

Abundant *life*

WINTER 2016

DR. BILL THOMAS BRINGS AGE OF DISRUPTION TOUR TO PITTSBURGH

What if nearly everything we think we know about aging is wrong?

Dr. Bill Thomas, internationally acclaimed longevity expert, posed this question and provided new insights into the world of dementia during his Age of Disruption Tour in October at the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater in Pittsburgh.

Lutheran SeniorLife was the sponsor of *Disrupt Dementia*, a portion of the show which combined groundbreaking research and first-person narratives from people living with dementia.

“To go from not having dementia, to having dementia is like falling off the face of the earth,” Dr. Thomas said, “and with that diagnosis comes isolation, shame and fear that aren’t actual symptoms of the dementia, but rather the result of the negative attitude society has developed toward it.” Society, not the elder, he said, needs to adapt.

The show provided insight into the positive aspects of aging, suggesting that those living with cognitive change can still grow, learn and contribute if the meaninglessness in their lives is replaced with true purpose.

Having a *sense* of purpose, Dr. Thomas said, is not the same as actually *having* a purpose, adding that caretakers need



During the Age of Disruption Tour, Dr. Bill Thomas provided new insights into the world of dementia.

to realize the human potential that still exists, despite the dementia.

With the Age of Disruption Tour, Dr. Thomas said he hopes to spark meaningful conversations that will help those with dementia and their advocates embrace the rich growth that is still possible in the second half of life.

Disrupt Dementia also featured music and stories from humanitarian Samite; musician Nate Silas Richardson; Dr. Jennifer Carson, a pioneer in the field of authentic partnership; and Kyrle Carpenter, millennial psychotherapist and activist.

The second portion of the Tour, *Aging: Life’s Most Dangerous Game*, examined the possibility of the world being able to view aging not as a process of decline, but as a process that presents us with some extraordinary rewards.

Dr. Thomas is best known for his health care system innovations. He is the founder of a global non-profit *The Eden Alternative*, which works to improve the care provided to older people, and is the creator of The Green House model of senior care. ❖

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Abundant*life*

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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

The Christmas season is a time of joy and celebration and a time of new beginnings as friends and family join together to share in the blessings of good health and wellbeing. On behalf of those we serve, the holiday season throughout Lutheran SeniorLife is also a reminder to reach out and connect with an older adult or person who may need a warm open heart.

This edition of Abundant Life, with the many photos of those we serve, is a reflection of the completeness of the Lutheran SeniorLife network of services. It is also a reflection of our commitment of service with hearts of gratitude and generosity.

On Christmas, an angel of the Lord stood before the shepherds living on the field: "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." The angels brought good news not to those in power and authority, but to the humble shepherds in the fields.

The ministries throughout Lutheran SeniorLife draw a parallel to the hope and joy of Christmas and the awakening to a new beginning.

The visiting nurses at VNA serve persons in great need – particularly those receiving hospice and palliative care. At St. John Specialty Care Center, persons who are most frail receive supportive services through our ventilator program – one of only a few programs offered in Pennsylvania. And our LIFE programs provide comprehensive health services at no cost to low income, frail seniors enrolled in the program.

The gifts we offer during Advent, Christmas and throughout the year is a lasting promise to foster an environment which is caring and enriched to create the abundance of life.

May you find peace and joy this season and blessings throughout the year.



David Fenoglietto,
President and Chief Executive Officer, Lutheran SeniorLife



Warmest holiday wishes from the Lutheran SeniorLife family.

NEW CAFÉ OFFERS HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES

Older adults in the North Hills area now have a place to make a healthy start.

Lutheran Service Society has partnered with St. John's Lutheran Church of Highland in McCandless to open the Healthy Start Café, which will offer health-focused programming each Monday and Thursday morning at the church.

Participants can enjoy healthy breakfast options including nutritious shakes and smoothies, socialize with friends and take part in low-impact exercise classes. Health screenings, wellness-related programs and educational programs will also be offered.

