

COMMUNITY MATTERS

January - March 2022



FIVE COMMUNITIES.
ONE VISION. WHERE
FAITH, WELLNESS AND
COMMUNITY FLOURISH

CONTENTS

- 1 LifeSpire Committee to Refresh Organization's Strategic Plan
- 2 LifeSpire's New Board Chair Seeks to Strengthen Faith Community
- 3 LifeSpire Welcomes Two New Trustees to Its Board
- 4 Summit Resident Bill Hadden Credits Love, Faith for a Full Life
- 6 Chesapeake Aqua Aerobics Students Splash into Health
- 9 Glebe Resident Linda Gast Takes Fitness the Extra Mile
- 12 Lakewood Gifts Dozens of Books to The Summit Library
- 13 The Glebe Honors 2020, 2021 VBH Foundation Influencers
- 14 Girl Scouts Plant Meditation Garden in Memory of Lakewood Team Member
- 17 Use Your Will to Make a Lasting Impact



From the Editor



With every new year comes resolutions. Sometimes people resolve to work out more or eat a healthier diet. Other resolutions focus on traveling or developing a new hobby. New Year's resolutions always seem to focus on starting something new or self-improvement in some way.

When I started planning this issue I was trying to come up with publication goals for the year. What could I start fresh? As I met with residents and interviewed fellow team members, I realized I don't need to start anything new. Instead, I simply need to focus on what is already special about LifeSpire: the people. There are dozens of choices when it comes to senior living, but it's LifeSpire's residents and team members who make the organization unique.

In this issue, I was honored to meet with The Summit's Bill Hadden and his guide dog Sammie. He told me about his time in Japan just as World War II was coming to an end. I went on a walk with Linda Gast at The Glebe as she described must-see destinations out west. The Aqua Aerobics class at The Chesapeake challenged me to take on their fitness regimen. One day soon I'm going to return and do just that even if Nancye Wilson warned me about the bicep curls.

I hope you will enjoy getting to know each of them in these pages as much as I did. I believe each resident has a story to tell. Those stories are indeed what makes LifeSpire such an extraordinary place. This year I resolve to help share as many as I can.

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COVER PHOTO: Newly renovated pool and wellness area at The Chesapeake that features an infrared sauna and Himalayan salt relaxation room.

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LifeSpire Committee to Refresh Organization's Strategic Plan

One of the key responsibilities of LifeSpire's Board of Trustees is to set the strategic direction for the organization. While it's common for organizations to have a vision for 10 or 20 years from now, shorter strategic planning cycles are necessary in today's fast-changing world.

"Changing consumer demands, workforce challenges, rapid advances in technology and significant industry consolidation are just a few of the forces impacting senior living organizations, requiring us to plan for three to five years while continuously monitoring and adapting," said LifeSpire's Chief Strategy and Integration Officer Lisa Legeer.

Lisa joined the team in June 2021 and was charged with leading the transition as LifeSpire welcomed The Summit into its family of communities. Strategic growth like the addition of a fifth community was a key initiative in the organization's last strategic plan.

"LifeSpire engaged in a strategic planning process in 2018 that has helped guide the organization to improved operating and financial performance, a stronger Board of Trustees, continued organic growth and significant investments at all LifeSpire communities with nearly \$165 million in capital improvements," Lisa said.



Lisa Legeer

LifeSpire's Six Strategic Planning Pillars

- Investing in the future
- Strengthening finances
- Employer of choice
- Excellence in healthcare
- Strategic alliances
- Technology

In 2022, LifeSpire's Board of Trustees will refresh and update the 2018 strategic plan, building on the successful foundation of that work. Lisa will work together with the Board and LifeSpire's leadership team to imagine the future for LifeSpire and determine the strategic imperatives and priorities that will achieve that future.

"This is really a pivotal time, and I'm excited to kick off our strategic planning process with a series of education sessions for the Board, team members and residents," Lisa explained. "In these sessions, we'll hear from industry leaders and other experts with the latest information about key topics such as workforce, industry consolidation, technology and even design trends."

The Board of Trustees and leadership teams will participate in a strategic planning retreat in June. Lisa expects the group to leave that meeting with a refreshed vision and framework for the next three to five years. ■

"In 2016, when Virginia Baptist Homes became known as LifeSpire, the board also recast the mission of the organization: Empowering individuals with choices in purposeful living. What foresight they had in this ever-changing world. It's our job to continue to advance that mission."

