

# THE *Lotus* LEAF

A THRIVEMORE NEWSLETTER



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## Center for Thriving Children Opens in Winston-Salem

**BRINGING HIGH QUALITY CHILDCARE & INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION**

A new childcare center designed to strengthen the Brookridge team and foster intergenerational connections opened in March.

The Center for Thriving Children at Brookridge will provide care for up to 144 children, and our own team members will receive priority enrollment as well as tiered fee subsidy from ThriveMore.

ThriveMore President and CEO Reed VanderSlik first had the idea for the center more than three years ago.

"We saw an opportunity to uplift our entire community," Reed said. "A childcare center would not only be a tremendous benefit to our team...

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## A SEASON OF GROWTH & GRATITUDE

# A Message from Our CEO

This March, ThriveMore reached a milestone worth celebrating in a meaningful way. On March 16, we marked our 75th anniversary, and while that single day is important, this moment deserves far more than a one-day celebration. Throughout the year ahead, we'll be reflecting on our history, honoring the people who are shaping our journey, and celebrating all that ThriveMore continues to be today.

Seventy-five years ago, ThriveMore was founded with a simple but powerful purpose: to care for older adults with compassion, dignity, and respect. While our name and programs have evolved over the decades, our mission has remained constant. At every point in our history, it has been people who made the difference. Visionary leaders, dedicated board members, committed team members, and the residents and families who place their trust in us have shaped ThriveMore into the organization it is today.

That same spirit is alive and well across ThriveMore now. From new programs and partnerships to

moments of connection and service that define daily life in our communities, the work happening today reflects our enduring mission and our commitment to the future. In the pages that follow, you'll read stories that highlight how ThriveMore continues to grow, innovate, and serve with purpose.



Thank you for being part of ThriveMore's story. Whether you have been with us for decades or are just getting to know our organization, we are grateful for your support and belief in the work we do together. I look forward to celebrating this milestone with you throughout the year ahead.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reed VanderSlik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Reed VanderSlik, President & CEO

## Taylor House Renovated

### 100-YEAR-OLD BUILDING GETS A FACELIFT

Taylor House residents are enjoying a new environment after the building in Albemarle was renovated starting last year.

Taylor House is ThriveMore's oldest property. It opened its doors in 1953 as the Albemarle Baptist Home when ThriveMore was still called Baptist Homes for the Aging.

But it wasn't a new building even then. It started out in 1926 as Yadkin Hospital, a county hospital where some of its current residents were born, such as Joyce Puckett. Born at the hospital in 1946, Joyce returned decades later to support her mother who lived at Taylor House in 2014, and now she calls the campus home herself.

"I love it here," she said, adding that when her mom was a resident she already knew this is where she



would like to live when she needed the support. "I had told Ginger [Harris], I said, 'When it's my time, I'm coming back here, so save me a room.'"

ThriveMore prioritizes investing in all our campuses, and so last summer renovations began on the property. An elevator was added and the second and third floor resident common spaces were updated, which included new flooring, paint, lighting and furniture. Additionally, a lot of electrical and wiring that was on the outside of the wall was moved inside walls, leading to an overall cleaner look.

Taylor House is a close-knit assisted living community with capacity for 28 residents. Some are offered need-based subsidies provided through the Baptist Retirement Homes Foundation. It's a warm and welcoming environment in Stanly County.

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## Center for Thriving Children Opens in Winston-Salem

### BRINGING HIGH QUALITY CHILDCARE & INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION

...members with young children — it would also open the door for meaningful intergenerational experiences for our residents.”

To bring the vision to life, ThriveMore partnered with Imprints Cares, a respected local nonprofit with decades of experience serving children and families in Forsyth County. ThriveMore oversaw the construction and owns the building, while Imprints Cares will lease and operate the center, ensuring a nurturing environment rooted in best practices for early childhood education.

