

## “Career Ladder” Creating Fulfilling Healthcare Careers

Part of Bethesda Health Group’s mission is to provide fulfilling career opportunities, which includes opportunities for advancement once an employee joins the organization.

And that is why Bethesda developed its “Career Ladder.”

“This program is great for people who are truly compassionate and want to help others,” says **Eileen Caffey**, Director of Recruitment and Employee Relations. “If they’re dedicated to their education and furthering their career, participants can complete training to become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), a CNA Mentor, a Certified Medication Technician (CMT), then eventually enroll in nursing school.”

**Kristina Johnson** is on track to do just that. She started working at Bethesda Southgate in early 2020 after applying on somewhat of a whim.

“I had never worked in healthcare before, but my mom is a staffing coordinator with Bethesda and I saw how much she loves her job, so I decided to apply,” Kristina says.

In the two years Kristina has been at Bethesda, she’s already completed the training programs to become a Nurse Assistant, a CNA, a CNA Mentor and a CMT.



**Kristina Johnson** takes time from her busy day to visit with one of her favorite Bethesda Southgate residents, **Phyllis Benson**.

Nursing school is the next rung she wants to climb. That’s the magic of the Career Ladder.

“I am so grateful for the Career Ladder program because it has allowed me to enter into and progress quickly in a field that I have become very passionate about,” says Kristina. “I love giving back to the generation that paved the way for me and my family, and the relationships I’ve built with the residents have made my job so enjoyable.”

Kristina says she appreciates the financial assistance Bethesda provides in each step of the Career Ladder program.

“There is no charge to our employees who participate in the 12-week CNA and CMT programs; in fact, we actually

pay them while they’re in training,” Eileen says. “Our bottom line is setting our employees, and in turn our residents, up for success. We’ll do everything we can to take care of our people!”

The Career Ladder program has graduated more than 120 “students” since its creation. It is on track to graduate the largest number of participants yet in 2022.

“Bethesda sets you up for success by being so supportive and helping you accomplish your goals,” says Kristina. “If you’re looking to achieve greatness and grow in your career, Bethesda’s Career Ladder program will help you do that.”

For more information, contact Eileen at 314-800-1950 or [eecaffey@bethesdahealth.org](mailto:eecaffey@bethesdahealth.org). ■

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## Residents Enjoy Bethesda's Complete Continuum of Care

Bethesda's mission is to be the premier provider of care and services for seniors in the St. Louis area. To accomplish this mission, Bethesda provides a complete continuum of support to residents. For Bethesda's Independent Living residents, this includes access to a full range of in-home services—Care Management, Home Health and Senior Support Solutions (private duty)—that will be provided to them in their own apartments.

"Even our most vibrant residents may need a little help now and then, and it is important to us that we support their needs however we can," says **Michelle Glass**, Corporate Vice President of Senior Living and In-Home Care. "If they have an accident or injury, or if their overall health declines, our in-home services

team is ready to help. I would estimate that 75% of our residents have used at least one of these services."

The ultimate goal is to keep people living healthy and well in the space they are the most safe and comfortable for as long as possible. This continuum of care promotes aging in place, which has been proven to increase happiness and quality of life.

"We're able to meet all of a resident's needs within the walls of their apartment from the day they move in until the end of life," says **Missy McAuley**, Director of St. Andrews & Bethesda Home Health and Bethesda Hospice Care. "I don't believe other organizations offer the depth and breadth of services and communication between providers quite like we do."



For more information about Bethesda's in-home services, please call 314-963-2200 or email [caremanagement@bethesdahealth.org](mailto:caremanagement@bethesdahealth.org). ■

## Bethesda Shines at Senior Olympics

The 52nd annual St. Louis Senior Olympics took place over Memorial Day weekend, and Bethesda was an important part of the festivities.

Not only was Bethesda one of the organizations that sponsored the 4-day event, but Bethesda residents participated!

**1** On May 26, **Sylvia Swaysland**, a resident at Village North Retirement Community (center), participated in two numbers in the dance exhibition!

**2** On May 27, **Dan Barger**, a resident at Bethesda Orchard, participated in the horseshoes competition, and earned a bronze medal in his age category!

Congratulations to Sylvia and Dan—and maybe the Bethesda contingent will be even larger next year! ■



## Hearts for Our Homes Campaign Exceeds Goal

You can't put a price tag on peace of mind.

No one knows that more than **Linda Sanders**, Bethesda Corporate VP and Director of Development, and why she was so thrilled at the results of the 2022 *Hearts for Our Homes* campaign. The goal was \$120,000, which was achieved with three weeks left in the campaign.

