

# HERITAGE *of Care*

# THE BETHESDA LETTER

BETHESDA HOME...independence, respect, dignity since 1899

## Discipline of Devotion



Bethesda has always been a place that cares for people both physically and spiritually.

That is made evident every time a meal is served in the main dining room. At each meal one of the staff at Bethesda shares a devotional with all of the residents.

Linda Peters, CEO, gives a devotional every Tuesday morning at 8:15. She has been doing this for as long as she has worked at Bethesda. She's been here for 15 years.

The devotionals are open to all residents and staff, and all are encouraged to attend. The whole staff breaks away from what they are doing to attend the devotionals.

"We value this time as a great way to focus and get the day started," said Peters.

Each member of the staff take turns and give a devotion one time per week. During evenings and weekends the nursing staff give the devotionals.

For the noon devotionals, the activities director or the chaplain provide the devotional time.

The time is usually only a few minutes long but has become such a meaningful part of everyone's day, and it would be greatly missed if it were to be discontinued.

"I hear many comments from residents about how much they really enjoy the devotion time," Peters said.



**For 15 years, Linda Peters has shared morning devotions with Bethesda residents.**

"Many times those who are more musically inclined will sing or play instruments for their input. Sometimes Venita Schroeder will sing old hymns and Connie Wiens, accompanies her. Other times, Eric Schrag will round up Rick and Charlie Woelk to provide a trio of guys who can play and sing incredibly well."

"These are all special times for both residents and staff. The variety is amazing and the quality of the input is truly a blessing," Peters explained.

For Peters and the rest of the staff this is just one more way to connect with the residents at Bethesda.

Feel free to stop by anytime if you need some uplifting words, a song to inspire or a message from scripture. Daily devotion times are 8:15 a.m., 12:15 p.m., and 6:15 p.m.

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## God's Gift...

The Psalmist says, "In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation" (Psalm 5:3). Luke writes, "One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God" (Luke 6:12). These two passages of scripture speak to us of prayer. They are not by any means exhaustive, but they portray hearts open before God. Because one is a morning prayer and one an all night prayer, we know that it is appropriate to "pray continually" as Paul urged his friends in Thessalonica. In an attempt to follow Paul's instructions, daily cycles of prayer were developed even in the early church. One set of monastic rules for daily prayer developed in the fourth century included eight daily times to pray; at daybreak, early morning, mid morning, noon, mid-afternoon, the end of the working day, before bedtime, and during the night.

If you reside, work, or visit Bethesda Home, you are familiar with a similar, although scaled down schedule of devotions. The appointed times are 8:15 a.m., 12:15 p.m., and 6:15 p.m. Generally, at these times scriptures are read, words of encouragement are shared, and prayer is offered. These are communal times with silence while all listen for God's word. Workers and residents greet one another and rejoice for the gift of a new day, and we remember that even in our infirmities, we are in this together to help, lift up, and encourage each other.

On Thursday mornings all who wish and are able say the Lord's Prayer together. The mysterious and amazing sense of God's presence is beyond description. Briefly, there is order out of chaos as dishes and silver cease to chatter, and we join our voices to utter the familiar words of the One who taught us to pray.

It may seem a bit artificial to "schedule" a time for devotions, but there is also a sense of anticipation. Perhaps we mentally prepare and open our hearts to God, and then listen for what He gives us. Perhaps we've felt alone and simply hope to reconnect.

One of my favorite hymns is "Sweet Hour of Prayer," and whether times of prayer and devotion are scheduled or spontaneous, truly the time spent in prayer is release from "a world of care."

"In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief. And since He bids me seek His face, believe His word and trust His grace, I'll cast on Him my every care, and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer."

Finally, prayer and devotion are not limited or bound by schedules. They are a way of living. So the formal gathering for devotions that we do every morning, noon and evening at Bethesda become reminders and reinforcers of who we are and Whose we are. David told the leaders of Israel, "Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the Lord your God" (I Chron. 22:19). We do well to follow his advice.

Gail Graber, Chaplain



In Webster's dictionary, one definition listed for the word "devotion" is: "an act of prayer or supplication". When I think about devotion – the following thoughts come to my mind:

Nurses, nurse assistants, homemakers, social workers, maintenance men, activity personnel, dietary staff, office workers, volunteers – EVERYONE – visiting with residents, sharing funny stories, assisting residents with their baths, with tasks of daily living, fixing things, preparing meals, cleaning, washing, playing, singing, reminiscing, caring... Bethesda residents ministering to staff members – so much caring...

Psalm 71:9 – "Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone."