Lisa Legeer

LifeSpire's New Board Chair Seeks to Strengthen Faith Community



Dan Carlton

Dan Carlton was born in Newport News where his dad worked at Temple Baptist Church. He lived just a mile down the road from The Chesapeake and remembers visiting from a very early age. Later, when his family moved to Richmond, he remembers traveling to The Culpeper to visit residents there.

So, seven years ago when he became the pastor of Culpeper Baptist Church, a relationship with the organization seemed predestined. Dan joined the LifeSpire Board of Trustees in 2016. In 2022, he's taken the helm as the Chair of the Board.

"I've been aware of LifeSpire my whole life. There are a couple things that you do if you're going to be the pastor of Culpeper Baptist Church, and one of them is the relationship with The Culpeper. That is not a casual relationship for Culpeper Baptist Church, it is a primary relationship," Dan explained. "When LifeSpire comes and asks you to serve you don't really decide because of who I represent, and the church expects that. LifeSpire is core to who we are as a church, and we want to keep that moving in that direction."

To solidify the relationship, Dan worked with LifeSpire's President and CEO Jonathan Cook to hire a senior adult pastor for the church who could also serve as The Culpeper's chaplain. As a result, Chaplain Hans Murdock joined the team.

Dan said hiring Hans showed his commitment to bringing the church into view at The Culpeper. Having Hans at the community has also helped the church see the relationship with The Culpeper as a more significant part of its mission.

"A huge number of our church members live at The Culpeper, and I do believe it's the church's role to provide spiritual support whether it's at The Culpeper or any retirement community. The spiritual needs of senior adults too often are seen as anything above 65 as a senior adult but there a lot of transitions and life stages between 60 and 90 and 100, so the relationship with the retirement community helps us to see that a little more clearly. We are a faith-based retirement community. A chaplain makes that statement," he said.

In his 28 years as a pastor, Dan said that he has never seen the need for that kind of spiritual engagement so evident as it has been in the past two years. He said isolation has been a huge issue amongst all age groups throughout the pandemic. But, he is encouraged by how well many senior adults have adapted using technology and by forging relationships.

He said what the world has gone through in the past several years will inform not just what he does at the church but also what the Board of Trustees will do moving forward.

"There's been a community that's built out of crisis. We need to figure out how do we build on that community. How do we give some breathers to folks who have been running hard? How is our team doing? How are our

residents doing who have really been stressed for two years? I think we will look to provide some breathing space, but we will also try to figure out what we learned about community that we can build on. There's a lot of opportunity there and I think organizations like LifeSpire are



Board Chair Dan Carlton and Chaplain Hans Murdock pose with the stained glass window that honors Culpeper Baptist Church.

uniquely situated to do that because of what we have historically done."

Chief on that list of lessons learned for Dan is the recognition of just how valuable each member of the extended LifeSpire family is to achieve the organization's mission. He said each resident, family member or team member is someone who needs to be cared for and uplifted.

As he chairs the board, he is looking forward to learning. He is proud to be a part of an organization he said has good instincts and is rooted in faith.

"Some of the things that have been most helpful to me as a pastor is serving on a board and watching exceptional leaders. I come to board meetings, and I learn way more about how to lead an organization than I ever provide benefit to the organizations that I'm serving. I love that we have clergy on the board, but we don't have to raise our hands and say we're a faith-based organization. It permeates everything that we do."

Dan explained that as the Board embarks on strategic planning, long-term sustainability is key. He said the board is committed to further development of LifeSpire's five existing communities, potential acquisitions or greenfield projects and expansion of at home and home health programs.

"The future is bright, and as the organization explores, we will keep the promise that we have made to every one of our residents and their families front and center: we will take care of them for life. While a lot will change in the senior living industry and it is changing, the fact that we're a faith-based organization is not going to change because the Board is going to hold on to that and everybody in this organization is going to hold on to that." ■

LifeSpire Welcomes Two New Trustees to Its Board

LifeSpire welcomed two new members to its Board of Trustees in 2022. James Poats and Gary Thomson officially joined the board on January 1.



James Poats

James Poats is a financial advisor operating out of Lynchburg, Va., who has been in the financial industry for more than 30 years. Poats is an advisor for Pettyjohn, Wood & White, Inc. Poats is the first trustee representing the Lynchburg area following LifeSpire assuming ownership of The Summit in Lynchburg where he served as a board member for many years.

