

The Fireside

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In Your Service

Thad D. Rothrock
President/CEO

**"Tough times don't last.
Tough teams do."**

Maybe you have seen this slogan posted on our social media or a banner at one of our communities. Or, maybe you have seen our social media hashtag "#HomewoodStrong" posted on various social media platforms. The year has certainly tested Homewood's strength, those it serves, those who serve and the families of both.

COVID-19 is the most significant crisis to face seniors in decades. It has been a reminder that life is fragile and time with those we love is invaluable. Some of us have lost loved ones this year and feel a fresh sense of mourning. Others have suffered the emotional stress of isolation and disruption to healthy routines.

As a result of the many challenges, this year has revealed some important truths about Homewood's enduring strength. The first is God's faithfulness. We have not endured this difficult year alone. Social isolation did not limit God's care or concern for Homewood. He has been with us when we mourned the loss of loved ones and when we celebrated the recovery of others.

The year has also revealed our love for one another. Homewood has been the recipient of more support and generosity than at any time in recent history. Our supporters have

volunteered countless hours and provided much needed resources. They hand-produced face masks, provided iPads for virtual family visits, donated to the Co-worker Appreciation fund and kept us in their regular prayers. Our supporters have touched the lives of our residents and co-workers in a time of great need. I hope you enjoy reading some of these stories in the following pages.

Our executive directors, Karen Coleman, Karen Main, Melissa Hadley, Lisa Defibaugh and Mary Colledge and their teams have been fighting COVID-19 tirelessly since March. It's been a long and difficult battle. Your support has provided the encouragement and strength to endure.

As we enter the Christmas season, let it serve as a reminder that Homewood's strength flows from the love of Christ. His birth, life and resurrection are a constant beacon of hope. May the Lord bless you for your faithfulness to the ministry of Homewood Retirement Centers. I look forward to partnering with each of you as we enter a new year filled with new opportunities to make a difference in the lives of our residents and each other. ■



The Fireside

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Resident Profile:

Joyce Smith
Homewood at Frederick

When you make a gift to benevolent care at Homewood you never know who might be helped. But Homewood at Frederick resident Joyce Smith wants to make sure everyone knows just how important those gifts are.

Joyce and her husband Harry, moved to a Lodge apartment at Homewood at Frederick a year ago in December 2019, but she already knew how special a place Homewood was.

Not long after Homewood at Frederick opened its doors at Crumland Farms, Joyce's mother, Gladys McQuown needed care after a stroke. Fortunately, a bed was available at Crumland Farms and Mrs. McQuown was accepted. Joyce said her mother had ample financial means, or so she thought.

At the time her mother moved to Crumland Farms in early 2001, the Smiths had retired to Arizona but their daughter lived and worked as a nurse in the Frederick schools and the family firmly believed Homewood was the right place.

"Crumland Farms had just opened and it was new and beautiful," Joyce said. "She received wonderful care. They truly *cared* for her." In addition, Joyce's daughter, Stacy, was able to visit on a regular basis.

As the years went by, Mrs. McQuown's personal funds began to deplete—a scenario confronted by many Homewood residents. Eventually, Joyce said she applied for benevolent care for her mother.

"There was no change at all. Everything for my mother was exactly the same," Joyce said. "It's hard to tell where she would have gone (without Homewood benevolent care). Thank heavens for Homewood."



Joyce Smith (right) with her mother, Gladys McQuown

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Mrs. Smith said her mother benefited from benevolent care for 7 or 8 years—until her death in 2012. And because of the peace of mind Homewood gave their entire family, Joyce said she has continued to give to the Benevolent Care Fund in her mother's name. In addition, she decided to name Homewood in her will.

"It just meant so much to know my mother was cared for," she said.

Fast forward to 2016 when the Smiths began to think about moving back to the Frederick area from Arizona. Each year when they visited the area they toured a retirement community. Joyce said that while she had good memories with Homewood at Frederick, she wasn't sure she wanted to revisit the grief of her mother's death. But in 2016, she decided to take a look. She said she was pleasantly surprised to see how the community had grown and matured through the passing years. Through Fireside articles, she knew the community had expanded to Willow Ponds, but when the Smith's saw The Lodge, they knew that was the right place.

