

# Willow Brook REFLECTIONS

## Reflections

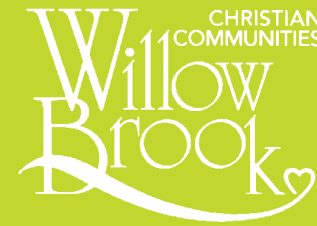
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# REFLECTIONS

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*“Cast me not off  
in the time of old age;  
forsake me not  
when my  
strength faileth.”*

Psalms 71:9

Verena Holcomb  
Willow Brook at Delaware Run



In April, nearly 300 people attended the open house welcoming the community to our new transitional and assisted living wings of Willow Brook at Delaware Run. Food stations were spread across the health-care center and music was provided by Columbus crooner Dwight Lenox. Acceptance of the transitional living concept is so strong that only a few apartments remain and a waiting list has been established.



Back in the '70s, when Willow Brook was little and easy, our workforce numbered about two dozen. I knew them all – first names and last, kids' ages, dogs' breeds. They were my team, and I was grateful for their devotion to our lowly startup nursing home.

Willow Brook has grown exponentially since those days. An all-hands count now approaches 400, a tally that taxes my ability to keep track of many in a personal way. I try hard, I do, but I wonder how often I pass one in Kroger or at the mall and fail to recognize them as my own, which probably leaves them wondering why the boss didn't speak.

Early on I started writing a staff newsletter, *The Grapevine*, resolving to mention as many team members as possible each month. One way I did this was with the "Question of the Month," a little query I put to an arbitrary selection of staffers. "What's your favorite movie?" "Describe your dream vacation."

Now 39 years into my Willow Brook journey, I still write that bulletin. Each month I don my reporter's cap, grab a pen and yellow pad, and wander our halls and kitchens and laundries, stopping to pester random victims with The Question.

My colleagues in other communities who know about this think I need more to do. But the heart has it reasons.

This monthly ritual obliges me to step out among my people in a way I probably wouldn't otherwise. I gauge the mood on the floor and engage workers in a moment of light conversation with the boss. These stenographic outings call back a wistful echo of those sepia-toned days when Willow Brook was simple. Days I miss.

In February, as I was going around asking The Question – "Who is your hero?" – I was taken aback by the number of tears the innocent probe drew forth. Who would have predicted? But as I step back now and reflect a bit on the answers, I think I get it. The



Larry Harris, CEO  
lharris@willow-brook.org

## Random Victims

by Larry Harris, CEO

28 respondents named mothers and fathers, grandparents, a couple of sisters, an uncle, a friend from church, and others who had wrought a difference in their lives. Not once did a celebrity or sports figure pop up. And, thank goodness, there were no phony politicians – just everyday folk to whom are owed a personal debt of gratitude.

Several who answered then turned the tables and asked who my hero is. I didn't give an answer then, but let me take a stab at it now.

There isn't any one individual, although I can point to three whose instruction and counsel have lifted my thinking: A Bible professor I had as a college freshman who first pried open the creaky door of my mind; a Willow Brook resident – a '60s civil rights crusader – whose example has inspired me to speak

*... a group I have come to admire are those on my team who are staggering under life's burdens.*

up for fairness and justice; an anti-war activist who taught me to not fear the light. Fallible mortals all, they each prompted a needed correction in my life's heading.

But closer to home, a group I have come to admire are those on my team who are staggering under life's burdens. They lug a heavy load, yet they hold steady in their service to Willow Brook. We have one right now whose husband is locked in a high-stakes stare-down with leukemia. I know she is scared for him, and for her future.

Another recently suffered the unforeseen death of her spouse. Yet another, a crushing divorce. They now are left grieving and lost as they try to reassemble the pieces of their shattered lives.

And there are the ever-changing few who find themselves sinking in financial quicksand, and pressed at times to desperate measures – forgo meals, submit to the usurious exploitation of a payday lender, take up residence in a car. They are so busy finding ways that I forgive them if on occasion they only mimic the motions of their assigned work.

Some of our hurting souls harbor fears and sorrows too deep for words, yet they show up for work each day, sometimes walking the halls by rote, as if their feet were not their own. They bear a burden that may be known or not. Still, they give.

These, I declare to you, are my heroes.

Introducing . . .

## Transitional Living

With the opening of our newly-expanded healthcare center, Willow Brook at Delaware Run is introducing what we believe to be a totally new concept in central-Ohio senior living.

While independent living in a retirement community is like living in a condo with the added benefit of a community of friends and social opportunities, assisted living is for someone who needs a watchful eye and helping hand on a consistent, 24-hour-a-day basis.

But more and more people find themselves caught somewhere in the middle, and that's where

transitional living comes in. Transitional living is designed for people who can get along just fine overnight but need help during the daytime. They may forget to drink enough liquids or take their medicine.

***The independence of an apartment, with the security and support of assisted living***

They may need reminders about heading to dinner or a little help getting into or out of a bathtub. Or they may have the occasional emergency situation that requires assistance.

Sometimes it is a couple in which the healthy, active one of the pair is being worn down caring for the other and needs someone to ease the load during daylight hours. With transitional living, a couple can continue to live together in an apartment that is practically identical to all of the other independent living apartments and open to all the independent amenities.

Individual interests and needs are taken into account, and other benefits include:

- Being able to choose among three dining locations.
- Getting a friendly reminder when it's time to take your pills.
- Bringing your pet.
- Having a helper available on your floor 12 hours a day.
- Enjoy the services of a weekly housekeeper.
- Giving your spouse an opportunity to do other things during the day but spending evenings together.
- Paying a one-time deposit and monthly rent – no hefty entrance fees.
- Paying less than assisted living prices – and continuing to live together as a couple.
- Local telephone, Internet, cable TV and utilities are included.
- Enjoy top-quality care, in the Willow Brook tradition.