"In my years of working with the financial well-being of individuals and families, I came to understand the importance of seniors maintaining their independence and dignity as they transitioned from living in their own homes to the various levels of care offered by life plan communities," Poats said. "I believe I will bring an analytical approach to dealing with the financial and non-financial issues facing our organization while always remembering that we are here to serve the needs of our residents above all."



Gary Thompson

Gary Thomson is the managing partner at Thomson Consulting, LLC in Richmond, Va. He has more than 35 years of experience in the CPA profession spanning small to medium to large firms, and the last 15 years spent at Top 25 firms in governance and leadership roles. He currently serves as a council member for the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and is a past chair of the Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants. He also serves as a board member for the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, the Virginia Foundation of Independent, the American Heart Association and The Bank of Southside Virginia.

LifeSpire's Board of Trustees voted in December to appoint these two new members. Susan Rucker of Midlothian, Va., who served on the board for eight years, and Robert Musick of Richmond, Va., who served on the board for 24 years, cycled off at the end of December.

"The future is bright, and as the organization explores, we will keep the promise that we have made to every one of our residents and their families front and center: we will take care of them for life."

Dan Carlton

Summit Resident Bill Hadden Credits Love, Faith for a Full Life



Bill Hadden hugs his eighth guide dog, Sammie.

Anyone who has visited The Summit has probably met Bill Hadden. If they met Bill, they definitely met Sammie. It doesn't take long to realize that the duo's friendship is unique. Between his jokes and tales of his adventures, it takes even less time to recognize that he, a 94-year-old World War II veteran, is a true gem.

In 1972, Bill had a massive stroke that caused blindness and partial paralysis of the left side of his body. He explained he cannot use the typical white cane most blind people utilize due to the paralysis. Instead, Bill learned about Leader Dogs School for the Blind, founded by Lions Clubs International in 1939. It took him three years, but in 1975 he got up enough nerve to go for a five-week training program. Upon graduation, he went home with his first guide dog: a 90-pound German Shepherd named Rex. Since then, he's had seven dogs, including his current companion, Sammie.

"I've been blind longer than I was sighted. You can show me how to get to the lobby, and I can count steps and find my way there, but I can't get there on my own. It's a constant learning experience but having a guide dog has allowed me to be independent," he said.

After his graduation, Bill became an ambassador for Leader Dogs, traveling an estimated 80,000 miles a year for 30 years. During those trips, he visited rehab centers and schools for the blind to talk with others about using a guide dog. Maine and New Hampshire are the only two states he hasn't visited.

"One time in Alaska, a bellman helped me find a relief area for my dog in the parking lot surrounded by woods. I was there, six

o'clock in the morning, and the ground started shaking. I thought, 'Oh! I'm in the middle of an earthquake! I'm going to get gobbled up, and nobody will ever know what happened to me.' About that time, somebody grabbed me by my good right arm, and I thought, 'Gosh, I'm getting mugged right here in the middle of an earthquake!' Only to find out the bellman observed a cow moose charging because I got between her and her calf, and she was trying to get back to her baby. I had on a short-sleeve shirt, and her saliva blew off her mouth onto my arm about the time he was jerking me sideways!"

Travel tales like this one make Bill so captivating and charming. His grade-school sweetheart, Jackie, would undoubtedly have agreed. He wooed her with "goo-goo eyes" across the church they both attended as children and a watermelon gifted on their first date. They were married for 68 years, and their lives touched for 75. The couple moved to The Summit in 2011.

"We debated the move about 16 months. Cried about it, prayed about it, laughed about it, and finally decided let's do it," Bill said. "Unfortunately, I lost my wife in 2016. God needed another angel, so He called her to heaven."

Bill credits their enduring love and his faith for his long life. His faith also led him to The Summit, which is affiliated with the Disciples of Christ and, more recently, the Baptist church.

"It was entirely new to us, but since we've been here, it's family. We say that, and it's meaningful because we truly are extended family. The Summit gives the aura of, 'I want to live here.' Plus, the food and meals I experienced coming here were a come along as well: move here so you can eat here," he said with a sly smile.

Never one to be idle, Bill stays busy at The Summit. Sammie joined him there in 2016 and they haven't stopped moving since. He's a member of the prayer group, the Recycling Committee and, of course, the Welcoming Committee. He never misses a meal at his chosen table, number 33 in the back, so Sammie has a corner to curl up in and recharge.