The Healthy Start Café will build upon the success of the existing exercise program at the church, with the hope of evolving it into a more comprehensive senior center program.

"The mission of the program is having fun and staying young," said Pr. William Diehm, pastor of St. John's Lutheran.

Pr. Diehm recognizes that older people know the importance of healthy aging. "The café gives them a place to go to help them achieve their fitness goals."

Exercise instructor Dawn Andersson explained that her classes focus on flexibility, cardio, range of motion

and balance. But, she said, for the 20 to 30 current participants, the social aspect is just as important.

"The program combines friendship and exercise. It's an unbeatable combination," Andersson said.

"Today's seniors are more active," said Terry Mann, director of Lutheran Service Society. "We can start a golf group or a cycling group and reading groups. We want to offer a wide variety of physical and mental activities."

The Healthy Start Café joins two other senior centers run by Lutheran Service Society – Center at the Mall in the Beaver Valley Mall, and the Bellvue Senior Center. Each are funded by the Pennsylvania Lottery, county agencies on aging and community sponsors.

Additional funds for the Healthy Start Café were provided by the Passavant Hospital Foundation to purchase food, tables and supplies.

The program is open to anyone age 60 or older. Participation is free. ❖



Carole Helvig, 68, husband Chuck Helvig, 73, Healthy Start participants and exercise class leader Dawn Andersson



PASSAVANT HOSPITAL
FOUNDATION

A Legacy of Caring

'NOTHING SHORT OF A MIRACLE'

Rosalie Pitzer, an active, healthy 87-year old participant at LIFE Lawrence County, has a quick wit, a contagious smile and is determined to live her most *Abundant Life*®.

In late January 2016, however, she was hospitalized for a bowel obstruction. Testing also revealed a large hiatal hernia which caused her stomach to migrate into her diaphragm, and a failing gall bladder. Her condition worsened quickly, resulting in a life-threatening episode of aspirational pneumonia. She was intubated and put into a medically-induced sleep for 12 days to allow her lungs to recover, with the hope of performing a complex digestive surgery.

"The odds were that Mom wasn't going to make it. We were mentally preparing for that," said Rosalie's son, Don Pitzer.

With only a 50% chance of survival, she lived through the surgery, but other complications including

infections, failing organs and muscle atrophy occurred.

"I don't remember much from that time," Rosalie said, "but I distinctly remember a doctor telling me I needed surgery because the hernia had grown to the size of a grapefruit."

"I'm so glad she doesn't remember anything during those weeks of recovery," Rosalie's daughter, Cindy Weiss, said. "She was in really bad shape."

Rosalie remained motionlessly asleep for six weeks. In early March, she was transferred to St. John Specialty Care Center for continued treatment and intensive therapy.

"She was still on the ventilator, wasn't opening her eyes and wasn't following commands when she came to us," said Kristi Schutte, occupational therapist at St. John. "She really wasn't even with us."

"I knew we had a long way to go with her," recalled Jessica McGuinness,

physical therapist at St. John, "but I told Kristi, 'We're getting her back.'"

With the help of her therapists and aides, Rosalie slowly began showing signs of progress and was able to be taken off the ventilator. She began to walk and swallow on her own.

"It took a long time for her to bear weight and grip," said Tim Reamer, physical therapy assistant. "She was so swollen from all that her body had been through."

The therapy team at St. John and the interdisciplinary team at LIFE Lawrence County (where she would eventually go to continue her rehabilitation), however, never lost hope and was determined to help Rosalie recover fully.

"It was really amazing to watch her body slowly awaken, from her head to her toes, over the course of months," Cindy said.

Part of Rosalie's therapy involved walking up and down the hallways with Reamer to regain her strength.

"Just when I thought I couldn't walk anymore, he would tell me to go a little further – and I did!" Rosalie recalls.

After three months at St. John, Rosalie was finally ready to go home to New Castle. She made a seamless transition to becoming a participant at LIFE Lawrence County for continued therapy.