Luke 1:46-48 – "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant."

The building project. So much to think about. So many decisions to be made. Will we make wise choices?

Philippians 4:5-6 – "... The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Jeremiah 29:11 – "For I know the plans that I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Lots of young people coming in - Tom Krehbiel's 4th grade class doing "balance" exercises with residents; Ilona Abraham's 5th grade class working together with residents on various projects, GrandKids from the daycare spending some afternoons here – or eating their noon meal here during the summer months. Fun, learning, laughter, surprise, joy, playful, smiles, giggles...

Mark 10:14 – "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

A resident passes away. We have lost a family member. Tears, sorrow, joy for a release from pain, grief, celebration of a life well lived.

Matthew 5:4 – "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Psalm 23: 1,3,4,6 – "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want... He restores my soul... Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil... Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Devotion - every day, every deed, every act, every thought, every word.

"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!" Psalm 150:6



Linda Peters, CEO/Administrator

## Bethesda Home Board Members

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# *Our Modified East Annex*



Top: The East Annex in the early stages of removal. Center: The bare structure is all that remained inside. Bottom: The new maintenance shed is a welcome storage solution. Lyle Crist, Ron Soller, and Charlie Woelk have our thanks.

In our last quarterly Bethesda Home Newsletter there was an article about our East Annex, the portion of our facility that was formerly the hospital, and the need for it to be removed. That article spoke to the reasons for removal.

On the northern edge of the East Annex was a lean-to connected to the drive-through area. Our maintenance guys are continually limited on storage space, and had an idea to save the lean-to, and make another half. The pictures you see are of the finished project. Lyle Crist, Ron Soller, and Charlie Woelk put in the hard work, engineering and time to make this a reality, and you will notice as you drive by how aesthetically pleasing the new structure is.





Medicaid is an extremely complicated program created by the federal government to provide health coverage to families, people with disabilities, and the aged with low income. It

requires an enormous collaboration between federal and state mandates and funding to provide such coverage. In 1965, when Lyndon B. Johnson established Medicaid through the Social Security Amendments, it was linked to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the welfare system at the time, to ensure that families receiving monies through the state were provided health benefits as well. Since that time Medicaid has evolved into one of the largest federal funding sources for states and one of the most important ways for low income families, people with disabilities, and elderly to obtain medical assistance.

The federal government defines Medicaid as: health coverage for “certain low-income families with children, certain low-income people who are aged, blind, or disabled, certain low-income pregnant woman and children and certain people who have very high medical bills.”

The groups of people mandated by the federal government to receive Medicaid services in every state are called the “categorically” eligible. Some examples of those that fall within the “categorically needy” definition are:

- Low-income families with children
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients; i.e. people with disabilities
- Children under age 6 and pregnant women with family incomes at or below 133% percent of the Federal Poverty Guideline.
- Recipients of adoption assistance and foster care under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act
- Low-income elderly

Funding for Medicaid is one of the most contentious aspects of the program. Health care costs are on the rise for everyone and are rising even faster for people with disabili-

ties and the elderly. Relative to the general population served by Medicaid, people with disabilities and the elderly are the most costly groups for which to provide health services. Children cost about one-eighth of the annual cost of a disabled or aged beneficiary, non-elderly adults cost about one-fifth the cost of an aged or disabled person, on average.

The main reasons for the cost increases in Medicaid are similar to those in the private sector: higher costs for prescription drugs, greater use of medical technology, and fewer savings from managed care.

Medicaid costs will continue to increase, largely because of two factors:

- Increases in health care for the current caseload...the underlying causes include rising prescription drug expenses advances in medical technology, and reductions in managed care savings.
- Increases in the costs of caring for aged and disabled beneficiaries. Four-fifths (82 percent) of the projected Medicaid expenditure growth reflects increases in the cost of caring for aged and disabled Medicaid beneficiaries.

The key factor driving up Medicaid expenditures is the general increase in medical costs, a problem that private insured are facing as well and that reflects underlying changes in medical practices and costs, such as rising prescription drug costs, higher hospital costs, and greater use of technology.

Medicaid plays another role in addition to providing health care to families with low incomes, people with disabilities and elderly. Medicaid also contributes to state economies. Studies have consistently found that deep cuts in state Medicaid programs can trigger the loss of thousands of jobs and reduce state economic activity by as much as hundreds of millions of dollars. Moreover, since the health care providers that Medicaid supports are spread across the state — in urban and rural areas alike — the repercussions of cuts in Medicaid would be felt statewide.