"Imagine if I'd been holding on to your elbow, having you guide me everywhere I go all day. That's exhausting and a lot of responsibility," Bill explained. "The dogs are bred for this specific purpose, and at eight weeks of age, they are evaluated to determine the possibility of being a guide dog. Only three out of 10 make it."

And, to Bill, that means Sammie and her fellow guide dogs are quite literally a miracle. Because of that, he is sure to give back to the community that gives him so much. He established the Hadden Student Helper Fund at Guiding Eyes for the Blind, where he got Sammie. The fund is designed to help students who need incidentals ensure they can finish training.

"I'm here today because of my faith. I feel very strongly about that. God was walking with me through all my trials and tribulations," he said. ■



Bill moved to The Summit in 2011 and Sammie joined him in 2016.

"I'm here today because of my faith. I feel very strongly about that. God was walking with me through all my trials and tribulations."

Bill Hadden



Chesapeake Aqua Aerobics Students Splash into Health

Louise Marchello and Nancy Wilson have been coming to The Chesapeake's pool for water aerobics for 16 years.

"We're the longest members of this class," said Louise. "And the oldest," Nancy added.

Both women had taken aqua aerobics classes in the past and were excited the community both had a pool and a wellness program that allowed them to keep moving.

"This is one of my favorite activities. It's a good exercise, and I'm just so graceful under water. I do all kinds of things I can't do on land," Louise joked.

"By the time we've finished, we've exercised every muscle in our bodies," said Nancy proudly. "The pool was closed for four months, and I was afraid I wouldn't be able to move if they didn't open it soon."

The pool was closed for renovations in the middle of 2021. In addition to resurfacing the pool area and refreshing the locker rooms, a new infrared sauna was installed, and a Himalayan salt relaxation room was built.

Of the new amenities, Roger Fuhrman said, "Pretty, pretty, pretty!" He and his wife moved to The Chesapeake one year ago and he has been attending the Aqua Aerobics class alongside Louise and Nancy ever since.

"You can tell we don't have any fun," he laughed.

The long-standing class meets every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and draws a crowd of at least 15 residents each time. Aqua Ease, which is slower-paced and just 45 minutes

long, meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fitness Director Candace Montgomery said the classes keep participants moving the whole time.

"First and foremost, expect to have fun but also expect to work hard," she said. "We do cardio, we do balance, we do range of motion. Realistically, someone who starts this class can expect to work every muscle group. The water sits at around 88 degrees, so there's a therapeutic aspect of it because the warm water helps with arthritis and sore joints."

Marie Biermann can attest to the benefits of the class. As a 10-year participant, she said her arthritis has improved. Candace said exercise can also allow residents to remain independent longer.

"My daughter told me I needed to stay fit by attending a water aerobics class, so when I got to The Chesapeake and found out they had the classes she insisted that I come. I'm so glad I did! If I miss one day, I can feel it. It's really been a blessing to me," Marie said.

Anne Gullen has a whole routine built around the wellness amenities. She starts out with around 10 minutes in the sauna followed by the class and rounded out by around 20 minutes in the salt room at least twice a week.

"I find exercising on land very hard on my body. Exercising in the water is a piece of cake," she said. "The salt, I always touch it; it's very relaxing. Sometimes I take my book in, turn the light on and read, sometimes someone else will be in there and we'll just visit."

Candace attributes the success of the class to the opportunity for social networking. Louise agreed. She said being around others is good for her physical and mental well-being.

"In general, most of us love riding the noodles. We used to sing all the time. It's just fun; it's just plain fun."

"One time Candace was out for a few days and when she came back, we'd practiced a surprise with our noodles," Roger said. "The first time we did it she just laughed and laughed!"

Sudi Stultz credited the instructor with the popularity of the class. She has been attending for nearly five years and she said in addition to her design skills—which are on display in the pool area—Candace is a "delightful young lady."



Fitness Director Candace Montgomery joined The Chesapeake's team in 2016.

The Himalayan salt relaxation room was completed in Spring 2021.



The pool renovations included new furnishings, resurfacing and decor.

Continued on next page

Chesapeake Offers New Wellness Amenities

LifeSpire's construction team completed a substantial renovation to the pool and locker room areas at The Chesapeake in May 2021. Included in the pool renovation was a complete resurfacing of the pool deck using a material designed to prevent falls. New stainless steel ladders and handrails were also installed. The locker rooms were completely renovated with new wall and floor finishes, new lockers, plumbing fixtures and paint.

