

Pulse

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Fostering successful aging through
compassion and innovation



Staying Active Matters

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Bethesda's CNA Apprenticeship Program Nurtures Careers, Enriches Lives

Bethesda has reinvigorated its Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Apprenticeship program, a dynamic initiative designed to identify and empower motivated individuals with a passion for healthcare.

Eileen Caffey, Senior Director of Recruitment, says that after a nine-month hiatus, the collaboration between Bethesda and Applied

Technology is back, offering apprenticeships through the Department of Labor. Its primary objective is to encourage potential, providing educational and financial support to individuals seeking a fulfilling career in healthcare.

"This is a great opportunity for those individuals interested in going back to school and growing their careers while working at Bethesda," says Eileen.

The apprenticeship includes a comprehensive 13-week curriculum, seamlessly integrating classroom instruction with real-world clinical on-the-job training. Notably, the first two weeks are devoted to honing study and note-taking skills, a crucial preparatory step for the certification exam that is held at the end of the program.

Tiffany Oneal, who has been a laundry aide at Bethesda Dilworth for a year and a half, is one of eight

current class participants. "As soon as I heard about it, I signed up. It's a great opportunity for my career, and I love working with elders. I'm excited to build relationships with them," she says.

The apprenticeship program operates on a rolling basis, with sessions starting every three months. Those interested can delve deeper by attending an information session or learning about the program through the Careers tab on the Bethesda website: careers.bethesdahealth.org.

Eileen acknowledges the critical shortage of healthcare workers in St. Louis, recognizing the pivotal role the program plays in incentivizing individuals to join the healthcare workforce. Bonuses upon program completion and retention with Bethesda serve as powerful motivators.

"It's not just a career, it's a calling," Eileen says, encapsulating the importance of Bethesda's mission.



***Tiffany Oneal** is just one of the participants in the 13-week apprenticeship program.*

To see a list of available positions, go to <https://careers.bethesdahealth.org> or scan here.



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Bethesda Brings Christmas Joy to Deserving Families

The St. Louis community has generously supported Bethesda's mission for 135 years, and each year Bethesda employees contribute to a collective fund to return the favor.

Our employee-driven donations have supported a variety of initiatives, including The Kidney Foundation and various Alzheimer's organizations.

In 2022 and 2023, the Events Committee at the Bethesda Corporate office chose to support children and families in need who had been identified by the Juvenile Division of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD). This past Christmas, three families, each facing their unique challenges, were selected to receive the warmth and generosity of Bethesda Corporate employees.

Penny Northern-Phanse, Revenue Cycle Director, spearheads the project, which strived to meet the distinct needs of each recipient. Among them was a single mother of six children, one of whom is autistic and another a cancer survivor. Having recently lost all of their belongings in a house fire just two weeks after moving into a new home, this family was in desperate need of assistance. Another family, a single mother of four, sought refuge from an abusive marriage. The third was a 10-year-old girl who had been a victim of sex crimes.

Upon hearing these heart-wrenching stories, Penny and the team got to work. With careful planning, fundraising, bargain shopping and couponing, they purchased vital human necessities as well as educational and fun items for the kids, such as video games, sunglasses, novelty knee socks, a baby doll, and weightlifting equipment for one of the teenagers.



Penny Northern-Phanse, Bethesda's Revenue Cycle Director, offers one of the numerous gifts collected to Detective Erica Anderson as (l-r) **Carrie Wetzel**, **Toni Durham**, and **Joe Brinker** of Bethesda watch along with Juvenile Advocate Shelda Hunter and Cadet Kamaria Waller.

The effort culminated with a wrapping party, as a conference room was transformed into a festive hub with eight people sorting and wrapping the gifts. The SLMPD officers arrived to collect and deliver the gifts, ensuring a magical Christmas for these deserving families.

