

*Paying Tribute  
to Those We Love*



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# soaring

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## New Observance Celebrates Life

Mennonite Home has instituted a new ceremony, the Life Celebration Walk, as a way to honor residents. The brief, but noble, ceremony encourages residents and staff to show their respect and love to a fellow resident at the time of their death.

“It was such a great way to honor my father and provided closure for our family,” said Cindy Daub Miller, whose father Glenn Daub passed away earlier this year.

The ceremony includes a beautiful memorial quilt that is placed over the resident. As the resident leaves the floor, other residents and staff are invited to stand in a moment of silent meditation or they may walk alongside if they prefer. Mennonite Home

*“It was such a great way to honor my father and provided closure for our family.”*

is like a family. Residents and staff form friendships with one another and may be deeply impacted when one member of the family is no longer present.

“Through the Life Celebration Walk, we want to offer a compassionate and dignified way to honor and acknowledge each resident’s life,” shared Deb Puglisi, RN, Director of Nursing. “We want to respectfully celebrate the life that has passed.”

Family members or powers of attorney will be asked for permission prior to the walk. Thus far Deb says that most people appreciate and welcome the gesture. “Death is something that happens and we have to face it,” says resident

June Wilson. “By participating in the Life Celebration Walk, it feels like we are doing something good.”

As Mim Cruz, recently retired Director of Pastoral Care, noted, the Walk gives residents and staff who cannot attend a funeral or memorial service the opportunity to still pay tribute.

“Not only does the Life Celebration Walk provide honor to the resident, it also offers comfort to the family,” shares Michelle Becker, Social Worker. “Observing staff lining the hallway to pay respect gives the families an overwhelming feeling of gratitude and appreciation.”

*(left photo) Cindy Daub Miller and her husband, Chris Miller, appreciated the new Life Celebration Walk to honor Cindy’s father, Glenn Daub. (right photo) Mim Cruz (standing, left), Michelle Becker (standing, right), Deb Puglisi (seated, right) and Kathy Markward (seated, left) collaborated to create a new celebration to honor Mennonite Home residents who have passed away.*

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Deb, Mim, Michelle and Kathy Markward, Director of Community Life, collaborated together on this new initiative.

“The Life Celebration Walk speaks to our culture at Mennonite Home,” says Kathy. “In having experienced life celebration walks, it is impactful and meaningful as team members to stand together and be present to show sympathy and respect to the family as their loved one has passed and to say our goodbye to the person.”

“Working together, we will provide honor and respect to a resident at their death, even as we have during their life,” explained Mim.





VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## Transport Volunteers Are on the Move

Some people go to the gym or walk on a treadmill; our volunteers go that “extra mile” when they come to Mennonite Home to transport residents to and from beauty shop and therapy appointments. It is only with their help that the therapist and beauticians can keep their combined 1,380 appointments per month running smoothly. Last year, volunteers helped fill 1,404 three-hour shifts to help take residents to appointments within Mennonite Home.

Here’s a few reasons why volunteers love transporting residents:

- **Marianne Oberholtzer** started as a “friendly visitor” more than 30 years ago but at some point was asked to transport residents to therapy. “I helped that first time and I guess I was hooked from then till now,” she says with a chuckle.
- **Bob Kopf** was retired and had no problem keeping busy, but he felt the desire to volunteer. At about the same time, his neighbor, Betty Hoover, told him about transporting residents in wheelchairs at Mennonite Home and the need for volunteers. The rest is history. He remembers asking one man who was a B-17 ball turret gunner in WWII: “Why did you pick that job?”

Wasn’t it the worst one?” The response was: “I don’t know...I guess it was the last job available!”

- **Elias Groff** worked for Mennonite Home for many years and immediately after retiring, he started volunteering. He loves the exercise he gets while meeting and helping people.
- When **Betty Frey** is transporting for the Beauty Shop, she loves the opportunity to talk to both residents and staff. She feels it is a great place to walk and really enjoys the lunches with the friends she has made here.
- **Rebecca Zook** says it is a great way to exercise in any weather and absolutely loves the opportunity to help and encourage people.
- **Brooke Sakellaris** shares that to her volunteering “not only is it helpful, but it makes my soul feel good.”
- **Deanna Moore** loves humming hymns as she’s helping and smiles when residents hum along.

*Transport volunteers include (seated, left to right) Eileen Hasselbach, Marianne Oberholtzer, Betty Frey; (standing, left to right) Natalie Hough, Sally Rodenberger, Joyce Poukish, Sharyn Habecker, Sandy Brown, Bob Kopf, Audrey Ackerman-Frey, Judy Wieand, Deanna Moore, Becky Zook, Ruth Fiedler, Brooke Sakellaris.*

Many Woodcrest Villa residents also enjoy helping. Ruth Fiedler and Audrey Ackerman-Frey have been having fun volunteering for years. As Sally Rodenberger shared: “In exchange for a cheerful word to a somewhat anxious patient, I get a morning of good exercise and a heartfelt thank you from the therapy staff. Surely I am getting the better of that deal!”