Jodi Wallace, physical therapy assistant at LIFE Lawrence County, said that each day, Rosalie sets a new goal for herself. "She was using a wheelchair when she started here, but now she walks around the center with just her wheeled walker."

Continued on page 5



Rosalie Pitzer (center), surrounded by her family and parts of her therapy teams. Top row: Russ Umstead; Don Pitzer; Dale Umstead; Tim Reamer, St. John. Middle row: Gena Knight, LIFE Lawrence County; Lori Umstead; Rosalie Pitzer; Skip Pitzer. Bottom row: Jennie Popojas, LIFE Lawrence County; Jessica McGuinness, St. John; Kristi Schutte, St. John; Jodi Wallace, LIFE Lawrence County

'NOTHING SHORT OF A MIRACLE' *Continued from page 4*

Pitzer said she is relieved to be regaining her independence. "I don't like to ask for help when I am capable of doing things for myself," she joked.

Rosalie is back to participating in her old hobbies and is engaged in several activities at LIFE Lawrence County, where she continues to receive physical and occupational therapy several times per week. Her next goal is to graduate to walking with only a cane, and eventually unassisted.

"God has mercifully preserved my mom's life," Cindy said. "He used the medical teams at the hospital and St. John's to accomplish that goal. Mom's strong will certainly contributed to her healing. She's a tough farm girl!"

"Everything happens for a reason," Don said. "I don't question that. But what happened with my mom while she was in the hospital then at St. John and LIFE is nothing short of

a miracle. They gave Mom her life back."

Cindy said that the family is grateful to everyone who helped Rosalie recover and return home. They are very appreciative to LIFE Lawrence County for their continued care of her. Because of LIFE, Cindy said, and Rosalie's eldest son Skip, who lives with her, she has been able to return to her beloved home and resume the activities she most enjoys. ❖

LUTHERAN SENIORLIFE WALKS TO END ALZHEIMER'S

During the month of October, Lutheran SeniorLife supported the mission of the Alzheimer's Association by serving as a sponsor of their Walk to End Alzheimer's events in Beaver County, Butler County and Pittsburgh.

A combined total of 70 staff, family and friends of Lutheran SeniorLife participated in the Walks.

"The facts supplied by the Alzheimer's Association are staggering," said Pr. John Hoogerbrugge, chaplain at St. John and Passavant Communities, and one of the organizers of Lutheran SeniorLife's participation in the walks. "We have to find a way to end Alzheimer's."

Held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide, the Walk to End Alzheimer's is the world's largest event to raise awareness and funds in support of the Alzheimer's Association.



The LIFE Beaver County team did their part to raise awareness of Alzheimer's Disease.

Proceeds collected from Walks nationwide serve to further research into treatment of the disease, and ultimately the search for a cure.

As the opening ceremony of the Beaver County Walk reminded participants: "You are walking today

for a future without Alzheimer's Disease."

In total, the Beaver County, Butler County and Pittsburgh Walk to End Alzheimer's events raised more than \$450,000 for Alzheimer's care, support and research. ❖

LOW VISION SUPPORT AVAILABLE AT PASSAVANT'S LIBRARY



If you lost your ability to see clearly, what would you miss most – reading a book, writing cards and notes, looking at photos of loved ones?

Now imagine some of the inconveniences that result from sight loss – the inability to pay bills, write a shopping list, or read a medication bottle.

The low vision team at Passavant Community, in conjunction with Sharon Whalen, technology associate at the SilverSmart™ Technology Center, have created a low vision library which houses technology items to help those with vision loss regain some of their independence.

“I’ve had hundreds of people over the years who are experiencing vision loss tell me how much they miss reading,” said Mary Pat Sherman, manager of rehabilitation services at Passavant Community. “There is so much wonderful technology available to help them.”

The equipment in the low vision library, which includes a table-top magnifier, portable magnifiers appropriate task lighting and more, was purchased through donor gifts specifically designated for the project.

