

Pulse

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Fostering successful aging through
compassion and innovation

A photograph of two elderly men standing on a golf course. The man on the left is wearing a maroon and white striped polo shirt, maroon shorts, and a maroon cap. He has his hands clasped in front of him. The man on the right is wearing a red and white striped polo shirt, light-colored shorts, and a dark cap with a red logo. He is holding a golf club. The background shows a lush green golf course with trees in the distance.

Making Every Round Count

Meet the 2026 Foundation Team

The Bethesda Health Group Foundation is powered by a dedicated three-person team: (l-r) **Linda Sanders**, Corporate Vice President and Director of Development; **Ellie Palacios**, our recently hired Development Associate, and **Marianna Malecek**, newly promoted to Development Coordinator.

Together, this team raises funds to support the needs of lower-income Bethesda residents and patients. These funds address critical needs, including:

- Financial assistance for residents who can no longer afford their monthly rent.
- Durable medical equipment, incontinence supplies, and other essential dignity items that insurance doesn't cover.



Their fundraising initiatives and philanthropic programs include **Hearts for Our Homes, Birdies for Bethesda, Grateful Giving, Bethesda Women's Board, Elizabeth Hayne Society, John W. Rowe Humanitarian Care Fund, and the John Norwood Society.**

Every dollar raised helps our seniors remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible—preserving dignity, security and quality of life.



For more information about the BHG Foundation, scan the QR code or call 314-800-1916.

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



Connect with us!



Still in the Swing of Things at 91

At 91 years old, Bethesda Orchard resident **Jerry Sommer** is more active than most people decades his junior. His secret? Keep moving, keep socializing and, whenever possible, keep swinging.

Jerry has become the community's "golf guy," hitting his favorite courses five days a week.

"The first thing other residents say to me each day when they see me is, 'Did you golf today?'" Jerry says.

He didn't start playing until he was around 45 years old. A few friends invited him to join them on the course, and he quickly fell in love with the game.

More than four decades later, Jerry has built an impressive amateur golf record. He has earned three holes-in-one and several tournament wins. In 2012, he and his son won the Member-Guest Invitational at Westborough Country Club. Later that year, Jerry also won the club's Member-Member tournament with a friend.

Today, Jerry splits his time between Westborough and Forest Park Golf Course—four days a week at Westborough and once a week at Forest Park with a combination of family and friends. A typical week for Jerry involves playing about 54 holes: nine holes most days and 18 holes on Wednesdays.

And that packed schedule doesn't even come close to telling the whole story.

"The most days I ever played in a row was 17 days of golf, but that was quite a few years ago," Jerry says.

For Jerry, though, the appeal of golf goes well beyond the game itself.

"I love being outdoors and getting exercise," he says. "I love that



Jerry Sommer beams as he shows off one of his tournament-winning trophies.

it's a social event. I can play with my kids, my grandkids and my friends. After playing, we typically have lunch and solve all the world's problems."

One of those friends is 86-year-old **Bill Bennett**, a resident at the Oaks at Bethesda. The two met about 20 years ago when Bill joined Westborough. Bill is a former president of Forest Hills Country Club, and today, the two play together three times a week.

Bill appreciates the game for many of the same reasons, from the challenge to the camaraderie.

"I like to play golf because it's challenging, it's good exercise and I enjoy playing with friends," Bill says. "It's really a social thing. And every now and then, I'll hit a good shot like I used to and that keeps me coming back."

Jerry and Bill play practically year-round, in just about any weather condition the clubs will allow.

"We'll play any temperature in the 40s or higher if it's not too windy," Bill says.



Bill Bennett and Jerry Sommer

Their approach to golf offers a lesson that extends well beyond the sport itself: Don't let age keep you from doing what you enjoy.

"Don't give up," Jerry says. "If you're not playing well, don't let that stop you. Don't let the quality of your game stop you from having fun. I'm going to keep playing as long as I'm capable of getting out there."

Susan Moore and Nick Ohlman Honored with Norwood Award

Bethesda is proud to honor and recognize **Susan Moore** and **Nick Ohlman**, two extremely worthy recipients of the 2025 and 2026 (respectively) Norwood Award!

The Norwood Award was established in 1998 to recognize individuals and groups who have given many years of extraordinary support and service to Bethesda. The award is named in honor of **John Norwood**, former President and CEO of Bethesda, who devoted more than 30 years of service to the organization and was the first recipient of the award.