"This annual giving campaign raises funds to ensure residents who have outlived their financial resources will always have a home at Bethesda," Linda says. "It's so unique—it even involves residents who have the financial means donating to support their

neighbors willingly and without hesitation.

"They do so quietly, to protect the dignity of their friends, which makes their gifts even more beautiful," she adds.

The campaign has always relied on the generosity of Bethesda residents, employees and board members, and this year special emphasis was given to cultivating support from our Community Partners—those organizations with whom Bethesda does business and have seen the efforts of the campaign first-hand.

Thanks to all who supported, the 2022 *Hearts for Our Homes* campaign raised \$150,000 for



Bethesda Gardens resident **Jeannette Smith** is thrilled to have won the raffle for this beautiful quilt, which was made by the wife of Door Attendant **Gary Jackson** specifically to raise funds for *Hearts for Our Homes*.

the humanitarian care described above. "Looks like I have to re-think our financial goal for the 2023 campaign," Linda says with a smile.

For more information, please call 314-800-1916 or email [celuna@bethesdahealth.org](mailto:celuna@bethesdahealth.org). ■

## Women's Board Increases Involvement

The Bethesda Women's Board has been committed to enhancing the lives and experiences of Bethesda residents for decades, but the return to in-person meetings has resulted in a new-found vision in the ways the board members can help.

"In order to be impactful, a group must have a goal," says **Sharon Burkhardt**, the organization's Membership Chair. "Our goal-setting is always very clear and intentional, and something we all agree will brighten the days of the residents. The direction we have chosen to take this year fits our

goals very well."

The direction of which she speaks is two-fold. The Women's Board will use its dues for two projects—a Whisper Glide Swing at Bethesda Southgate that accommodates people in wheelchairs and raised garden planters at Bethesda Dilworth. "The planters are especially meaningful for residents in memory care, as the flowers elicit memories of days spent in their own gardens," says Sharon.

However, the board will also be launching two new initiatives—hosting holiday parties to help our residents get into the holiday

spirit and "Adopt a Senior," which involves members calling or visiting a resident monthly just to chat and listen to their stories.

"I'm especially excited about these two initiatives," says **Linda Sanders**, Corporate VP and Director of the BHG Foundation. "The Board expressed a desire to become more involved with Bethesda as leaders and volunteers, and what they chose to pursue will especially help those seniors who no longer have family or friends in their lives."

The next meeting of the Bethesda Women's Board is scheduled for Sept. 15, and will feature a presentation by 5-time Emmy winner (and St. Louis native) Terry Schnuck. The group is really looking forward to stories of his Broadway productions!

To join the Women's Board or for more information, please call 314-800-1916 or email [LLSanders@bethesdahealth.org](mailto:LLSanders@bethesdahealth.org). ■



Members of the 2002 Women's Board.

## Danforth Center Teaching Bethesda Residents about Plant Science

Bethesda is proud of its community collaborations, especially when the end result is to the benefit of our residents.

One of the latest collaborations is with the esteemed Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, whose staff members are making presentations to residents at our independent living communities.

The Danforth Center's mission is to improve the human condition through plant science. They do this through feeding the hungry, improving human health, preserving and renewing the environment, and enhancing the St. Louis region.



Bethesda Barclay House residents enjoy the presentation by the team from the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center.

"The residents have really enjoyed learning about the future of the Danforth Center and seeing why St. Louis has come to be known as the 'Silicon Valley' of plant science," says **Michelle Glass**, Corporate Vice President of Senior Living and In-Home

Services. "We hope to continue these lectures at each one of our communities, as they provide a great way for residents to learn about an incredible St. Louis-based organization."

The largest independent nonprofit research institute dedicated to plant science in the world, the Danforth Center is headquartered in St. Louis. **John Rowe**, current Bethesda Board Treasurer and former Bethesda President & CEO as well as former Board Chair, currently serves as a member of the Danforth Center Friends Committee and is responsible for facilitating this partnership. ■

## Community Partnership Prepares Youth for Successful Futures

Bethesda is also proud to consistently engage in partnerships that benefit the St. Louis community. Since 1995, multiple Bethesda communities have been part of the Special School District Vocational Skills Program (VSP), which pairs students with a local business or organization to learn job skills; daily living skills needed to live independently, like budgeting and picking out appropriate clothing; and social skills.

**Dhanel Stepney**, a 19-year-old trainee in the VSP at Village North Retirement Community, has participated in the program since 2021 and plans to return in the fall. She helps with Activities and performs morning wellness checks, calling residents to ensure they're awake and had no issues overnight.

"I like doing wellness checks because it feels good to check on the elderly, to make sure they are okay," Dhanel says.

"I also like helping with activities because I am a motivated and creative person. I help with crafts, painting and cooking."

