

Pulse

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Fostering successful aging through
compassion and innovation

Summer in Full Swing!



MCC Earns AHCA Silver Quality Award



Until now, only one Bethesda skilled nursing community/rehab community had earned the National Silver Quality Service Award bestowed by the American Health Care Association (AHCA) and National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL).

Now there are two.

Earlier this summer, the team from Memorial Care Center (MCC) learned that its application for this

extremely prestigious honor had been accepted. MCC joins Bethesda Southgate as recipients of this national quality award at the Silver level.

To put this into perspective, MCC is one of only three rehab or skilled communities throughout Illinois to attain this achievement, and the only one in 2024.

“The ACHA shares that the achievement of this award demonstrates MCC’s dedication to providing quality care and

“Based on the 14 years that Memorial Care Center has been designated a 5-star rated community by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, we knew [Administrator] **Keri Bryer** and her team had a great chance of being selected.”

Kiel Peregrin, Chief Operating Officer.



continuous performance improvement, but it means so much more than that,” says **Kiel Peregrin**, Chief Operating Officer. “The criteria for the Silver Award is so incredibly challenging and extensive that most communities do not qualify, let alone have the quality outcomes needed to earn the award.”

The award will be recognized at the AHCA/NCAL national convention in October. Congratulations to everyone at MCC for this tremendous achievement!

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Former Bethesda Colleagues Reunite in Retirement—at Bethesda!

Decades ago, within the bustling corridors of Bethesda General Hospital, **Sandy Brown** and **Sally Sharamitaro** forged a workplace bond from 1993 to 1999. Their connection endured beyond their tenure, strengthened by regular lunches and shared rounds of golf. Unbeknownst to each other, however, their paths would cross again during the next chapter of their lives.

It was during a lunch meet-up last fall that Sally, who had served as the hospital's Director of Medical Records, mentioned Bethesda Orchard in Webster Groves as a retirement community she was interested in pursuing. Sandy, who was the hospital's Laboratory Director, and was also in the market for a retirement community, added Bethesda Orchard to her list of possibilities and booked a tour with her brother.

"My brother is very particular, and he was very impressed with the accommodations and recommended I jump on it," Sandy says. "My sister-in-law even said she would take it if I didn't. It all happened very fast." Sally just happened to have some trips planned. When she returned from her travels, she began her move-in process at Bethesda Orchard, and was very pleased, and quite surprised, to discover that Sandy had already moved in!

"I mentioned that I had a friend who was looking to move to a community and that she might be reaching out," says Sally. "Todd, the General Manager, said, 'You mean Sandy Brown? She moved in before the holiday.'"



(L-R) **Sandy Brown** and **Sally Sharamitaro**

“Working for Bethesda and moving to Orchard were both great decisions. I enjoy it more and more every day.”

Sandy Brown
Bethesda Orchard resident

“Surprise!” Sandy laughed when she met up with Sally.

The pair, now reunited, savor the past, recalling the intimate work environment and festive Christmas parties at the Washington University Whittemore House. They continue to make new memories, meeting for brunch every Sunday and partaking in the community's lively activities. While Sandy has wholeheartedly embraced activities such as happy hours and Scrabble games, Sally

enjoys more reflective time and has recently found fellowship in a book club.

They both speak fondly of the balance Bethesda Orchard has provided to them. They like that residents can live their independent lives, and yet they never have to worry about household chores like cooking or cleaning anymore.

Their story reflects the resilience of friendships and the comfort of familiar surroundings. Bethesda, once a place of work, now serves as a backdrop to their shared retirement, proving that some bonds, just like places, stand the test of time.

“Our years at Bethesda Hospital, it felt like being with family,” Sally says. “And I get that same feeling here at Orchard as a resident.”

Sandy agrees. “Working for Bethesda and moving to Orchard were both great decisions. I enjoy it more and more every day.”

Career Ladder Program Adds New Collaborator

The Bethesda Career Ladder program has a new collaborative partner in Jefferson College.

In general, participants in the Career Ladder program can focus on nurturing and advancing their careers at Bethesda while becoming Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Certified Medical Technicians (CMTs) or even Registered Nurses through a combination of academic and hands-on training.

The participants in the recent CNA class offered at Bethesda Southgate, for example, followed a rigorous yet rewarding schedule, attending classes at Jefferson College's Arnold campus and engaging in clinical practice at Bethesda Southgate. They are compensated for their clinical hours and receive paid on-the-job training.

Eileen Caffey, Senior Director of Recruitment and Employee Relations, highlights the significance of this program as a continuation of Bethesda's 135-year legacy as a leader in senior living, care and services.

"This program speaks to who we are at Bethesda," says Eileen. "Having a new education partner through Jefferson College allows us to expand our program, offering our team members to learn and earn simultaneously."

