



Wesley Willows
Senior Living Communities

SPRING 2021

Connections

LIFE AND NEWS FROM WESLEY WILLOWS



New Horizons, New Opportunities, New Possibilities

There is never a dull moment at Wesley Willows. Things are always moving, progressing, and evolving. Over the past year, the management staff of Wesley Willows has been focused on not only COVID-19 safety precautions but the transition of three key leadership staff that will be retiring in 2022.

These individuals have grown as a family with Bill Pratt, CEO, while the campus has continued to expand. Bob Moran, Director of Facilities & Grounds, Mark Ticknor-CFO, and Deb Adkins-COO all plan to retire in late summer of 2022. Between these three and Bill, there are 70 years of experience managing, operating, and expanding our Wesley Willows ministry to Seniors. Spending time to replace that experience is critical for Wesley Willows' success moving forward.

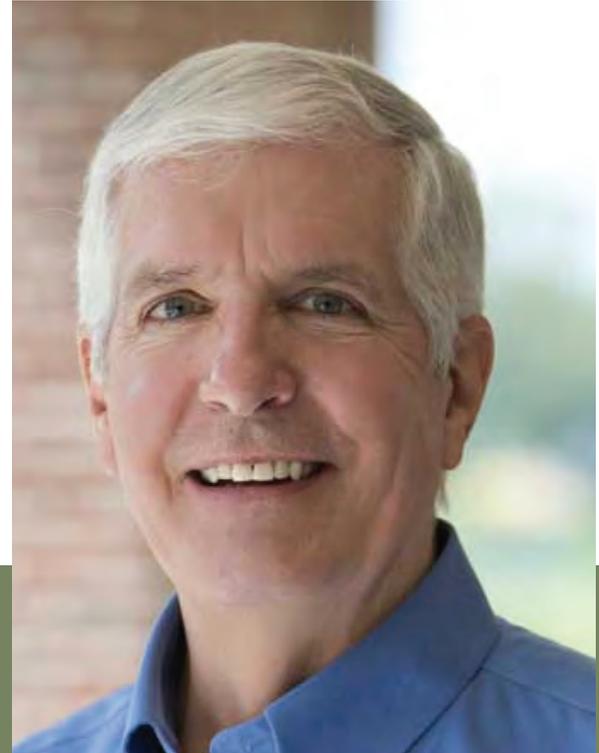
A Strategic Planning Committee comprised of Board of Trustees members and management staff have spent months developing a plan for the future of Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows. A recruitment plan was developed with consideration for the retiring staff and the training of new leadership. It can be a time of uncertainty with these key individuals retiring. The following verse from the Bible can help give us all some encouragement for the future.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” — Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

Wesley Willows has always and will continue to put residents first during times of change. Our residents are the reason we exist. Please trust that the Wesley Willows team has found high-quality leaders to replace our valued staff. If you have questions or concerns, please email Bill Pratt at billp@wesleywillows.org.

We are heading into new horizons, new opportunities, and possibilities, and as Bill Pratt has said before.....
“Buckle your seatbelts! Here we go!!!”

*Paula Capone
Director of Fund Development*



A message from Bill Pratt

In this issue of Connections there is an informative article outlining what will transpire over the next 16 to 18 months relative to some long-term senior employees retiring.

In my 46 years of Senior Living, I have worked for seven different Senior Living organizations. As you might imagine there were more job changes in the early part of my career compared to the later years of my career. To explain that, I have worked for two organizations over the past 32 years meaning five different organizations during the first 14 years of my career.

It took a loving and caring family to tolerate and support my changing positions (always involving a move) to learn, grow, and develop as a professional. As a result, in the last 32 years, I have been able to be a CEO at both organizations. I share this because just as I went out and pursued new opportunities during the course of my career, I also could observe quite candidly how other organizations handled my departure – succession planning.

In all instances including my last position in Pennsylvania from 1988 to 1999 each of my employers really flew by the seat their pants and only started recruiting as I was leaving.

I'm sharing these experiences because I want to help you understand the role succession planning has played here at Wesley Willows for the past 21 years. It has been a blessing to me to have discussions with the Board of Trustees for the past 4 to 6 years as we began to develop our succession plan knowing there were leadership retirements 2-4 years away, even though they were never publicly mentioned.

