

A publication of Bethesda Health Group, Inc. • December 2019

Happy 130th Anniversary, Bethesda!

It is hard to comprehend that Bethesda Health Group has been serving the needs of St. Louis seniors and their families for 130 years!

The changes to the organization from the day that **Mrs. Elizabeth Hayne**, with the help of her husband, **Roger Hayne**, and their friend **Dr. Edward Saunders**, began Bethesda in 1889 by caring for one female patient are too numerous to address in this space.

Imagine what they would think, however, if they saw our thriving organization now! Bethesda now comprises 14 communities (six independent living, two assisted living, six skilled nursing and rehab), providing a home and exceptional quality care for more than 1,000 seniors.

Over the years, we have expanded our care to include dedicated neighborhoods for seniors living with dementia. We also have expanded our community based services options (Care Management, Home Health, Senior Support Solutions, Hospice Care) offered in the privacy and comfort of wherever the senior calls home.



We have a Foundation that raises funds annually for humanitarian care, assuring that Bethesda residents who outlive their means to pay will always have a home within our organization.

We have thriving Volunteer programs at many of our communities and services.

All of us at Bethesda would like to think that Mrs. and Mr. Hayne and Dr. Saunders would be very proud of what we have become!

So thank you for your continued support. With your help, Bethesda will continue to thrive and strive to be the premier provider of senior living, care and services in St. Louis area.

For more information about senior care and services, please read our blogs (www.BethesdaHealth.org/blog) and check out our Facebook page (www.Facebook.com/BethesdaHealthGroup). ■

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“Career Ladder” Programs Helping BHG Employees

The Bethesda mission statement includes a phrase that expresses an organizational commitment to “providing fulfilling career opportunities.” For years, Bethesda has offered such programs as tuition reimbursement, a “School at Work” program and an “LPN to RN” program.

Recently, however, the opportunities for education leading to career advancement has expanded, as the Human Resources department has added a number of classes to the Career Ladder program:

- Classes in which current non-nursing Bethesda employees can become certified as nursing assistants (CNAs). In 2019, nearly 20 employees took advantage of these classes, and many are currently working as CNAs in Bethesda’s skilled nursing communities or community based services.
- As the next step in our Career Ladder program, qualified CNAs can participate in a class in which they are learning the skills to become a Certified Medication Technician—the staff that distributes the daily doses of medication to the residents in our skilled nursing communities. Twelve staff are currently participating in this class.
- For the first time, a unique CNA “Apprenticeship” program is being offered to candidates outside



This happy group of Bethesda employees (plus lead instructor **Kathy Cranor**) celebrate the completion of the CNA class in November 2019.

of the Bethesda organization. The apprenticeship combines traditional classroom education with on-the-job training at a Bethesda skilled nursing community. Upon program completion, the participants will be ready to take the CNA exam.

“Eleven apprentices are in the current program which, if successful, will be used as a model for staff development going forward,” says **Eileen Caffey**, Recruitment and Retention Director.

“We’re committed to cultivating our employees at Bethesda, and are thrilled to be able to increase the number of opportunities for our staff to further their careers while continuing to work at Bethesda,” says **Kathy Joslin**, Senior VP of Human Resources.

To review the employment opportunities available at Bethesda, go to www.BethesdaHealth.org/careers and click “Apply Here!” ■

Bethesda Offering Unique Respiratory Therapy Program

As of January 1, each Bethesda skilled nursing community will be providing a respiratory therapy program to its rehab patients unlike any other.

In this program, patients can undergo **a customized respiratory therapy program seven days a week**. In addition, the program is **administered by licensed respiratory therapists, not nurses**. According to the program’s management team, both of these unique aspects, among others, are helping our patients avoid a return to the hospital.

“The majority of hospital re-admissions of rehabilitation patients are due to respiratory-

related illnesses, like COPD, pneumonia, and congestive heart failure, that are not adequately addressed during rehab,” says **Kiel Peregrin**, Senior Vice President, Long Term Care. “By offering our program every day of the week, we are committed to doing what is best for the patient.

Kiel added that he is not aware of any other respiratory therapy programs in post-hospitalization rehab environments (typically a skilled nursing community) in the St. Louis area offering a similar program.