The VSP follows an academic calendar, so trainees begin in August and conclude in May.

"This partnership is beneficial in many ways, because the trainees may learn skills from our staff, but we learn so much from them, too," says **Felinna Love**, General Manager at Village North. "It's really rewarding to see the trainees start the year quiet and shy, and then blossom into confident, self-assured young people by the end."

Another benefit of the VSP is the joy the trainees bring to the residents.



**Dhanel Stepney** (left) makes a wellness check call as Administrative Assistant **Chelsea Callender** watches.

"When we had to pause the program because of COVID, the residents were so sad," Felinna says. "They tirelessly asked me when the trainees were coming back. It's really touching how much the residents love talking with them and having them in the building." ■

## AMRT Nurses Honored

**Natalynn Casey** (left) and **Jennifer Schmittling**, Licensed Practical Nurses who work at Alton Memorial Rehabilitation & Therapy, celebrate their inclusion in the Nurses: The Heart of Health Care special section in the May 8 edition of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

According to the newspaper, the nurses who were profiled in the section were those who made an impact on the lives of patients, loved ones and the community at large. In the Skilled Nursing/ Assisted Living/Memory Care section, Jennifer and Natalynn were two of only 19 nurses profiled.

Congratulations, Jennifer and Natalynn! ■



## We Honor Veterans— Level 5 Secured Again!

Bethesda Hospice Care has once again earned the prominent Level 5 distinction in the “We Honor Veterans” program.



WE HONOR VETERANS

The initiative, coordinated by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, was created to help hospice programs identify and handle the unique needs of Veterans at end of life.

Requirements for the Level 5 tier include staff education and training, community events and educational programming, and a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans celebration.

“Not only have we earned this distinction each year that it’s been available, but we are one of only four Hospice programs in Missouri to achieve Level 5,” says **Michelle Glass**, Corporate Vice President of Senior Living and In-Home Services. “Bethesda is committed to honoring the needs of each one of our residents, and it is a privilege to serve those who have served our country.” ■



## Remembering Our Veterans on Memorial Day

**Bob Morris**, a Veteran and longtime volunteer at Bethesda Meadow, lights nine candles—one for each of the Veteran residents living at Bethesda Meadow who passed away during the last 12 months—as fellow volunteers and Veterans **Margie Jacob** (right) and **Bob Kraus** observe.

The May 27 ceremony at Bethesda Meadow was one of the many commemorative activities that were held at communities around Bethesda over the Memorial Day weekend.

“It’s important that we remember and cherish the memory of those who gave everything for our freedom,” says Morris, who has been organizing Veteran-related activities at Bethesda Meadow for more years than he’d like to admit. ■

## Bell Visits Bethesda Communities



On June 14, Bethesda Terrace residents enjoyed a visit from St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney **Wesley Bell**, who provided an update to some of his senior-based initiatives and answered questions from the group. This is the third Bethesda community he has visited in the last few weeks. ■

## Residents Having Fun



**1 Margaret Lahey** and her friends from Hawthorne Place know that the best place to go for a root beer float is Fitz's!

**2** It's always fun to sit with Village North friends and enjoy lunch at the Cheesecake Factory!

**3** Plenty of strikes and spares for **Glenda Branyon** and her fellow CECR residents!

**4 Laverne Meyer** and **Amanda Hoffmeister** were having a great time at the Bethesda Southgate "Cinco de Mayo" celebration!

**5 Rosemary Bourisaw** enjoys her "Blue Lagoon Cocktail" at a Bethesda Terrace Happy Hour!

## Senior Fairs Are Back!

**1 Keri Bryer**, Administrator of Memorial Care Center, interacts with attendees at the "Taking Me Out to the Aging Expo," held on May 19 in O'Fallon, Ill.

**2** Bethesda participated in many fairs in the spring and early summer. **Jocelynn Lewis**, Activities Director at CECR (right), and **Adrienne Loyd**, Life Enrichment Director at Village North Retirement Community, worked the Archwell Health Senior Expo on April 27.

Bethesda also participated in the St. Louis Senior Olympics Fair on May 26, the West County Chamber Senior Expo on June 14 and the ALS Association Walk on June 25. ■



## Did You Know...

... that Bethesda will be involved in many fundraising walks this year? Besides Bethesda Hospice Care's "Kayman 5K" on September 24 (mark your calendars), Bethesda supported the ALS Association walk in June as well as two scheduled for October—the APDA (Parkinson's Disease) Optimum Walk and the Alzheimer's Association's Walk to End Alzheimer's. More information forthcoming.

... that Bethesda Southgate has earned a very prestigious quality award from the American Health Care Association?

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

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