were invented at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis by vendors after running out of dishes.
- Ben and Jerry's employees get to take 3 pints of ice cream home every day.
- New Zealand consumes more ice cream per capita than any other country, with an average of 7.5 gallons per person per year. The US comes in second with 5.5 gallons per person per year.
- Vanilla is the #1 most popular ice cream flavor.
- Thomas Jefferson is credited as the first American to write down an ice cream recipe.
- The world record for tallest ice cream cone was over 10 feet high in 2015.
- Pecans are the most popular nut to be included in ice cream recipes while strawberry is the most popular fruit.



A Garden Refresh

RESIDENTS AT THE CROSSINGS PITCH IN TO UPGRADE A COMMUNITY COURTYARD



The Crossings courtyard spaces have always been a serene gathering place for residents to enjoy a stroll, sit on their patio, or watch birds come and go. Recently however, water retention issues began to arise prompting residents to take action. Thanks to the efforts of residents Becky Clayton, Larry White, and Judy Rountree (pictured left to right) the pool courtyard at The Crossings has undergone a total makeover.

Working alongside Greg, the community's Executive Director, the trio helped shape a plan to enhance the area—both to address the water retention issues and enhance the beauty of the space. The committee generously funded the materials and carried out the majority of the physical work, bringing the vision to life.

When asked about her dedication to the project, Judy Rountree said, "This is my home and I look at it as I am working in the yard at home."



Birthday Balloon

Most birthday celebrations include cake, candles and a few balloons. But when The Crossings resident Linnie Hyde celebrated her 95th birthday, her family knew an ordinary celebration simply wouldn't do. Instead, they brought a hot air balloon. As the sun began to set, residents gathered in the courtyard at The Crossings as a brightly colored hot air balloon rose above the community before settling in for a spectacular balloon glow. At the center of it all sat Linnie, smiling as a lifelong family tradition came to life just outside her front door.



The surprise was arranged by Linnie's grandson, Daniel Hyde, a professional hot air balloon pilot. Ballooning has been part of the Hyde family for generations, beginning with Linnie's mother and continuing through Daniel's parents and now Daniel himself.

Wanting to share that legacy with the woman who helped inspire it, the family brought the experience directly to The Crossings so Linnie could enjoy it surrounded by loved ones and neighbors. As the balloon inflated and illuminated the evening sky, residents filled the courtyard, capturing photos and taking in a sight few expected to see outside their homes.

The celebration carried extra meaning because Linnie has called The Crossings home since the community first opened. For one unforgettable evening, her neighbors became part of a cherished family tradition, proving that sometimes the greatest adventures don't require leaving home—they simply arrive with the people who love you most.



Happy 100TH BIRTHDAY



Left to right on couch: Laurel Lea Cummins (101), Dorothy Langdon (100), Jackie Rehkopf (100), Ruby Old (101)



There was something extra special to celebrate at Cornerstone Retirement Community recently as Jackie Rehkopf officially joined the community's beloved "100 Club," ringing in her 100th birthday surrounded by friends, laughter, and heartfelt celebration.

The joyful occasion added yet another remarkable member to a very special group of residents, including two Cornerstone ladies who celebrated their 101st birthdays just last month. The day was filled with sweet moments, shared stories, warm smiles, and the kind of love that only grows stronger with time.

At Cornerstone, milestones like these are more than birthdays—they are celebrations of lives well lived, memories cherished, and friendships that continue to flourish every single day.



A New Kind of Graduation:

Bayview Resident Completes Citizen's Police Academy



Opportunities to learn, engage, and make a meaningful impact don't always come in expected ways—and for Evelyn Borrero, one such opportunity led her straight into the heart of public service.

Evelyn recently graduated from the La Porte Citizen's Police Academy, completing an immersive three-month program designed to build meaningful connections between residents and the public servants who protect and serve their community. But this wasn't your typical classroom experience. Evelyn stepped into the world of public safety, gaining firsthand insight into the many moving parts that keep La Porte running smoothly.

Throughout the academy, she had the opportunity to shadow professionals across a wide range of departments, including

Dispatch, Department of Transportation, Patrol, Animal Control, Drone and K-9 units, SWAT, Victim's Liaisons, and even the Municipal Courts. Each experience offered a new perspective, transforming what many see from the outside into something far more personal and deeply understood.