(selections taken from [www.workwelfareandfamilies.org](http://www.workwelfareandfamilies.org))

## Small Business Fair

Bethesda displayed a table at the first annual Goessel small business fair held in the Goessel grade school gymnasium. Eric Schrag, director of marketing and development, was on hand to discuss the benefits of working and living at Bethesda Home. The fair was a great success for area businesses, allowing Goessel’s entrepreneurs an opportunity to showcase the many fine goods and services they offer our community.



# “Give Thanks”

I recently took a family member through our facility to give them a tour of where I work. It was a pretty normal stroll for me...down the west hall, said hello to some residents along the way, and stopped to introduce some of our staff. Then down to the nurses station, and dining room. For me it is a routine walk as this is the area where we have our daily devotions, celebrations, programs, hymn sings, bible studies, and breaks.

When we returned home the comments that were made were twofold. First, “I don’t know how you can work in a nursing home,” and second, “It really seems like you enjoy what you do.”

As I reflect on the subject of devotion I think a lot about what we do at Bethesda Home. I love working here for the devotion I see from staff to resident, from resident to staff, staff to staff, resident to resident, family to staff and staff to family and the list goes on. It is not uncommon to witness staff members comforting families, or administrative staff helping a resident down the hall. It is not uncommon to have a staff member pull up a chair or get down on a knee to talk with a resident in a wheel chair. It is not uncommon for one to see residents helping

each other, through the dinner line, to their rooms, or with a project.

Nursing homes do get a bad rap. Stereotypically they are too hot, they smell, everyone looks sad, it looks like an institution, etc., and yes sometimes it is hot in here, and sometimes it does smell, and sometimes after a loss we do look sad, and our structure does have the feel of an institution. This is why my family member said, “I don’t know how you can work here,” but what that family member would see if they were to walk with me for a week, is devotion. Smiles too numerous to count, heart felt prayers and singing, laughter, kind words, expressions of sympathy, and the wisdom that comes from residents who have lived many years and have a wealth of experiences to share.

I encourage you all to come and visit, not just once or twice, but as often as you can. I think you will find you get as much joy in visiting, as you bring.

Blessings in Christ,



**Eric Schrag, Dir. Marketing/Development**



## Autumn's Attic

Once again it's time for the newsletter; our feature article focuses on devotions. Devotions... not something you would think of as an activity. Unless you're

considering the devotions that are done during each meal. These are very special times for staff and residents. We have many talented musicians who share their gifts for song during this time. Take for instance Venita, our director of nursing, who is accompanied by our nurse Connie on the piano. Eric and his children have sung for us with Eric accompanying on

guitar. We also enjoy the music of Charlie and Rick Woelk from maintenance. Occasionally, they too are joined by Eric when playing a favorite hymn. We have many other staff from the business office who also offer devotions daily.

Then it hit me—being devoted to a person, or perhaps a place. While planning activities I have never worked at a place where there were so many devoted volunteers. Many thanks to those of you who share your gifts with us. Whether it's brightening up someone's day by coming to visit, sharing a talent, or just donating supplies for crafts or activities, every act is a display of devotion. We now have some

healthy tomato plants, thanks to the gift of some large flower pots. Many residents have some pretty neat crafts made with the recyclables donated. We are enjoying the markers and coloring pages donated by a resident's daughter, not to mention all of the wonderful memories brought about by our volunteer visitors. The devotion of area churches goes above and beyond, providing services, chapel and the Friday programs for our folks here at Bethesda Home.



**Autumn Hanson, Activities Director**

## Memorial Gifts

*We appreciate the many gifts that have been designated to the following funds/projects in memory of loved ones:*

***Twin Plate Stack Heater and Wheelchair***  
Sam F. Schmidt

***Special Care Unit Refrigerator & Fan***  
Eldon Bargaen

***Designation Pending***  
Helen Lewis

### Welcome

George Endres  
Joe Guerra  
Irvin Reimer  
Ruth Reimer

### Dismissals

John Rice  
Joe Guerra

### New Employees

Laura Jensen  
Nanci Christ  
Chad Wedel  
Andrea Goddard  
Jennifer Browning  
Wendy Herl  
Chelsea Hill  
Dominique Owens



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**Bethesda Newsletter is now on-line at [www.bethesdahome.org](http://www.bethesdahome.org) – tell your friends about it!**



Above: Eric, Julianna, Jacob and Timothy Schrag sing for morning devotions.

Above Left: Staff members Charlie, Rick and Eric sing some Gospel Bluegrass favorites.



Left: Ilona Abrahams' 5<sup>th</sup> graders entertain residents during the "Generation Bridge."