The 2019 Villager

THIS ISSUE
Cultivating Community
We are all drawn to people and places that make us feel safe and part of a caring community.

Perhaps this is why so many of us find comfort in the warmth of Central Baptist Village. In 2019, our vision to empower one another by connecting as family and friends in a community inspired by faith surpassed all expectations and generated an abundance of kindness, grace and joy. Together, our community of residents and loved ones, staff and volunteers flourished as we came together to celebrate the passions and dreams of residents.

As always, our devoted employees strengthen CBV’s strong culture of trust, teamwork and compassion and 2019 was no exception. Every day, staff cultivated genuine connections through countless expressions of kindness and goodwill: a caregiver singing favorite songs with a resident, a poignant final goodbye with family in the memory garden, even a spontaneous birthday visit from two giant pandas. Staff are always honored and privileged to serve. Their warmth and hospitality is palpable and the foundation of CBV’s Heart to Serve philosophy.

To our delight, this culture of compassion blossomed and attracted even more generosity and support in the form of an ever-growing base of volunteers. We were humbled by our treasured volunteers of all ages who contributed hours of their valuable time. From board members to students from high school and graduate programs, volunteers worked hard to support our community. This year we were especially fortunate to host student interns from the School of the Art Institute and reap the benefits of their ambitious endeavors in our resident creative arts programs.

The outpouring of good will and generosity culminated throughout the year in community-wide celebrations, as well as smaller, more intimate moments among a parent and child, or a trio of best friends. While many residents took turns in the limelight, everyone joined in the festivities. Together we rallied for Jodi’s 100th birthday, Nick and Lou’s outing to the Cross Town Classic, Bob’s Folk Dance extravaganza and Marty’s tour of Wrigley Field. These personalized events brought hours of anticipation, enjoyment and fulfillment as we collectively shared in the deep sense of satisfaction that comes when you check off a wish on a decades-old bucket list or enjoy the simple pleasure of a day at the mall with your girlfriends.

As our tradition to serve and celebrate seniors continues to uplift Central Baptist Village, we invite you to join our caring community where kindness, grace and joy are firmly rooted and here to stay.

Dawn J. Mondschein
Bob Abson, 93, has more than a hundred bolo ties that he’s fashioned from souvenirs he’s collected during his travels. Today, he’s wearing one with a purple geode as he holds up an old photograph of him dancing with his wife. A talented folk dancer and instructor, Bob can no longer dance, or remember the steps to call out. Still, he recognizes the music and loves watching others dance. So it was more than just a fond wish fulfilled when a group of folk dancers who were old friends of Bob’s, several of whom he had trained, performed at Central Baptist Village for his birthday.

“Bob was very involved in planning the event and he was able to share his passion for folk dancing,” says Becca Galuska, Director of Life Enrichment at CBV. “It became so much more. Everyone enjoyed the wonderful performance, but they also learned more about Bob.”

Galuska and her staff wondered if there were other dreams and wishes that they could make happen. Because CBV was gearing up to raise money for a wheelchair-accessible van, they asked residents what they would do if they could just go for a drive. The requests came in, fast and furious. And over the past six months, CBV staff began working with residents to design their own dream adventures.

Marty Martinetti, for example, toured Wrigley Field. Geraldine Meyer and her daughter visited Millennium Park. Barb Essig spent a leisurely day at the mall with her girlfriends, the way she used to do—shopping and talking over a long lunch. “Do you know how long it takes to walk through the mall at my age?” She laughs. “It was so wonderful to be able to relax with my BFFs and not worry about the time.”

Although the fundraiser for the Village Van has successfully concluded, Galuska says the ‘Dream Adventures’ concept has become part of CBV’s approach to its life enrichment program. As she explains, dreams, memories and reminiscing are closely related and can often be sad and difficult to cope with. “We’ve created a new tradition that’s empowering and hopeful. By recognizing and sharing residents’ passions, we can incorporate their memories into the present moment to make new ones.”

Hanging on Bob’s wall next to his bed is a collage of photographs from his birthday celebration, including one of him surrounded by the folk dancers. If you look closely, you can see the bolo tie Bob wore that day has a bright, colorful bird dancing on a field of white which, in Pennsylvania Dutch country where he bought the little pin, represents happiness and good fortune.

