

# connections

L I F E   A N D   N E W S   F R O M   W E S L E Y   W I L L O W S

*A Faith-Based Community*

FALL 2019

## PETERSON MEADOWS IS GROWING TOGETHER!

The Dick and Pat Nyquist Family Chapel grand opening was held on September 18, 2019. The 6,000 square foot building will provide our Peterson Meadows residents with a designated place to host chapel services, a fitness studio with equipment, and community space for various events such as luncheons, classes or other group activities. We are so grateful for residents that have a vision and come forward with the means to make their vision come true. We are blessed by our generous residents today and into the future who given to the Growing Together Campaign.

Peterson Meadows homes are full to capacity and this is a very good problem to have for our community. This made the purchase of an additional four acres of land on the west side of campus a very easy decision. We are excited to see how we can use that new land for adding new construction homes and, maybe, other new and exciting opportunities.

We welcome you to come tour our newest addition and learn more about joining our thriving community. Please contact Melissa Wright at 815-316-6901.



### STAFF COMMITMENT

**Kerri Mathes - 27 years**

**Retha Patterson - 26 years**

**Amy Goodman - 23 years**

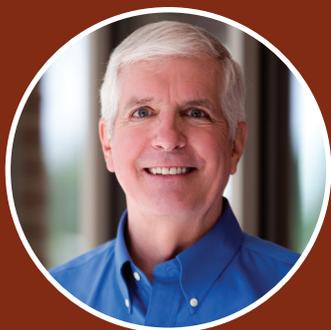
**Shirley Thompson - 21 years**

**Wayne Goodman - 20 years**

**Bonnie Jamison - 20 years**

**Bill Pratt - 20 years**

**Let Your Light Shine Bright!**



*Bill Pratt, President & CEO*

**“Our commitment to Relationships defines who we are.”**

*John Shockey, Chairman of the Board*

*Wesley Willows  
Board of Trustees*

*Joe Clinton*

*Jack Croffoot*

*Rebecca Epperson*

*Denise Popp*

*Bill Pratt*

*Dennis Roop*

*Joseph Scandrol*

*David Schmitt*

*John Shockey*

*Don Williams*

**OUR MISSION**

*We promote active secure lifestyles for Seniors through ongoing personalized care.*

**OUR VISION**

*Wesley Willows will be the leader in providing exceptional programs, services, and amenities for Seniors.*

**G**reetings from Wesley Willows! You're going to find that this issue of The Connections newsletter is filled with information. I think literally we have something for everyone. As you read the articles about residents, our staff, and everything that's happening at Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows, you will understand that every day there is excitement in the air on both campuses.

At the Peterson Meadows campus, there are two great highlights. The first one is the celebration of the opening of the Dick and Pat Nyquist Family Chapel. This is a crowning glory to the Peterson Meadows campus and will allow for many new programs and activities for our residents, our staff, and folks from the greater Rockford community. Also it is so encouraging to know that all of our new construction units are spoken for with people excited about the prospect of making the move to Peterson Meadows to begin their new life. This was accomplished in just four years after the first of 21 units was sold.

At the Wesley Willows campus many incredible things are happening as well. We are so thrilled about the opening of our new Memory Wellness Center and the success we have seen early on. Likewise, the residents have taken on the project of making it more convenient to cross the west campus on foot with a new walking path connecting the Castle Town Center to the garden area. They raised all of the funds to make this project become a reality. I think you will be inspired by the article on Veronica Gilley-Amdal, a young Philanthropist, who is impacting the lives of our residents in the health center. You'll be interested to read about all the people who are moving to Peterson Meadows and Wesley Willows. Perhaps, you will even know some of these new residents.

One of the exciting programs for our staff, now in its second year, has to do with the whole concept of leadership training for the future. When you read the stories and comments about our mentorship program, you'll be impressed with the desire and vision for growth that Wesley Willows has for our employees, both personally and professionally.

Another item of interest is a plan for a nationally recognized senior living expert to visit our campus. Larry Minnix, retired president of LeadingAge, our national association, will join us to share his thoughts and experiences on how we do this thing called senior living. If you were not able to join us for the Starlight Theater Box Office Benefit this year, you missed a truly spectacular event. Even though we had severe thunderstorms right up until the program began, folks had fun and enjoyed themselves. Additionally, their donations and ticket purchases helped benefit our Good Samaritan Fund.

Please also note the wonderful things that the Wesley Willows Auxiliary is doing for our campus, our residents, and our staff. And before you finish reading this issue of Connections, you will also get a hint at what direction our strategic plan for 2020 - 2023 is taking Wesley Willows during those years. Finally, there are still other articles that will pique your interest, so please enjoy.