Sue's involvement with Bethesda included nearly 20 years on the Bethesda Board of Directors, as well as the Bethesda Women's Board, the Bethesda Advisory Board and countless committees.

Nick is a volunteer with Bethesda Hospice Care who visits with patients, primarily Veterans, at Bethesda Dilworth. But that is just the tip of the iceberg regarding his community service.

Congratulations and thank you, Sue and Nick, for everything you do for Bethesda!



Susan Moore and Nick Ohlman

Scan here to watch
a video about Sue.



Scan here to watch
a video about Nick.



T-Shirt Sales Deemed a Huge Success at Bethesda Barclay House

Leave it to the residents at Bethesda Barclay House to come up with a creative way to raise money for the Bethesda Health Group Foundation.

"Some of us were talking at lunch about how we could raise money, and we decided we'd make some

T-shirts and donate the proceeds to the annual 'Hearts for Our Homes' fundraiser," says **Carla Britton**, one of the residents who coordinated the activity. "The only problem: We weren't sure what we needed to do to make them!"

Still, the undeterred residents went to work. **Neil Nielsen** created the artwork for the front of the shirt. He says it took him three times, with help from AI, to get the turtle right. **Rosemary Oliver** provided the marketing oversight. **Eli Britton** came up with "Barclay House—For the Rest of Your Life!"

Fifty-five shirts were sold, raising a total of \$1,078.43 for Hearts for Our Homes.

"Some people just donated without even ordering a shirt," Carla says. "We were very pleased to have had so much success with our idea we came up with over lunch!"

Several of the Barclay House residents gathered to celebrate their tremendous achievement.



Bethesda Dilworth Gets Squeaky Clean with Wheelchair Car Wash

In July, Bethesda Dilworth team members traded their usual routines for sponges, sprinklers and a whole lot of suds, turning the rehab courtyard into a “full-service” wash for the wheelchairs of some of the residents.

Dressed in specially designed team T-shirts, employees scrubbed wheels, rinsed under rainbow-arched sprinklers and towed chairs dry as nearly 20 residents rolled through, smiling as they caught a few water droplets themselves. Music played throughout, with staff singing along to “Car Wash” and other tunes while chatting and laughing with the residents as they gave each wheelchair a thorough cleaning.

Resident **Debra Hillman** couldn’t stop smiling. “I am having a ball; this is so much fun!” she says.

The idea came from **Jessica Rhodes**, Senior Director of Nursing at Bethesda Dilworth, who discovered the inspiration on TikTok. Bringing it to life took a couple of months of planning, but staff were eager to get involved.

“We want to bring some joy to the residents every day. Everybody pitched in—nursing, housekeeping, every department,” Jessica says. “They were all excited to do it.”

The activity brought together team members who all pitched in to make the experience enjoyable for residents. For staff, it was a welcome change of pace and a chance to have some fun alongside the people they care for each day.

“The residents and staff were ready for fun, we were pumped up,” says nurse **Keiota Hart**. “It’s a great way to build morale.”



Scan this QR code to watch a video of the Bethesda Dilworth team “in action!”

Bethesda Hospice Care Holds Second Annual Memorial

More than 50 people attended the second annual Bethesda Hospice Care “Annual Memorial,” which once again featured a special memorial ceremony and interactive stations to remember and honor loved ones who have passed away.

The stations included areas for meditation, journaling and a quote wall for writing a quote or memory of a loved one. Trained grief support volunteers provided listening and support. And a self-care station offered do-it-yourself lavender sachets, pressure-point massage for hands and chocolate!

Like the previous memorial events, participants wore ribbons

featuring their loved ones’ names, which they proceeded to place on the Memorial Ribbon Wreath. The names were read aloud during the ceremony by **Melissa Helmkamp**, Hospice Volunteer Coordinator.

“From the responses I have received, the Annual Memorial has become a very meaningful event for the families we serve, Bethesda staff and our hospice volunteers,” says **Rev. Dr. Julie Strassman**, Manager of Support Services. “We at Bethesda Hospice Care feel blessed to provide this unique way to honor their loved ones and find healing on their grief journey.”



Michele Kimball, Corporate Director of Clinical Services, places a ribbon on the Memorial Ribbon Wreath.

Mary June King Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to (l-r) **Airica Hammonds**, **Brian Scheurer** and **Tanita Maxam**, each selected to receive a \$500 scholarship from the Mary June King Scholarship Fund in 2026.