Brookridge team member Marisha Foust is the mother of a five month old who will attend the

## A Fond Farewell & a Warm Welcome

### AT ARDENWOODS

After more than 23 years of dedicated leadership, Pam Pate retired as executive director of Ardenwoods, leaving behind a legacy of care, connection and community. During her tenure, Pam helped shape Ardenwoods into the welcoming, highly regarded place it is today — for residents, team members, and families alike. She remained with the community through the end of March to help ensure a smooth transition, and now looks to spend more time with family, friends and personal interests.

Sarah Marr stepped into the leadership role April 1. She brings nearly 12 years of experience at Ardenwoods and a deep understanding of the community. Sarah began her career at Ardenwoods as marketing director and later served as associate executive director and assisted living administrator. Many residents know her well — she has welcomed countless people to the community over the years

center. She shared at the grand opening event that Brookridge is like family to her and it means so much that she will have on-site childcare for her baby.

“I do appreciate all that you do,” she said to the team, adding that she knows she and her family will receive the care and support they need there.

Another key benefit of the Center for Thriving Children will be its intergenerational programming, said Dean Clifford, Brookridge resident. Spending time with children gives seniors purpose and joy, lowering blood pressure and even helping prevent depression, she said. And children benefit from receiving more love and care, not to mention learning from elders’ wisdom and experience.

“This is going to be a place of joy and life in our community, and I’m grateful to everyone who made it possible,” she said.



and has worked closely alongside Pam throughout her leadership journey.

“Pam has been an outstanding leader who consistently set the bar high,” Sarah said. “Whether she was shoveling snow after a storm or delivering hot meals to residents, she always made sure everything was running smoothly and everybody was well cared for. I’m excited to step into this role and continue building on the foundation she laid.”

As part of this leadership transition, Ardenwoods also celebrates the promotion of Gena Duncan to assisted living administrator at Heather Glen. Gena brings more than 15 years of senior living experience and reflects Ardenwoods’ continued commitment to developing leaders from within. Together, these changes honor the strong foundation Pam leaves behind while looking confidently to the future.

# Clowning for Love

## THRIVEMORE AT HOME MEMBERS FELL IN LOVE OVER JUGGLING & CLOWNING

When she first met the man that would become her husband, Kathy Carson was just clowning around. Although many young people in love could be described that way, Kathy was an actual clown. And she met Jerry in a way only natural to clowns: at a juggling club.

Jerry was a young computer programmer in 1991 who ran a juggling club on the weekend in Detroit, and Kathy called him up to ask about joining.

Kathy had only recently gotten into clowning. She says it was a bit of a fluke. At her day job as an insurance agent, her boss needed volunteers to be clowns in a parade. She found she really enjoyed it, and thought it could be a great way to help make ends meet as a single mom of two girls. So she called up her CPA and told him she wanted to start a side business.

"I said a clown business — he laughed for 10 minutes and then he said, 'You know, if anyone can make it work, Kathy, you can,'" she said. And the rest is history; Kathy started her own clown business and joined other clown groups over the years. When she was starting out though, she figured if she was a clown she needed to learn how to juggle. That's when she came across Jerry's club.

She started attending and they started dating a year later and got married in 1995. The entire wedding was juggling themed, including the newlywed couple juggling together instead of a first dance. They took their honeymoon to Sweden for the European Juggling Festival, where they wore "just married" shirts.

Juggling became a whole family affair too, with Kathy's daughters learning as well. Although daughter Brooke Taxakis says she had to be bribed with good food in order to learn. She didn't always love having to "share" her mom with other kids when Kathy was a clown.

"It was sometimes unfair that other kids got to have her, and I didn't," she said. But as an adult she realized how

much joy her mom gave to others through clowning.

Over the years, Kathy and Jerry kept their day jobs but continued to juggle and clown for many years. Jerry said he's had to slow down as he's gotten older and bending down to pick things up has become more difficult.

