

Connection

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Larry Monroe

A Promise Kept



“I was raised to be self-sufficient, and to not be a burden to anyone. That’s what upsets me the most. I’ve lived too long, Larry, and I don’t want to be a burden to you and to CBA.” Those words were spoken to me by one of our healthcare center residents who has lived in our community for over thirteen

years and at the age of 94 she was about to deplete her personal funds. Because the extent of care she required was so minimal, it was doubtful she would meet the qualifying criteria for Medicaid and the future was shaping up to be quite frightening for her.

As I spoke to this resident, I had a flood of emotions. I was saddened by what she said, and my heart broke for her. My greatest concern as we spoke was what I saw as fear about the future. At the same time, I was joyful that I could offer comforting words of reassurance, that she need not worry or think of herself as a burden. Through tear-filled eyes she smiled when I told her about the ministry of the CBA Foundation, and that providing for her now in her time of greatest need was not a burden to us, but an opportunity to deliver on a promise; one of the most God honoring aspects of our ministry. In over 50 years of providing care for the aging we have never asked one of our healthcare residents to leave our community because they had depleted their personal finances. This is so important for many reasons.

It’s Foundational to our Cause

In 1960 the Christian Benevolent Association was founded initially to be a support for the aging, primarily within our brotherhood of independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ who needed assistance with care and housing. Through the years we have remained true to our ministry of benevolent care for the aging, but in addition we have grown as an industry leader in quality Christian retirement living and senior healthcare. Following her participation in the groundbreaking for The Christian Village at Mt. Healthy in 1964, Mrs. Georgia Mohorter, on whose family estate the Mt. Healthy campus was to be constructed, said, “Of all the spades of soil I have turned on that place this will be the most important – the beginning of a beautiful home for many persons for many years. A truly Christian home in all its aspects, we hope it always will be.” That legacy lives on today and with God’s help it will remain until Christ returns.

It Honors our Donors

I rarely find donors who are eager to give their money for things like the upkeep of our buildings, vehicle maintenance or cutting the lawn. They want their gifts to support an inspiring cause, to impact lives in transformative ways. The benevolence ministry of The Christian Benevolent Association Foundation resonates with donors because they know their gifts are making a difference for people in need. Donors can’t provide the care and compassion to our residents themselves, but through their contributions they are meeting critical needs. I’m so pleased to be able to tell donors that unless their gifts to CBA are designated

elsewhere by their choosing, they are directed to support the CBA Foundation's benevolence ministry. Like the story I shared above, when I meet with a resident who is at risk of outliving their finances and deliver the good news that they need not worry about the future, I'm extending not just the helping hand of our ministry, I'm extending the hand of every donor who has made giving to our ministry a priority in their life.

It Pleases God

There are many passages in scripture that provide us with direction with regard to caring for the poor. In James 1:27 we read, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." In Proverbs 19:17 we find, "If you help the poor, you are lending to the Lord and He will repay you!" In Galatians 2: 9, 10 when Paul and Barnabas traveled to Jerusalem to meet with the church leaders to gain their approval of the gospel message they were sharing with the Gentiles, it's interesting to me that Paul writes, "All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along."

In Leviticus 19:32 we get a sense for God's heart for the aging. "Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD."

Clearly, caring for our residents in financial distress by providing for them when they no longer can provide for themselves pleases our Lord.

In this issue of the *Connection* we are introducing something new, a column written by our friend Doug Waters that will appear in each issue of this newsletter. Doug recently retired after a long career as an insurance industry executive. He earned an M.A. in Theological Studies from Cincinnati Bible Seminary in 1992. He is married to Amanda, whose parents, Dick and Betty Whitacre, moved to The Christian Village at Mason in 2011. Dick passed away in August of 2017, and Betty continues to live independently in a Garden Home and enjoys spending time with family and her many friends at the Village. Doug is a gifted writer, and I hope you enjoy this first edition of his column, which we are entitling, Doug's Reflections.

To our ministry partners I say, thank you! You make it possible for us to bless lives in Jesus' name.

As you read this issue of the *Connection* newsletter, I pray you will receive a blessing and a renewed confidence in our ministry, knowing your gifts are being used in ways that honor you, our residents and God. ✝

WHEN GIVING
COSTS YOU
NOTHING

amazon smile

There is a "free" way you could give money to Christian Village Communities. If you have an Amazon account that you purchase items through, Amazon offers you the opportunity to select a charity for them to donate 0.5% of your purchase price.

To make this happen you must place your order through the "Amazon Smile" website, <https://smile.amazon.com>. The website will provide you an option of selecting a charity for them to donate to. There are three options to choose from to support us:

1. Christian Village Communities
2. Christian Village at Mason
3. Christian Village at Mt. Healthy

Once you select your charity, 0.5% of every purchase you make will be sent our way each quarter.

While 0.5% may seem small, based on the potential volume of purchases it could become a substantial amount of money throughout the year. What a great way to give to a great cause at no extra cost to you! ✝

The Auxiliary - What a Friend, Indeed!

What a friend we have in the Auxiliaries of Christian Village Communities!

