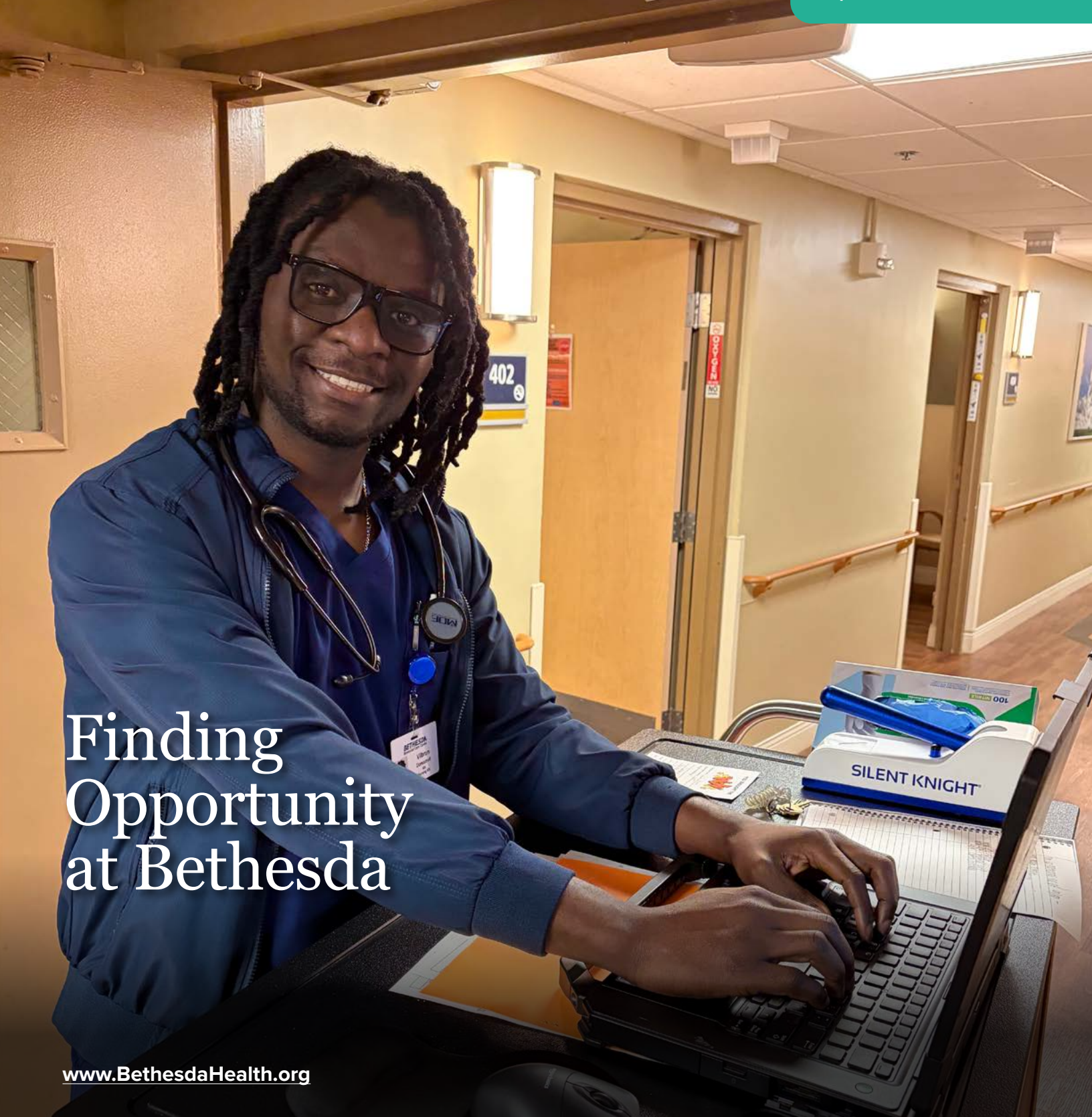


Pulse

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Fostering successful aging through
compassion and innovation



Finding
Opportunity
at Bethesda

Alex and Magen–Congratulations and Welcome!

Congratulations to **Alex Reynolds, Sr.**, who has recently moved into the position of General Manager at Bethesda Gardens and The Oaks at Bethesda.

Alex has been working at Bethesda for 11 years, most recently as Senior Human Resources Manager at Bethesda Dilworth.

“I am so excited to have Alex join our team as G.M. at Bethesda Gardens,” says **Michelle Glass**, Senior Vice President, Senior Living and In-Home Services. “His enthusiasm and commitment to doing the right thing for residents are going to serve him very well in this new role. We had a number of very good applicants, but Alex was the right fit.”