Sherman explained that in order to use the equipment, though, interested residents will have to complete an evaluation process by the low vision team first and then be trained on the equipment to ensure the most effective use.

“Not all low vision issues cause the same complications, so you really need the support first,” she said. “Each person is different, so we want to teach them how to adjust the equipment to address their specific needs.”

Pr. Victor Redfoot, a resident in the Abundant Life Center, is blind in one eye, and has limited vision in the other. “I was no longer able to read my Bible,” he said. “I didn’t know there

were so many things out there that I could use to help me see better.”

“We are blessed with a wonderful therapy department here at Passavant,” he said. “They have really helped me. They came to my apartment for an evaluation, and I learned that the lighting was not nearly as bright as it should be for me. They also taught me where to sit to watch TV so that I can see the screen the best.”

Although he now owns his own table-top magnifier and appropriate task lighting, Pr. Redfoot is being trained to use some of the other equipment in the low vision library, and encourages other residents to do the same.

“I want to let people know that they don’t have to stop doing the things they love just because they have vision loss. There are people here who can help,” he said.

Sherman explained that, in conjunction with the SilverSmart™ Technology program, therapists can make recommendations about technology items that help residents compensate for their vision loss and lead a more **Abundant Life**®.

“At Lutheran SeniorLife, we are so fortunate to be so progressive in addressing the issue of vision loss,” she said. “As a company, we are taking a significant problem and finding solutions to help the residents.”❖



Mary Pat Sherman and Sharon Whalen teach Pr. Redfoot how to use a portable magnifier in the low vision library.



NORDENBERG NAMED EXCELLENCE IS AGELESS GALA HONOREE

The Lutheran SeniorLife Foundation proudly

announces Mark A. Nordenberg as the 2017 Excellence is Ageless Gala honoree. The Excellence is Ageless award is given to an individual age 55 or older who has made significant contributions to the community through profession, service, philanthropy or leadership.

The Excellence is Ageless Gala will be held Friday, April 28 at Heinz Field.

“Lutheran SeniorLife is proud and excited to have Mark Nordenberg as our 2017 Gala honoree. He has deep ties to western Pennsylvania and is committed to this area through his leadership in education, service and philanthropy,” said Jane Bittcher, president of the Lutheran SeniorLife Foundation.

Nordenberg is the chancellor emeritus of the University of Pittsburgh and chair of the university’s Institute of Politics.

A professor of law and university administrator, Nordenberg served as the seventeenth Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh from 1996 to 2014. Nordenberg served as the Dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law between 1985 and 1993 and other various administrative positions before becoming interim Chancellor in 1995, a position which became permanent the following year. He led the university for 19 years until retiring in 2014.

Throughout the years, Nordenberg has received many prestigious honors including being named Pittsburgh Magazine’s Pittsburgh Person of the Year and a History Maker by the John Heinz History Center. He was awarded the Homer S. Brown

Law Association’s Spirit Award, Community College of Allegheny County’s Legend in Leadership award, the Pittsburgh Area Jewish Committee’s Community Impact award and the Johnston Institute for Responsible Leadership’s Exemplary Leader award. He is a past Chair of both the Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education and the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Universities.

In addition, he has been awarded honorary degrees by Carnegie Mellon University, the Community College of Allegheny County, LaRoche College and Thiel College.

Nordenberg is married to Dr. Nikki Pirillo Nordenberg. They have three children and three grandchildren. He is an honors graduate of North Allegheny High School, Thiel College and the University of Wisconsin Law School. ❖

AbundantLife

BLACK TIE BINGO GALA

Celebrating Lutheran Service Society’s 110 years of serving seniors in Beaver and Allegheny Counties.