As they've gotten older, more things have changed. The couple settled in Raleigh in their current home in 2002. More recently, as they looked forward to the future, they realized they needed to make more firm plans for their future.

Then they heard about ThriveMore at Home. It's a program that helps older adults plan for their longtime care, helping them stay healthy and age in their own home rather than moving to a retirement home. They became members last year and said they immediately felt more peace of mind about their future.

"We feel a lot more comfortable," Jerry said. Kathy chimed in, "It's almost like there's something off my back now. We don't have to worry."



# Staying Active on Campus

## THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO AT TAYLOR GLEN

Independent Living (IL) at ThriveMore communities is a place to be active, enjoy life and get involved – and Taylor Glen in Concord is no exception.

“There’s just a lot of opportunities if you want to be out and about,” Taylor Glen IL resident Judy Schurig said. She moved to Taylor Glen more than six years ago with husband Ralph and they’ve found lots of activities to keep them active. They enjoy walking and exercise, Bible studies and billiards. But Judy’s also always looking for a fun outing and suggesting it to IL Life Enrichment Director Denise Boyd. And Denise listens to what she and other residents say they want.

“I think it’s wonderful, because Denise works so hard and she does try to come up with good ideas, things people would like and that are different,” Judy said. Residents have celebrations on campus, go to restaurants, or take day trips to see giant trolls or plays and musicals.

Denise says if there’s interest in an activity, she tries to make it happen. “I just weigh it out and if it fits on the schedule or if I get enough interest, then I do it.” She’s always looking for things to do “to keep them involved and engaged.”



Judy said she’s certainly succeeded.

“I think what they do here is wonderful,” she said. “There’s something for everybody. And there’s really no excuse not to be active.”

Taylor Glen is always responding to the evolving needs of its residents, and that includes enrichment programming. They recently have had a new influx of residents with the expansion being completed this year, and that means new people to join in and enrich campus life.

“They’re wanting to be involved,” Denise said of the new residents, some of whom have already begun teaching art classes on campus. “They’re wanting to share their talents with the rest of the community, which I love.”

Judy likened life at Taylor Glen to a constant vacation.

“I don’t think how you could want for anything to be nicer or anything more well planned,” she said. “It’s just a neat place to live.”





# Medicine From The Heart Program Grows

## PRESCRIPTION COPAY COVERAGE EXPANDS TO THIRD PHARMACY

With the rising cost of living, many older adults are feeling the pinch. And whether they rely on medication to manage chronic conditions or temporary ailments, high medical costs often eat into seniors' budgets.

At Hogan's Pharmacy in Lillington, NC, owner and Pharmacist Stacie Hogan said it's been hard to see some people struggle with the decision whether to buy medication or pay other bills.

She recently dispensed for a man who needed medicine to treat cancer. He heard the cost and tried to give the medicine back. This story could have had a heartbreaking ending, but in this instance there was a happy one.

"We were able to tell him, 'Well, we have this program, Medicine from the Heart, that can help you,'" she said. The program was able to cover his copay costs so he could receive the treatment that he needed. "It brought a lot of joy being able to help him," Stacie said.

Medicine from the Heart is the Baptist Retirement Homes Foundation's program that pays for prescription copays for older adults. The program

has long taken place at two independent pharmacies in Wilson and Smithfield. In February, it kicked off at a third location at Hogan's Pharmacy in Lillington.

The expansion was brought about through a partnership between the Foundation, Hogan's Pharmacy and Memorial Baptist Church in Buies Creek. All donations to the Medicine from the Heart program go directly to funding prescriptions for seniors in need. The church acts as the fiduciary, helping manage the payments, and the pharmacy identifies those in need and bills the fund for those prescriptions.

It's a wonderful partnership that the church is happy to be involved with and support.

"We were very excited about being able to help people of this age bracket with some life-saving medicine," Associate Pastor Meredith Craddick said.

In its first month in place, the program supported nine people with 35 prescriptions for a total of \$492.12.

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