Bethesda aims to graduate 50 CNAs per year through this program, creating a community of skilled, compassionate caregivers. This commitment to professional growth not only builds careers but also strengthens the healthcare workforce with dedicated caregivers.



(L-R) New Bethesda Southgate CNAs **Angela Buckner**, **Vito Schneider** and **Jazlynn Smith** celebrate after completing the class and passing the exam.

For more information on the Career Ladder Program, contact Eileen at eecaffey@bethesdahealth.org.

Hearts for Our Homes: A Celebration of Community and Compassion

The summer marks a special time in the Bethesda community, as staff, residents, families and volunteers come together for the annual "Hearts for Our Homes" campaign. This initiative raises crucial funds to support residents who have outlived their financial resources, ensuring they can continue to call Bethesda home.

This year, the campaign successfully raised more than \$120,000.

The campaign began on May 1, and for the next two months Bethesda communities held a variety of events to raise funds, including happy hours, block parties, BBQs and silent auctions.

And it's more than just resident involvement, as the staff get really involved, too. Those employees willing to donate 1% of their salary were awarded a day off with pay. Many employees also donated their time, figuratively and literally. The General Managers and Activity Directors planned events and created impressive silent auction baskets, and more than 232 hours

of Earned Time Off were donated back to Bethesda so that the cash value of those hours could be redirected to the effort.

Linda Sanders, Bethesda's Corporate VP and Director of Development, emphasizes that the event is about more than just fundraising.

"Hearts for Our Homes has become one of my favorite events," says Linda. "It's unique in that it provides an avenue for everybody who is part of the Bethesda family to come together to help our residents in whatever way they can."

For more information on the Hearts for Our Homes campaign, please call 314-800-1916 or email celuna@bethesdahealth.org.



*Pacific Place residents (l-r) **Marilyn Turner**, **Carolyn Stotts**, **Mary Kay Boyle** and **Lois Brodt** enjoy celebrating Hearts for Our Homes.*

Showers of Talent at Bethesda Orchard's Annual Follies

The lobby of Bethesda Orchard was filled with laughter and music as residents gathered for the sixth annual Follies talent show.

This year's theme, "April Showers," brought a flood of rain-themed performances by Bethesda Orchard "thespians and singers." A colorful rainbow backdrop created by the residents themselves helped bring the theme to life.

The show opened with the Glee Club's lively rendition of "April Showers," led by **Ann Cleeland**. **Millie Slack's** "The Garden Song," during which she strummed her guitar and invited the audience to sing along, added to the atmosphere. The senior soap opera "All My Gallstones," performed by **David Bates, Patsy Conte, Joe Lynch** and **Vince Nicosia**, left the audience roaring with laughter with characters like "Dr. Frank Instein," patient "Jack Hammer" and nurse "Sal Monella."

Among the singers, the performances by **Phil Fleet**

("I Get the Blues When It Rains") and **David Bates** ("Look for the Light," with accompanist Roberta Kilstrom) captivated the crowd, while **Don Walsh's** rendition of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" resulted in a fun sing-a-long.

The "Happy Campers" skit, performed by **Alice Fink, Paul Ferrara, Angie Heumann, Dianne Kraemer** and **Dixie Wright**, provided more humor. **Marty Holland's** comedic monologue, "Little Old Lady," told the story of whimsical things she would do if she lived with her kids.

John Puterbaugh and **Jennie Werremeyer's** couples' dance to "Sentimental Journey," was sweet, and **Judith Giraud's** piano performance of "Sonatina by Clementi" added a classical touch. **Ann Cleeland** who delivered a humorous eulogy for the Pillsbury Doughboy, and **Vince** and **Michele Nicosia**, who performed "Still Got You, Babe," a rewritten version of the original Sonny and Cher song, added to the evening's delightful variety.

The night wouldn't have been complete without a version of "Singin' in the Rain!" This one was performed by **Angie Heumann** and **Faith Williams**, complete with umbrellas and raincoats.

The grand finale, a heartwarming rendition of "Over the Rainbow," invited everyone to sing together. To cap off the event, **Mabel Weigle**, the Follies' director for the last two years, treated residents to chocolate gold coins, reminding everyone that there truly is a gold pot at the end of the rainbow.

Narrated by **Pat Dineen**, the show lasted a little over an hour.

Mabel noted the residents' enthusiasm and dedication to perfecting their performances.

"The residents did all the work," says Mabel. "They just needed someone to help them put it all together."

To watch the Follies, type www.youtube.com/BethesdaHealth into your internet browser, press enter and click on the video. It should be the first video you'll see.



The cast of the 2024 Orchard Follies gathers for a photo.

Reynolds Named Top Administrator by MHCA



When Bethesda Hawthorne Place, the assisted living and memory care community located on the Bethesda Dilworth campus, opened in 2017, **Lisa Reynolds** was there.