For Evelyn, the experience sparked something deeper than curiosity—it ignited a sense of responsibility. She walked away not only with knowledge, but with a renewed appreciation for the role everyday citizens play in shaping safe, connected communities. Programs like the Citizen's Police Academy are designed to build that bridge, and Evelyn has embraced it wholeheartedly.

Now, she's stepping into a new role: advocate.

With Class #226 set to begin in May 2026, Evelyn is already encouraging fellow Bayview residents to participate, eager to share her experience and invite others into the conversation. She sees this not just as an opportunity to learn, but as a chance to foster understanding, strengthen relationships, and champion community involvement from the inside out.

Her story is a powerful reminder that engagement doesn't have to be grand to be meaningful—it simply has to begin. And sometimes, it starts with one person saying yes—and then turning around to bring others along with them.

A Lasting Place to Remember:

Crestview Place's Memorial Rock Garden



At Crestview Place, remembrance has taken root in a quiet, meaningful way. Nestled within the community grounds, a memorial rock garden offers residents a place to pause, reflect, and honor the lives of friends who are no longer physically present—but never truly gone.

Each stone in the garden bears the name of a resident who has passed, creating a simple yet powerful tribute that grows over time. For those who remain, the garden serves as both a space for personal reflection and a shared reminder of the connections that make community life so rich.

The garden was originally established more than five years ago by Kathy Adkins, whose vision created a lasting way to celebrate the lives and legacies of residents. This month, that vision was renewed as the garden was thoughtfully rededicated—reaffirming its role as a place of remembrance for years to come.

In a community built on relationships, the memorial rock garden ensures that every story continues to be told. Here, among the stones, memories endure, and the bonds of friendship continue to shape the heart of Crestview Place.

The Crossings Fills Pantries and Hearts in La Porte

At its heart, community is about neighbors caring for neighbors — and recently, the residents and staff at The Crossings put that spirit into action in a meaningful way for residents at Bayview and Oakview.

Together, they collected and donated boxes filled with pantry essentials to support residents, many of whom rely on community food pantries to help meet everyday needs.

But the donation effort went beyond canned goods and shelf-stable foods. The boxes were thoughtfully packed with comfort items meant to nourish both body and spirit. Residents included skin care products, hair care items, baking supplies, coffee, and other small touches designed to bring warmth and dignity to daily life.

The generosity behind the project reflected a deeper understanding that care is often found in the little things — a favorite cup of coffee in the morning, the ability to bake something comforting, or simply having personal care items readily available.

For the residents and team members at The Crossings, the donation drive became more than a service project. It was an opportunity to extend kindness and remind fellow seniors in neighboring communities that they are seen, valued, and supported.

Acts of compassion like this continue to demonstrate the power of connection across MRC communities, proving that even simple gestures can leave a lasting impact.



You Can Plant Flowers, or You Can Plant Weeds

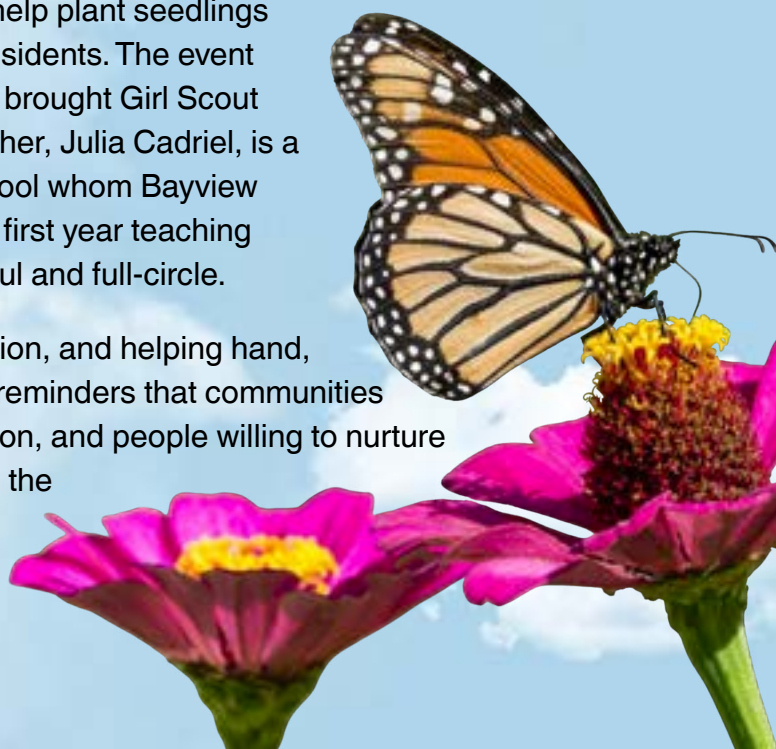
At Bayview and Oakview, the month of April was filled with fresh blooms, helping hands, and reminders that even the smallest seeds can grow into something beautiful. What began as a simple idea soon blossomed into something much larger. Residents at the La Porte Affordable Housing communities set out to create a Butterfly Way Station within their existing community garden — a safe and welcoming stop for Monarch butterflies during their incredible migration journey.