If you have questions or you'd like to talk about any of the topics in this issue of Connections, don't hesitate to call me, I am always delighted to talk to those who are part of the Wesley Willows family.

*Bill Pratt*

## YOUNG PHILANTHROPIST



The Fund Development Department had a very special visit from Vernonica Gilley-Amdal, 12 years old, a student from Winnebago Middle School. In Veronica's social studies class she needed to identify a situation in the community that wasn't ideal and the students needed to come up with a positive solution. Veronica had a grandfather that lived at Wesley Willows and in her visits with him, she was never able to stay long enough to finish a puzzle. Veronica also saw that the Health Center needed new activities, puzzles and games. With all of this on her mind, Veronica chose to help our Willows Health & Rehab Center residents feel more at home while living here. Her goal was to raise \$100 to buy all new items. Veronica decided to have a raffle at Anna's Restaurant in Winnebago, IL. She ended up raising over \$340!

Veronica purchased almost everything on the wish list. She also added a few things that she thought would be including, a Puzzle Stow & Go. She thought it would encourage families to be able to start and finish a puzzle over several visits.

Most of the items that Veronica purchased were from AmazonSmile. The same products, prices, and shopping that are featured on Amazon.com are the same on AmazonSmile. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

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## Follow the Path to the Garden!

Each summer, our residents and staff enjoy choosing raised garden beds, tilling the soil, planting their seeds and seeing the fruits of their labor. It truly is amazing to see the 77 garden beds in full bloom. So much effort and time is put into each garden bed. When the gardens are ready to be harvested, the gardeners set up a "Gardeners Market" every Friday morning in the North East Campus parking lot. Donations are accepted in exchange for the produce. Any leftover produce is given to the Castle Town Center Bistro and the Rockford Rescue Mission. Proceeds from this market benefit the Good Samaritan Endowment Fund at Wesley Willows.



The popularity of the gardens has grown so much that residents wanted a walking path installed from the Castle Town Center to the Community Garden parking lot. This blacktop path will make the gardens easily accessible for all of our residents to travel from the Castle Town Center to the gardens.

The path is projected to be completed in the fall of 2019. To make a donation to this project please contact Jo Lyttle in the Fund Development department at (815) 316-1570. Thank you to all those who have given to the new walking path and we are happy to announce that we have raised over \$3,500.00!

## ONLINE GIVING

It is no secret that the younger and now older generations are likely NOT to carry a checkbook. With Wesley Willows being a not for profit organization, it is important for us to keep with the changing times. We have made it easier for our donors to give without being limited to their checkbook. In January of 2019 we made online donations available on our website. By giving online, your gift will be processed immediately and never have to worry about waiting for your check to clear the bank. You can also make a monthly gift to the Good Samaritan Fund if you would like right on our website. On the backside, to process your gifts is much simpler and fewer errors will occur. Online giving is safe and secure. We are so very grateful for your giving to the Good Samaritan Fund and other campaigns that we wanted to make it easy for you.

To give please go to the following link: <https://wesleywillows.org/who-we-are/charitable-opportunities/> click on the **DONATE** button. Also, know that we will always accept cash or a check.

Thank you for your generous support!

## Lead, Inspire, Empower

Staff from Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows campuses have the opportunity to develop leadership skills by participating in the Wesley Willows Career Mentorship Program. This is the second year of the mentorship program and is designed to match an employee with a Leadership Team Member. This provides the opportunity for those in the program to receive one-on-one support and guidance to reach individual career goals, as well as expand their knowledge of Wesley Willows, senior living and leadership development. Individuals who have been employed a minimum of six months and meet the specific guidelines are able to apply to participate in the program. Recommendation from the department supervisor is required.

This program was made possible through the generosity of Jack Packard. Since the program was created 12 individuals have participated in this six month program.



*“Being a part of the mentorship program helped me dig deeper into skilled nursing care and our memory care areas. It also helped me learn how we manage internal moves and strategize about residents who may need to move through the continuum. This only helped me be a better Senior Living Counselor and communicate with prospects.”*

Natalie Armstrong, 2018 Mentorship Class

## Rotary International comes to Wesley Willows!



Rotary is an international membership organization made up of people who share a passion for and commitment to enhancing communities and improving lives across the world. The difference this organization makes starts with people like you! In April of 2019, Jim Nelson, member of the downtown Rotary, suggested to Bill Pratt, CEO, to start a satellite club at Wesley Willows. Bill agreed and in July of 2019 the Wesley Willows Satellite started with 10 members. This group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month in the Castle Town Center Club Room. The motto of Rotary is “Service above Self” and with this motto the Wesley Willows Satellite group is focused on Rockford Reads, Rockford Academy and Build a Dream.

