


Pulse

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Fostering successful aging through
compassion and innovation



Saying “I Do”—
Again!

Congratulations, Lisa! Congratulations, Jen!

In the Summer edition of the *Pulse*, we recognized **Lisa Reynolds**, Executive Director at Bethesda Hawthorne Place, for her selection as the 2024 District 3 Administrator of the Year by the Missouri Health Care Association (MHCA).

But the story didn't stop there. At the MHCA's annual conference, Lisa was selected from among all of the district winners and was named the 2024 statewide Administrator of the Year!



Jen Popp (3rd from left) listens as she and other Leadership Academy Fellows are honored at the 2024 LeadingAge conference.

And at the national convention for LeadingAge, our industry's professional organization, **Jennifer Popp**, Vice President and Administrator at Bethesda Southgate, was honored for her selection to the prestigious LeadingAge Leadership Academy, and then for completing

the requirements to earn the title of Leadership Academy Fellow!

Jen's project, "Fostering Future Leaders Through Formal Mentoring," will be incorporated into the template of the Bethesda Leadership Development program.

We at Bethesda are extremely fortunate to have leaders within our midst like Jen and Lisa!



Lisa Reynolds (center) celebrates her selection as 2024 MHCA Administrator of the Year with **Lea Ann Coates** (left) and **Lakesha Cook**, two members of her team at Bethesda Hawthorne Place.

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Scan to view a complete list of our leadership team and board members.



Connect with us!



Bethesda's Partnership with SSD Creates Job-Ready Graduates

For more than 15 years, Bethesda has proudly partnered with the Special School District (SSD) of St. Louis County to provide its students with an invaluable opportunity to build job skills and confidence through hands-on experience in an actual workplace environment.

This program, called the VSP (Vocational Skills Program), gives students a chance to dive into daily responsibilities like doing laundry, setting the tables, and even serving in the dining room—essential tasks that build both practical skills and personal independence.

“Our goal is to help these students become job-ready once they leave our program,” says **Eileen Caffey**, Bethesda's Senior Director of Recruitment and Employee Relations. “We want to support them in reaching their full potential as independent adults.”

Danielle Barnhart, a special education teacher who has worked with students at Bethesda Barclay House for 12 years, has seen firsthand how transformative this experience can be.

“It's incredibly rewarding to watch these students grow and mature through the program,” Danielle says. “Each of them has their own success story.”

Beyond skill-building, the program fosters relationships between students and residents, creating a sense of community and mutual support.

“There's a fun dynamic between the students and residents,” Danielle shares. “They build real connections, and the students look forward to seeing them every day.”



JoJo Kersting takes a rare break from her job as a server at Bethesda Orchard. JoJo graduated from the VSP in 2013.

“Bethesda is such a welcoming place. They support our vision for these students, and I hope this partnership remains as strong as it's been going forward.”

Danielle Barnhart,
Special School District VSP teacher

Students often feel such a strong bond with Bethesda that some, like **JoJo Kersting**, become Bethesda team members. JoJo, a former SSD student, completed her vocational training at Bethesda Orchard in 2013 and stayed on as a full-time server.

“I wanted to stay at Bethesda Orchard because this is where I received my training and felt most comfortable,” JoJo explains.

Now a beloved team member, she shares close relationships with the residents, who eagerly ask for updates about her children.

“They ask for photos and tell me about their grandchildren,” JoJo says. “Sometimes I get to meet them if they come visit for lunch.”

Reflecting on the program's lasting impact, Danielle says, “Bethesda is such a welcoming place. They support our vision for these students, and I hope this partnership remains as strong as it's been going forward.”



Currently six VSP students are participating in the program at Bethesda Barclay House. Four are seen here, along with teacher Danielle Barnhart (far right) and assistant Gloria Morrow (second from left).

Thankful for Our Donors

The Elizabeth Hayne Society (EHS) is a prestigious group of donors who annually make gifts of \$1,000 or more to support Bethesda's residents in need. The Society was named after Elizabeth Hayne, who co-founded Bethesda and became our first President.

The annual EHS donor appreciation luncheon was held in September at The Courses at Forest Park. The focus of the luncheon is to personally thank our most generous donors and share with them the incredible impact their gifts have made on the Bethesda residents we serve.

In addition, the attendees learned about **AI**, a kind, funny and warm-hearted man who has lived at Bethesda for 10 years but struggling to afford his rent. Donations made by our EHS members allow AI to remain in his Bethesda home amongst his friends and trusted Bethesda staff.

For more information about the EHS or how to donate to Bethesda, please contact **Linda Sanders** at 314-800-1981 or llsanders@bethesdahealth.org.