Congratulations is also extended to **Magen Finazzo**, who has joined Bethesda as our newest Administrator in Training (AIT). Magen, who worked as an Administrative Intern at Bethesda in summer 2025, completed her Master of Health Administration degree from the University of Missouri and officially joined the Bethesda team in July.

“I had the opportunity to work closely with Magen last summer, and it didn’t take me long to realize what an asset she could be to our organization if we had a position for her,” says **Jen Popp**, Vice President of Skilled Nursing. “She has a passion for older adults unique to many her age, and we are lucky to have her.”

Bethesda’s most recent AIT was **Chris Reynolds**, who is now the Administrator at Bethesda Southgate.



Alex Reynolds



Magen Finazzo

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Bethesda Southgate Resident Rediscovered Hobby at 100

Adele Gaertner has been part of the Bethesda Southgate skilled nursing community for 14 years. Known for her independent spirit and love for her own routine, Adele spent many years enjoying the quiet comforts of daily life.

Then, a few months after celebrating her 100th birthday in 2024, Adele decided it was time to add something new to her routine: bingo.

"She just decided to come down on her own one day," says **Lori Buehler**, Activities Supervisor at Bethesda Southgate. "The staff joked that she decided to begin a new hobby in her new era."

For Adele, the decision to take up bingo was simple.

"It's a good, fun game," she says. "I like it."

Adele says bingo is now her favorite part of the week. She attends both the Monday afternoon and Friday morning bingo games nearly every week. She sits in the same spot each time, uses only the pink covers for her bingo card and plays completely independently.



And while she enjoys everything about playing, there's one part she likes best.

"Winning," she says with a smile.

According to Lori, Adele is especially good at that part.

"She's the oldest resident we have that plays bingo, and she seems to win at least twice a week," Lori says. "We have to keep an eye on her when she plays, though, because she won't yell out when she wins. She'll just raise her hand and patiently wait for someone to notice."

Winning residents get to choose from a cart full of prizes, but Adele chooses word search puzzle books every time.

"We typically have two puzzle books available for winners," Lori says. "If we run out, Adele doesn't want anything else. We have to go to the office and find one for her."

Winning bingo isn't the only way Adele receives her coveted books.

Ruthann Wolz, Business Office Associate at Bethesda Southgate, personally ensures Adele is always stocked with new ones.

"I've loved Adele from the moment I met her 14 years ago," Ruthann says. "She never asks for much, except for puzzle books. So, I make sure to stop by the dollar store at least once a week to buy her some."

Over the years, Ruthann estimates she has bought Adele hundreds of puzzle books.

"When I first started buying them for her, she kept a list of every volume I had already purchased," Ruthann says. "If I accidentally repeated, she'd tell me, 'You've already bought that one.' Now, anytime she sees me walking through the lobby, she's looking for her books."

Since she started participating in bingo, Lori and Ruthann have noticed a small but meaningful change in Adele.

"We've noticed she's more engaged and connected with the community," Lori says.

At 101 years old, Adele proves it's never too late to try something new and find joy in unexpected places.

*Bethesda Southgate volunteer **Lana Hale** gives **Adele Gaertner** her well-deserved puzzle book after one of Adele's recent Bingo wins. Lana is a resident at Bethesda Terrace.*



Bethesda Is Building the Caregiving Workforce of Tomorrow

Bethesda Health Group is taking a proactive and unique approach to finding and keeping qualified healthcare workers.

Eileen Caffey, Senior Director of Talent Solutions, says Bethesda has built a unique, layered strategy to expand the talent pool. The organization trains people through its Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) Apprenticeship, a 12-week, paid on-the-job educational program. Tuition reimbursement of up to \$4,000 per year is offered for full-time employees to assist with ongoing training and education.

It also includes recruiting international healthcare workers already living in the United States, helping those who are working to obtain their green cards and don't have them yet.

These programs reflect Bethesda's commitment to attracting, developing and retaining a talented healthcare workforce.

The results speak for themselves. Nurses recruited internationally several years ago have become long-term team members, embraced by colleagues and residents alike.

"Bethesda has a culture that embraces people and provides them with the opportunity to get training and develop," Eileen says. "It's a very welcoming environment."

For families with loved ones at Bethesda, that commitment means the people providing care have been carefully selected, thoroughly trained, and are genuinely invested in the work, no matter where in the world their journey began.

Every caregiver has a story. Here are two team members whose journeys brought them to Bethesda.

Christian Igwe's Journey Is Just Beginning

When **Christian Igwe** arrived in St. Louis three years ago, he slept on the floor of an apartment and took the first job he could find: housekeeping at a local skilled nursing community.