Monarch butterflies travel thousands of miles between North America and South America, and it takes four generations of butterflies to complete the round trip. Along the way, they depend on plants like milkweed to survive and reproduce. With that in mind, Resident Garden Club members got to work brainstorming ways they could help support the annual return of the Monarchs.

Residents harvested seeds from existing milkweed plants, encouraged neighbors to “babysit” seedlings and pollinator-friendly flowers, and even began creating handmade items to sell alongside student volunteers from La Porte Independent School District at their annual booth.

What unfolded over the following weeks became much more than a gardening project. It became a season of connection, collaboration, and community pride. One of the highlights came during the Jennie Reid Early Act Garden Work Day on Saturday, April 11th, when 28 student volunteers gathered to help plant seedlings and assemble butterfly feeder kits alongside residents. The event also welcomed special guest Ava Cadriel, who brought Girl Scout Cookies to donate to the community. Ava’s mother, Julia Cadriel, is a first-grade teacher at La Porte Elementary School whom Bayview residents had previously sponsored during her first year teaching there, making the visit feel especially meaningful and full-circle.

Through every planted seed, shared conversation, and helping hand, the gardens at Bayview and Oakview became reminders that communities grow much like gardens do — with care, intention, and people willing to nurture something bigger than themselves. After all, as the residents often say, you can plant flowers, or you can plant weeds.



TEEPA SNOW'S *Positive Approach to Care*



Meet the Presenter: **Beth Nolan**

Beth A. D. Nolan, Ph.D., is the Chief Public Health Officer and a Lead Mentor, Trainer, and Speaker for Teepa Snow's Positive Approach to Care® (PAC). A former Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health, she holds a Ph.D. in applied gerontology and master's degrees in Human Development and Applied Behavior Analysis. Dr. Nolan now focuses on helping caregivers become care partners.

SAVE THE DATE

Monday, Sept. 14th at 10:30 AM
Mirador – Corpus Christi, TX

Tuesday, Sept. 15th at 9:30am
The Crossings – League City, TX

Tuesday, Sept. 15th at 2:00pm
Creekside – Huntsville, TX

Wednesday, Sept. 16th at 9:30am
Cornerstone- Texarkana, TX

Wednesday, Sept. 16th at 2:30pm
PineCrest-Lufkin, TX

Thursday, Sept. 17th at 10:00am
Crestview – Bryan, TX & The Langford –
College Station, TX

Friday, Sept 18th at 10:30am
Stevenson Oaks – Fort Worth, TX

Teepa Snow's
**Positive
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CAN A MACHINE BE A COMPANION? RETHINKING CONNECTION IN THE AGE OF AI

In a world where technology is evolving faster than ever, artificial intelligence is stepping into places we once believed were reserved only for human connection. Among the most intriguing—and perhaps controversial—developments is the rise of AI companionship.

Since its inception, the marketplace has been flooded with apps promising tools designed to engage, respond, and even “relate” to users. One of the target demographics for this technology is older adults, particularly those experiencing isolation, the promise is simple: someone—or something—always there to talk to.

Despite and enthusiastic roll out campaign, most of these AI tools that have been designed for companionship have been met with skepticism by the consumer. Some might even call the topic controversial as they ponder the core questions: Can artificial companionship ever be an adequate substitute for the real thing?

The Case for “Yes”—At Least in Part

For some older adults, especially those who live alone or have limited social interaction, these technologies can provide consistent engagement. They respond without impatience, listen without distraction, and are available at any hour of the day. There is no scheduling conflict. No burden. No fear of “being a bother.” Morning, Noon, and Night, AI is always up and ready to chat. Some argue that one of the best features may be for those facing cognitive decline who could benefit from gentle prompts and mental stimulation.



