



Wesley Willows
Extraordinary Senior Living

FALL 2021

Connections

LIFE AND NEWS FROM WESLEY WILLOWS



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.

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.

Box Office Benefit a Big Success!



Earlier this Summer on July 25th , we celebrated the Box Office Benefit with a showstopping performance of *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* at Starlight Theater. It was a wonderful day of coming together as a Wesley Willows family to enjoy a classic musical and raise over \$84,000 for the Good Samaritan Fund.

All your favorites – Linus and Lucy, Snoopy and Schroeder, Charlie himself and his little sister Sally – paraded about the stage, reenacting the most popular skits from the hit comic strip, Peanuts. Until recently, this beloved comic was syndicated in thousands of newspapers across six continents and published in forty-eight different languages! It was a delightful show produced by our local Starlight Theater at Rock Valley College.

This annual event provides every attendee with a Dilly Bar from Dairy Queen, a Goodie Cup filled with tchotchke items and candy, and free popcorn, cookies and water. New this year, the Rockford Police Department sent out their K9 unit to demonstrate the powerful & dynamic force a K9 presence brings to the Rockford Police Department. It may not have been Snoopy out there running down the barrels but it was “Snoopy the Red Barron” approved!

Each year, the Good Samaritan Fund serves an average of 30 residents, providing ongoing and personalized care to those who have outlived their financial resources. Gifts received from the Box Office Benefit go directly to the Good Samaritan Fund, guaranteeing a lifetime of care to our residents. This commitment to our residents provides peace of mind, understanding and confidence that they will be cared for the rest of their lives at Wesley Willows.

As Charlie Brown would say, *“Good Grief!”*, we are in unprecedented times but we were proud that we could continue the tradition of the Box Office Benefit this summer!

Thank you to our 2021 Box Office Benefit Corporate Sponsors.



Conversations with our Chaplain.

As we are continuing to navigate through all the twists, turns and turbulences of this present life, let us hold fast to this one unyielding fact – God is good and His love is everlasting! God is good when life and our health are not. He is good when our finances or family may not be. And God is good when people are not. Yes, God is good when situations in our lives are not.

In Psalm 107:1-9, the Psalmist gives three key insights to encourage us to keep flowing and following in the goodness of God. First, we must always give thanks to the Lord for who He is and the blessed redemption He gives us (vs 1-2). We must live in God's goodness even when our situations are not so good (vs 3-7). And furthermore, be still and know that God's goodness fulfills our lives (vs 8-9).

Biblical scholar Dr. J. Clinton McCann Jr., states the following about the goodness of God: "...we would do better to think of God as the vulnerable victim, or at least on the side of the vulnerable and victimized. God is not causing the pain, but rather God is sharing the pain and empowering people to endure it. God is not orchestrating the tragedy, but rather God is sharing the grief and preparing people to live beyond it. God is not creating natural disasters, but rather God is suffering with the victims and motivating people to respond with compassion and generosity. Why? Because God is good, and God's faithful love lasts forever!" We pray your hearts are encouraged, that you continually show kindness to others and that you always put your trust in the Lord. Remember Jesus is the King of Kings who cares for us, covers us and showers us daily with His abiding goodness and faithful love. Our God is Good!



Rev. Thomas DeWitt



Rev. Allen J. Shuler

Wesley Willows Chaplain Ministry

Rev. Thomas DeWitt, M.Div, BCCS
thomasd@wesleywillows.org | (815) 316.1535

Rev. Allen J. Shuler, Jr., M.Div
allens@wesleywillows.org | (815) 316.1608

A message from Bill Pratt

Fall has finally arrived here in Northern Illinois. It's a great time of year to see so many changes, so many colors, another edition of the Connections newsletter, and the results of our last fiscal year at Wesley Willows.

Clearly the war against COVID-19 continues and yet in this edition of Connections, you'll see many reasons to celebrate Wesley Willows this fall. Since our last issue we have had the annual Box Office Benefit. It had wonderful success as we were able to return to our normal format at Starlight Theatre. We had a great crowd and if you read the article, you'll see that the fundraising was a smashing success. It was an amazing afternoon with friends and family of Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows providing the support that we receive each year. We are very grateful for all of our corporate sponsors that are listed inside this issue as well.

Over the past six months the number of Seniors moving to Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows has improved dramatically over the previous six months. This looks like an ongoing trend as we kick off the new fiscal year.

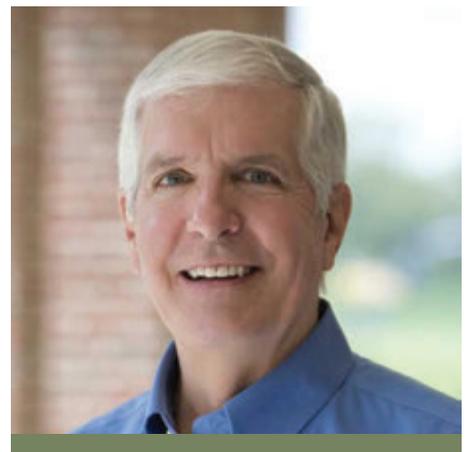
I hope you'll take time to read the article on Conversations with our Chaplains as they share some scripture from Psalm 107 amidst some rather trying times with Covid-19 and across our nation. Details are inside relative to the Robert Ash Legacy Society dinner. The turnout wasn't what we hoped it would be, but those attending were very interactive and appreciated being able to hear Dan Ross from the Community Foundation speak on Leaving a Legacy. Bob Ash passed earlier in the year. We were able to celebrate Bob and his wife, Sharon, with a gift of acknowledgment for their work at Wesley Willows.