Joyce said she was recently telling her story to another resident. "They didn't seem to know about the benevolent care or to believe it was real," she said, which just redoubled her efforts to promote giving to it.

So when a gift is made to benevolent care, you truly never know the peace you are giving to someone else. ■



▲ Joyce Smith, her mother, and their family



Courtyard Enhancements Prove Timely

Despite the many challenges the pandemic has brought, the staff and residents on the Homewood at Frederick campus feel blessed for the generosity shown to them this past year. Resident life at *Homewood at Frederick* has looked a little different over the last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and precautions that *Homewood* implemented. But due to the kindness of so many, residents have been able to experience new ways to gather with family and have meaningful experiences.

Last year, *Homewood at Frederick* received a generous gift from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. This donor has been touched by personal experiences with relatives receiving care as well as close relationships with a number of current residents, and so this person was looking for a way to make a meaningful impact on the care and services Homewood offers. The donation was designated for improvements to enhance resident life in health care and

assisted living. The first enhancement project was the improvements completed to the Willows courtyard. The Willows is the memory care unit within the health care center. This gift helped enhance the courtyard with an expansion of the patio area, a new outdoor pavilion and elevated flowerbeds, which offered residents the opportunity to plant flowers and vegetables. Especially over this past summer when

families could only visit with their loved one outside due to the CDC safety guidelines, this area was vital in keeping

families and residents connected by safely having families meet. Everyone looks forward to the return of warm weather when the residents can once again enjoy this beautiful outdoor space.

Over this past year, the Frederick community have given generously to the staff and residents. *Homewood at Frederick* had received many donations to keep residents and staff safe by providing everything from face masks, PPE (personal protection equipment) supplies, hand sanitizers, to meals from local business. Some of the most valued gifts came in



Willows Courtyard Improvements. ▲

the form of cards and letters from families and the local schools offering kind words and hand-drawn pictures of encouragement. To all of those who had shown their support, *Homewood at Frederick* is very appreciative and grateful for you. ■

Reflections on Philanthropy

Pat O'Toole

Vice President of Fund Development

In September of 2008, the makings of what would become known as the Great Recession were fully under way. That was the month Lehman Brothers collapsed, marking the largest bankruptcy in U.S. history and one of the pivotal moments in the financial crisis. September 2008 also happened to be when I began my career in fundraising.

Although I may have bemoaned my unfortunate timing as those events unfolded, I realize now that I was probably right where I needed to be. I believe we are called into situations we are uniquely suited to handle and connected with those who can help us accomplish what we are there to do. I have witnessed first-hand how philanthropy is a powerful force for good, especially during times of trial.

Many of the lessons I had to quickly learn in my early days of development work have become freshly relevant in the wake of COVID-19. When I joined Homewood in December 2019, I hoped everything in 2020 would go exactly according to the ambitious plans we had for making life better for Homewood residents.

Just ten weeks into the year, everything changed.

With a great deal of optimism surrounding the potential for several effective vaccines to be made widely available in the next few months, we can only hope that this ordeal will quickly be behind us. In the meantime, I thought I might share some of the lessons I have been reflecting on, as they are also indicative of the ways I will continue to approach the work of growing philanthropy at Homewood.

"Philanthropy is built on relationships"

While most people are naturally inclined to want to help where they can when they are able to, we know that, at the end of the day, people give to people. The number one reason people say they don't support a particular cause is because they were never asked. And most of us are far more likely to give generously when we are personally connected with the organization we care about and trust the people associated with it.

Like any relationship, our connection with a cause is often forged when walking through challenging days together. It has been especially difficult to stay connected during this pandemic though, as we would normally be seeing one another for personal visits and out and about on our campuses. We have used technology and conventional means to do what we can to show our support for one another, but it's just not the same as the personal interactions we would normally have.

In the end, the most important thing is that we seek to understand what others are going through. I realize so much of what the Homewood family loves about this organization has been upended this year, and the economic turmoil has created a great deal of uncertainty in the lives of many donors and their families. And yet, many residents and family members have shared that they have never felt as grateful for the people who make up this organization as they have this year. Philanthropy may be one way to express that gratitude—if we can demonstrate we are deserving of the trust it takes to help make that happen.