At the heart of what the Auxiliary does is providing additional care and comfort items that benefit residents in our Health Centers. The Auxiliaries have been faithful for many years, enhancing our residents' lives. Their generosity of major and minor items never ceases to amaze our caring staff. It takes year-round effort on the part of many Auxiliary members to lead assorted successful fundraisers.

The members of The Christian Village at Mt. Healthy (CVMH) Auxiliary say that they strive to enrich the lives of their residents. At this community, residents enjoy the outdoors by resting and relaxing on benches provided through the generosity of the Auxiliary. Inside the beautiful courtyard, the patio furniture, tables, chairs, and umbrellas are admired by everyone viewing them through the huge windows as well as appreciated by the residents and guests using them. The chapel received a much-needed upgrade to its sound system. A better sound system enhances preaching and worship because it can be heard clearly.

The annual flower sale at The Christian Village at Mason (CVM) is an example of the great lengths the Auxiliary will go to in order to raise thousands of dollars. It takes many hours of planning, communication with the vendor, solidifying volunteers, and then running the 2 ½-day flower sale. A mum sale is also very successful every autumn.

Isolation carts are a frequent necessity, and the CVM auxiliary has purchased several throughout the years. Such carts are configured to store and organize all of the supplies required to reduce the risk of transmitting infection in healthcare settings.

Our generous Auxiliaries have provided many vital signs monitors over the years, the most frequently used and indispensable piece of equipment in our nursing areas. Without the vital signs monitors the nurses would be obtaining vital signs slowly, the old-fashioned way, carrying separate blood pressure cuffs, thermometers, and handheld pulse oxygenation devices.

There is always room for more Auxiliary members! The great value and impact that they bring to the lives of our residents is magnified with everything their committees have provided. ✚

Stone Worship Center and Auditorium Generosity Campaign Continues




We continue to seek partners who will invest in the construction of the Stone Worship Center and Auditorium at The Christian Village at Mason (CVM).

Named in honor of Sam and Gwen Stone, the Stone Center will be a 400-seat worship auditorium located in the healthcare center at our Mason community. The increased seating capacity of the Stone Center will help our ministry in several very important ways.

CVM enjoys a very robust calendar of activities. Residents frequently declare that their social calendars have never been so full since moving to the Village. The current chapel, with a maximum posted capacity of 99, is the largest non-dining venue on the campus and is where concerts and most of the other special resident activities take place. Regularly the number of residents with a desire to participate in these events exceeds the room capacity, requiring that we hold events over multiple consecutive nights. The problem is, what happens when a resident can only attend on one night and there's no room for them? When special concerts take place in the chapel, very often the choir has just one evening on which to perform, and this always means that a significant number of our residents can't participate because of insufficient seating. Resident town hall meetings take place in the dining room to accommodate everyone. At CVM we are blessed with a very active auxiliary that has fundraising initiatives annually. One of

the most successful of these is the annual craft sale. Vendor booths occupy nearly every available space in the healthcare building, including the main hallway, chapel, front lobby and dining room. How nice it would be for this event to be held in the Stone Center and have everything in one location!

Last, and certainly not least, our Sunday morning chapel services have grown tremendously over the last several years, not only from resident participation, but with people from the outside community at large. The popular traditional service includes the singing of hymns, great gospel preaching, weekly observance of the Lord's Supper and frequent special music. Chaplain Tom Moll recently added a third service on Sunday to accommodate the growing crowds. The Stone Center will make it possible for everyone to worship together in one service, and provide space for growth, allowing us to reach more people for Christ.

We have raised \$1.4M toward our need of \$2.85M. We need the help of many more folks who embrace our need and have a desire to make a tax-deductible gift as an investment in support of the Stone Center campaign. Go to www.stoneworshipcenter.org for more information on how to give. While you're there, check out our video about the campaign. 



Demi's Story

By Larry Monroe, CEO

Her name is Nizchonie, but she goes by Demi. Demi works in the Food Service Department at The Christian Village at Mason (CVM) and is among so many

on our team who pour themselves into the lives of our residents. It's not Demi's outstanding work performance that has earned her mention in this newsletter, but rather an inspiring story about a challenge in her life that she overcame with God's help, and with the action of one CVM resident and the CBA Foundation.

It's not uncommon for residents to come to me with special requests, and most are handled quickly and routinely. There was one request I received early in 2019 that I will never forget. It introduced me more intimately to Demi and made me aware of a serious issue in her life.

One day a resident was being served by Demi in the Matthews Dining Room. He happened to notice that one of her eyes was a bit red and swollen. He gently inquired about the situation, and she shared that she had recently been diagnosed with a growing tumor behind the eye, and if left untreated it could result in loss of sight. She was in a great deal of pain, and her eye watered constantly without relief.

The resident told Demi that she must get whatever treatment was necessary to resolve the issue. Being a bit shy, Demi smiled, thanked the resident for his concern and continued her duties. Over time Demi's eye grew worse. She became less cheery and she frequently looked away when approached by others. It was obvious that her pain was intensifying.