You'll notice a fun article about a group of neighbors who get together every morning to share in the Pledge of Allegiance. It provides a way of staying in touch and encouraging each other during this pandemic. Speaking of the pandemic I am happy to share with you that vaccination rates at Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows are extremely high with over 98% of residents vaccinated and 88% of all staff vaccinated. These numbers are above national averages for Senior living communities. Wesley Willows does not require employees to be vaccinated, but rather encourages that they do. For those who are not vaccinated, they are tested weekly for Covid and are not eligible to return to work without a negative test result. This has been a successful effort in terms of keeping our residents in healthcare as safe as possible as well as trying to keep all of our INDISPENSABLE WARRIORS safe and free from COVID-19.

In closing, it was a joy for me to read the article on our Volunteer Extraordinaire, Gail Holtzman. You will enjoy how Gail has become very active in the Wesley Willows community and has a heart for our mission, our residents, and our staff.

I want to wish all of you a great Thanksgiving and very Merry Christmas along with God's blessings for 2022!

Bill Pratt, CEO



Robert Ash Legacy Society Dinner.

The Robert Ash Legacy Society (RALS), our planned giving program, held its annual dinner in August, at the Castle Town Center. President Dan Ross from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois was the guest speaker, speaking on the “*Art of Leaving a Legacy*”. The beauty of leaving a planned gift means giving something that will be valued and treasured by those who survive after your passing. His presentation was very inspirational and everyone left feeling good knowing that they have committed to Wesley Willows for the future.

We took the opportunity to acknowledge the name sake of our planned giving program, Robert Ash (Bob). We were saddened by the passing of Bob in May, 2021. So we wanted to take the time to acknowledge the giving legacy that Bob was so passionate about at Wesley Willows. We presented an etched glass vase to Sharon Ash (Bob’s wife) as a token of our appreciation of Bob’s generosity.

The Robert Ash Legacy Society (RALS) permits donors to give to Wesley Willows via stocks, wills or trusts, entrance fees or other vehicles that can be adapted to each donor’s need.

For more information on becoming a member of RALS, contact Paula Capone, Director of Fund Development, 815-316-1512 or paulac@wesleywillows.org.



America the Beautiful!

A pandemic isn’t stopping this neighborhood group at Wesley Willows! In an effort to stay connected, the Aldersgate Drive neighbors decided they would get together to say the pledge of allegiance every morning at 10:00 a.m. no matter rain, snow, sleet or sunshine. Having this morning get-together gives them the opportunity to check in with one another while quarantining to make sure that all is well.

These neighbors are still meeting every morning and will continue to do so even after the pandemic! The spirit of our residents is to be admired and their patriotism to be well-regarded! Our residents are resilient, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Wesley Willows Volunteer Extraordinaire – Gail Holtzman!

Gail Holtzman has been a Wesley Willows resident since 2014, having come all the way from Alaska! Gail's sister lived at Lake Summerset (now at Wesley Willows) and when Gail came to visit her, the two would often talk about living closer to one another. This led them to visit possible retirement communities. When they came to Wesley Willows, Gail immediately fell in love with the campus. When she retired from her nursing profession after 43 years, she moved into her new home at Wesley Willows.

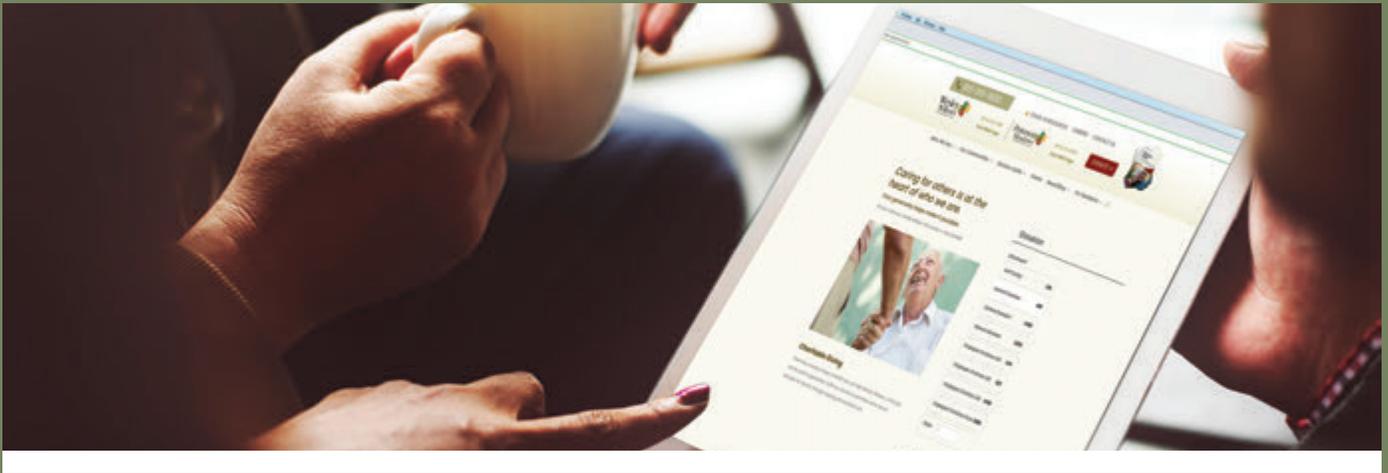
It took about a year after Gail moved in to start her volunteer efforts. When she walked into her first meeting of the B. Whitgrove Retired Nurses Association, all of the members said *"and there is our new leader"*. They realized Gail was the youngest of the group of 72 retired nurses. She was a natural fit.