The Case for “No”—What’s Missing

Despite the possible perks, there are others who argue that there is no substitute for human connection. This crowd argues that companionship is about much more than conversation alone, it is about shared experience. Both AI and human companions can be familiarized with your stories, your history, your quirks. But AI can only simulate empathy, it cannot feel it like a human can.

Consider the power of silence, an AI companion cannot sit beside you in silence and understand what that silence means, the pain or sorrow it carries. It cannot laugh from a place of memory or love from a place of sacrifice. There is a difference between a companion who responds to you, and one who truly sees and knows you in ways that aren’t simulated, but are real and raw and filled with genuine emotion.

For many, that difference matters. Perhaps the question isn’t if artificial intelligence can replace human companionship, but rather, if it should.



BLESSING OF THE HANDS

Nurses at Creekside Senior Living recently gathered in the chapel for a meaningful Blessing of the Hands ceremony led by Chaplain Marty Ballesteros, honoring the hands that bring healing, comfort, and compassion to residents each day. For nurses, their hands are among their most important tools. They provide care, ease pain, offer reassurance, and bring comfort during life's most vulnerable moments.

The ceremony reflected the Methodist tradition of servant leadership and compassionate care, recognizing nursing as more than a profession—it is a calling rooted in healing and service. Participants paused to reflect on the countless lives touched through everyday acts of care, from tending to physical needs to simply holding the hand of a resident in need of comfort. The Blessing of the Hands served as a powerful reminder that the work of nursing is deeply human, and that healing hands leave lasting impressions on the hearts of those they serve.



PRAYER OF BLESSING FOR NURSES

A METHODIST TRADITION

"Almighty, loving Lord, bless the nurses hands which you have ordained, empower them for healing, caring, strengthening, and comforting those who are suffering.

Free them from any kind of adversity. May all nurses be filled with your compassion and walk daily in the healing light of your love, through Christ our Lord. Amen."





Meeting Them Where They Are:

Why Joining the Reality of Those Living with Memory Loss Matters

When someone you love is living with memory loss, one of the most natural instincts is to correct them. You might find yourself saying, “No, that’s not what happened,” “That person isn’t here anymore,” or “You already asked me that.”

It comes from a place of love—a desire to help them stay grounded in reality. But for individuals living with dementia, Alzheimer’s, or other forms of cognitive decline, reality is no longer something fixed. And trying to pull them back into ours can sometimes cause more harm than good. What if, instead of correcting, we chose to join them where they are?

For those living with memory loss, the past and present often blur together. A mother may believe she needs to pick up her young children from school—even if those children are now grown. A husband may ask for his spouse who passed years ago. These moments feel real to them, not imagined. Correcting them may seem logical, but to them, it can feel confusing, distressing, or even heartbreaking—as if they are hearing difficult news for the very first time, over and over again. Their reality is shaped by emotion, not accuracy. And emotion is something we can meet with compassion.

When we repeatedly correct someone living with memory loss, a few things often happen:

- Increased anxiety: Being told they’re wrong can make them feel unsettled or unsafe.
- Loss of trust: If their experience is constantly dismissed, they may withdraw or become defensive.
- Emotional pain: Imagine reliving grief repeatedly because someone insists on correcting your memory.

Over time, correction can create distance instead of connection. Instead, joining someone in their reality doesn't mean agreeing with misinformation—it means validating the feeling behind it. If they're looking for a loved one, you might say: "You must really love them. Tell me about them!"

There are many everyday moments where this approach can make a meaningful difference. When someone says, "I have to go to work," you might respond, "You've always been such a hard worker. What kind of work do you do?" If they ask, "Where is my mom?" a gentle reply like, "Tell me about your mom. What is she like?" keeps the focus on connection rather than correction.

Even in moments of frustration or confusion, validation can bring calm. If someone says, "Someone took my purse!" instead of dismissing the concern, you might say, "That must feel frustrating. Let's see if we can find it together." If they're unsure whether they've eaten—or insist they haven't—you can simply reassure them: "It's okay, let's get you something to eat. What sounds good right now?"

When someone expresses discomfort, saying, "I don't belong here," a response like, "It can feel unfamiliar sometimes. I'm right here with you—how can I help you feel more comfortable?" offers reassurance. And when they ask, "When are we leaving?" you might gently redirect with, "Sounds like you're ready for the next thing. What are you hoping to do?" These responses do something powerful, they honor the emotion without creating conflict.

When we step into their world, even briefly, we build trust. We communicate safety. We show respect.