Jim Nelson believes having this satellite group at Wesley Willows will give the opportunity to those that would have difficulty driving downtown to be able to meet right here on campus. No driving needed! Don Black is the Chairman of the group and encourages every resident to truly think about becoming a member of this group. It is great way to keep active, help others and give of yourself.

## RESIDENT TESTIMONIAL FROM DALE & PATTI BIGGER

Dale and Patti Bigger moved to Wesley Willows just over a year ago. One day, they got a retirement magazine in the mail that listed things to consider when looking for a place to retire. As they read through the list, they realized that Rockford had everything they desired! While touring various retirement communities in the Rock River Valley, they were drawn to Wesley Willows because of all the amenities on campus. Wesley Willows is truly their home. They feel safe and comfortable living on campus and don't hesitate being outside after dark. They enjoy biking around campus and using the dog park every day.

Dale and Patti have made friends with the other couples/individuals on their street-gatherings, mostly Friday nights for a social hour. The group takes turns hosting and they know when they see a flamingo in a neighbor's yard on a Friday morning that social hour is on!

One of the reasons they chose Wesley Willows is because of the mission: "to promote active secure lifestyles for Seniors through ongoing personalized care." This summer Patti volunteered to organize the Auxiliary Ice Cream Social. She recruited over 50 volunteers to help with this event! Being a part of the Wesley Willows community is vital to living life to the fullest!



The website **SeniorAdvice.com** recently published their list of the **Top 20 Best Cities For Retirement 2019**, and Rockford, IL made the cut, coming in at the **number 18** spot.

## Golden Cross Award Recipient



Wesley Willows employee, Holly Briggs-Finn, was awarded the Golden Cross Award by the Council on Older Adult Ministries of the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church. This award is presented to individuals who are pursuing higher education in a field related to helping seniors.

For over 8 years, Holly has been an employee of Wesley Willows. She has worked in the Housekeeping, Laundry, and Maintenance Departments. Recently, Holly was promoted to Housekeeping Manager. She has provided leadership and works side-by-side with her team. This has helped her build a wonderful rapport with her team.

Because of her desire to advance professionally, Holly has enrolled in a Business Management program through Concordia University. She is on track to graduate with her bachelor's degree in December, 2021. Wesley Willows is thankful for Holly's loyalty and that her light shines bright for our residents!

# CONVERSATIONS WITH OUR CHAPLAIN, Eric Ngum

## The Future



A future looking organization is one that provides an extraordinary experience for the residents for today and for the future. The goal of chaplaincy spiritual care is attending to the inner world of residents, from daily concerns to the challenges that are at the very core of their health and wellbeing. We face the future whether we are ready for it or not. The future can either be a time we enthusiastically look forward to like graduating from high school or college and possibly marrying your high school or college sweetheart. It is looking forward to your first job; buying your first home; welcoming your first baby; grandbaby, or great grandbaby. The future is also looking forward to retiring, or now that you are retired looking forward to transitioning from one type of lifestyle to another, and then the ultimate future must be faced.

My goal as a chaplain is to engage with residents in their everyday life and help them work towards their future. When it seems everything you looked forward to has come and gone what is still there to look forward to? That is where spiritual care and chaplaincy come in to help sustain a fresh perspective about the ultimate future – HEAVEN. Paul in Philippians 3:20-21 puts it this way, *“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior . . .”* Different worldviews put forth different kinds of opinions about the future. In conversations with residents my goal as a chaplain is not only to help them find meaning and purpose for the moment; it is also to come alongside them as they wrestle with the meaning and purpose of the here and now and with the ultimate future. That future for those who are of faith is all about seeing Jesus face-to-face. *“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure,”* (1 John 3:2-3). The Chaplaincy ministry at Wesley Willows is here to support the residents and staff enjoy this moment in view of the promised future in Christ Jesus.