One day the resident asked Demi if there had been a date set for treatment or surgery. After being pressed

on the matter Demi reluctantly shared that she faced a huge challenge in the form of a \$2,000 insurance deductible that would have to be paid at the time of admission for surgery. For Demi and her mother, who also works in food service, this deductible was an insurmountable obstacle.

The resident went to our Human Resource Department expressing a desire to pay for the \$2,000 deductible himself. HR decided to bring the resident to me. As soon as I heard the resident's passionate and tearful request I was deeply moved, and I began to see a path forward that might help us accomplish what we all wanted to do for Demi.

Among the areas of focus for The Christian Benevolent Association Foundation is providing a catastrophic relief fund for CVC employees to provide them a helping hand when they encounter financial hardships beyond their control. It seemed to me that Demi's situation would surely qualify for a grant from this fund. I enthusiastically submitted a request to the Grant Committee of the Foundation Board, and it was immediately approved.

Months following a successful surgery, Demi is fully recovered and is once again a fun-loving teenager full of optimism for the future. She radiates a confident smile and her sweet face once again glows.

Debra Walker, Director of Food Services at CVM, asked Demi how this experience had impacted her life, and how she felt about the aid provided by the CBA Foundation. She said, "I'm speechless!! I never dreamed that this surgery was possible due to financial concerns. It was a huge gift and blessing from the foundation and I am forever grateful for their kindness, compassion and willingness to help. They helped me smile and laugh again and take away the pain I was feeling, not only physically, but mentally too. I felt a lot of stress worrying about how I would pay that deductible. I now have a better understanding of what some of our sight-challenged residents go through.

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UC Health Provides Present-Day Education

By Lisa Cecil, VP of Health Services



Two unique programs were held at both communities this past spring and summer, and both were topics that are a sign of the times in which we live: Active Shooter and Stop the Bleed programs.

Through funding by UC Health's Department of Public Safety, Active Shooter training was provided by Officer Chris Sharp from UC West Chester Hospital.

Participants in the training were educated on the definition of a "violent critical incident," and different models were shared on how to act or behave in case of an active shooter situation. The simplest and most logical method seems to be Run, Hide, Fight®. Many informative details of these three actions were given.

Officer Sharp stressed the importance of everyone having the authority to evacuate the building and leave the premises. This is a difficult concept to grasp for clinicians who work closely at the bedside with residents and patients. It was also stressed that we should help others escape, but not to waste precious time trying to convince them to leave if they insist on staying in place.

If taking the hide approach, it is important to look for alternate escape routes, and if you can escape safely, do it quickly and quietly. Many photos, examples, and stories were shared in this robust program.

When countering or fighting an active shooter situation, the audience was told to use anything possible as a weapon. Techniques were shared on how to swarm the suspect, if that is the best or only option. It is important not to just freeze in place. "Compliance is dangerous," Officer Sharp said.

Stop the Bleed was presented by Regina Menninger, RN, BSN. She is the Trauma Prevention and Outreach Coordinator from UC Medical Center's Trauma Center. This program is funded by UC Health's Trauma Services Department. The program educated the audience on swift actions that must be taken in order to control bleeding to save lives.

One of the biggest take-aways from the training was the dispelling of the common myth that tourniquets are not safe to use. If applied correctly they are safe, and emergency personnel must be informed of how long the tourniquet has been in place. There are times when pressure alone will not stop bleeding, so a tourniquet must be applied.

Hands-on demonstrations with mannequins were available for audience members to practice packing wounds.

Both of our communities have Bleeding Control Kits available in designated locations in each building. 

Memorial and Honor Gifts

Gifts Given January 1 – July 31, 2019

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Joe & Jean Alexander
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Joyce Drake
Herman & Nancy Samendinger

Jo Ella Anders

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Bridgetown Church of Christ

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Betty Whitacre

Doug & Amanda Waters



New Directors Begin Board Service



Dave Lippert: Dave is President of Hamilton Caster & Mfg. Co., a family-owned and operated manufacturing firm in Hamilton, OH. Founded by his great grandfather, John Weigel, in 1907, the company is now under fourth generation family leadership and two of the fifth generation are currently on board.

In addition to serving on the Board of Hamilton Caster and a related manufacturing business located in Nashville, TN, Dave has served many years on the Board of the Greater Hamilton Chamber of Commerce. He is also a current director of the Greater Hamilton Safety Council. He serves on the Board of the Fitton Center for Creative and Performing Arts, the Board for the Father's House, and on the business advisory councils of the Hamilton City Schools and Miami University Branch campuses. In the material handling industry, he recently completed eight years of service on the Board of Governors for MHI (trade association) and remains part of the Roundtable of Industry Leaders of MHI.

Mr. Lippert has been a member of Christ's Church at Mason since 1985, where he leads an adult Sunday school class and a home Bible study group. He has served as an Elder of the church, including serving as Chairman of the Elders. For many years Dave has also taught a Sunday morning study class at The Christian Village at Mason for the healthcare residents.

Dave joins the Board of the Christian Benevolent Association of Greater Cincinnati, DBA Christian Village Communities.