In Memory Care settings, this approach is often called validation or redirection. It allows caregivers to gently guide conversations while preserving dignity. Instead of focusing on facts, we focus on feelings—and that's where true connection lives.

This doesn't mean there's never a place for orientation or gentle reminders. But the priority shifts from being right to being kind.

Caring for someone with memory loss requires patience, flexibility, and a willingness to let go of what we think should be true in favor of what feels true to them.

Joining their reality can look like:

- Listening without correcting
- Asking open-ended, comforting questions
- Redirecting with warmth and curiosity
- Meeting confusion with calm reassurance

These small shifts can transform interactions from frustrating to meaningful.

At the heart of this approach is dignity. People living with memory loss are still deeply emotional, relational, and deserving of respect. When we meet them where they are, we affirm their humanity—not their memory.

Because in the end, they may not remember the exact words we said, but they will remember how we made them feel.

And that feeling—of being safe, heard, and valued—is what truly matters.



ME-ME'S CREATIONS

When Dorsey Vega, affectionately known as "Me-Me," moved into PineCrest in 2017, she noticed something many people might have overlooked—neighbors whose days were often quiet and whose visitors were few. "I wanted to see a smile on their face," she once said. "So, I wanted to do something to make them happy." Those simple words became the foundation of a remarkable legacy.



From her assisted living apartment, Me-Me transformed everyday craft supplies into extraordinary expressions of love. She created tissue box covers, pencil holders, coasters, door hangers, and countless other handmade gifts—not for recognition, but simply because she cared. "I really do it to serve the Lord," she explained.

What began as thoughtful gifts for a few nearby neighbors soon spread throughout PineCrest. Residents in Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing, Memory Support, and Independent Living, along with team members across the community, were all touched by Me-Me's generosity. Her apartment became a small craft studio, but her true work was building connections, one handmade gift at a time.

Her kindness reached beyond PineCrest as well. She spent countless hours crocheting baby blankets for a local pregnancy crisis center, continuing her quiet ministry of serving others.

While Me-Me's hands created beautiful gifts, her greatest creation was something that can't be displayed on a shelf. She cultivated a culture of neighborly love, reminding everyone around her that even the smallest act of kindness can brighten someone's day.

Today, her crafts remain treasured keepsakes, but the love behind them is her greatest legacy. Every smile she inspired, every person she made feel remembered, and every life she quietly touched continues to reflect the generous heart of a woman who simply wanted others to know they were loved.



HEARTS AS BIG AS TEXAS

When Alex Jackson moved to The Crossings with her husband, Charles, she arrived carrying more than boxes and keepsakes. For years, she had lovingly cared for her Charles as he navigated the challenges of memory loss, dedicating herself fully to his care through seasons that required strength, patience, and unwavering devotion.

The couple came to The Crossings through Methodist Retirement Communities' Covenant Fund, after being nominated by their church as candidates for financial support. The program helps older adults with financial need access care and community—and for Alex and Charles, it offered a new beginning.

Since moving in, both have been thriving. Alex settled into Independent Living while Charles receives support in Memory Care. But one challenge remained. Determined to visit him often, Alex made the walk between neighborhoods regularly, though weakness was making the distance increasingly difficult.

When MRC Vice President of Philanthropy Todd Partin learned of her need, he began searching for a solution. That search led across Texas to Bryan, where Crestview's



Executive Director, Mike Adams, knew of a family with a power chair no longer being used after the passing of a loved one.

What happened next was MRC at its best. The family generously donated the chair, members of the Central Support Office helped transport it across the state, and The Crossings maintenance team made sure everything was set up and ready for Alex. Now, getting to her husband is easier—and the time spent together can remain the focus.

An entire network of people across the state worked together to make this blessing possible. The only thing bigger than the State of Texas is the unstoppable drive of the people of MRC who aim to honor and serve older adults as an expression of Christ's love.

OUR THERAPY IS #1



RANKED #1 IN LEAGUE CITY, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXARKANA, AND BRYAN FOR SHORT-TERM RESIDENT DISCHARGE FUNCTION SCORE.

THE CROSSINGS, MIRADOR, AND CRESTVIEW ARE IN THE TOP 10% IN TEXAS FOR DISCHARGE FUNCTION SCORE.



RANKED #1 IN LEAGUE CITY AND HUNTSVILLE FOR SHORT-STAY DISCHARGE TO HOME RATE.