The Board and I have had many discussions about what would happen when those employees actually started to plan their retirement.

Our conversations really allowed us to do some out loud strategic thinking in preparation for the strategic planning that now seems to be unfolding in our midst. With Debra Adkins, COO, Mark Ticknor, CFO, and Bob Moran, Director of Facilities and Grounds, leaving in the next 16 months we have been actively engaged in this process mentally for a good 24 months but only on paper within the last 16 months.

I announced to the Board, the residents, and our staff that these changes were going to occur back in December 2020. Doing this in the middle of the COVID War while difficult, really afforded us the opportunity to get information out and be transparent just as I have been with the Board about all succession planning. That article I referenced at the start describes the process and states when people are leaving and who is going to replace them. It brings great satisfaction to me because we are planning and prepared. We have allowed time to work through with the new leadership staff what the position really entails with the onboarding done in each case by the current staff person.

When I was hired to join Wesley Willows in July of 1999, my immediate inquiry upon arrival was how is it that we didn't have current leadership who would be interested in the position of CEO and or even mildly qualified for the position. At that time, as it is now, Wesley Willows was in as great a shape financially, facility-wide, and culturally as any Senior Living organization in today's world. More times than not, there is a desire by the Board to maintain and build on such success. The easiest way to do that is promoting from within with skilled and culturally fit individuals. That was not the case when I came to Wesley Willows, but it has been my goal since.

As we rolled out our plan in December, we had identified current staff we thought would be interested in the two executive positions. We had three internal candidates. That made for a good opportunity to talk with, discuss, and address how the positions would be filled and what exactly Wesley Willows was looking for in these two new key leadership roles.

Going through the process I was delighted with our staff. After multiple interviews and much feedback, we finalized who would be offered the new positions.

In the case of the Director of Facilities and Grounds, we did not have internal candidates apply and consequently did a hard look to the outside. The candidate selected comes from a great background and seemingly matches our Wesley Willows culture. Bob Moran has been especially good at that in his 13+ years here. This is a time when we will have the ability to review this new person for quite a period of time and have Bob and Debra evaluate his talents, skills and culture-ability within the organization.

My hope is that all three of these new leaders will be very successful as they begin and progress in their new positions. In fact, my hope is they will more than succeed and Wesley Willows will continue on its upward trajectory in not only the years ahead but in the decades ahead. I am fully aware that the bell is ringing in the future for myself as well and I'm confident the process we have laid out will reap great success when it is time for me to step aside and make room for a new CEO.

Bill Pratt

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

We are here to encourage each resident to remain independent and active; feel and be safe; and benefit from the programs and services that are tailored to meet their individual needs.

We empower residents to enjoy a lifestyle within a safe, secure environment where they may remain as active and independent as possible. Meeting their goals enables us to fulfill our mission.



Wesley Willows Community Outreach – 2020

It has been a difficult year for most of us but that doesn't mean we stop thinking of people and reaching out to those that are in need. Both Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows residents and staff lovingly gave to our community at large. Giving to and sharing with others is something close to our hearts. Here are some highlights of our 2020 outreach endeavors:

***Give-Alanche of Good Fund:** Our residents asked what they could do for the staff to support them during the COVID-19 pandemic. Realizing what a fantastic job the employees had been doing, they raised \$10,000 to encourage the employees. The Give-Alanche Fund is designed to give special recognition to staff, ranging from t-shirts to food to personal care items and even monetary rewards.

At the same time, gift cards were donated by the residents. 60 gift cards were collected and given to employees at the Annual Employee Picnic in July.

***Helping Hand:** The Helping Hand Fund was created by residents to bring the Wesley Willows campus together as a community during the COVID-19 pandemic. This program was an opportunity for the residents to give to the people of the Rock River Valley and to help make things better for the community. It allowed the residents to show that we are here and supportive of our community at large. In one month, **\$5,000** was raised by the residents to give to the **Rock River Valley Food Pantry**.



***Conklin Elementary/Rockford Rescue Mission Cold Weather Kits Drive:** Over the past two years, Wesley Willows employees have provided over 700 Cold Weather Kits to kids in need at Conklin Elementary School. This year, we voted to give to both Conklin School and the Rockford Rescue Mission. The staff from Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows gave kid-size gloves, winter hats, kids socks, and over \$700 to purchase items for the Rockford Rescue Mission to be delivered to their facility in December of 2020. The Cold Weather Kits for Conklin students were delivered in January when the students returned to school.