The Himalayan salt relaxation room and infrared sauna were also added to the wellness area the spring of 2021. The relaxation area is furnished with lounge chairs, lamps and fruit-infused water for residents to enjoy. Salt therapy treats respiratory conditions, such as asthma, chronic

"It's a luxury to have this. You find amenities this luxurious in spas."

Anne Gullen

bronchitis and allergies. It is also known to treat depression and anxiety and can help cure some skin conditions, such as psoriasis, eczema and acne.

Unlike a traditional sauna, infrared saunas don't heat the air. Instead, they use infrared lamps to warm a user's body directly and operate at a lower temperature than a traditional sauna. The benefits of using an infrared sauna include better sleep, relaxation, weight loss, relief from sore muscles and joints and improved circulation.



"I enjoy Candace, she's a marvelous instructor. She is the most thorough and caring," Sudi said.

Candace said the class has certainly become like a family. She said class participants have developed friendships and she has a long-standing relationship with many of them as well.

"They have seen me grow at The Chesapeake. They ask about my son and my husband," she said. "I'm happy when they're happy. I feed off their energy, so when they're having a good time, I'm having a good time."

The Chesapeake wellness program, Vibrance, in partnership with National Institute for Fitness and Sport Fitness Center Management (NIFS), is wide-ranging and has something for everyone. In addition to the pool classes, land-based classes are offered five days a week including stretching, strengthening, balance, yoga, seated dance and even a class that exercises the brain. Additionally, residents have access to ping-pong, shuffleboard and the onsite gym that is always open.

LifeSpire began its relationship with NIFS in 2016 with team members at The Culpeper, The Glebe, Lakewood and, of course, The Chesapeake. NIFS has provided oversight in the development of fitness programming for more than 30 years. NIFS also provides complimentary services such as senior fitness evaluations and exercise prescriptions for residents to gauge their current fitness level and allow for greater insight into areas that need improvement. ■



Glebe Resident Linda Gast Takes Fitness the Extra Mile

It is 4 a.m. and Linda Gast is in The Glebe's fitness room warming up. After an hour of stretching, she heads out for her daily morning walk, what she calls a "jumpstart."

"I'm not a cold weather person, but I'm challenging myself. I'm finding that I must get out and smell the fresh air sometime in the day. So, I'm making myself do it: cold, hot, any time. I find out it's working out very well," she said.

After walking for at least 30 minutes, she makes her way to a fitness class. Twice a week she attends an aerobics class. On Mondays and Wednesdays, she takes pilates classes. Then, on Fridays, she takes the functional fitness classes.

"I find something to do every day," Linda said. "Ever since I was a kid, I love being outdoors. I love sports. Anything I can try, I'll try it."

After her classes wrap up, Linda embarks on her second walk of the day. This time she goes to get her mail. When asked how many steps she is getting in each day she casually answered at least 10,000. When she goes for her walks, she hits all the community's floors, sometimes more than once.

"I'll do it as long as I can. I keep on going, and every year I think, 'surely this has got to slow down sometime,' but it keeps escalating."

Linda Gast

Continued on next page



Linda Gast practices pilates with Fitness Coordinator Gaby Ball.

“I’ve been going outside to get the mail. I take the long way to go around, so I get another walk in there,” she explained. “It keeps me occupied. If I’m not doing something I don’t know what to do with myself.”

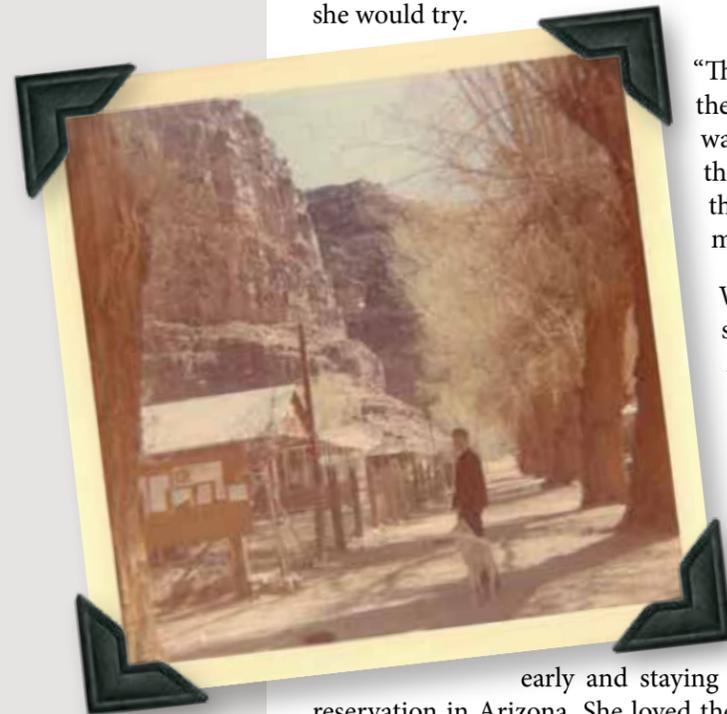
Never one to let moss grow under her feet, if Linda doesn’t have something to do to stay active, she goes to find something new to try. Recently she has taken up billiards, playing pool with fellow residents most afternoons. In December 2021, Glebe team members took on a planking challenge to collect donations for the local food bank. Participants held a push-up position for as long as possible. Never having done a plank before, Linda decided she would try.