“We’ve created a new tradition that’s empowering and hopeful.”
Connecting Through Art
Creating Artistic Identities & Relationships

Chicagans were still shivering from the biting chill of a polar vortex when Elsie M. and her son bundled into a warm bus headed to a private art opening at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. With them were art therapist, Casey Pax, then a SAIC graduate student, and several other residents from Central Baptist Village’s mid-stage memory care unit. As the bus travelled from Norridge to Michigan Avenue, the excitement was palpable; Elsie and the other residents were about to see their own artwork on the walls of the Institute.

As part of her master’s thesis, Pax adapted an award-winning, evidence-based program, Opening Minds Through Art (OMA), for the residents and student volunteers at CBV. Opening Minds uses art to forge intergenerational relationships, provide opportunities for creative expression and break down for teens the barriers and stigma associated with dementia. For eight months, Elsie and other residents paired up with students from nearby Ridgewood High School. The goal? To get to know one another and make art. Even if no art was made, the project would successfully create friendships across generations. But week after week the residents sat and talked and laughed with their student volunteers and created luminous works of abstract art using watercolor, acrylic and ink. “I’ve never been an artist in my life,” says Elsie. “I made pictures that I’m proud of.”

When Casey shared the news that their artwork was going to be exhibited at the SAIC, the residents were thrilled. “I was happy and proud,” Elsie admits. “And surprised, because I never thought of myself as having anything hanging in an art gallery.”

Helping individuals discover a new part of themselves and to create a new, artistic identity that exists independent of memory is just one way that art programs like OMA are invaluable to CBV residents. As memory and skills retreat, the imagination remains alive and vibrant, though not necessarily visible to the rest of the world. “We have to see the creation of new relationships and the creation of new experiences as equally important aspects to someone’s well-being,” says Pax. “The creative side and the drive for genuine connection that residents with and without dementia have shouldn’t be ignored.”

The exhibit, “Art in the Moment,” is currently on display near the administrative offices at CBV.

“I have made pictures that I’m proud of.”
Central Baptist Village lost the physical presence of a quiet and powerful leader when Board President John M. Smith passed away in August, but the indelible legacy of the 15 years he spent serving on CBV’s Board remains in a culture of kindness and warmth he fostered, and the community he helped build among residents, staff and loved ones.

Beyond the board meetings and budgets, the committees and strategic plans, fundraising and tough decisions, he recognized what really set Central Baptist Village apart. “John instinctively knew how important it was to create a real community—not just a sense of community,” says Dawn Mondschein, CEO. “And he knew how to make the social glue that bonds people.” An athlete and coach his whole life, John loved games and challenges and brought them into both his professional and volunteer roles, using fun and competition to unite people. “I’ll never forget one day when he came into my office carrying a Michael’s bag filled with wooden birdhouses and craft supplies,” Mondschein recalls fondly. “He handed them to me and said, ‘have a birdhouse competition.’ And I thought to myself, what is he thinking?” She chuckles and shakes her head. “But we went ahead and did it and it created this buzz... staff, residents, everyone got into it!”

The culture which John helped bring about was one in which there was always room for improvement, but the emphasis was on teamwork, positivity and achieving higher and higher standards. “His number one directive to me was, ‘delight the residents. Delight the residents and everything else will follow,’” says Mondschein. Even when he wasn’t at Central Baptist Village, it was on his mind. He would anonymously tour, or “mystery shop,” other continuing care retirement communities to discover what they offered, how they compared to CBV. He always came back and shared with Mondschein what he’d seen and learned. “And he always told me, ‘we do it better,’ or ‘no one’s doing what we’re doing.’”

He believed so strongly in CBV’s mission, its staff and the genuine warmth it offered residents, that he brought his mother to live at CBV even though there were other CCRCs much closer to his home and more convenient. After she passed, when the beautifully landscaped Memory Garden was completed in 2015, he dedicated its visual centerpiece, a stunning fountain, to her memory. Each time he came to CBV, he would go there to remember her and pray, so it’s fitting that a plaque in his honor will forever face her fountain. To remember John Smith, though, all you need to do is walk through CBV and let the infectious spirit of camaraderie he fostered lift you up. That spirit of community, that’s John Smith.

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Paying It Forward
The Genius Brothers & Jacob Meier

Dreams are part faith and vision, hard work and passion…and sometimes a few twists of fate. A German farmer dreams of a better life for his young son, and sends him to America. Meet Jacob Meier, the farmer’s son. As a young immigrant in New York City, Meier learns the shoemaker’s trade, but yearns to be a pastor and so, after studying goes on to lead a church in Iowa and is then called to pastor the First German Baptist Church of Chicago and later establishes five other Baptist churches.