**Saturday, February 11, 2017
5PM at The Fez in Hopewell Township**

TICKETS: \$40/person
Includes dinner, local celebrity bingo callers, entertainment, cash bingo prizes, and auction baskets

TO PURCHASE TICKETS:
CALL: Lutheran SeniorLife Foundation, 724-453-6015
EMAIL: jennifer.mcintire@lutheranseniorlife.org

Please RSVP by January 25, 2017

Proceeds benefit Lutheran Service Society

4TH ANNUAL LIFE PROGRAMS



Purse Bash

**Saturday, March 4, 2017
Shakespeare’s
Restaurant and Pub**

1495 Mercer Road
Ellwood City, PA 16117

Sponsored by



Admission and ticket: \$40

Includes food and beverages plus four chances to win designer purses. Winner need not be present to win.

TO PURCHASE TICKETS:
CALL: Lutheran SeniorLife Foundation, 724-453-6015
EMAIL: jennifer.mcintire@lutheranseniorlife.org

*Proceeds benefit the LIFE Programs
in Armstrong, Beaver, Butler and Lawrence Counties*

ABUNDANT LIGHTS FESTIVAL KICKS OFF THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Christmas spirit shone through the hearts of residents, families, community members and staff at Passavant Community's Abundant Lights festival earlier this month.

Guests were treated to a variety of entertainment, activities, winter refreshments, a basket raffle, horse carriage rides and much more.

The highlight of the evening was the Celebration of Christmas ceremony to honor loved ones. "Friendship and fellowship are vibrant in this community," said Laura Roy, executive director of Passavant Community, as she reflected on this year's theme of hope.

In his message, Pr. Reinhold "Dutch" Weber said, "We need the message of Jesus Christ more than ever today. May God place hope in every one of our hearts."

The ceremony concluded with a reading of the names of loved ones who were honored or memorialized with one of the more than 100 handmade lanterns placed throughout the campus. Proceeds from the lantern sales and other activities throughout the evening benefit Passavant's benevolent care fund.

To see more photos from the Abundant Lights festival, please visit our Facebook page. ❖



Even St. Nicholas made an appearance to spread holiday cheer.



Local families help us celebrate the Christmas season. (L to R) Pam and Sarah Rowland, Zelenople; Jeaneen Thomson, Pittsburgh; Joanne Hartman, Cranberry Township.



Resident Nancie Johnson was in the Christmas spirit with her musical, dancing Santa hat.



ABOVE: Visitors delighted at the miniature train display, built and run by Passavant residents.



BELOW: David Wolfe (center), chairman of the Lutheran SeniorLife Board of Directors, with Patrick Harrison and Andrew Sandherr, two of the many dining services staff who helped make more than 400 dozen cookies for the event.



LEFT MIDDLE: Horse-drawn carriage rides toured visitors around the campus

LEFT BOTTOM: Passavant resident Dolores Fruth and David Fenoglietto, president and CEO, Lutheran SeniorLife



IN TRIBUTE

The following gifts were received between August 1, 2016 through October 1, 2016.

IN HONOR OF:

The Albert A. Bittcher Family

Mr. and Mrs. Albert A. Bittcher

Albert Bittcher

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Mary L. Schnur

Thank You

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.

LIFE BEAVER COUNTY EXPANSION COMPLETE

LIFE Beaver County celebrated the opening of its expanded space last month.

The additional 5,000-square feet of space will allow for additional participants to benefit from LIFE (Living Independence for the Elderly) services including comprehensive medical care, adult day services, meals, recreational programs, prescription coverage, home care and more.

"This expansion allows us to serve an additional 52 participants in our Adult Day Center," said Marie Timpano, center director. "With the addition of the two personal care stations, we are able to enhance the quality of care for those with extensive mobility issues. The participants and staff are very



Cutting the ceremonial ribbon were (center) Dr. Huma Vahora, LIFE Beaver County physician; Marie Timpano, LIFE Beaver County center director; Mike King, recreational therapy manager; Josh Konecheck, staff member, Senator Elder Vogel's office; and Jack Manning, president and executive director, Beaver County Chamber of Commerce.

excited about the new space."

The renovation includes a recreational space, television/lounge area, new

computers for participant use, a meeting room for families and staff, and a reception area. ❖