“The challenge was down to the last three minutes, and they said, ‘let’s all do the last three minutes together.’ I was watching them, and I didn’t know if I could last three minutes, but I wanted to try. So, I did. I was there three minutes,” she said. “I probably could’ve done more but we ran out of time!”

When Linda isn’t joining fitness classes or challenges, she spends her time with Max, the Glebe’s miniature Australian shepherd. Despite her busy routine, she said she always makes time for Max.

“We’re great friends. I’ve known him since he was a baby. I got used to walking him outside and he got used to me. Then he found out that I like to play ball with him, and he loves to play ball. So, every time he’s here we go up to the apartment and play.”

As a lifelong nurse, Linda got used to waking up early and staying on the go. She completed her nurse training on a reservation in Arizona. She loved the natural beauty of the area so much that she stayed until she retired. She calls the area “God’s country,” and urges others to visit. When she



Linda completed her nurse training on a reservation in Arizona.

began looking for a life plan community to call home, she learned about The Glebe from her sister and came to visit.

“I opened the doors. It was 2005 and I liked the idea of it being brand new and I could break it in myself,” she said. “I liked the area and the layout.”

With her background in healthcare, she was also impressed by The Glebe’s wellness program, Vibrance. Prior to moving in Linda had not taken organized fitness classes, opting instead for what she could do on her own. She would walk her dogs, take long walks or bike. But when the opportunity presented itself, she decided to challenge herself to stay fit for as long as possible.

“I’ll do it as long as I can. I keep on going, and every year I think ‘surely this has got to slow down sometime,’ but it keeps escalating,” she laughed.

She credits The Glebe’s wellness team with keeping her going. She’s developed a great rapport with Fitness Coordinator Gaby Ball who she said pushes her to continue achieving her health goals.

“She challenges me to keep going, and if I can’t I’ll tell her but, I’m going to try it. She’s a good person to have around.”

Gaby said Linda is an inspiration and embodiment of what Vibrance is all about. “She goes up and beyond on everything she does. I can definitely say that she is one of the most active and in the best shape amongst residents at The Glebe. I just hope I will have her stamina and energy that she has!”

Linda said she hopes to inspire and encourage fellow residents as well. She said she’s had her share of health problems and she is getting older, but she plans to keep going. Her best advice: “find something you love and keep on doing it as long as you can.”

Gaby agreed. She said it is important for all residents to develop a fitness routine and nurture a healthy lifestyle.

“As residents feel better and stronger, they can live a happier, cheerful and satisfying life. That’s when they can enjoy what The Glebe has to offer,” Gaby encouraged.

The Glebe’s Vibrance program offers more than 18 classes a week including water aerobics, chair yoga, chair pilates, seated exercises, aerobics, strength and stretch. The comprehensive wellness program was crafted in partnership with National Institute for Fitness and Sport Fitness Center Management.

“It keeps you going longer, it keeps your strength up and I would advise it. I’m going to push it to the hilt,” Linda said. “I’m going to use it while I’m feeling good. What happens after that is okay with me.” Linda said. “I’m going to use it while I’m feeling good. What happens after that is okay with me.” ■



Linda Gast cuddles with The Glebe’s service dog, Max.

Lakewood Gifts Dozens of Books to The Summit Library



Ann Smith packs books for donation.

The Summit's library boasts more than 1,500 books, separated out into fiction, non-fiction, biographical and large print. The community librarian, Hazel Harrison, said that without a doubt, the large print selection is the most popular.