Theresa Wolff and **Ruthann Wolz** (1st and 2nd from left, respectively), the recipients of the 2024 and 2023 Norwood Awards were among the attendees at the 2024 Elizabeth Hayne Society donor appreciation luncheon.

To watch the video, scan here.



Planting Party an Annual Highlight at Hawthorne Place

The Spellman Brady interior design firm has been designing Bethesda's communities for more than 20 years. So naturally, when Bethesda Hawthorne Place opened in 2018, it was the designers

at Spellman Brady who were responsible for the beautiful interior design.

But this story was just beginning. The Spellman Brady designers had expressed an interest in giving back to the community and connecting with Bethesda residents. It wasn't long before the designers came to Bethesda Hawthorne Place one evening to help residents beautify their apartments with potted plants.

"Admittedly one of our initial goals was to see how the residents were using the space within the community," says Alicia Nicolay, who was among the Spellman Brady designers that started this program. "But we enjoyed coming so much,

*Alicia Nicolay watches as **John Fischer** works with his plant.*

we wanted to make it a tradition, and finding volunteers to come and participate has never been an issue!"

The designers brought mums, pots and potting soil, stickers to decorate the pots, and of course snacks.

More than a dozen residents participated in the 2024 planting party, and the smiles on their faces told the whole story.

"I love plants, and I participated last year and had a lot of fun, so I decided to come back this year and do it again," says **Judy Maurer**, a Bethesda Hawthorne Place resident.

And good news could be on the way—Alicia says expanding the planting party to other Bethesda communities is under consideration.



Three Couples Renew Their Vows at Bethesda Terrace

Wedding bells were ringing at Bethesda Terrace this past September, as three resident couples celebrated their love and commitment in a touching vow renewal ceremony.

The event was inspired by Life Enrichment Coordinator **Nikki Aubuchon's** (now **Nikki Ross**) upcoming wedding, which was perfect for giving the week's Resident Appreciation Week a bridal theme. Joy and love filled the air, reflecting the deep connections these couples have built over the years.

Bethesda Terrace went "all out" to recreate the magic of a wedding day. The dining room was adorned with a flower archway and a white canopy. A beautiful cake, crafted with care, stood as a centerpiece of the celebration, adding a sweet and tasty touch to the occasion.

Michelle Glass, Bethesda Senior VP of Senior Living and In-Home Services and an ordained minister, officiated the ceremony, guiding the couples through their vows. Adding to the charm of the event was Austyn Nelson, the adorable young daughter of Sales Counselor **Ashley Nelson**, who delighted everyone by serving as flower girl.

For **Mike and Debbie Sullivan**, who were celebrating 50 years of marriage, the ceremony was a chance to reaffirm their love publicly.

"When asked if we wanted to participate, I said 'yes' immediately—I wanted everyone to know how much I love her," Mike says.

Debbie, flashing a warm smile to her husband, offers her advice for a happy marriage: "Show each other



(L-R) Bethesda Terrace residents **Bob and Vicky Schmidt** (64 years), **Bob and Nancy Reinagel** (61 years) and **Mike and Debbie Sullivan** (50 years) participated in the community's Vow Renewal Ceremony.

"It was a wonderful day,
and we want to thank
Bethesda Terrace for
making us feel so special."

Vicky Schmidt,
Bethesda Terrace resident

affection every time you come and go...and a little compromise doesn't hurt either!"

Bob and Nancy Reinagel, married for 61 years and renewing their vows for the third time, brought their humor and wisdom to the celebration.

When asked why they enjoy renewing their vows, Nancy says, "It's important to remember why you liked your partner in the first place!"

Bob agrees, turning to share his advice for other couples hoping to follow in their footsteps: "Keep your individuality—staying your own person is key."

Bob and Vicky Schmidt, who have been together for 64 years, offer simple yet timeless advice that resonated with all three couples.

"Never go to bed angry," Bob says. Vicky expressed heartfelt gratitude on behalf of all the couples. "It was a wonderful day, and we want to thank Bethesda Terrace for making us feel so special," she says.

Strong Showing by MDS Coordination Team at ALS Walk

This past summer, Bethesda's MDS coordinators took a day away from assessing the health and well-being of our residents to participate in the annual ALS Walk, with great success.

"I am so proud of our 'Dirt Two Timers' team, as we raised \$1,050 to help fight ALS," says **Annie Kramer**, MDS Coordinator at Bethesda Southgate pictured here (far right) with MDS Coordination team members **Melanie Doelling**, **Leah Cole**, **Tamara Lee**, and **Markita Reece**. Annie has participated in the walk for many years, having lost two husbands to the debilitating disease.

"Next year, we plan to start earlier getting donations, and the MDS coordinators are going to challenge our co-workers at the facilities we cover to join us and help us raise more money," Annie says.