Steve Carr: Steve is Vice President of Ministry Development at CDF Capital. Since its founding in 1953, CDF Capital has served over 900 churches and ministries and has funded over \$1.6 billion in loans. Over the past 66 years, the marketplace has shifted. Barriers that now obstruct church growth have changed as well. Through it all, CDF remains true to its mission of "Helping Churches Grow".

Mr. Carr has over two decades of experience helping churches and non-profits navigate the cultural landscape. He has spent ten years working in higher education, both as an administrator and professor. In 2005, he helped to start Echo Church in Cincinnati, where he is currently an elder.

Steve joins the Board of the CBA Foundation.

Continued on the next page...



Donna Pickard: Donna is an educator and has been serving the students at Mt. Healthy High School as their Guidance Counselor for the past nine years. Prior to this and upon joining MHHS in 2000, she was the Guidance Counselor for Mt. Healthy Elementary School for ten years.

Donna's occupational history is diverse. Originally following her graduation from high school and college she embarked upon a career as an airline flight attendant. She later worked as an account executive for an advertising agency, met her husband and started a family. As her family grew, she went back to school to pursue a dream of becoming a teacher, obtaining a Master's degree in school counseling.

Donna joins the Board of The Christian Village at Mt. Healthy.



Jason Rehmel: Jason is the Lead Pastor for Eastside Christian Church, in Milford, Ohio, where he has served since 2007. Prior to joining Eastside, he served as an Associate Pastor at Northside Christian Church in New Albany, Indiana for six years. Before his call to full-time ministry in 2000, Jason worked as an executive in the fields of finance and marketing.

Jason joins the Board of The Christian Village at Mason.

We welcome these Directors and thank them for their sacrificial service in support of the Ministry of Christian Village Communities. ✝️

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5.

I can better relate to the struggles they are having, and it makes me more sympathetic as well as understanding when they need a bit more help ordering their meals.”

Ms. Walker added, “I admired Demi’s strength to live with her condition prior to her surgery. Never once did she seek sympathy or special treatment. She fought through the pain, never wanting to make it a burden for others around her. Demi aspires to be a nurse one day, and I know that she will be a nurse with her huge heart, positive attitude, dedication and the will to serve others.”

We are proud of Demi and grateful for all that she does for our residents and their families. I’m also grateful for a resident who refused to sit back and see one of our employees suffer, and who followed God’s prompting through His Holy Spirit to advocate on Demi’s behalf. ✝️

The Heart of a Chaplain

By Tom Moll, Senior Chaplain



The heart of a chaplain. . .

- **Is concerned.** The chaplain is concerned about the spiritual needs of the ones to whom he ministers. He tries to provide a warm and caring church home for those who are now separated from the church families they may have been part of for years. He wants them to have opportunities for meaningful and fulfilling service. He wants them to be uplifted by services that include music that ministers to their hearts and by teaching from the Word that encourages their spirits.
- **Listens.** The chaplain takes time to listen as people share about their lives and what they used to do and are now doing. They want to share the things that have made up the fabric of their lives - colleges attended, military service, and the professions they spent their lives in. They want to talk about their children and grandchildren and their great-grandchildren. They want to talk about how they are feeling. And it doesn't matter if some of these stories are repeated. They are important to those who share them because they represent life as it once was.
- **Is a prayer warrior.** A chaplain receives so many requests to pray for better health, for upcoming travels, surgeries and hospital stays. Residents need someone to pray with them for the needs and crises in the lives of their families who may live miles away. A chaplain is privileged to pray for the staff that he sees around him ministering to the needs of beloved residents and often going "above and beyond" what might be expected.
- **Is thankful.** The heart of a chaplain is blessed by all of the lessons that can be learned from residents. Many of them have lived successful lives and have done some pretty amazing things. They have gained wisdom and they have real insight to share. It is a privilege to sit at their feet.
- **Is a counselor.** A chaplain has the opportunity to be a counselor to staff who work hard at the Village and then go home to families and personal responsibilities. They go home to husbands or wives and children. Sometimes they just need to talk for a minute about balancing the different facets of their lives because as much as they want to do well at their jobs, they also want to do well at meeting the needs of those they love at home.
- **Is a Bible teacher and preacher.** A chaplain has many opportunities to share the Word of God, from brief devotionals in various departments to regular Sunday morning and evening worship services. He may be able to present Bible studies or facilitate a variety of small groups that will equip people to deal with the situations they are facing.
- **Is on the move.** A chaplain learns to be flexible because he never knows where the day will take him. Each day will no doubt include many trips up and down the hallways of the Village. But it may also include trips to area hospitals or hospice facilities. It may be to a memorial service held either at the Village or at an area church or funeral home. It may give him the opportunity to encourage families and thank them for allowing the Village to care for their loved ones.
- **Is privileged.** A chaplain counts it a privilege to work with and serve some of the finest people anywhere.

The heart of a chaplain beats for those in his care! 

In The Spotlight

It is with great enthusiasm that we introduce our newest leadership team members that have recently joined Christian Village Communities.