"Several years ago, the Summit Library Committee started marking our large print books with a red dot on the spine. At that time, we had very few books in large print, but that this simple red dot was very popular among the residents," Hazel explained. "During 2021, we had more and more requests for the larger print, so we decided to concentrate on purchasing as many large print books as we could find. At the same time, we gathered all the large print books in our library and shelved them together apart from the regular fiction category."

Lakewood resident Ann Smith knows a little something about building a library. When she started in March 2017, the Lakewood library had 80 large print books in a temporary space. Now the Ann R. Smith Library Center, which was dedicated to her in October 2020, has a nearly 1,800 large-print book collection that was donated by Ann.

When the LifeSpire team arrived at the Summit, Hazel said she was very proud to show off the community library. She mentioned the popularity of the large print books to Virginia Baptist Homes Foundation Vice President Jodi Leonard who then told Ann about their goal to boost the large print selection.

"The next thing I know I was picking up 14 bags of books that Ann wanted to donate to The Summit. It was a special moment for me to facilitate this unofficial 'welcome to the family' gift from one community librarian to another," Jodi said.

"We at Lakewood are happy to welcome The Summit into our LifeSpire family," said Ann. "I hope that the books will provide hours of pleasure to the residents. I always like to do whatever I can to help others enhance their lives."

Of the donation Hazel said she is still in awe and is incredibly grateful to Ann for her generosity.

"I felt that it was too good to be true! The same day the books arrived we checked our card catalogue and found that there were very few duplicates. Now, residents are very anxious for these new books to be on the shelves," Hazel said.

Hazel said her next goal is to have a dedicated library room at The Summit. She said the committee is in the process of developing a database to manage the books.

"Hopefully we can have a completely digital system in the future!" ■



To show appreciation for the donation, each resident at The Summit signed a giant thank you card that VBH Foundation Vice President Jodi Leonard delivered to Lakewood.



Jodi delivers the books to The Summit's librarian, Hazel Harrison.



The Glebe Honors 2020, 2021 VBH Foundation Influencers

Residents at The Glebe gathered in December to honor and celebrate both the Virginia Baptist Homes (VBH) Foundation 2020 Influencer, Pam Renga, and the 2021 Influencer, Carole Edwards. Because of the pandemic in 2020, the Foundation team did not have the opportunity to join in fellowship to honor Pam, so the 2021 event was a dual celebration.

Attendees enjoyed a dessert reception and program, as well as music provided by The Bob Peckman Jazz Band.

Carole Edwards was one of the first residents of the Glebe in 2000. She became a charter member of the Executive Committee of the Residents' Council, from which she recently retired. Carole encouraged residents to contribute to community capital fundraisers, including the purchase of a grand piano and the gazebo garden. She currently serves in many leadership positions throughout the community and looks for ways to serve and visit residents in the higher levels of care.

"Carole Edwards and Friends," the longest running piano ensemble group in the country, presented its 49th consecutive annual week of concerts in April 2021, marking the 17th year of performances at The Glebe. Started in N.Y. in 1974, this group helps raise money for local charities as it selects a different group each year to which attendees voluntarily contribute.

Carole is a high-spirited influencer to all she meets, through her charitable efforts, cheerful presence, committed participation in the community and the ever-present smile on her face.

The Foundation team extends gratitude to Pam and Carole for their commitment and support of The Glebe.

The VBH Foundation Influencer Award is given to a champion of the Foundation from each of LifeSpire's communities who causes a positive effect in its mission to enhance the lives of residents at LifeSpire. Influencers embody the core values of the communities through their spirit, engagement and generosity. ■



2020 Influencer Pam Renga congratulates 2021 Influencer Carole Edwards.



Girl Scouts Plant Meditation Garden in Memory of Lakewood Team Member

Baylee Huber-Cohen, Kelly Poole, Jadyn Sutton and fellow Girl Scouts from Troop 5365 have been helping Lakewood residents wrap Christmas presents for the past four years. So, when the trio decided they wanted to work towards the Silver Award, partnering with the community seemed like a perfect fit.

“If you do 50 hours of community service you get a badge and a medal,” said Jadyn. “It’s nice to have and we can help the community while we’re improving our resume.”

In fact, the Silver Award is one of the highest in Girl Scouting that charges Girl Scout Cadettes to team up with a small group of friends, find an issue they care about locally and work together to make a difference in that community.

