

Abundant *life*

FALL 2016

NEW GARDENS WILL BE A PLACE FOR PEACE AND RESTORATION

Not only are there plenty of opportunities for Passavant Community residents to live abundantly inside the Abundant Life Center, but soon they will be able to enjoy new gardens outside the building as well.

“These gardens will be a place for friends and family to gather in fellowship, where healing and hope are offered,” said Jane Bittcher, president of the Lutheran SeniorLife Foundation. They are expected to be completed in September so that they can be enjoyed this fall.

The South Garden, located in the rear of the building, will include a pavilion, pond, pergolas, benches and a fire pit. The garden will retain the Alice Osborne name, as it was called previously, and the original fountain that stood outside of Olde Main before it was demolished, will be resurrected into the new landscape of the garden.

“We wanted to maintain some of the items that our residents have come to love,” Bittcher said.

The North Garden, which has been named The Albert A. Bittcher Family Garden, will have a gazebo, benches,

shuffle board court, bocce ball, and horseshoe pit.

Funding for the gardens has been provided through generous donations

from friends of Lutheran SeniorLife and Passavant Community, including \$125,000 from the George H., Lillian S. and Mary S. Campbell Foundation.

“Daily, and for a very long time, the staff and supporters of this institution have carried on their ministry to the elderly in Christ’s name,” said John Harmon, representative of the Campbell Foundation. “We at the Campbell Foundation are pleased to be able to help adorn this ministry with these new gardens. May they always remind us of God’s promised guidance and blessing on the good work of this noble institution and its dedicated staff.”

“Gardens restore the soul,” said Laura Roy, executive director of Passavant Community. “We want these to be our own Garden of Eden, where residents can come and find peace.” ❖



ABOVE: Jim Cunningham (left), Lutheran SeniorLife board of directors, performed with the Trinity Music Group during a groundbreaking ceremony for the gardens on June 30.

RIGHT: Ken Spruill (left) and John Harmon (center), George H., Lillian S. and Mary S. Campbell Foundation; Laura Roy, executive director, Passavant Community; Lance Whiteman (right), chairman, Lutheran SeniorLife Foundation board of directors.



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OUR MISSION

On behalf of our Moral Owners,* Lutheran SeniorLife serves elders in our three synod region, intending that the recipients of these services will experience a more **Abundant Life**® regardless of their physical condition or financial circumstances.

*SWPA Synod, NWPA Synod, WVA-WMD Synod

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Lutheran SeniorLife has grown into a complete and vibrant senior services continuum. Three of our organizations – Passavant Community, St. John Community and Lutheran Service Society (LSS) - have been serving those in need for more than 100 years, while other long-standing programs like VNA Home Health & Hospice have been in operation for more than 50 years.

As our programs and services have grown out of the Lutheran church with help from many caring volunteers, the photo below is certainly an example of our century-old tradition of helping one another, as volunteers from LSS assisted at the recent 116th U.S. Open Golf Championship in Oakmont.

Coincidentally, at about the same time that the first U.S. Open golf championship was held 116 years ago, LSS opened its first community-based program. Today, they provide home delivered meals, operate senior centers and other programs.

Over the last 100 years, Lutheran SeniorLife has continually moved our field forward. Today, we view aging services with grace, compassion and new technology advances that empower our organization to remain committed to the individuality of aging.

As an organization, we embrace environments that provide the abundance of life for those we serve and always recognize a person-centered approach. Our focus is on what a person *can* do and their continuing potential to learn, grow and enjoy a fulfilling life.

Please walk alongside us in our quest to continually look ahead and introduce new programs along with our partner organizations and committed team.

David Fenoglietto,
President and Chief Executive Officer, Lutheran SeniorLife



Extreme weather conditions at the U.S. Open did not stop volunteers from donating their time and energy at the Lutheran Service Society refreshment tent.

DANCING HELPS REJUVENATE RESIDENTS – MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT

Cassidy Negri has passion—passion for life, passion for dance and a passion to help seniors and people with disabilities live their **Abundant Life**®.

A Zelenople native, Negri grew up around the arts and has spent several years as a dancer. She is currently a junior at Slippery Rock University, majoring in adaptive physical therapy and dance, and spent part of her summer sharing her talents with the residents at Passavant Community.

“Physical activity is important for every population,” Negri said, no matter what form it comes in.

“Dance is something that everyone can do, even if you have physical limitations,” she explained. Some exercises and sports, she said, require a certain degree of skill to

be successful. But dance is open to interpretation.

“It’s about the residents exposing their emotions through movements that feel good to them. When you are part of a dance, you just feel better,” she said.

“It’s not about how you dance. It’s about how you feel when you dance.”

— CASSIDY NEGRI

During the 30-minute dance sessions, Negri incorporates simple arm and leg movements to music that is familiar to the residents. Some sing, others just do movements,

and others just sit and enjoy the socialization aspect of being together with their neighbors.

Regardless, Negri said, all of the residents can benefit from the sessions in some way.