"Judge each day not by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you sow"

This agricultural adage has been passed down through many generations of fundraising professionals. Factors that are out of our control (such as a pandemic-based recession) may keep people from moving forward on their charitable

intentions at this moment, but that doesn't take away from the importance of what we are doing together.

Every day, I have conversations with people whose support will be vital to Homewood's future. When the time is right and they decide how to make their mark, the long-term impact on Homewood will be significant.

"Giving is not 'one size fits all'"

We are so fortunate to have several thousand people committed to Homewood's work of caring for residents in need, improving the lifestyle opportunities for all residents, advancing the educational opportunities of our dedicated co-workers, and enhancing the campuses our residents call home. But for each of those donors, the ways in which they choose to—and are able to—support Homewood look very different.

We are grateful that so many members of the Homewood family choose to leave a legacy here through a bequest or other estate planning tool. In fact, Homewood's very existence is owed to the bequest left by George Pearson more than 90 years ago. Reviewing estate plans and considering Homewood as a potential recipient of a donor's legacy has gained a lot of



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momentum during this pandemic, as donors may not be in a position to give today, but want to make provisions for the future.

Getting to know our donors as individuals and helping to connect them with ways to make a real difference at Homewood is why I love the work that I do. It is a blessing to be someplace where our donor family feels so passionate about the people we serve and what we can accomplish together.

What do you think?

As we close out 2020 and look to 2021, I hope you will take the time to share with me (using the information below) some of what you have been reflecting on during the pandemic. How has it shaped your thinking about the things you are focused on? Where does Homewood fit into your plans for the future?

Thank you for being part of the Homewood family and for the opportunity to serve with you in this important work. ■

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HOMewood AT WILLIAMSPORT

Christmas Comes to Williamsport

Homewood at Williamsport is taking Christmas decorating to new heights—with the help of a local company and RLEEF.

King of Christmas put the finishing touches on the lighting display in early December with lights, greenery and bows decking as many surfaces as possible throughout the campus.

“We tried to distribute the lights so no matter where you are on campus, you can see lights,” said Erin Younker, director of marketing and Christmas “decorator-in-chief.” She said one of the things she likes about the company’s work is their attention to detail. “They hide all the cords so all you see are the lights.”

King of Christmas first came to campus two years ago to add some flair to the community’s “Kick off to Christmas.” That event included Santa and Mrs. Claus, horse-drawn wagon rides and refreshments in the community center. And just as things got going...snow began to fall, Younker said.

Unfortunately, the community event couldn’t happen—because of COVID, but

Christmas decorations at Homewood at Williamsport ▼▶



the decorations could and will be lit each night until after New Year’s.

Younker said she applied for RLEEF (Resident Life Enrichment Endowment Fund) to cover the cost of the expanded decorations. Residents will enjoy lighted courtyards, building entrances, pine trees and fences. “We tried to use a variety of lights—from icicle to Charlie Brown lights—to cover everyone’s tastes.”

Younker said she hopes to continue to expand the display each year and incorporate some sponsorship opportunities to decorate even more areas of the campus. ■



RLEEF Brings Virtual Reality to Campus

The COVID pandemic slammed the breaks on many aspects of daily life, including many of the amenities and services at Homewood Retirement Centers. But Homewood's dedicated staff put their creativity to work and found new ways to engage residents.

Homewood at Plum Creek's therapeutic recreation staff merged technology with RLEEF (Resident Life Enrichment Endowment Fund) and found a way for residents to "see the world."

Karan Baranauskas, director of therapeutic recreation, came across an ad for a virtual reality headset in a technology magazine and thought it just might be the ticket. She researched the product and made a request for funding through RLEEF.

RLEEF was established to provide extra experiences for residents—events, trips, the arts—that would be above and beyond regular funding. With COVID making those types of events impossible, the next best thing was to join the virtual world.

Baranauskas said the headset maker creates programming specifically for seniors. Her staff uses the programs during individual visits with health care, personal care and memory care residents. Each month, new programs are available that include tours of cities around the globe, nature walks, music and animals. Baranauskas said a fan favorite is a pen of puppies or kittens. The headset works in conjunction with a tablet so a staff member can see what the resident is experiencing—although obviously not a 3-D version.

The technology has been such a big hit, other Homewood communities are



▲ Residents try out the new virtual reality headsets.



looking into getting their own virtual reality sets.