Another Great Day for the Kayman 5K!

On a beautiful September morning, the Bethesda Hospice Care team, along with families, co-workers, volunteers and a growing number of Bethesda residents, gathered in Queeny Park and celebrated the 11th anniversary of the annual Memorial Walk, also known as the Kayman 5K.

The event, which honors the memories of friends and loved ones, was renamed in 2021 in memory of **Brian Kayman**, a dedicated employee of Bethesda Hospice Care, who sadly lost his battle with COVID-19 in 2020.



The Bethesda Orchard team of residents and staff posed for a photo before the walk began. By the end of the walk, the wreath was covered with commemorative ribbons.



2024 Mary June King Scholarship recipients (l-r) **Shante Weaver**, **Lisa Kirika** and **Fatima Maningo** celebrate their selection with Mary Brown, creator of the scholarship.

Mary June King Scholarship recipients

Congratulations to **Lisa Kirika**, **Fatima Maningo** and **Shante Weaver**, all of whom were selected to receive a \$500 scholarship from the Mary June King Scholarship Fund in 2024.

The scholarship assists Bethesda employees in their pursuit of a post-secondary education of college-level study.

Welcome to the Roundtable!

The Bethesda President's Roundtable is comprised of select Bethesda employees who exemplify excellence and commitment.

The 2024 additions are **Latisha Gill**, Office Coordinator, Bethesda Barclay House (BH); and **Cami Sanders**, CNA, Alton Memorial Rehabilitation & Therapy (AMRT).

Cami was nominated by **Jen Popp**, who worked with her at AMRT. Tisha was nominated by **Judy Portnoy**, a resident at BH. It's the first time a resident ever nominated a candidate for the Roundtable.

"The Roundtable members offer great insight and perspective into issues involving our employees," said **Joe Brinker**, President & CEO. "We are pleased to add Tisha and Cami to this select group."



(L-R) **Cami Sanders** and **Tisha Gill** celebrate their selection to the President's Roundtable with President and CEO **Joe Brinker**.

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



Activities Galore at Bethesda!



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1 General Manager **Sarah Zimmerman** chats with attendee Tracey Swabby at the Pacific Place table at the Old Orchard Gazebo Music Festival. Pacific Place was a sponsor of the event.

2 The Holway family was just one of the many who enjoyed the fun, food and camaraderie at the third annual Bethesda Southgate Oktoberfest.

3 Lisa Meyer looks over the inventory at the Bethesda Women's Board's Tory Burch pop-up event, which was held at Bethesda Barclay House.

4 **Ashley Nelson**, Sales Counselor at Bethesda Terrace, had conversations with many South County seniors at the annual "Aging My Way" senior resource fair.

5 These Bethesda Terrace residents spent a wonderful day in Kimmswick, Mo., which of course included lunch at the Blue Owl!

6 Hawthorne Place team members **Lakesha Cook**, **Betty Stanley** and **Khadisha Vaughn** hope everyone had a very Happy Halloween!

... that Bethesda Veterans and their spouses were celebrated during ceremonies held at our communities on Nov. 11? Photos can be found on our Facebook pages and in the Winter 2025 edition of the *Pulse*.

... that Bethesda Hospice Care’s “No One Dies Alone” (NODA) program will be getting some unique media visibility, thanks to the effort of one new NODA program volunteer?

... Alton Memorial Rehabilitation & Therapy is a “Best of the Best” finalist in the skilled nursing facility category by the *readers of the Alton Telegraph* and *Edwardsville Intelligencer* for the seventh straight year?

We’ll share more information on these and other items in the Winter 2025 edition of the *Pulse*.

BETHESDA

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Facebook Photos Tell the Story of Community Activity

We think that someone should probably tell Bethesda Orchard resident **Barbara Wagner** that the Petting Zoo animals should not be fed off a paper plate!

We’re just having fun with a cute photo, of course, but the photo of Barbara and her new friend is among many taken of the Petting Zoo visit that have been posted to the Bethesda Orchard Facebook page.

Each of our communities—Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Skilled Nursing/Rehab—has its own Facebook, where members of the Activities teams post about community events. It is the ideal way to get a sense of the activities that take place across Bethesda,

and the joy shared among residents and staff as they participate in those activities.

There are many ways you can access our Facebook pages. You can access our website (www.BethesdaHealth.org), access the community page of your choice, and click on the Facebook link found just below the name of the community. You can send an email to marketing@bethesdahealth.org and we can send you a link to that page.

Or you can access the Facebook page of your choice by scanning the QR code on this page with your phone or tablet camera, and then click on the tab of the community that you want to visit.

Enjoy the activity photos!

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