Volunteers are also critical on Sundays when they bring residents to and from chapel service. Most residents have a long tradition of attending Sunday services and our helpers make sure they can continue that at Mennonite Home.

It is truly amazing how many stories our volunteers hear as they get to know the various residents. They develop many new friendships and learn so much from each person they meet.

If you would be interested in this rewarding experience and joining this incredible group of volunteers...we can certainly use your help! Just call the volunteer office at 717-390-7971 and we’ll be happy to get you started.

# Benefit from the New Tax Law

In December 2017 Congress passed the biggest change to the US tax code in the past 30 years—the “Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.” This change in tax law—effective for 2018 tax returns—presents many planning opportunities for individuals. Our discussion below will outline some of the key changes resulting from the tax bill and actions to consider that will provide financial benefit to you and your family.

Beginning in 2018, the deduction for exemptions is eliminated. In 2017 taxpayers received a deduction of \$4,050 deduction per household member. For example, if you are married, your exemption deduction was \$8,100 in 2017 but will be \$0 in 2018.

Also beginning in 2018 is a major change to the standard deduction. Taxpayers are allowed to deduct the greater of the standard deduction or itemized deductions on their personal tax returns. Itemized deductions for most taxpayers consist of taxes paid, charitable contributions, medical expenses, and mortgage interest.

The standard deduction for persons over 65 is now \$26,600 per couple, up from \$15,200; for single persons the standard deduction is \$15,200, up from \$7,900. The practical impact of this change is that many more people will use the standard deduction, as it will be greater than the sum of their itemized deductions.

A simple example of the impact of these two items—and including the lower tax rates implemented with the “Tax Cuts and Jobs Act”—is shown below:

*assumptions - married couple, both over age 65, \$50,000 in annual income*

	2017	2018
Adjusted gross income	\$50,000	\$50,000
Less exemptions	(\$8,100)	\$0
Subtotal	\$41,900	\$50,000
Standard deduction	\$15,200	\$26,600
Charity	\$5,000	\$5,000
Taxes	\$1,000	\$1,000
Medical	\$1,000	\$1,000
Itemized deductions	\$7,000	\$7,000
<b>Taxable income</b>	<b>\$26,700</b>	<b>\$23,400</b>
<b>Tax liability</b>	<b>\$3,073</b>	<b>\$2,427</b>

In both years the taxpayer’s standard deduction is larger than their itemized deductions; therefore, they utilize the standard deduction in both 2017 and 2018. As you will note, the elimination of the exemptions increases income by \$8,100 in 2018; however, this increase is more than offset by the increase to the standard deduction to \$26,600. The net effect of these changes—as well

as the impact of the lower tax rates in 2018—results in tax savings of approximately \$650.

One very tangible way to organize your financial affairs to maximize the additional standard deduction and minimize your tax liability is to make your charitable gifts using a qualified charitable distribution. In simple terms, this means taking the required minimum distribution from your retirement plans and donating that directly to the charity or charities of your choice. The effect of the transaction is that the required minimum distribution is not reported as taxable income and the charitable contribution is not reported as an itemized deduction. A basic illustration of this is as follows:

*assumptions - married couple, both over age 65, \$100,000 in annual income but RMD of \$10,000 is used to fund charitable giving through use of Qualified Charitable Distribution*

	2017 - no QCD	2018 - QCD
Income	\$100,000	\$90,000
Less exemptions	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$100,000	\$90,000
Standard deduction	\$26,600	\$26,600
Charity	\$10,000	\$0
Taxes	\$1,000	\$1,000
Medical	\$1,000	\$1,000
Itemized deductions	\$12,000	\$2,000
<b>Taxable income</b>	<b>\$73,400</b>	<b>\$63,400</b>
<b>Tax liability</b>	<b>\$8,427</b>	<b>\$7,227</b>

As you can see, giving our charitable contributions from your required minimum distributions lowers both your income (in this case \$10,000) and the amount of reportable charitable giving (again, \$10,000); however, because the taxpayers are utilizing the standard deduction because it is larger than itemizing deductions in both scenarios, they in effect create and receive a \$10,000 tax deduction and save \$1,200 in tax by employing the qualified charitable distribution to make their charitable contributions.

The new tax law presents many new opportunities to plan your financial affairs and minimize tax liabilities. I would encourage you to contact your financial advisors to make sure you are taking advantage of all resources at your disposal; the Development Office of Mennonite Home Communities is willing and able to assist in walking with you through the qualified charitable distribution process.