Today, he works weekends as a CNA at Bethesda Dilworth, holds a full-time position in social services with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, and is pursuing his master's degree in healthcare administration online.

Christian came to the U.S. with a physics degree from Nigeria and was quickly inspired by the nurses and CNAs he saw caring for residents at his first job. What he didn't have was a clear pathway into a healthcare career.

Healthcare became personal for Christian long before he entered the profession. His father has lived



Vilbrun Dorsainvil Finds New Calling

In Haiti, **Vilbrun Dorsainvil** was already a doctor. After earning his medical degree, he worked as a general practitioner in the emergency department before conditions in his home country grew too dangerous to stay.

"Because of all the chaos and insecurity, I had to leave," Vilbrun says. "It's hard to talk about leaving my family behind."

He arrived in the United States hoping his medical credentials would transfer. They didn't. His medical degree from Haiti carried

no standing in the U.S. healthcare system and returning to medical school wasn't realistic. So, Vilbrun adapted.

He enrolled in nursing school in Springfield, Ohio, attending full time while working weekends as a patient care assistant. After three years of school and two-and-a-half years working in a hospital cardiac unit, he found his way to Memorial Care Center (MCC).

Bethesda partnered with Flint, a firm that helps internationally trained medical professionals navigate the U.S. immigration process, to bring Vilbrun on board. Bethesda is sponsoring his green

Vilbrun Dorsainvil visits with MCC patient **Delores Airhart**.

with a spinal cord injury since 2007, and Christian and his siblings rotate care for him in six-month stints. He also lost his mother to a heart attack while growing up in Nigeria, where access to medical care is scarce.

"I didn't know CPR. I didn't know what to do," Christian says. "That experience stayed with me."

And those moments also shaped how he views every resident he serves at Bethesda Dilworth.

"I know I can help save a lot of lives now," he says.

Christian's path became clear when his girlfriend, **Shonekka Hart**, who works at Bethesda Dilworth, encouraged him to look into Bethesda's CNA Apprentice Program after completing it herself. His instructor, Miss Sandy, pushed him further, explaining the opportunities available through Bethesda, including tuition reimbursement.

"If not for the opportunity Bethesda gave me, I wouldn't be



Christian Igwe (2nd from left) reviews charts with fellow Bethesda Dilworth team members (l-r) **Marisa Davis**, **Roxanne Patton**, **Judy Foote** and **Marchelle Epperson**.

here," Christian says. "They made me want to go back to school. They made everything easy."

Within his first year at Bethesda, Christian became a CNA, passed his certification exam on the first attempt and enrolled in his MHA program, aided by the tuition reimbursement Bethesda provides.

Having worked as a housekeeper, a CNA and a senior services specialist, Christian has seen and experienced senior living

from multiple angles. He believes strong leadership starts with understanding people.

"A leader should walk one-on-one with people," he says. "That is the only way you can find real solutions."

Christian knows where he hopes that journey leads.

"Bethesda has given me the foundation," he says. "I want to keep growing and stay with Bethesda for a long time."

card application, a process that takes roughly three years. In return, Vilbrun has committed to working as an RN at MCC throughout that time. He is also currently pursuing his Bachelor of Science in Nursing and considering becoming a nurse practitioner.

For Vilbrun, long-term care has given him something he missed in emergency medicine: the chance to build lasting relationships. In Haiti, patients came in, received care and left. At MCC, he cares for the same residents day after day.

"I like to take my time, to really get to know my patients so I can help them in every way possible," Vilbrun says.

That personal connection runs deep. When Vilbrun looks at his residents, he sometimes sees his own family. His mother, now 87 and still in Haiti, has arthritis. His father passed away from a stroke 10 years ago.

"When I see my patients, I sometimes see my mom or my father," he says. "I feel like I have to give more because it could be them lying here."

Residents and their families have noticed. In fact, shortly after arriving at MCC, Vilbrun was nominated for the community's WOW Customer Service Award after a patient family member praised his positivity.

Beyond his bedside manner, Vilbrun's medical background also brings a clinical depth to the team. Years of training have made him skilled at spotting early warning signs, an ability that makes a real difference in long-term care.

He's grateful for his new home at MCC. He hopes obtaining his green card will eventually allow him to bring his mother to safety. But in the meantime, he's found something he didn't expect: a community.

"When I come here, I can feel some relief. I know I'm going to see friends, people who like me and I like them back," he says. "Bethesda gave me that."

Bethesda Earns Top “Best Places to Work in St. Louis” Finish

Congratulations to Bethesda!