Meanwhile, two young American brothers, also born in New York City, train as physicians. Richard and Arthur Genius finish their medical studies in Europe—in London, Vienna and Berlin—before returning to the United States. The brothers set up their medical practice not in New York, but in Chicago, just a few blocks away from the grand exhibition halls of the 1894 World’s Columbian Exposition. Their practice flourishes and soon they count among their clients the wealthiest and most powerful of Chicago society. Their parents, Frederick and Henrietta, move from New York to Chicago to be closer to their sons and are delighted to discover that there is a Baptist church just like the one they left behind in New York City.

It’s just another Sunday in 1899 when Reverend Jacob Meier shares with his congregants the latest progress on the West German Baptist Old People’s Home their church has founded. He has no inkling that the newest members of his congregation sitting in the pews that day—the Genius family—will have such a powerful and long-lasting impact on the home’s future. At that moment he cannot know how fully the home for the elderly will capture Henrietta’s heart. And he certainly couldn’t imagine that one day her two sons—Richard and Arthur—will honor their mother’s deep love for the church and the home for the elderly by remembering it with a bequest.

But that is exactly what they do when each of the Genius brothers set up a trust upon their death to benefit the West German Baptist Old People’s Home Society. The funds contribute to many items over the years, from salaries for employees and maintenance to clothing and food. These trusts continue to provide a safe, comfortable residence for older adults through the years. Then in 1956, funds from the Genius Brothers’ trusts allow the home’s board of directors to purchase the lush, expansive 10-acre property on which the present-day community of Central Baptist Village sits.

Serendipity brought Richard, Arthur and Henrietta Genius together with Jacob Meier and his West German Baptist Church, and they realized the vision of a caring community for older adults through faith, hard work and passion. But their collective dream of sustaining CBV came by paying it forward.

"Their collective dream of sustaining CBV came by paying it forward."
Ways to Give
Support our community now and in years to come
As you contemplate your year-end gift, please give thoughtful consideration to supporting Central Baptist Village in one of the following ways. Your generosity helps us provide compassionate care for the mind, body and spirit of our residents.

- The Endowment Fund helps us fulfill our charitable mission and support our residents who have depleted their financial resources.
- The Employee Appreciation Fund enables us to recognize staff for the compassionate, professional, holistic care they provide our residents.
- The Technology Fund allows us to bring state-of-the-art technology to enrich, engage and enhance our residents’ lives.
- The Creative Arts Fund helps us grow our creative and therapeutic arts programs of music, movement and art.

I was recently hiking in a picturesque state park with our middle son when we came across a familiar sign that said: Take Only Pictures. Leave Only Footprints. This wise motto is found in beautiful wilderness areas worldwide. It is a friendly reminder to respect the wonder of nature by keeping it undisturbed for future generations.

Footprints are traces of where we have walked. They are remnants of our presence. American astronauts left a few on the moon. Parents are happy when muddy kids mop theirs off kitchen floors. Polite golfers erase theirs from bunkers; sand-seeking hackers like me appreciate this.

One kind of imprint is highly commendable. It is the mark we leave on people long after our life’s journey ends. Our impact includes our contributions of words and deeds and resources. The intent of any gift is worth more than any amount. Generosity is a priceless legacy.

It is also unforgettable. Have you heard of the guy who once boasted he had a photographic memory, but had since run out of film? (That old joke had more punch before the digital age!) As our years increase, our recall can decrease. Yet there is Someone who will always remember.

So when it comes to courteous hiking, let us reduce any residue of where we have been. When it comes to successful living, let us take many pictures and make many memories. May we each leave lots of lasting footprints.

Mike Weber, Chaplain

A word from Our Chaplain
Footprints

Central Baptist Village gratefully accepts:
- Checks payable to Central Baptist Village
- Gifts of appreciated securities
- Contributions as designated in a will or as part of an estate
- Required minimum distributions (RMDs) as a tax-free transfer directly to CBV

If you would like to learn more about these gift opportunities, please call Dawn Mondschein at 708.583.8500.

Make your gift in 3 easy ways
Online cbvillage.org/donate
Phone Call Carol at 708.583.8500
US Mail Send your check payable to Central Baptist Village Marketing & Development Coordinator, 4747 N. Canfield Avenue, Norridge, IL 60706

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of a gift during this holiday season. We send you many blessings for a beautiful Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

Hebrews 6:10 says, “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people.”

Our just God will forever keep in mind all the ways and times you loved him by serving others.
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Inspired by Faith, We Serve & Celebrate Seniors

Cultivating Community

The Villager

2019

THE ISSUE

4747 N. Canfield Avenue
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