The Bethesda respiratory therapy program also includes a full



assessment of any sleeping, breathing, skin and stamina issues coordinated by a team of respiratory therapists in conjunction with the patient’s personal physician and medical team. In addition, all therapy activities are conducted on site.

To learn more about this new program, please contact **Dawn Smiddy**, Program Director, drsmiddy@bethesdahealth.org. ■

Welcome to the Foundation, Teasha Brooks!

After more than a decade of working with non-profits and foundations to develop measurable outcomes, track relevant data, and secure funding, **Teasha Brooks** has brought her talents to the Bethesda Health Group Foundation, where she recently started working as a Fund Development Coordinator.

In this position, Teasha will be responsible for much of the grant writing that takes place within the BHG Foundation. However, she already has been out visiting the communities and meeting the residents.

"I believe that as a development professional my job is to advance the mission of the organizations with which I work, always striving for excellence and serving a greater purpose to the community and its citizens," Teasha says. "Bethesda has a great reputation for quality care, and I am pleased to be part of a team that makes sure residents don't have to leave their homes just because they have outlived their ability to pay."

Teasha joins **Pam Dempski**, Corporate VP of Fund Development, and **Pam Moore**, Development Administrative Assistant, as members of the BHG Foundation team.



For more information on the BHG Foundation, go to www.BethesdaHealth.org/giving-to-Bethesda and sign up for their "Happenings" e-newsletter. ■

"Hope Dove" Program Thriving at BHG



The vision is practically unavoidable—by Dec. 25, every Bethesda community will have a festive tree filled with ornaments in the shape of a white dove.

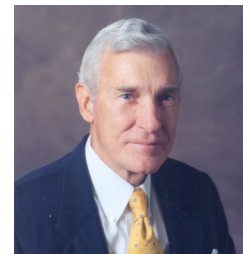
For those not familiar with the program, however, these are no ordinary ornaments. These are "Hope Doves," which are placed on the tree in the community of

the donor's choice when a gift is made to the Bethesda Health Group Foundation as part of the "Hope Dove" campaign.

"Most of the 'Hope Doves' are purchased by families to honor their resident loved one or a special employee who has cared for their loved one, but we also sell plenty of doves to employees who want to recognize their fellow employees," says **Pam Dempski**, Corporate VP of Fund Development. "The donor can identify the community at which they would like the dove to be displayed, and the residents love looking at the ornaments on the trees!"

The Foundation provides many opportunities (like the Hope Dove program) to support our seniors through gracious donations year-round. To learn about the variety of options, please go to www.BethesdaHealth.org/giving-to-Bethesda. ■

Remembering Joe Birk



The Bethesda family fondly remembers **Joseph E. Birk, Jr.**, a former Chairman of the Bethesda Board of

Directors (2013-14) and long-time supporter of our organization, who passed away on Nov. 24, 2019, at the age of 89.

Joe was a retired attorney and executive at Ameren UE. He served on the Boards of many community organizations, including Bethesda. He also had served on the Bethesda Advisory Board.

Joe received the Norwood Award in 2006, in recognition of his distinguished service and commitment to Bethesda. Our thoughts are with his daughter, **Mari**, and members of his family. ■

Kathy Joslin—Life Saver!

As a longtime Board member and former Board Chair of the local chapter of the National Kidney Foundation, donating a kidney had always been in the back of **Kathy Joslin's** mind. Imagine Kathy's surprise to learn that she was a match for the husband of a fellow Bethesda co-worker!

"It is so gratifying to know that I was able to help **Will and Paula (Keeven)** like this," says Kathy, Bethesda's Senior VP of Human Resources. "Will had been on dialysis for three years and on the wait list for a lengthy time. It's wonderful to see he is doing as well as he is."

"I still cannot believe that Kathy was so giving and gracious," says Paula, who works at Bethesda's Corporate



office as an Administrative Assistant. "Our family will never be able to thank her enough for this unbelievable gesture of kindness." ■

Kathy Joslin, right, visits with Paula and Will Keeven. Kathy donated one of her kidneys to Will in August.



Members of the Eunice Smith Home team celebrates its third "Best of the Best" award in row.

Best of the Best—3 Years in Row!