Tracy Wolcott – *Director of Community Life Services*

Tracy joined the management team at The Christian Village at Mason on April 1, 2019. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Recreation Management with a minor in Gerontology from Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY. She has over 20 years of experience working in not-for-profit organizations serving in a variety of roles.

Tracy enjoys the outdoors, hiking, sports and spending time with family and friends. She is also an avid Cincinnati Bearcats fan.



Greta Smith, BSN, RN – *Director of Nursing*

Greta joined the management team at The Christian Village at Mt. Healthy on April 22, 2019.


Greta brings a wealth of healthcare knowledge to our organization with over 30 years of practical experience in caring for older adults and other patient groups in roles as a Staff RN, Nurse Manager, Nurse Consultant, and Clinical Manager. She has over 20 years of experience as a Director of Nursing. Greta holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from the University of Cincinnati. Greta enjoys sports, spending time with family, fishing, and most importantly beating her brothers at fishing.



Shannon Bryant – *Director of Life Enrichment*

Shannon joined the management team at The Christian Village at Mt. Healthy on July 17, 2019. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Hobe Sound Bible College in Hobe Sound, Florida and has over 16 years of experience working in Senior Living serving in a variety of roles.

In her free time, Shannon enjoys cooking, scrapbooking and shopping.

We are excited that Tracy, Greta, and Shannon have joined our team, and look forward to the contributions they will make to their respective departments, and to our overall future success as an organization! 

Our Stars Shine Bright at Christian Village Communities

Each year we participate in the STARS employee recognition program sponsored by LeadingAge Ohio that encourages all provider members, such as Christian Village Communities, to identify front-line, non-management employees who diligently work to provide selfless gifts to those we serve.

Although we have many others on our team who consistently display the qualities that it takes to be nominated as a Star, there were six team members selected from each community to be recognized and honored at this year's event.

Kathryn Brod, CEO of LeadingAge Ohio, presented the Star awards to the twelve recipients highlighted below at our annual management meeting held on June 26th at the Manor House.



The Christian Village at Mason

Bonnie Collins, Housekeeper
Jim Grisham, Utility Worker, Food & Nutrition
Rozina Malik, Activities Coordinator, Community Life Services
Dan Penny, Maintenance Technician
Emily Sauer, Hostess, Food & Nutrition
Roberta Simons, STNA, Nursing

The Christian Village at Mt. Healthy

Larry Atkins, Maintenance Technician
Darnesha Crigler, Activities Coordinator, Life Enrichment
Tonya Gaston, STNA, Nursing
Jon Claude Jones, Dishwasher, Dining Services
Delois Rice, STNA, Nursing
Rachel Wright, LPN, Nursing



We greatly appreciate the hard work, dedication, commitment, and consistent display of support for our core values from these team members who embody the true meaning and intent of Service From the Heart.

Congratulations 2019 STAR Award recipients! 

Renew You Fitness Challenge

By Kyra Schroer, Director of Fitness and Wellness, CVM



One definition of the word “challenge” is “to summon to action, effort, or use.” Beginning to exercise or starting back after a sedentary period can often be difficult and requires motivation. The “Renew You Fitness Challenge” started at Christian Village at Mason to provide that motivation for residents to start an exercise habit. Fitness is important and can give us more energy to help others. The forty-four residents signed up for the challenge are already helping each other stay motivated each week.

Residents at CVM are walking more and using the cardio machines in the Renewal Fitness Center to get a minimum of 60 minutes of exercise per week. There is a colorful chart tracking eight weeks of action and residents successfully meeting the minimum of 60 minutes receive a chance to win one of two prizes each week. The minimum requirement was set at 60 minutes to encourage non-exercisers to start the habit. It can be broken up into several short periods which is more realistic for those who haven’t been exercising. The NuStep machine is a great option for those people who have difficulty walking so there are fewer barriers to enter the challenge. Residents who have made exercise a habit sometimes meet the 60-minute minimum on day one! We want these avid exercisers on our team to encourage others because we are better together and all need encouragement.



In the first three weeks of the challenge it has been encouraging to see men and women walking instead of driving to the fitness center. Mary, having a competitive nature, even grabbed her umbrella one day and walked in the rain from her garden home. Another motivated lady, Susan, got her 10 minutes in on the NuStep before heading back to her apartment after a busy morning at her doctor’s appointment. Several people have mentioned that getting it done early in the day has been helpful and I’ve seen so much support and encouragement between residents.

Action, effort, and use is good for us as God’s children. Exercise helps us live our best life here on earth until we achieve our final goal of eternal life in heaven. I’m reminded of the following verse of scripture: “I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.” 2 Timothy 4:7

The “Renew You Fitness Challenge” is an opportunity for healthy competition with community support. Look for future challenges to keep the motivation and encouragement strong. ✝

Doug's Reflections

We Do Not Lose Heart

By Doug Waters



Doug Waters recently retired after a long career as an insurance industry executive. He earned an M.A. in Theological Studies from Cincinnati Bible Seminary in 1992. He is married to Amanda, whose parents, Dick and Betty Whitacre, moved to Mason Christian Village in 2011. Dick passed away in August of 2017, and Betty continues to live in her Garden Home and enjoys spending time with family and her many friends at the Village.