Established by **Mary Brown** in memory of her mother, former Dilworth resident Mary June King, the scholarship assists a Bethesda employee in pursuing post-secondary education or college-level study. It can be used for books, a computer or other resources to support their experience as a student.

Thanks to the scholarship, we might see two new Administrators and a new Director in Bethesda’s Business Office in the future!



New General Manager at Bethesda Orchard

Congratulations to **Kayla Chapman**, who has recently been promoted to General Manager at Bethesda Orchard and Pacific Place Retirement Community.

Kayla first joined Bethesda in 2008 while in high school (dining services). She re-joined Bethesda in 2022 as the Life Enrichment Coordinator at Bethesda Orchard. Most recently, she has served as the two communities’ Assistant General Manager.

“Kayla has done a terrific job throughout her tenure at Bethesda,” says **Michelle Glass**, Senior Vice President, Senior Living and In-Home Services. “The residents at both communities like her, and I look forward to seeing her continue to thrive as she assumes this leadership position within the organization.”



Remembering Pat Kapsar

The entire Bethesda Health Group family mourns the passing of **Patricia (Pat) Kapsar, RN**, our longtime Corporate Compliance Officer and a true advocate for the senior community. She was 91.

Pat joined Bethesda in 1990, and during her 24-year career she not only rose to Senior Vice President and created our compliance program, but accomplished the following:

- Served as Bethesda General Hospital's Nurse Executive.
- Educated legislators at the Missouri Capitol on the financial burden on skilled nursing communities as a result of Medicaid underfunding.
- Oversaw the development of Bethesda's quality management and clinical education programs.
- Served as a longtime Board Member (and Board Chair in 2005-2006) of LeadingAge Missouri, our professional aging services provider organization, eventually earning its coveted E. Willis Piehl Award.
- Named one of the Ageless-Remarkable St. Louisans in 2015.
- Selected to receive Bethesda's prestigious 2015 Norwood Award.
- Served as Bethesda's Women's Board President and Bethesda Southgate's Auxiliary President, and on the Bethesda Advisory Board.



"Pat's commitment to providing quality care and services was at the forefront of everything she did," says **Joe Brinker**, Bethesda's President and CEO, who worked with Pat throughout her tenure at Bethesda. "She was a friend and colleague who was extremely passionate about Bethesda, making an incredible impact over many years to Bethesda's success. As one former colleague said to me upon her passing, Pat was a Bethesda Super Star!"



Strong Showing by MDS Coordination Team at ALS Walk

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

The team, which approached 30 members this year, once again walked for **Annie Kramer's** "Durdy Two Timers" team, but also in memory of **Joann Arnold**, former Staffing Coordinator at Bethesda Dilworth and Bethesda Southgate, who died from the disease in April 2026.

"We all loved working with Joann, and I know first-hand what her family is going through," says Annie, a former Bethesda MDS Coordinator who has lost two husbands to the debilitating disease. "Thanks to the efforts of the Corporate Director of Clinical Reimbursement, **Tamara Lee**, and others, the team keeps growing, and we raise more money as a result."

Follies Celebrate 10th Year

Ten years ago, a group of residents from Bethesda Orchard decided to "put on a show," full of singing, dancing, monologues and fun.

With the exception of a two-year interruption for COVID, the Follies have taken place every year since.

A full article on the history of the Follies will be available in the 2026 Annual Report, but to watch the 2026 Follies, which took place in August, scan the QR code at right.



Carolyn Redmore and John Puterbaugh were among the participants in the Bethesda Orchard Follies.

Did You Know...

... that Bethesda Southgate and Memorial Care Center have been named to the list of *Newsweek's* America's Best Nursing Homes for 2027?

... that three members of the Bethesda team recently completed programs within the LeadingAge Leadership Academy?

... that the team at Bethesda Hawthorne Place is preparing to celebrate the community's 10th anniversary?

... 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 or Instagram—you must check out the entertaining content on the Bethesda



Terrace, Village North, Bethesda Hawthorne Place and Bethesda Foundation accounts!

BETHESDA

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“Grateful Giving” Making an Impact

The “Grateful Giving” program was created by the Bethesda Health Group Foundation to provide 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. We are continuing to highlight a few in each edition of the *Pulse*.

We thank them for their commitment to their residents and patients, and to the donors for their generosity.



Grateful Giving

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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.