Negri has engaged some of the residents in an adaptive form of dance called Brain Dance—a series of eight fundamental movement patterns that babies discover in their first years, which have been proven to increase focus, balance, body awareness and coordination.

“Brain Dance wakes up the whole body,” she said, and lets seniors experience movement in a way that relaxes them and can reduce stress.

Negri said that her experience at Passavant has been rewarding for her on so many levels.

“Actually,” she said, “the residents have more to teach me than I can teach them. They aren’t afraid to act silly and they don’t feel like they are being judged. They just go with the flow and dance in whatever way expresses what they are feeling that day.” ❖



Cassidy Negri, left, dancing with nursing residents in the Trillium neighborhood of the Abundant Life Center.

PASSAVANT RESIDENT SUPPORTS FRIENDS IN NEED AT GRANDPARENTS RUN

At 84 years old, after walking in the 5K in this year's Grandparents Run at Passavant Community on August 20, Nellie Smyth is hanging up her running shoes.

The annual race raises funds for Passavant Community benevolent care, which supports residents who have outlived their financial resources.

Smyth raised \$200 through donations she solicited from family and friends. More than \$12,800 was raised by the 202 runners who participated.

"It makes me feel grand to be helping others," she said. "There are so many amazing people living here, and some of them can use a helping hand. It's my pleasure."

Smyth was born and raised in Boston, and recalls attending the Boston Marathon with her family every year.

But she said she did not catch the running bug herself until later in life.

She ran her first race at the age of 54.

"Every kid from Boston runs at some time, don't they?" she joked. "I just started a little later than others."

She has competed in several races since—always to benefit various charities—and has the trophies to prove it.

Her training consists of two miles on the elliptical machine and one mile on the treadmill at Passavant's fitness center several times a week.

"But this race was my last hurrah," she said, although she still plans to remain as active as possible.

"I have run from age 54 to 84—that's long enough, I think."

The Grandparents Run is organized by Joella Baker, founder and president of Get Fit Families, LLC in memory of her grandmother Rose Mudicka



and her grandmother's friend Francies Yingling, both former Passavant Community residents. "I believe there is an athlete in all of us," Baker says on her website. "I teach my athletes that the wisdom of the body is smarter than the self-perceived, limited barriers of the mind. Listen to your body and you will always win."

Jenn McIntire, director community services, Lutheran SeniorLife Foundation, expressed her gratitude on behalf of those who will benefit from the race.

"We want to thank our many sponsors including spotlight sponsor Northwest Bank and shirt sponsor Dave's Tri-State Truck Service, LLC. We also want to express our great appreciation to Dave and Ann Richard, Scott and Joella Baker, Larry and Janet Huggins, the Merriman family, and Get Fit Families, LLC for their continued help and support for the past 12 years of this event," McIntire said.

For additional race photos, please visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/LutheranSeniorLifePA/>. ❖

Nellie Smyth (center) walked in the 5K portion of the Grandparents Run on August 20 at Passavant Community.



LIFE PARTICIPANT USES GPS TECHNOLOGY TO STAY SAFE AT HOME

The goal of the LIFE (Living Independence for the Elderly) Programs is to provide the care, programs and services needed to keep eligible seniors living safely at home.

"We want to help our participants be independent members of their community to the greatest extent possible," said Matt Long, OTL/R, LIFE Lawrence County. "And sometimes that means we have to look for creative solutions."

Long said he often turns to technology items, both high- and low-tech, that participants can use in their homes. These could include overhead track lifts for transferring from a bed to a chair, cooktop

protectors that sound an alarm when the stove is left unattended, low vision items, and home modifications.

These are great, he said, but it is important to keep seniors safe in the community as well.

One item, a GPS tracking unit, has proven invaluable for LIFE Lawrence County participant Joann Snyder, and her granddaughter, Amber, a CNA at the Center.

Joann has dementia, but is otherwise healthy, and wishes to remain living in her home with family.

"When she first started wandering because of the dementia, I knew we needed to do something to keep her



from going places that aren't safe or familiar to her. The GPS does that," Amber said.

Joann wears a small tracking device on a cord around her neck. Amber and her family determined a 'safe zone' where Joann could go within her neighborhood, and programmed the parameters into the GPS. If Joann accidentally wanders outside the safe zone, Amber immediately receives an alert through an app on her phone, allowing her to take action immediately.

"Grandma loves to keep busy all the time. I can check the app whenever I want and always know exactly where she is," Amber said. "Without the GPS, I would be so much more nervous. The GPS won't keep her from wandering, but it could save her life."

"We take so many simple things for granted," Long added. "It is a privilege to have so many technology items available to help our participants, and to give their families peace of mind." ❖



Joann Snyder (left) likes to stay active at home, in her community and at LIFE Lawrence County. Her granddaughter, Amber (right) is grateful that the GPS unit allows her to do that.

NEW APPROACH PROVES EFFECTIVE IN LESSENING DEMENTIA SYMPTOMS

A new approach to engaging residents with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia is gaining traction in the caregiving community, including at St. John Specialty Care Center and Passavant Community.