Detective Sgt. Kevin Bentley, Supervisor of the Juvenile Division, expressed gratitude for the second consecutive year of partnership with Bethesda. He says, "This has truly been a blessing for not only the families that we serve but for us as well. Any time you can help put a smile on someone's face, especially

during the holiday season, it is a beautiful thing!"

Penny and the committee remain committed to finding impactful ways to give back to the community. For Penny, these Christmas donations hold a special place in her heart. With a quiver in her voice, she says, "I know firsthand the importance of donations like this. And as I've gotten older, I have never forgotten how important it is for kids to feel cared about and happy, especially at Christmas."

In the spirit of giving, Bethesda proves that with collective effort and compassion, we can make a significant difference in the lives of families facing adversity.

Holiday Assistance from MCC



In Belleville, the team from Memorial Care Center partnered with Home Instead Senior Care to collect necessities specifically for seniors. The campaign, called "Santa to Seniors," provided more than 30 seniors with items of need.

Derrick Crockett, Social Services Coordinator at Memorial Care Center, poses with some of the bags collected for seniors as part of the "Santa to Seniors" project.

Bethesda Barclay House Embraces Wellness and Harmony with Yoga

A wellness movement thrives at Barclay House, where the tranquil setting of yoga classes has consistently united residents in the celebration of flexibility, strength and meditation.

“Stretch and challenge the body while relaxing your mind and spirit,” encourages **Judy Meyer**, the community’s yoga instructor, setting the tone for a holistic approach to wellbeing during each class.

Classes are held twice weekly in the multipurpose room on the mezzanine, creating a serene environment for residents. On Tuesdays, chair yoga accommodates those who prefer not to get down on the floor. Meanwhile on Thursdays, an average of 6 to 10 participants actively participate in butterfly stretches and other flexibility activities directly on yoga mats.

Resident **Bobbi Boley** has practiced yoga for 40 years and is grateful for the on-site classes. “It’s something I can do, and it’s just an elevator ride away,” says Bobbi.

“Everybody in my family is delighted with my experience here. My kids say it’s like a refined fraternity and sorority house!”

Celeste Wight

Karen Bacon, a resident at Bethesda Barclay House for two years, has become a fervent enthusiast. “It gives me a good stretch; I love it,” she says, reflecting on the positive impact yoga has on her overall health.

For **Rosemary Oliver** yoga recently became a remedy for maintaining her health. “I was having back issues, and I have found that yoga has really helped me,” she says.

Yoga classes are just one of the many activities that add to the vibrant Bethesda Barclay House community. **Celeste Wight** shares the sentiments of her family, stating, “Everybody in my family is delighted with my experience here. My kids say it’s like a refined fraternity and sorority house!”



Most of the participants in the Yoga classes at Bethesda Barclay House never miss a session, they say.

As residents gracefully transition from warrior to triangle poses, the uplifting energy in the room is palpable. Rosemary captures the essence of the experience. “This is how I like to start my day. Now, I get to go off and do other things,” she declares as she rolls up her yoga mat, ready to embark on the rest of her busy day.



Patricia Melechen, Rosemary Oliver, Karen Bacon, instructor **Judy Meyer**, **Celeste Wight** and **Bobbi Boley** prepare for the morning yoga session. There are typically 4-10 participants at each yoga class at Bethesda Barclay House.

The Healing Harmony of Music

In between his responsibilities as Executive Director at Village North Retirement Community and Christian Extended Care & Rehabilitation, one might find **Billy Hogan** sitting at the piano playing familiar tunes to the delight of residents.

Billy's musical journey started at age four with the piano and led him to his church's youth choir. He earned an associate degree in Performing Arts before embarking on a journey through nursing school.

"I love to play for our residents, as I truly believe music heals and offers connection," says Billy.

The residents often request their favorite gospel hymns. During a melodic rendition of "This Little Light of Mine," the atmosphere is electric as residents clap, sing and smile.