Andrew Steckbeck, CPA, Partner





## New Resident Board Member



This March, the Mennonite Home Communities Board of Directors appointed Rosalyn Ward as the new Woodcrest Villa (WCV) resident board member. Rosalyn replaces Albert Huizing who resigned in December 2017. Rosalyn will fill the remainder of Albert's term and then a two-year term continuing through December 31, 2020.

The Board believes Rosalyn will be a tremendous asset as she has extensive professional development experience and a passion for Mennonite Home Communities.

She is an active member of Grace Lutheran Church, Lancaster, where she has held numerous leadership and advisory positions.

At WCV, Rosalyn serves as Vice Chair of the Residents Council, Chair of the Legislative Advocacy Committee, member of the Development Advisory Group, and Co-chair of the new Hearts and Hands Women's Connection. She also volunteers at the Woodcrest Hummingbird Center and at the Mennonite Home Country Store.

## New Court Now Open!

This spring, Woodcrest Villa celebrated the grand opening of the combined pickleball and tennis court visible from Harrisburg Pike. This beautiful new amenity is open to Woodcrest Villa residents and their family members. To kick off the start of spring and to get on the court, Mennonite Home President & CEO John Sauder and Vice President of Operations Daniel Mortensen challenged Woodcrest Villa Director of Resident Life Jennifer Bicher and Wellness Coordinator Emily Newman to a game of pickleball. The match was filled with lots of laughter and spirit as residents and staff cheered on both sides. In the end, the women's team bested the men's, but it was a close one! Residents are really enjoying getting out and playing with their friends and neighbors.



# Activities Abound at WCV

*One of the best things about living at Woodcrest Villa is that you can be as busy as you'd like to be on any given day.*

A glance at the monthly activities calendar reveals that there is no such thing as a dull moment!

Becky Wise took the helm as Community Life Coordinator in November 2017 and since then has filled the monthly calendar with a mixture of usual events and a bunch of "out of the box" opportunities for our residents.

Highlights include touring the Harley Davidson plant, going trout fishing, enjoying an authentic Amish lunch, visiting a wolf sanctuary, taking a behind-the-scenes tour at the QVC studio, shopping at a local wholesale craft warehouse and road tripping to Washington, D.C. to visit the Museum of the Bible.

Becky is also working hard at bringing the entertainment to us! Several interesting speakers visited to share stories about such things as biking across America,

Lancaster County Pet Association, hiking the Appalachian Trail, Lancaster County Park and spring plantings.

Movies are another big attraction and varied showtimes cover weekdays, evenings, and weekends and offer current releases like "Dunkirk" and "The Greatest Showman." In addition, local musical talents from big bands to school chorales come often to entertain the community.

Becky notes that many of the activities come from the residents who are members of the Trips Committee, Community Life Committee and /or Life Enrichment Committee. Becky comes to us from Traditions of America, a 55+ Community and is experienced in planning and executing a myriad of lifestyle enhancing events and activities. She was recently honored with the Best 55+ Lifestyle Director award from the National Association of Home Builders.





## Mennonite Home Communities

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## soaring

**Featured on the cover:** Mennonite Home staff Michelle Becker and Deb Puglisi (standing, left to right) were happy to help Cindy Daub Miller and her husband Chris Miller as well as the rest of her family as they said goodbye to Cindy's father Glenn Daub.

### SOARING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Connie Buckwalter, Jane Gamble,  
Kathleen Maule, Dan Mortensen,  
Kim Peters, Greg Pierce, John Sauder

## Create a lasting legacy

by supporting Mennonite Home through your estate and/or your will. Call Greg Pierce at 717-390-4903 to learn more.

If you would like to receive information about **Residential Living at Woodcrest Villa**, call 717.390.4103

If you would like to receive information about **Personal Care or Health Care** at Mennonite Home, call 717.390.7979

If you wish to have your name removed from our mailing list, call Kris at 717.735.2647.

## Hearts and Hands Women's Connection Luncheon



Seated from left to right: Pat Leaman, Mennonite Home Communities Board Chair; Rosalyn Ward, Resident Board Member and Hearts and Hands committee member; Vera Miller; Marilyn Kriebel-Felter and Bev Wagaman.



On Saturday, April 28, more than 40 women gathered together in the Gamber Auditorium to learn about Hearts and Hands Women's Connection, a new benevolent care opportunity. Guest speaker Lori Burkholder from WGAL 8 shared heartfelt comments about the power of women who come together with a shared passion to accomplish great things. Committee members Reba Buckwalter-Kreider, Suzanne Burger, Hilma Mumma, Kim Peters and Rosalyn Ward facilitated the event. It was a great time of food, fellowship and celebration.

Hearts and Hands Women's Connection is open to all women. Meetings are held three times per year to connect women through social and educational opportunities.

**To learn more, please contact Kim Peters at 717-390-4105.**