***Wesley Willows 2020 Graduates:** We had seventeen high school and college graduates that did not have the opportunity to “walk the stage” to receive their diplomas. Wesley Willows invited residents and family members of the graduates to take part in our “Class of 2020 Graduation Ceremony” on June 3rd. COVID-19 protocol was followed.

***WW Community Garden:** All excess vegetables were donated to the Rock River Valley Food Pantry and the Rockford Rescue Mission.

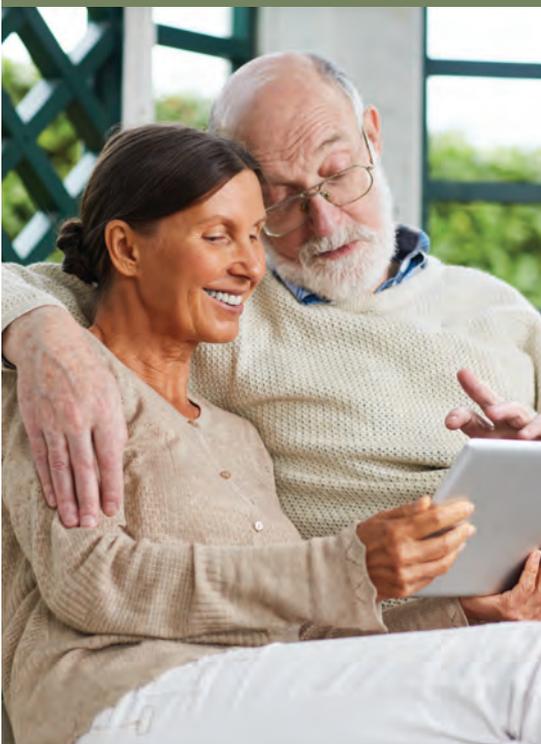
***Décor and More (AKA The Auction House)** Items that do not sell at Décor and More are donated to the Rockford Rescue Mission.

Staying Connected During the Pandemic-Embury Drive Neighbors

The need for physical distance leads many of us to feel isolated in these challenging times. Being socially connected is considered a fundamental human need. Our connection to others enables us to battle diseases, thrive, and survive. Research shows that people who take part in meaningful, and productive activities generally live longer, have a sense of purpose, and maintain a better mood.

Some Wesley Willows residents that live on Embury Drive on the east side of campus were determined to stay connected during the winter months. But how were they going to do that when temperatures were at 0 degrees? Residents Sherry Campbell and Neita Webster decided to gather their neighbors on Zoom, a video conference meeting program that allows people to use their iPad or cell phones to join in on the call. Now, there are 14 Embury Drive neighbors that gather on Zoom once a week to catch up with one another and make sure that everyone is well. Neita also sends out a question to discuss via email prior to each Zoom meeting.

Several of the Embury Drive neighbors had to learn how to use Zoom, so this goes to show that you are never too old to learn something new!



Here are a few more suggestions on staying connected during the pandemic:

1. Schedule regular calls with friends and family
2. Start a text or email chain with friends about good articles to read, videos to watch, podcasts to listen to, songs to listen to, etc.
3. Play online games, such as Bridge, Words with Friends, etc.
4. Start a recipe exchange with family or friends by email, shared drive, or Google Docs.
5. Tune into live-streamed concerts and other events together
6. Tune into Wesley Willows YouTube page.

Wesley Willows Volunteers Extraordinaire!

Bob and Georgia Eiss moved to Wesley Willows in October of 2014 and fell in love with how close it was to their children and their families, not to mention the beauty and location. After moving to Wesley Willows, they soon found the community to be friendly and accepting.

Georgia started volunteering at Timeless Treasures in January of 2017. She now volunteers three days a week at the Décor & More (The Auction House). Georgia also sits on the Auxiliary Board of Directors. Following Georgia's footsteps, Bob wanted to volunteer and immediately found himself being the President of the Auxiliary and the Manager of the Auction House. Nothing like jumping in with both feet!