Soon after, Gail found herself volunteering as the Resident Council President, the Auxiliary Secretary and was also asked to be on the Health Care Advisory Committee.

Gail takes all her commitments very seriously and works hard to make sure that programs and events are executed with quality and every resident is at top of her mind.

One of Gail's most memorable volunteer moments was organizing the annual Christmas Tree Decorating Day for Willows Arbor, Willows Health and Rehab Center and the Castle Town Center. She was in awe of the 60-70 volunteers that came to make sure the Christmas trees were displayed with beauty and style. "It was great to see how the volunteers were having so much fun talking and laughing with each other as they worked. Then to see all the residents enjoy the decorated Christmas trees was true joy!", said Gail.

Being a volunteer at Wesley Willows gives Gail structure to her life, something that is very important to her. Not being a native of Rockford, volunteering gave Gail the opportunity to meet many people and develop new lifelong friendships.



Valuable Information.

The last 18 months have certainly been a roller coaster ride when it comes to the stock market. Now, the market is up, we wanted to take the opportunity to share some valuable information with you.

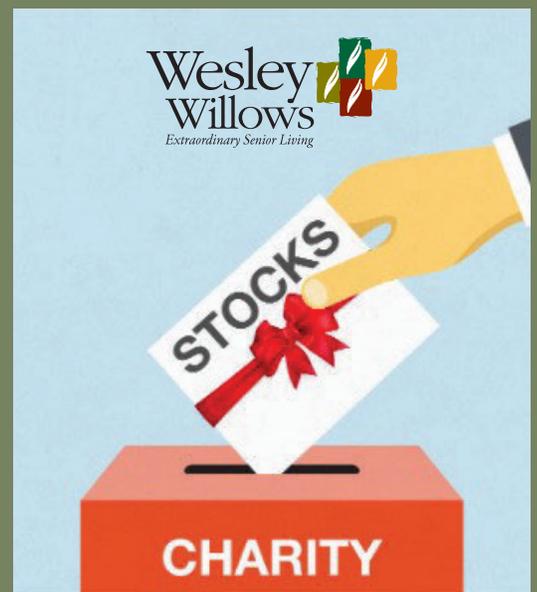
If you are planning to make a charitable gift to a not-for-profit this year, now could be the right time to do it using stock. Gifting appreciated stock is a smart way to give because it avoids the capital gains tax you would have on the appreciation.

Let us tell you how it works: you can transfer shares directly to Wesley Willows! You'll receive an immediate tax deduction on the fair market value of the stock and you'll increase your giving impact, because as not-for-profit, we don't pay capital gains tax when we sell the shares.

By transferring stock directly to Wesley Willows, you literally turn tax dollars into additional funding to help our families thrive, while increasing your charitable deduction.

If you have your shares of stock in a brokerage account, this is a convenient way to transfer your securities. Simply instruct your broker to electronically transfer your securities out of your account into Wesley Willows **Charles Schwab** account at **Focus Financial**.

For more information, contact Paula Capone, Director of Fund Development, 815-316-1512 or paulac@wesleywillows.org.



Make Wesley Willows your home: 815.316.1500

Welcome Home!

We are excited to have new individuals in our growing communities! (March – August 2021) We welcome these residents 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!

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

Wesley Willows

Alvin and Patricia Barkhau
Ann McCormick
Barbara Dittman
Barbara Peterson
Bart Beninco
Roger and Bette McDougall
Carol Tanner
Charles Fry
Charles and Barbara Pefley
Dave and Diane Risley
Debra Persaud
Diane Weeks
Harold Giffor
LaVonne Arendsee
Linda Brinkman
Lydia Schafer
Marilyn Calvagna
Mary Hahn
Nancy and Chad Kincheloe

Patricia Piwonka
Ruth Todt
Sharon Peterson

Peterson Meadows

Ann Burke
Barbara Loveland
Bill and Pat Geist
Carl and Pat McNair
Cynthia Lindgren
Earl Smith
Helen George
Margaret Cooney
Maria Gilfillan
Richard and Jeanette Detrick
Richard and Mary Osborne
Ron and Judith Bookland
Sue Drager
Ulla Kercher



Fran Webb, Resident