For the second consecutive year, Bethesda finished third in the Giant Companies (750+ employees) category in the annual Best Places to Work in St. Louis contest, finishing behind Clayco and CarShield.

This is quite an achievement considering the vast number of companies in the St. Louis area with 750 or more employees, and only three qualified to be a category finalist.

“I’ve said it before, but I truly believe that an organization can’t continue qualifying at this consistent

rate if our team members don’t believe that they are working for an organization striving every day to do the right things for our residents and patients,” says **Caprina Wakefield**, Senior V.P. of Human Resources. “I’m very proud of this achievement, and I would hope that each employee is proud as well.”

The contest, coordinated by Quantum Workplace and the *St. Louis Business Journal*, attracted more than 150 St. Louis-area businesses and organizations, with 78 taken forward as category finalists.



Members of the Bethesda team accept their trophy at the 2026 award ceremony, held at the Royal Sonesta Chase Park Plaza Hotel.

This marks the 10th time in the last 14 years that Bethesda has attained the lofty achievement of being named a category finalist in the contest.

Annual Hearts for Our Homes Fundraiser Brings Us Together

Each year, Bethesda residents, families, employees, board members and donors come together to support the annual Hearts for Our Homes campaign. The campaign supports our Humanitarian Care Program, which ensures that every

resident will always have a home at Bethesda no matter their financial resources.

Residents and staff hold special events to raise funds, including bake sales, barbecues, block parties and raffle baskets.

“It always amazes me how generous our residents and employees are,” says **Linda Sanders**, Corporate VP and Director of Development. “Everyone understands how important the Humanitarian Care Fund is for our residents in need.”

Linda shares that many residents have told her how pleased they are to live in a community that cares so much for each other.

Together, this year’s campaign raised more than \$124,000 for residents in need.

To learn more about Hearts for Our Homes, call 314-800-1916 or email lsanders@bethesdahealth.org.



*Bethesda Gardens residents **Debbie Woodward** (left) and **Jane Wilhelms** staff the bake sale table in support of Hearts for Our Homes.*

Bethesda's Change Makers!

Three Bethesda staff members were selected for the 2026 class of Change Makers by LeadingAge Missouri, an organization supporting and furthering nonprofit senior care organizations.

- **John Denu**—Grounds Supervisor
- **Toshia Harper**—CNA, Christian Extended Care & Rehabilitation
- **Kris Mueller**—Nurse Manager, Christian Extended Care & Rehabilitation

According to LeadingAge Missouri, the Change Makers awards celebrate those individuals whose dedication and leadership create meaningful impact. It honors those whose actions inspire others, improve resident experiences and demonstrate how one person's commitment can spark lasting change.

Congratulations to John, Toshia and Kris!



Toshia Harper (left) and Kris Mueller



John Denu

Here's what's going on at Bethesda!

- 1 Resident (and former daycare worker) **Deborah Farrell** enjoys some "alone time" with Millie Daniel, the daughter of Bethesda Southgate Activities Director **Amanda Schlueter**.
- 2 Art projects are often on the schedule at Bethesda Terrace. Here, **Rob LaBeau** shows off his colorful 3-D foam sticker project, full of flowers and butterflies.
- 3 **Doris Wood** has a great time as she makes her way down the runway, accompanied by **Bill Whitford**, son of former resident **Joan Whitford**, at the Bethesda Hawthorne Place Fashion Show.
- 4 When it comes to celebrating Juneteenth, these Village North residents know how to do it right!



To see more photos, please scan this QR code and access all our Facebook pages.

Did You Know...

... that two Bethesda team members have completed the LeadingAge Missouri Leadership Academy?

... that the Training Specialist program, designed to provide on-site CNA leadership, just finished a class of 16 participants?

... that our Activities and Life Enrichment staff members regularly share fun and engaging content on our community Facebook pages? To see the latest photos and videos, scan the QR code and click on the community of your choice. And for those who are active



on TikTok—you must check out the entertaining content on the Bethesda Terrace and Village North accounts!

We'll share information on these stories and plenty of others in the Fall 2026 edition of the *Pulse*.

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“Grateful Giving” Making an Impact

In the Fall 2025 edition of the *Pulse*, the “Grateful Giving” program was introduced by the Bethesda Health Group Foundation, providing residents, patients and families a meaningful way to recognize the incredible Bethesda team members who make a difference with a tribute in their honor.

Since the beginning of the program, many employees have been honored. In recognition of their generosity, their names are listed at right. We thank them for their commitment to their residents and patients, and to the donors for their support.



Grateful Giving

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Honoree

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For more information about the “Grateful Giving” program or any other fundraising opportunity at Bethesda, please scan the QR code or call the Foundation office at 314-373-7043.