Actually, Lisa was there *before* the community opened. As Executive Director, she was hired months in advance of the expected open date to make sure everything was properly in place for the time when the community began accepting residents.

Now it's 2024, and Lisa is still there, leading the way as Executive

Director. And under her leadership, Bethesda Hawthorne Place has thrived. Typically, the community is full, and rarely have more than one or two apartments been open at once. The community's quality and satisfaction scores are extremely high. And the comments from pleased family members are plentiful.

And in June, Lisa received the wonderful news that she had been selected as the District 3 Administrator of the Year by the Missouri Health Care Association, with the announcement of the statewide winner to take place at the association's annual convention in late August.

"We are extremely proud of Lisa and all that we have accomplished for our residents and families at Hawthorne Place," says **Lea Ann Coates**, Residency Counselor at Bethesda Hawthorne Place and who provided most of the content for the nomination along with **Lakesha Cook**, Nursing Manager. "For seven years I have seen the way she manages the business while always finding the time to address resident needs and family concerns. She never hesitates to jump in and help wherever it is needed. We are happy and fortunate to have her here at Hawthorne Place!"

Good luck, Lisa, and congratulations on this tremendous achievement!

BJEC Achieves Top CMS Rating

After coming very close during the prior few ratings periods, it finally happened for Barnes-Jewish Extended Care (BJEC) in the 2nd quarter of 2024—the community received the elusive 5-star rating

for Overall Quality from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

"I am so proud of the staff, who worked extremely hard for this rating," says **Candice Brown**,

Vice President and Administrator at BJEC. "I'm very glad we were recognized for their dedication and commitment to quality."

Only skilled nursing communities who are ranked in the top 10% nationally receive a 5-star rating in Overall Quality.

In addition to BJEC, Bethesda Southgate and Memorial Care Center are the other Bethesda communities that currently hold a 5-star rating in Overall Quality from CMS.

The team from Barnes-Jewish Extended Care gather to celebrate its 5-star rating for Overall Quality from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.



Resident Fun on Facebook!

1 These Oaks at Bethesda residents really know how to enjoy themselves, especially when it comes down to celebrating the 2024 Hearts for Our Homes campaign!

2 Who says that “experienced” Bingo players are undoubtedly the best? **Elliott Reholz**, the great-grandson of Bethesda Terrace resident **Rosemary Bourisaw**, showed them all how it was done with a full-card victory and plenty of winnings!

3 Residents **Valery Lewis** (left) and **Doris Rice** prepare to celebrate the Juneteenth holiday at Village North Retirement Community.

4 Kreis’ Steakhouse was the destination for this hungry group of residents from Bethesda Barclay House—but they weren’t hungry for long!

5 It’s Munny time again, and this time the group from Bethesda Orchard enjoyed “Dreamgirls.” Many more memorable nights at the Munny to go!



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



DID YOU KNOW?

...that Barnes-Jewish Extended Care secured six 5-star Google ratings in the month of June? Congratulations to **Angela Watson** and the rest of the BJEC team on this achievement.

...and that from September 2023 to June 2024, Christian Extended Care & Rehabilitation has increased its overall Google rating from 2.3 to 3.7? Congratulations to **Rhonda Griffin-Haire** and the rest of the CECR team on this achievement.

...a team comprised of Bethesda's MDS nurse assessment coordinators raised more than \$1,000 at the 2024 ALS Walk??

We'll share more information on some of these items in the Fall edition of the *Pulse*.

BETHESDA

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Registration Open for Annual Kayman 5K Walk

The annual Bethesda Hospice Care "Kayman 5K" Memorial Walk will be taking place on Saturday, Sept. 21. Check-in begins at 8 a.m., and the Memorial Ceremony and Walk begins at 9 a.m.

The Walk takes place at Queeny Park. Walkers (or runners) will have a choice of a five-kilometer or one-kilometer run/walk. Participants will be encouraged to write their loved ones' name on a ribbon and affix it to a wreath once they have completed their journey.

But this walk will be a little different than the others.

"Bethesda Hospice Care hosted the first Memorial Walk 11 years ago, but we had to do a virtual walk in 2020 due to Covid, so this will be our 10th year gathering together in person," says **Dr. Julie Strassman**, Manager of Support Services at Bethesda Hospice Care and the coordinator of the event. "As always, there is no cost to participate, and your loved one does not have to have received



Please scan here for information and to register.

care from our Hospice team to participate. We are looking forward to great weather—we hope!—and a great crowd."

"This will be my first Memorial Walk, and I've heard great things about it. I'm excited for this special event and the chance to connect with current and—hopefully—new volunteers," says **Melissa Helmkamp**, who began serving as the Volunteer Coordinator for Hospice Care in May.

To register for the Walk, just scan the accompanying QR code. For more information about Bethesda Hospice Care or to volunteer, call 314-446-0623.