“We identified the need for more outdoor spaces, particularly during the pandemic. So, we wanted to do a meditation garden. We just saw a need for quiet, outdoor reflection spaces,” Kelly said.

The Lakewood team had plans to create a community garden, so when the scouts approached Lakewood’s Community Outreach Liaison Sally San Soucie about the project she was thrilled.

“Sadly, the Lakewood team lost one of our own last year. Karla Adair was our independent living program coordinator and she passed away in May of 2021. We are going to place a memorial bench near to the beehive that she lovingly tended to for years,” Sally said. “Continuing to honor her with a meditation garden seemed fitting.”

Throughout the months of August and September, the girls worked on the garden, beginning by clearing the existing space.

“We wanted to brighten up the space, especially during COVID, so we planted flowers that can be appreciated during the spring. We chose plants that encourage pollinators because of the bees that are housed there. So, our focus was to better the existing area and introduce color into the space,” Baylee said.

Kelly expected the planting to be a lot more difficult, but thanks to the help of the Lakewood landscaping team and Baylee’s parents, who own a landscaping company, the project didn’t feel like work.

“We learned a lot about native plants and pollinators,” Jadyn said. “I thought it was also great that we could get outside and do it together as a team.”

The girls, who are each in ninth grade, have been a team for many years already. They’ve been involved with the Girl Scouts since first grade. Projects like this one are why they continue to participate.

“It’s nice to feel like you’re doing something good,” Kelly said.

“It’s enjoyable to see the ways that your good deeds have benefited the areas where you live. Some of us might have family members who live at Lakewood one day, so it’s nice to see how we could impact the residents.”

The girls left behind a book with information about the native plants in the garden. It can be found in the garden mailbox for those who utilize the space or who would like to volunteer to water the plants in the spring.

“The girls worked really hard to make this a very special place for our residents and team members, and we are so appreciative,” Sally said.

Though the girls are proud of their achievement, and maybe a little tired too, they are looking ahead to the next project. The next badge they could take on would be the Gold Award which entails 100 hours of community service.

“I’m not sure when I’ll be ready to do the Gold Award just because it is a lot, but if we do it, I’m sure we’ll do something outdoors again,” explained Kelly. ■



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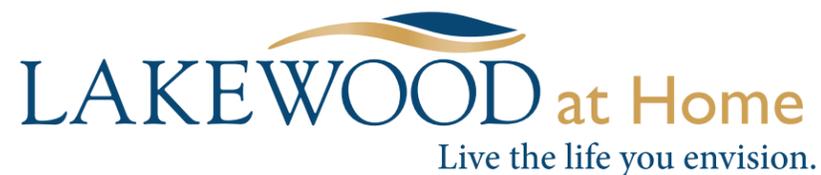
Sally San Soucie

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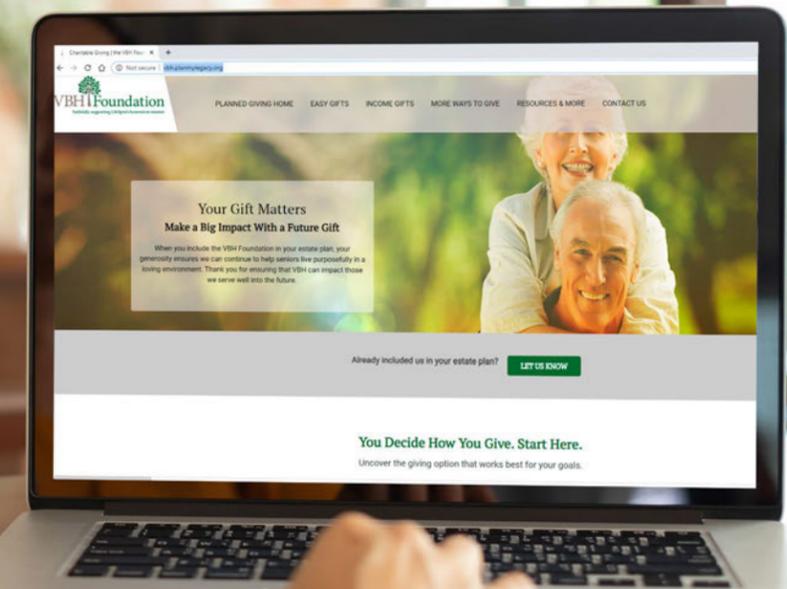
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