One resident especially enjoyed a hummingbird garden. "She said it felt like she could reach out and grab a hummingbird," Baranauskas said.

Many residents have enjoyed "revisiting" cities where they vacationed years ago. Baranauskas said some of the favorites are Barcelona and Venice.

"It takes people away from the current situation with COVID," she said, adding co-workers have also tried the headset and say it helps with stress relief.

Baranauskas said her staff has found many ways to incorporate technology in their work with residents. Virtual visits with families using iPads have been a staple throughout the pandemic and she recently partnered with a virtual home school group to set up visits with school children. The students are planning a holiday program for residents. ■



Campus Beautification

When the residents of Spring House Estates gathered for a traditional corn boil last year, the turnout was excellent. So good, in fact, that they found themselves overwhelming the capacity of their outdoor pavilion.

Carolyn Dingle, chair of the Resident Council, brought some chairs of her own to make up the difference. And it got her thinking.

Carolyn decided that the challenge of creating more outdoor gathering space was the perfect fit for her newly-created Campus Beautification Committee.

Everyone coming together around a shared vision.

With no capital dollars available in the campus budget, the residents proposed that the project would become the focus of Spring House's fundraising through the annual golf tournament. A record number of residents assisted with the event, and the net total raised was the most of any campus across Homewood.

The final funds needed for the pavilion expansion were planned to come from the 2020 golf tournament. Due to the pandemic, that event was not able to move forward. Luckily, a couple of generous resident donors made direct contributions to help close out the amount needed to complete the project.

◀ Expanded outdoor pavilion
▶ During construction of pavilion



The committee got to work with creating plans to add onto the existing pavilion to better meet their needs. It turned out to be a very collaborative process, with residents and staff having a great deal of input on the final design and ev-



Expanded outdoor pavilion and fire pit

Work was quickly under way, and the completion of the project has been a bright spot for the campus in 2020.

The new configuration has increased the pavilion's capacity from 80 to about 160, which is enough to hold all members of the Residents' Association. With the pandemic necessitating restrictions on indoor gatherings, this is a very welcome improvement.

Additionally, they were able to connect their fire pit with the pavilion by way of a new sidewalk to allow them to plan hot dog and marshmallow roasts when the weather allows.

"I was so overwhelmed with the fact that we could even do it," Carolyn said. "Especially during this COVID time, it gave everyone something to talk about—to be happy about." ■



Spring House residents enjoy the added space the pavilion provides.



Heroes Day Scholarships Awarded in Martinsburg

Over the summer, Homewood Heroes Day was held to celebrate the tremendous work of co-workers during our response to COVID-19. After receiving 270 nominations for awards, 28 co-workers were recognized as awardees. Several hundred people tuned in for the live broadcast, and the video has since been viewed more than 1,400 times, in addition to all those who watched on campus TV channels.

Thanks to the generous sponsorships of many corporate partners, residents, and family members, Heroes Day raised more than \$165,000. Proceeds have been placed in a scholarship fund for co-workers and their families.

While these scholarship funds will be used across the Homewood system based on donor



▲ Ashley Dick

designations, two of the first scholarship recipients are from Homewood at Martinsburg.

Ashley Dick currently serves as a Nursing Assistant. She has worked at Homewood for nine years, and she is using the scholarship funds to pursue her Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) certification.

Ashley shared that her passion for nursing stems from her own diagnosis of severe Crohn's Disease at the age of 11.

"I have met some amazing nurses, some that have even become good friends," she said. "I knew at an early age that nursing was what I always wanted to do."

Amy Langer currently works in Medical Records and serves as a Unit Clerk. She has more than 20 years of experience in the Health Information Management field and has been with Homewood for five years. Amy is using the scholarship to help her pursue her associate's degree, which will allow her to sit for the certification exam and become a Registered Health Information Technician. With this certification, she would meet the regulatory requirements to oversee the Health Information Management Department on her own, thereby eliminating the need for an outside consultant.

"My goal is to remain at Homewood at Martinsburg to oversee the HIM De-



▲ Amy Langer

partment until I retire," Amy said. "I am so thankful that I am receiving this scholarship."

Both of these recipients exemplify how the Heroes Day scholarships will allow the organization to invest in dedicated and talented co-workers so that they can continue to grow into their careers at Homewood. ■



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