Resident **Doris Rice** shouts joyfully, "Our lights are not dim!" Her sentiment resonates with others, receiving affirmations in the form of "Amen," "Praise the Lord!" and head nods. For Doris, the music transports her 70 years back to her childhood church days, she says.

Other residents are also reminded of days past, finding solace in Billy's music. **Goldie Kottkamp**, humming along, says, "He really makes the notes sing." **Valery Lewis** says, "It's like a rebirth after 67 years; the music and the words just come out."



***Billy Hogan** often attracts quite a following when he sits down at the Village North piano and begins playing.*

As he winds up his impromptu performance, Billy promises to play for them again soon.

"We'll be knocking on your door!" laughs resident **Sheila Patterson** as Billy puts on his jacket and readjusts his name badge before getting back to work.

Pacific Place Celebrating Wellness with On-Site Exercise Room

Nestled within Webster Groves, residents at Pacific Place are actively adopting a culture of wellness with a new on-site exercise room.

Residents **Jim** and **Marian Rose** helped kickstart this initiative by donating an exercise bike gifted to them by their physical therapist, Missouri State Representative Deb Lavender. An idea was kindled that

transformed an empty space into a fully equipped exercise room.

General Manager **Sarah Zimmerman** says the fitness area now boasts an air bike, treadmill, recumbent bike, hand weights and a resistance exercise chair. Donations came from Bethesda Southgate, Barnes-Jewish Extended Care and the Bethesda Women's Board.

"The Roses' request sparked an idea, and within a couple of months, we had an exercise room," says Sarah.

Residents can also participate in a range of classes, including Tai Chi and Chair Yoga. Plans for an outdoor walking group are also underway.

As of late February, more than half of the residents are either participating or plan to participate.

"I like to work out because it helps me keep my strength and my bones from deteriorating," says **Mary Kay Boyle**, a Pacific Place resident for two years. "Having the equipment here is so convenient."

Resident **Judith Mitchell**, who moved to Pacific Place for its vibrant community, praises the initiative. "I'm thankful that they make exercise a priority here, because it's important to me," says Judith.



*(L-R) **Mary Kay Boyle**, **Jim** and **Marian Rose**, and **Judith Mitchell** are among the many Pacific Place residents who use the exercise room practically every day.*

Swinging for a Cause: “Birdies for Bethesda” Returns for Second Year

The Bethesda Health Group Foundation is gearing up for the second annual “Birdies for Bethesda” Golf Tournament, a fundraiser that supports essential programs for Bethesda families. Scheduled for April 22 at Topgolf in Chesterfield, this event underscores Bethesda’s unwavering commitment to dignified aging and community care.

Linda Sanders, Corporate Vice President and Director of Development, expects another sellout, with more than 250 golfers participating. She said the Bethesda Foundation hopes to surpass last year’s remarkable achievement of raising nearly \$100,000 for Bethesda residents in need.

“Once someone becomes a part of the Bethesda community, we stand by the principle of taking care of them throughout their journey,” Linda says. “Whether an individual has outlived their financial resources or someone in our Home Health Services needs assistance, the Bethesda Foundation is dedicated to providing the necessary support, and ‘Birdies for Bethesda’ helps us do that.”

She points out that “Birdies for Bethesda” is a unique opportunity for Bethesda’s corporate partners to actively engage with Bethesda’s mission. One such partner, Midwest Elevator, is graciously returning as title sponsor.

Breaking away from traditional golf tournaments, “Birdies for Bethesda” at Topgolf welcomes participants of all skill levels. Linda says last year’s response for the



Golf committee member **Ryan Glasscock** (third from left) poses with one of the five Midwest Elevator teams ready to play in the inaugural “Birdies for Bethesda” event at Topgolf.

non-traditional golf outing was overwhelmingly positive.

“Our golfers liked that the event started later in the afternoon, under controlled temperatures rather than a full day on a course at the mercy of Mother Nature,” says Linda.

The event will again feature a silent auction, including the return of the popular “Booze Wagon” raffle.