The Montessori method, which has been used for decades in educating children, involves designing learning activities for residents which engage their senses, to help them rediscover the world around them – a world they may be losing access to due to dementia.

Jamie Pease, dementia coordinator at St. John Specialty Care Center, explained that staff at all levels can engage the residents in activities that are familiar to them such as sorting clothing, arranging tackle boxes,

pouring water into cups or scooping items from a bowl. As the residents become familiar with the task, the difficulty level is gradually increased.

"We notice results immediately. When they complete a task successfully, they feel a sense of accomplishment and pride," Pease said, and behavioral occurrences due to stress and frustration can be lessened or eliminated.

Pease said she found that one resident especially liked arranging flowers into vases. She later learned, that years ago the resident used to work as an interior designer which explained why the activity was so calming for her.

"And that's just one example," Pease said. "We look forward to

incorporating this with more of our residents, since it's been working so well so far."

"I love the concept of the Montessori method," said Karen Russell, executive director of St. John Community, "and the idea that you can continue to learn even if you have dementia."

Michelle Bobber, Allegheny Household coordinator at Passavant Community, agrees. She said that she and her team use the Montessori method to help keep her residents more engaged.

"We might ask the residents to sort items, clip together colored shower rings, or to slide shapes onto a stick – activities that mimic jobs or hobbies they practiced in the past – and they are happy to help. We always ask, 'Will you?' instead of 'Can you?' We get more engagement that way because it makes them feel as though they are being helpful, rather than being tested."

Other benefits of the Montessori method can include an improvement in cognitive symptoms, increased concentration and alertness, and increased opportunities for social interaction.

"Yes, we need to primarily need to meet the medical needs of our residents," Russell said, "but it is just as important for them to have their psycho-social needs met as well." ❖

One activity used in the Montessori method is sorting and matching, an activity which is enjoyed by St. John Specialty Care resident Julia Bowman.



MONETARY GIFTS SUPPORT RESIDENTS, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMING

Every day, Lutheran SeniorLife serves 3,000 older adults at our living communities, and through our community-based programs and services.

Last year alone, Lutheran SeniorLife provided \$3.3 million in benevolent care to ensure that those we serve can live their **Abundant Life**®.

"It is our moral obligation to provide for our residents and program participants. It's a promise we make to ourselves and those in our care—not just at Passavant and St. John Communities, but also to those who participate in our community-based programs," said Jane Bittcher, president of the Lutheran SeniorLife Foundation.

In our living communities, benevolent care funds are used to supplement payment for those who have outlived their financial

resources, for special projects such as the new gardens at the Abundant Life Center, for structural improvements and programming through donations made for those specific purposes.

Often, Bittcher said, the Foundation can apply for grant monies from foundations, private corporations and the government to cover expenses as well.

For example, a grant was recently received that allowed the Foundation to purchase several senior-friendly computers that are now being used at various locations to help residents stay connected to family and friends. In addition, many of the buses used to transport LIFE participants to and from the Centers and doctors' appointments were purchased through grants.

The Foundation also works to raise awareness and financial support for seniors who participate in community-based programs such as the LIFE Programs, Valley Care, VNA, Western Pennsylvania and Lutheran Service Society.

"These programs are much more mission-driven, so we hold special

events such as the March for Meals program to support Meals on Wheels in Beaver County, the Black Tie Bingo for Lutheran Service Society, the Friendship Luncheon to help fund VNA, Western Pennsylvania and the Purse Bash to support LIFE Programs, to supplement the cost of the care these programs provide," she said.

"It is important for people in the communities to know that, no matter where they choose to live, there are programs out there to keep them healthy and safe."

Many people also choose the planned giving option, Bittcher said, by remembering Lutheran SeniorLife in their will, or through other planned options.

The Foundation holds several seminars every year featuring experts who can educate seniors on their planned giving options, and help them to better understand how to customize their donations to fulfill personal goals of financially supporting their families, churches and faith-based organizations like Lutheran SeniorLife.

"There is not a donation that is too large or too small," Bittcher added. "It is up to the donor how they would like their money to be spent, whether it's for a specific project, or for benevolent care. But no matter how people choose to donate, every dollar helps our residents continue to live their **Abundant Life**®." ❖



The Lutheran SeniorLife Foundation supports many community-based programs, including Meals on Wheels in Beaver County.

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www.lutheranseniorlife.org

Lutheran SeniorLife offers a continuum of care featuring senior living communities, personal care, nursing care, Alzheimer's care, home health and hospice, social and physician services.

With headquarters in Adams Township, PA, Lutheran SeniorLife has locations in Zelienople, Mars, Butler, McCandless Township, Hempfield Township, Kittanning, Vandergrift, New Castle, Moon Township, Aliquippa, Ambridge and Monaca. To learn more about any of our programs or services, please visit our website at www.lutheranseniorlife.org.



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Activities will include:

Healthy snacks from the Healthy Start Café • Time for fellowship and socialization • Low impact exercises
Health screenings • Health related education classes • Opportunities for day trips

This program is provided through a partnership between

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