The staff at Eunice Smith Home are celebrating a hat trick of sorts. In hockey, players earn a hat trick when they score three goals in a game. On Nov. 20, the team learned they earned the "Best of the Best" award in the Skilled Nursing Facility category in the Alton/Godfrey/Riverbend area for the third year in succession!

"This is the culmination of a lot of hard work and dedication by our team to taking care of our residents and doing what's right," says **Daniel Vogel**, Administrator of Eunice Smith Home. "I'm very proud to be part of this team!" ■

Five Honored by VOYCE

Four Bethesda employees and one Bethesda volunteer were among those honored by VOYCE (formerly the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program) at the Dec. 5 celebration. Typically, honorees are nominated by co-workers or caregivers. Only 85 were nominated from throughout the St. Louis area.

Congratulations to (sitting, l-r) **Sarita Weldon**, Senior Admissions Counselor, Bethesda Southgate/Charless Village; and **Charlotte**



Busch, Senior HR Manager, Bethesda Meadow; and (standing, l-r) **Kara Henry**, Social Services, Bethesda Southgate; **Trina Davis**, CNA, Bethesda Hawthorne Place, and **Eileen Maher**, Volunteer, Bethesda Dilworth. ■

Congratulations, Julie!

Julie Strassman, Volunteer Coordinator at Bethesda Hospice Care walked into her Metropolitan Volunteer Management Association (MVMA) meeting in November without any ideas about what was about to take place.

She didn't know that her supervisor, **Leslie Schaeffer**, nominated her for the MVMA Volunteer Director of the year. As a result, she didn't know that she'd be the recipient of the award—but she was!



Julie Strassman, right, the recipient of the MVMA Volunteer Director of the Year award, celebrates with her supervisor, **Leslie Schaeffer**.

"In just two years with Bethesda, Julie has made fantastic strides in our Hospice volunteer program and our 'No One Dies Alone' program," Leslie says. "I have a hard time believing that anyone would have deserved this award any more than Julie." ■



Veterans Day

Each Bethesda community commemorates Veterans Day in a different way. Bethesda Hospice Care coordinates the majority of the activities, in which Veterans and spouses of Veterans are honored during a pinning ceremony.

Some activities involve area first responders, and some invite Veterans from other communities.

For more photos of our Veterans Day celebrations, go to [www.Facebook.com/BethesdaHealthGroup](https://www.facebook.com/BethesdaHealthGroup), and replace "Bethesda" with the name of the community of your choosing.



Village North Retirement Community



Bethesda Terrace



Bethesda Orchard



Bethesda Dilworth



Bethesda Meadow



Bethesda Barclay House



**Barnes-Jewish
Extended Care**



Bethesda Hawthorne Place



Bethesda Gardens & The Oaks at Bethesda

Did You Know...

... that one of the Bethesda managed communities—Eunice Smith Home—is changing its name? Nothing else will change—the management, the services, and the staff all remain intact.

... that the **Bethesda Respite Care** program can provide you with a well-earned rest while providing your senior loved one with socialization and daily activities?

... that the 2019 Annual Report will soon be available, and will include additional information on the Career Ladder, as well as features on some of our more unique residents and staff?

Information on these and other Bethesda initiatives and stories will be included in the next edition of the *Pulse*. ■

BETHESDA

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Social Media Platforms Provide Numerous Resources for Loved Ones

Whether you are interested in increased access to senior-related issues or finding new and easier ways to see which activities your loved one is enjoying each day, Bethesda keeps working to expand its options and simplify the process for you.

For those interested in “following Bethesda,” we are active in the social media platforms listed below.

In many cases, our communities have their own Facebook page. These pages can be accessed by replacing **BethesdaHealthGroup** with the name of the community of choice.

We publish 2-3 blogs per week on a variety of senior-related topics. Please access our blog library by going to www.BethesdaHealth.org/blog/.

Finally, our digital footprint is growing, as in early 2020 we will be publishing an e-newsletter that will be sent directly to your email account. If you want to be included in this distribution, you can register by going to www.bethesdahealth.org/sign-up.

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Thank you for your continued interest in Bethesda, and please “Like,” “Follow” and “Share” the posts on our social media platforms!