These rankings are a testament to our Eden Alternative philosophy of care. Achieving the top functional score in the state means our residents aren't just recovering, they are thriving and regaining the independence necessary to return to the lives they love. I've always know we had the best team in the city, but now we've got proof!

-Greg Rossi, Executive Director at The Crossings



RANKED #1 IN LUFKIN FOR HIGHEST
PERCENTAGE OF SHORT-STAY
RESIDENTS WITH ABILITY TO CARE FOR
THEMSELVES AT THE TIME OF
DISCHARGE.

A SUCCESS STORY

When Charlotte Nowels arrived at PineCrest's rehabilitation center in July 2022, her health was rapidly declining. What began as a series of unexplained falls quickly progressed until she could no longer walk, transfer independently or even feed herself. No one seemed to know why. But the PineCrest team refused to accept that there were no answers.

After weeks of persistent advocacy, staff secured a consultation with a neurosurgeon, whose testing revealed severe cervical spinal stenosis requiring emergency surgery.

Throughout the uncertainty, PineCrest caregivers remained by Margaret's side, even staying with her in the emergency room until her son arrived from Oklahoma.

Following surgery, Charlotte returned to PineCrest determined to reclaim her independence. Through months of physical, occupational and speech therapy, she steadily regained the strength and abilities she had lost.

Today, Charlotte continues to thrive in PineCrest's Assisted Living neighborhood, where she enjoys life alongside her two half-sisters.

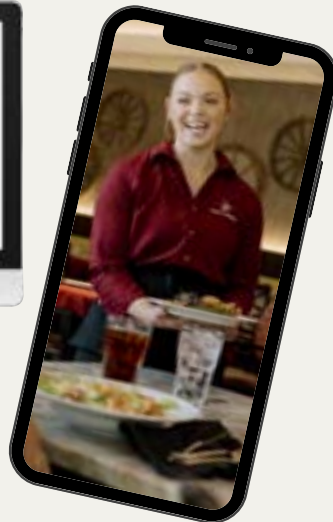
Her remarkable recovery is a testament to expert rehabilitation, unwavering determination and a team that never stopped searching for the answers she deserved.



From Left to Right: Christy Bryson, Margaret Nowels, and Jaci Wallace



**SUBMIT AN
ICARE CARD
TODAY!**



Taking a moment to submit an ICARE Card is a simple but powerful way to recognize the people who make our communities feel like home.

Our team members work hard every day to serve residents with Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence, often going above and beyond in ways that might otherwise go unnoticed.

When you share a quick note of appreciation, it lets them know their efforts truly matter and encourages the kind of care and kindness that makes our communities special. Your few words of gratitude can brighten someone's entire day and help celebrate the team members who make each MRC community such a wonderful place to live.

**Proud
to be
named**



MRC was recently named Senior Care's Best Place to Work 2026 from Activated Insights – the industry leader in senior care, health care, and human services surveys. MRC has met the rigorous benchmarks, backed by objective third-party data, to earn this badge of honor that signals excellence in care.

For a long time it has been difficult to pinpoint the qualitative benefits such as satisfaction and engagement that are most important in a senior care setting. Senior Care's Best from Activated Insights uses the largest third-party survey data set in the senior care industry from which to assess, certify, and rank organizations at regular intervals. Look for certified organizations to find the most trusted and exceptional senior care providers around.

“We are proud of this distinction, not only because it points to great company culture, but because it shines a light on what a difference purposeful work makes in the lives of employees. At the end of the day, MRC is one of the best places to work because we connect talent with calling, a tall order for most employers, but just a regular day at MRC,” shared Kelly Tittel, Talent Acquisition Director.

On the Cover:

Married since 1951, Arlen still affectionately refers to Marjorie as his "girlfriend."

A self-described "river rat," Arlen grew up along the Mississippi River before serving in the U.S. Navy as an air traffic controller. He later co-founded Bryan Marine with longtime partner Freddy Gale, while Marjorie managed the company's bookkeeping and administration. Together, they raised three children and now enjoy four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Charter members of Arbor Oaks at Crestview for the past 13 years, Arlen is known for lining the community with American flags on patriotic holidays and Aggie flags on Texas A&M game days, while Marjorie enjoys gathering with friends for a game of bridge.

Together, they continue to make Arbor Oaks a warmer place to call home.



Arlen



Marjorie



METHODIST
RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES



(281) 363-2600



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