It was nearly 5 p.m. on the first Friday of January, 2018, and I was finishing up a few e-mails before the weekend. My cell phone lit up with my doctor's cell number, and my heart skipped a beat. I had been undergoing tests to figure out the cause of some strange, severe back pain, along with unusual fatigue. As my wife, Amanda, and I listened, the doctor told us that my blood tests showed the unmistakable markers for bone marrow cancer. "It's called multiple myeloma," he said. "I've already set up an appointment for you next week with an oncologist I know."

There had been no history of blood cancers or any blood disorders in my family. I had spent years eating healthfully, exercising, avoiding risky behaviors like smoking – and now I had cancer. Amanda and I just stood there, staring at each other, having had the wind knocked out of us. We both instinctively knew that our lives had changed forever.

When we Christians are stopped in our tracks by bad news, how do we handle it? For me, I'm not ashamed to admit that there were many tears, many sleepless nights, many questions. As I searched for meaning behind this awful turn of events, early one morning I turned to Ecclesiastes, a book devoted to the mysteries and meaning of life. I was struck by a passage in Chapter 12, which carried new meaning for me now.

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them.'" (Ecc. 12:1).

This verse had always seemed like a faraway concept to me – reaching a stage in life when the days bring no pleasure. On January 17 I would turn 60, and I had always felt robust and strong. We had planned a trip for my 60th birthday to Arizona to play one of the best-known golf courses on the PGA Tour. But when my birthday arrived, instead of teeing up a golf ball in Arizona, I was lying in a hospital getting a bone marrow biopsy. And it had all happened so suddenly!

"Remember him – before the silver cord is severed, and the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the wheel broken at the well" (Ecc. 12:6).

Continued on the next page...

Wow! Those words seemed to describe the suddenness of my loss. From healthy to cancerous, just like that. My silver cord had been severed; my golden bowl had been broken. And I, like Solomon, found myself crying out, “Meaningless! Meaningless!”

But do you know what Amanda and I have learned? Cancer, in spite of being an incredibly painful journey, has not been meaningless at all.

Physically, I’ve had to deal with spinal fractures, bone lesions, and the pain that accompanies any form of bone cancer. Amanda has not only had to watch her husband go through this, but also be thrust into the role of caregiver. This journey has been especially rough on her.

Mentally, I’ve had to deal with all the losses: loss of career, loss of normalcy (it was months before I could drive again, or begin to regain some of my appetite, due to chemotherapy), and even the loss of golf, which may sound trivial, but represented the previous healthy version of myself.


Then there were the spiritual challenges: questioning God; the temptation to be cynical; the search for meaning amid the pain and grief. As Christians, Amanda and I were determined to live out Romans 8:28: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” This verse does not say that everything that happens is good. Some things are just plain bad, and we should label them as such. However, this verse does say that there is good to be found in anything, no matter how painful it might be. God works for our good in all things, both good and bad.

We’ve found a lot of good. We have been given insights we never would have had were it not for my cancer. Our perspective on living fully, and on death and dying, are far healthier than before. We are closer in our marriage than ever before. Our family relationships, which were already strong, have grown deeper and more meaningful, as we appreciate every day more fully. And we are more aware than ever of keeping an eternal perspective, that ability to live life in the moment, but always with the sense that God is watching, and that we are oh so close to joining Him in eternity.

“Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 16-18).

To any Christian enduring a difficult circumstance, I want to urge you to look for the good. It’s there. God promised!

And remember to keep your eternal perspective. It doesn’t remove the pain, but it enables us to endure it with a right frame of mind.

Ecclesiastes, Chapter 12, which had me crying in my Bible when it focused my attention on my losses, ends by turning our focus back to God. “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind” (verse 13b). As Amanda and I have continued to learn to live out those words, we find more and more good coming from the bad, and we do not lose heart! 

Kudos for Team Member Special Accomplishments

Recently, two of our leadership team members earned significant industry credentials and distinctions.

Heather Carter, Director of Social Services at The Christian Village at Mason, received her Licensed Nursing Home Administrators (LNHA) license. Debra Walker, Director of Food & Nutrition at The Christian Village at Mason, received the Certified Dietary Manager (CDM), Certified Food Protection Professional (CFPP) credential.

Both Heather and Debra are quite proud of their accomplishments and share a few words below about their experience in their individual journeys to earn these distinctions.



Heather Carter, LNHA, LSW: I have had the pleasure of working with seniors in a health care setting for over 29 years as a Licensed Social Worker and in Music Therapy. During that time, I often thought it would be beneficial to expand my knowledge in all aspects of nursing home and retirement living. In January 2018, I started this journey which included a three-week training followed by a six-month internship.

The training and internship involved to become a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator provided the opportunity of learning information pertaining to health care rules and regulations as well as management and leadership.