### Facts about the future:

1. It is coming
2. God is in charge
3. I must get ready for the future now
4. The chaplaincy program helps prepare you for the ultimate future

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## Welcome Home

We are excited to welcome these individuals\* to our growing communities! (April-August, 2019)

### Peterson Meadows

Dorothy Buckner  
Lou and Eve Agnew  
Bob and Suzanne Magill  
Marilyn Smaha  
Renee Shambeau  
Bonnie Nicholas  
Jan Aumann  
Lorraine Maffei  
Ed and Karen Linkenheld

### Wesley Willows

Carl and Marie Adams  
Jane Anderson  
Bev Bartlett  
Shirley Bauer  
Ralph and Carolyn Bergstrom  
Gary and Beverly Ewald  
Terrance and Lois Fisher  
Patsy Garren  
Alicia Goral  
Randy Graff  
Thomas and Suzanne Humphris  
Filip and Donna Johnson

Richard and Myrna Lake  
Michael and Ann Maitzen  
Bill and Martha Mitchell  
Lloyd and Marge Rhodes  
Dolores Shank  
Barbara Sherman  
Donald and Earlene Stefanelli  
Steve and Jo Ann Tamborello  
Bonnie Zollman  
Kim Zollman  
David and Susan Schoch

\*This list does not include residents who wish to remain anonymous.

To learn more about events that are happening at Wesley Willows or Peterson Meadows, find us on Facebook at [WesleyWillowsSeniorLiving](#), [PetersonMeadowsSeniorLiving](#), or visit us on the web at [www.wesleywillows.org](http://www.wesleywillows.org) to see our Full Community Calendar.

## STRATEGIC PLAN, 2020

The Board of Trustees and staff are in the trenches working on four strategic areas of focus for Wesley Willows. The purpose of strategic planning is to clarify a vision, set overall goals for our organization, and to develop a plan to achieve them.

The four areas of concentration are as follows:

1. **Information Technology:** Are we current with our technology needs and how do we prepare for future growth.
2. **Succession Planning:** The CEO, COO, and CFO are all with-in 4-6 years of retirement. How do we address these changes in leadership?
3. **Finalize Skilled Nursing Plan:** Determine what the best use of Willows Hunt Terrace, Willows Arbor and Hunt Terrace will be in the future.
4. **Pricing, Marketing, and Demographics:** Develop a plan for how to utilize the current campus and amenities and what needs to be done to keep them marketable. What does data tell us about how to proceed in the expansion of the WW campus.

When the strategic plan is approved by the Board of Trustees, we will share it with you.

## Wesley Willows Auxiliary: Serving our Campus Serving YOU

For over 50 years, the Wesley Willows Auxiliary has provided services, programs activities and fun for all who call Wesley Willows home. Volunteer residents and members from the community work to enhance the quality of life for residents and their families. Participating in the Auxiliary is an excellent way to meet people and make new friends. The main focus of the Auxiliary is to raise funds for the Good Samaritan Fund and Good Samaritan Endowment. These funds enable residents who have outlived their financial resources to continue to enjoy life on our campus. The Auxiliary also gives to various other efforts of Wesley Willows. For example, the Auxiliary committed to giving \$50,000 (over 5 years) to Wesley Willows to help purchase a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

A few areas that the Auxiliary oversees (with the help of Wesley Willow's staff):

- Timeless Treasures
- Gift & Card Shops
- Annual Christmas Tea & Elegant Elephant Sale
- Auction House
- The Campus Libraries
- Peddler's Cart
- Annual Ice Cream Social
- And so much more

All residents and friends of Wesley Willows are invited to join the Auxiliary. Your membership helps support the Auxiliary's financial efforts and all that it accomplishes. Residents are also encouraged to volunteer their time. All Auxiliary activities take place on campus, so volunteering is easy, fun and a great way to meet new people! For more information contact: Bob Eiss, President of the Auxiliary, at [bobeiss@aol.com](mailto:bobeiss@aol.com) or 815-988-0623.



Wesley  
Willows   
*An extraordinary senior living experience*

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For more information on how to make Wesley Willows your home, please call (815) 316-1500

## National Senior Living Expert, Larry Minnix

Oct. 23, 2019, 1 PM

We are very excited to have Larry Minnix, author and expert on Senior Living, join us on campus to talk about the benefits of living in retirement community.

There are nearly fifty million Americans who are sixty-five years or older, according to the US Census Bureau. However, the reality of caring for your aging parents or yourself is becoming increasingly complicated. How do you or your loved ones navigate the future and stay happy, active, and engaged in society? Author, Larry Minnix spent his entire career in mental health and aging care professions. In *Hallowed Ground: Stories of Successful Aging*, he offers prescriptive advice and insightful anecdotes about aging that everyone can use as we look toward the twilight years. Drawing from personal experience and more than four decades in a career in aging services, he covers the critical topics related to aging such as intimacy, retirement, and senior communities, among others. *Hallowed Ground* is a story collection of people who have a legacy of lessons to teach us so we -- and our loved ones -- can live the best of our last days. Call 815-316-6001 for more information.