To play or become a sponsor, please call Claire Luna at 314-800-1916.



To see photos from the 2023 event, scan here and scroll to the bottom of the page.

Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



(L-R) **Georgetta Stewart, Adrienne Loyd, Margie Watson, Chelsea Callender, Teddy Marler, Sam McKeever, Doris Rice and Amy Brent** comprised the group of residents and staff from Village North and Christian Extended Care & Rehabilitation who attended the luncheon.

On Friday, Jan. 13, for the sixth consecutive year, Christian Hospital hosted a Celebration Luncheon to honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

During the 2024 luncheon, which was titled “Embracing the Dream,” five members of the community who have given time, talents, and treasure in service of justice and equality were recognized and honored.

And as they have for the majorities of the luncheons, Bethesda sponsored a table, which was filled with a group of residents and staff from Village North Retirement Community and Christian Extended Care & Rehabilitation.

“It means a lot to be able to support the hospital and Dr. King’s memory by attending this luncheon,” says **Adrienne Loyd**, Life Enrichment Coordinator at Village North.

Celebrating the Holidays—Bethesda Style!

If there is a holiday on the calendar, leave it to the residents and staff at Bethesda communities to celebrate in style!

It didn't matter if the calendar displayed Dec. 31 (New Year's Eve), Feb. 13 (Mardi Gras) or Feb. 14 (Valentine's Day)—there were plenty of fun and smiles to be had.



To see more photos, please scan here and find them on our Facebook pages.



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1 If you ask us, the smile **John Fischer** is showing off at the New Year's celebration at Bethesda Hawthorne Place is worth \$500,000!

2 "Queen" **June Mattingly** and "King" **Carl Rainey** share a special dance during the Bethesda Meadow Mardi Gras celebration.

3 **Judy Park** shows off the baby from her piece of King Cake at the Mardi Gras celebration held at Pacific Place.

4 **Barb Crawford**, **Lucy Hacker** and **Paulette Johnson** are having a great time at the Bethesda Terrace New Year's Eve party.

5 (L-R) At the Bethesda Corporate office, **Sherry Waterson**, **Kiel Peregrin**, **Michele Kimball**, **Paula Czarnecki**, **Jeff Waldman**, **Toni Durham** and **Janet Sanders** show off their Valentine's Day spirit.

6 At Bethesda Dilworth, Activities Director **Jennifer Sythe-Jones** (2nd from left) poses with team members **Ruby Chesser**, **Judy Catalana** and **Crystal Smith** before the community's Mardi Gras parade was to start.



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DID YOU KNOW?

... that Bethesda has once again been nominated as one of the Best Places to Work in St. Louis? Bethesda has finished as a category finalist 7 of the last 11 years. We will learn the results of this year's contest later in the Spring.

... that the 2023 Report to the Community is completed? The full report has been posted on our website—www.BethesdaHealth.org—under Publications & Newsletters. If you would like a printed copy of the 2023 Annual Report sent to you, please send an email to marketing@bethesdahealth.org, and include your mailing address.

... that many Bethesda residents choose to give back by volunteering throughout the community?

Information on these and other stories will be included in future editions of the *Pulse*.

BETHESDA

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The Value of Public Reviews

The Bethesda team thanks all of the residents and family members who have posted reviews on Facebook or Google. These endorsements mean a lot to our employees and are very helpful to individuals and families considering Bethesda for a new residence. We encourage you to consider posting a review on Facebook or Google to assist others in their search.

It's easy and we are here to help if you need it. All you need to do is:

1. Log-in to your account—for Facebook, you must use your desktop computer or your laptop. (Not your phone.)
2. Go to facebook.com/bethesdahealthgroup/reviews
3. For both, either select a star rating to match your experience (Google – 1 is low, 5 is high) or answer yes (Facebook)
4. Make sure to write a written review
5. Click “post” to share it publicly

If you have any questions or need help posting your review, feel free to contact marketing@bethesdahealth.org.