The Auxiliary is a resident-driven group that has an elected Board of Directors, committees, and volunteers to work in coordination with Wesley Willows management and staff. The Auxiliary provides funding to the Good Samaritan Fund and Good Samaritan Endowment through its dues and other fund-raising activities. After the financial commitment is made to the mentioned Funds, special resident projects are able to be funded, such as purchasing a new resident bus, furniture for the Pocket Park, and campus TVs, etc.

Under the leadership of Bob Eiss, the Auxiliary has raised an average of \$60,000 a year. To raise this much money takes a lot of work - Bob volunteers about 30 hours a week with Décor and More (The Auction House) and then another 5 hours a week with the Auxiliary. Décor and More is the main source of funding for the Auxiliary.

By volunteering with The Auxiliary and Décor and More, Bob has truly felt the heart of the community. *"I love interacting with the residents, staff, and visitors,"* says Bob.

Bob and Georgia have really captured what it means to live an extraordinary life at Wesley Willows, and they make sure others are living it too with their dedication and commitment to their volunteer responsibilities. Thank you, Bob and Georgia, for making a difference!!



Welcome Home

We are excited to have new individuals in our growing communities! (Oct. 2020 – Feb. 2021). We welcome them to our Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows families where they will experience active and secure lifestyles for Seniors. It is a blessing to have them join us!

Wesley Willows

Larry and Peggy Slater

Landis and Patricia Lindell

Barbara Slocum

Teesi Heljula

Sue Tomblinson (*Sue's spouse, Ted*

Tomblinson, passed away on February 9, 2021)

Joseph McGroarty and Patricia Rooney

Roger and Bette McDougall

Margaret Adams

Albert and Marlyn Sicotte

Phil and Susan Zimmerman

Roger Bastian

Margaret Burgert

Charles Griffith

Peterson Meadows

Tony and Phyllis Zarembski

Karon Anderson

David Miller

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

Campus Highlights

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

IN TODAY'S WORLD,
**WOMEN AND
FINANCES GO
TOGETHER** JUST FINE.

TEN SMART FINANCIAL STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN

Since women have longer life expectancies, they are predicted to have to provide longer for themselves in retirement. Come hear about tips to improve financial strategies for having enough money to live comfortably during retirement. Teresa Harezlak and Matt Armstrong from Savant Wealth Management will present strategies to improve your financial outlook. (COVID-19 protocols will be followed).

Class size: 7

Location: Memory Wellness Center, 4117 Albright Ln, (across from the Health Center)

Time: **Tuesday, April 20th at 10 am or Thursday, April 22nd at 1 pm**

Reservations are a must! Call or email Kathleen Hedrick to secure your spot at 815-316-1570 or kathleenh@wesleywillows.org

Covid-19 Vaccines Administered to Residents

We are seeing steep declines in new COVID-19 cases in long-term care facilities across the nation demonstrating the remarkable impact the COVID-19 vaccines and protocols are having on the pandemic. We are delighted the residents of Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows had the opportunity to choose to receive their vaccine shot at their perspective campus'. Over 300 residents at Wesley Willows and over 100 residents at Peterson Meadows chose to be fully vaccinated. Other residents had the opportunity to be vaccinated at their Doctor's office or other available sites. The National Guard was at both facilities to assist in the process. The Postal Shoppe of Edgebrook was also be at Wesley Willows to laminate the residents' COVID Vaccine cards free of charge.

"At Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows, ensuring the safety of our residents is at the forefront of every decision we make as we navigate the pandemic. It is each person's choice to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine and I am grateful to know that so many of our residents are choosing to be vaccinated. We've made the best of this past year and are optimistic about the future beyond COVID-19 – for our residents, our staff and our community."

— Helen Dittmer, Director of Nursing



Peterson Meadows Keeps Moving

While the pandemic caused fear across much of the world, Peterson Meadows residents and staff were able to find peace by maintaining as much normally as possible. It takes great team work and creativity to modify our life during a pandemic. But it can be accomplished with the right space like the Dick & Pat Nyquist Family Chapel.

Dick and Pat Nyquist (former Peterson Meadows residents) and their family had a vision for a Chapel that residents could use not only for chapel services but for communal gatherings as well. The space is so large that during the pandemic, regular scheduled resident programs could still function with COVID-19 protocols in place. All Peterson Meadows residents were given the opportunity to participate in Life Enrichment activities such as exercise classes, chat groups, bible studies, virtual tours throughout the world via YouTube and a book club.