I have a true love and compassion to help our seniors maintain their independence and live life with the dignity, respect and the quality care they deserve. I am excited to use the knowledge gained during the training and the internship to enhance my leadership skills and to serve the community.



Debra Walker, CDM, CFPP: The Certified Dietary Manager, Certified Food Protection Professional (CDM, CFPP) credential is now listed as the primary qualification for the Director of Food and Nutrition Services in the absence of a fulltime dietitian.

The CDM, CFPP must possess the education and experience to competently perform the responsibilities of a Dietary Manager, and must prove this by passing a nationally recognized credentialing exam and by fulfilling the requirements needed to maintain certified status.

I enrolled in the University of North Dakota program which included 120 hours of instructional education and 150 hours of field experience. I gained useful knowledge and received a better understanding of some of my colleagues outside of my department and their daily job duties as I interviewed them for different assignments in my course.

Congratulations to both Heather and Debra for these great accomplishments! 🇺🇸

The Value of Sustaining Donors

By Mark McKinney, Director of Development


“Sustaining Donor” is a term that is familiar to fund-raising. These are people who faithfully support a charity through recurring systematic giving. Some mail in a monthly check, while others set up an EFT (electronic fund transfer) that is transmitted directly from a bank account. Sustaining donors are a special blessing to a charity as they tend to persist over time and can be counted on, even when outside influences, such as the national economy, can sometimes negatively impact donor giving.

There are different levels of sustained giving, based on the donor’s different financial abilities. Some give larger amounts each month while most of these gifts are smaller in size. There’s a tendency for people to think that a small gift could not make a difference. One of our sustaining donors gives \$25 per month. In 4 years, they’ve given \$1,200. While they may see their monthly gift as small, the accumulated impact over time is strong.

All giving is appreciated and necessary, but there’s something very special about someone who has made giving to the Christian Benevolent Association a lifelong endeavor. It shows their heart is invested in our ministry to the elderly. We are grateful that we have so many sustaining donors.

In His Word, God challenges us to be willing to give to help meet legitimate needs. He also promises to bless us if we give. Jesus said in Luke 12:33 – “Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.”

Perhaps you would like to become a sustaining donor. Your monthly gift, no matter the size, can make a real difference over time and be a true blessing to our residents.

The CBA Foundation, The Christian Village at Mason and The Christian Village at Mt. Healthy are 501 (c) 3 tax exempt not-for-profit organizations. Gifts may be made by mail, or online through a secured giving page at the Christian Village Communities’ web site at www.christianvillages.org 

Watch Us Grow!

By Lizz Stephens, VP of Marketing and Business Development



Christian Village Communities seeks innovative ways to serve our customers and to be adaptable to the every-changing competitive landscape as it relates to senior healthcare services. We have identified ways to better meet the needs of residents at both The

Christian Village at Mt. Healthy (CVMH) and The Christian Village at Mason (CVM).



Guardian Center Dining Room

The Christian Village at Mt. Healthy

A trend in our industry toward a reduction in independent senior apartment living had made it increasingly challenging to keep the IL apartments at CVMH occupied. With our research telling us that there was significant unmet need for specialized Assisted Living Memory Care, a task force was assembled to develop a plan that would allow us to take advantage of this opportunity. It was decided that our best approach would be to convert an IL floor to specialized care in assisted living memory support.

We have named this new floor the Guardian Center for Memory Support. It features 17 private studio suites, a large resident living room and common area, dining room and kitchen. The timeline for completion is Fall of 2019. We will celebrate the opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony open to residents and the greater community.

If you've been in a hospital recently you've noticed the expense to which they have gone to modernize their facilities and create spacious, private rooms. A private nursing room in a senior care center such as CVMH has almost become essential. Again, our research told us that there was a demand for more private long-term nursing rooms in the Mt. Healthy market area, so we decided to retrofit one additional floor into a secured, long-term skilled nursing center with private rooms. We are working with the architect to design this new space and hope to begin construction in this area very soon.



Spacious Dove Manor Home Living Room

The Christian Village at Mason

In 2018 CVM built the first independent living Manor Home by retrofitting two side by side Garden Homes into one large premium floor plan with a double car garage. We continue to receive feedback from some prospective residents that they want and need more space than is available in the majority of our traditional Garden Homes.

Late in 2018 two more adjacent Garden Homes vacated. The two homes were one-bedroom floor plans, our most challenging home to market. We decided to combine these two homes into our second Manor Home, featuring some of the same attractive features as the first, such as a spacious, open floor plan and double car garage. This home is targeted for completion late in 2019.

2019 has been a year of exciting growth and opportunities at Christian Village Communities. We thank God for His blessings and seek His continued guidance as we make important decisions about the future. ✝



Resident Spotlight - Living for Adventure...Even at 95!