When the plans for the Dick and Pat Nyquist Family Chapel were being developed, no one knew there would be a pandemic that residents, staff, and families would have to deal with. The design and outside access points provided an ideal set-up for continued use. Residents in the apartments and homes, although separate, had opportunities to utilize the space for planned activities and indoor family visits. This also gave residents opportunities to interact with friends and neighbors while so many across the country were isolate in their homes.

In talking with Dick and Pat's son, Dr. Scott Nyquist, recently, Bill Pratt expressed what an unknown blessing the Chapel turned out to be. We are so very thankful to all of the other donors from Peterson Meadows that contributed to the "Growing Together" campaign and played a part in helping to create this beautiful space.





Normally, this issue of the Connections Newsletter is when we announce what our Box Office Benefit will entail. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our annual fundraiser for the Good Samaritan Fund is postponed. Have no fear, the Fund Development Department is working hard to bring you a fabulous event, COVID-19 style. This is the largest fund-raising event that we have for the Good Samaritan Fund and the show must go on! Be on the lookout for more information as we all *mask up* during the pandemic.



Planned Giving

Planned giving, also referred to as gift planning or legacy giving, is a donor's intention to contribute a major gift to an organization, beyond their lifetime. Unlike an annual gift (an outright gift made for current use), a planned gift is for the future. Essentially, donors make arrangements for planned gifts in the present but they are actually doled out at a later date. Additionally, the major gifts contributed by a donor can be made as a part of their financial or estate plans.

At Wesley Willows our planned giving program is called the Robert Ash Legacy Society. Here are some possible ideas for planned giving:

- * Donate all or part of your entrance fee (popular)*
- * Include Wesley Willows in your will or living trust (most popular on campus) *
- * Designate Wesley Willows as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy *
- * Create a gift annuity *

Why make a planned gift? It's simple – not only is it easy to do, but your gift will be deferred until after your lifetime so your current income is never affected. Don't worry, with many planned gifts, you have the right to change your mind at any time.

Contact Paula Capone, Director of Fund Development to learn more about the Robert Ash Legacy Society. Ph. 815-316-1512 email: paulac@wesleywillows.org



A common myth about planned giving is that it's only for the wealthy when in reality it's for everyone! No matter your age or income, all you need is a plan. When you take time to plan, you create a secure future for yourself and the places you love.

Conversations with our Chaplain

“God Restores”. . . and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually. (2 Samuel 9:7)

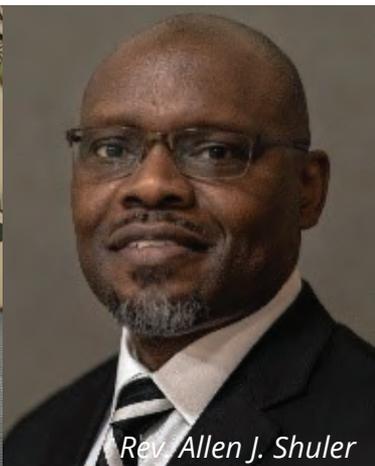
Pondering over the last year, our nation faced some rather unusual and unprecedented challenges. From a national shutdown due to COVID-19 to a divisive presidential election and a frigid winter storm that left thousands of Texans without heat, We now stand upon an economic-socio-political and spiritual precipice, saying, “what’s next?”

In the story about David and Mephibosheth, we are given the answer to our predicament (2 Samuel 9:1-13). David ascends to the throne of Israel and God gives him victory over his enemies. Regardless of the pain and struggles, he faced during the last sixteen years of his life; David still takes the opportunity to bless the family of his friend Jonathan. He asks the question *“is there anyone of Saul’s house to whom I may show the kindness of God”* (2 Samuel 9:3).

Through all we have faced this past year, David’s invitation to Mephibosheth highlights the blessings we have in King Jesus who seeks to give grace and kindness that assures us: God remembers, God rescues, and God restores. *“So, David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father’s sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually.”* (2 Samuel 9:7). We encourage you to continue standing on the promises of Jesus and to show kindness to others. Jesus is the King who showers us daily with His gracious kindness and welcomes us to sit continually at His table. Our God Restores!



Rev. Thomas DeWitt



Rev. Allen J. Shuler

Wesley Willows Chaplain Ministry

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For more information on how to make Wesley Willows your home, please call 815.316.1500