Adventure and nature have been a love of Howard Watrous' for many years. He has spent many hours over the last 45 years hiking, biking, camping, canoeing, sailing and kayaking. Howard had many opportunities to enjoy and embrace nature through his younger years. As a Boy Scout he began his interest and curiosity for nature and of hiking. He later earned his Eagle Scout and continued scouting with Sea Scouts, where he enjoyed sailing and water adventures. It was through these experiences and enjoyment; he then became a member of the Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club is the most enduring and influential grassroots environmental organization in the U.S. Their overall purpose is to defend everyone's right to a healthy world, and help people enjoy nature by protecting our natural resources. Each year Sierra Club Volunteers guide over 15,000 trips. Trips are as simple as afternoon hikes close to home, or to extended trips across the world. Howard was one of these volunteers. As a volunteer he taught whitewater kayaking and an Eskimo Roll school, a specific kayaking maneuver. He and his wife Mary Ann have enjoyed many trips across the country through Colorado, Alaska, Hawaii and New Zealand. Howard has enjoyed sailing in various parts of the

U.S. and has manned a surfing kayak while spending time in Florida.

As Howard's 95th birthday approached, and keeping with the influence of nature and adventure, his wife Mary Ann planned a trip to The Wilds where they traveled this past June. The Wilds is one of the largest conservation centers in North America. As they reviewed the various safari tours offered, they noticed several were Zipline Tours. The Zipline Overlook Tour is a 1 ½ hour guided tour that went through forests and over some animal pastures. Howard described the zipline tour as a new, unique and fun experience. When asked if he would zipline again, he responded, "Yes, no question about it."

Howard and Mary Ann moved to The Christian Village at Mason (CVM) about 4 ½ years ago. They commented that the campus was "inviting" to them. Certainly the 85-acres campus and outdoor spaces may have played a role in their decision.

Howard and Mary Ann remain active daily, visiting the Mason Ohio Community Center and the Renewal Fitness Center at CVM. Howard regularly bikes 8 miles, just about every day. 🇺🇸

Team Meets for Offsite Retreat



Team members work together to solve challenges

In the month of June, 45 managers from The Christian Village at Mason and The Christian Village at Mt. Healthy, CVC Chaplains and Directors of Development and Church Relations met at The Manor House Conference Center in Mason for an all-day retreat. The day was packed with an agenda designed to inform, invest, inspire and ignite!

Special speakers for the retreat included Kathryn Brod, CEO of Leading Age Ohio, who provided an overview of developments within our industry and shared some of the initiatives LAO has developed to help its member organizations with their workplace challenges.

Mike Kelly, Business Consultant, Financial Planner and Managing Member of Right Path Enterprises, LLC, spoke to the team, encouraging us to improve our ability to lead ourselves and others with distinction and integrity.

Ron Beshear, successful business leader, author and motivational speaker, anchored the day of speakers by challenging us all to look every single day for ways to make a difference in the lives of others, for by doing so we will discover that we ourselves will be positively impacted in more ways that we ever thought possible.

A highlight of the retreat was a two-hour team-building segment led by Tara Woolard, Executive Director for Team Expansion's Discovery School of the Outdoors and her team. Discovery School of the Outdoors, located in Louisville, KY, promotes team development services to business groups, non-profits, churches and schools. Tara led us in some fun (and challenging) activities that helped us learn to trust one another more and to lean on one another for assistance.

These annual retreats have become a special event for our team leaders, providing a very efficient way to provide information and training, and to invest in the lives of the people who lead our ministry each day of the year. ✝

Honoring A Transformational Leader

At the May 2019 Annual Meeting of Christian Village Communities there was a celebration honoring CBA Board Chair Mick McLaughlin upon the completion of thirteen years of service to the ministry.

Mr. McLaughlin's leadership helped CVC to accomplish many key initiatives through his years of service on the board. Among the most notable are:

- Board Governance – By enlisting the assistance of TAFT Law, Mr. McLaughlin led the restructuring of the code of regulations for the parent and affiliate organizations that brought needed change to structure, including the establishing of a new policy for board member terms of service.
- Officiated over the succession of the organization's long-tenured CEO, culminating in the hiring of Larry Monroe to be the organization's second Chief Executive Officer.
- Led the board in the creation of a corporate 5-year strategic plan that provided the key areas of business focus to guide the organization through a well-thought-out road map for stability and business success.
- Compliance – Oversaw the significant overhaul of the organization's ethics and compliance policies.
- Finance Management – Led in the restructuring of debt, including the refinance and pay-off of the Government-backed HUD loan on the property at The Christian Village at Mt. Healthy.

Mick's deep faith, spiritual commitment, business and finance acumen and his natural born leadership abilities served him well and helped to cultivate a board focus on the disciplines required for the organization to achieve success, fiscal strength and sustainability. It was his heart for our residents and his commitment to serve them faithfully that motivated his service to CVC. Mick also had a heart for every team member in the organization, and it was important to him that they be recognized and adequately rewarded for their hard work and dedication.

Thank you, Mick, for all the years of sacrificial service to the ministry of Christian Village Communities. ✝





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The mission of Christian Village Communities is to guide older adults to joyful and purposeful life experiences in a faith-filled community.

Care is the heart and soul of everything we do. We are devoted to maintaining the highest standards of expertise and service in health and wellness. We are committed to serving each person as though they were our own family; with love, compassion and excellence. 

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