Sheila Murphy, Peg Simone, Teena Haycock, Gert Tory, Betty Gray, Diane Nelson, and Genevieve Peterson brought several prayer shawls to the Stitch, Piece and Purl room recently for a photo.

### Encircled in Warm and Loving Care

Almost as soon as the first residents moved into Delaware Run, a talented group of textile artists found a meaningful way to care for one another in their new community. The women, all knitters, began creating prayer shawls for neighbors who were sick. They expanded into quilts, and now more than a dozen handicrafters create a breathtaking array of shawls in amazing colors, sharing with their neighbors a soft comfort wrapped in love.



## Staffers Honored for Walking the Second Mile

Every year, residents, families, and staff members have an opportunity to recognize a Willow Brook employee for, as proscribed in the Gospel of Matthew, going the second mile to help others.

Nominations are submitted and a committee of previous awardees selects a winner from each campus for the Second Mile Award. The honorees are announced at the staff Christmas party every year.

The most recent recipients of the award were nurse aide Amber Rose, from Willow Brook Christian Home; wellness nurse Carol Roden, from Willow Brook Christian Village; and Heidi Reed, assisted living director from Willow Brook at Delaware Run. If you have met any of the winners, you know exactly why they received the coveted award: their desire to go beyond the expected in service to the residents is limitless.

Our congratulations and appreciation to each of them.



Second Mile Award recipients Amber Rose, Carol Roden, and Heidi Reed



Springtime at The Village

Dogwoods are blooming in white and pink, and clusters of our "antique" redbuds abound at Willow Brook Christian Village this spring.



Willow Brook's 2014 LeadingAge Stars are: LPN Trevor Simonson, WBCV; housekeeper Deana Jones, WBCV; nurse aide Michele Karns, WBCH; housekeeper Eileen Wesley, WBDR; aide Darlene Stover, WBDR; housekeeper Pam Howard, WBCH; and aide Menchie Iballar, WBCH. Village server Brenda Davenport-Lilly and Delaware Run server Nathan Hornsby are not pictured.

## The Stars of 2014

Another set of nominations are solicited each year to honor direct caregivers for the the LeadingAge Stars recognition. LeadingAge Ohio, our association of not-for-profit housing and healthcare providers for older Ohioans, treats winners to lunch and accolades somewhere special every year. We're proud of the folks who make our mission *their* mission in service to Willow Brook residents.

## Good News just Keeps on Coming

Willow Brook continues to receive hard-earned accolades from all directions.

- This winter, both of our nursing homes – Willow Brook Christian Home and Cherith at Willow Brook Christian Village – were named in the *U.S. News & World Report's* "Best Nursing Homes" list for the second year running.
- The results of the Ohio Department of Aging's resident satisfaction survey are in, and all five of Willow Brook's healthcare centers fared well in response to the questions, "Do you like living here?" and "Would you recommend this facility?" Our scores ranged from 94% to 96.9%, compared to a statewide average of 87.1%. Willow Brook Christian Home even made the golden "Top 25" list, from among 940 nursing homes, for the second consecutive year.
- Both of our nursing homes are rated "5 Star" (the highest) by the federal government. Only about 20 percent of nursing homes nationwide earn the 5-Star rating.
- This winter, Cherith Care Center was selected by the Ohio Department of Health as a training site for new nursing home surveyors. For about a week, four trainees and two trainers had Cherith under a microscope so the newbies could learn the fine art of nursing home inspection. We consider this a high honor to have been deemed appropriate for their training site.
- This spring, Cherith earned a deficiency-free report from its surprise annual inspection by the Ohio Department of Health. In the past few years, all five healthcare centers have received perfect or near-perfect reports, an almost unheard-of record.



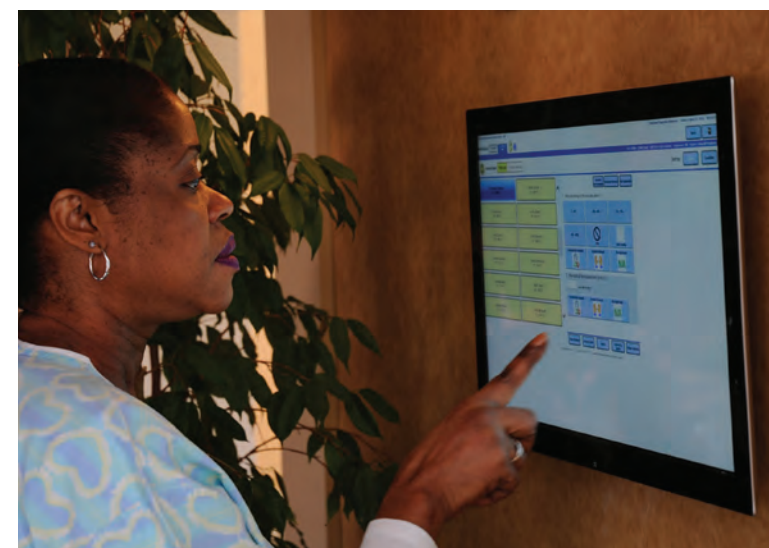
Nurse April Jackson enters information on assisted living resident Mike Chakeres, at Willow Brook Christian Home, using a laptop computer – a new experience for both.

## E-revolution Sweeps Willow Brook

Willow Brook's five healthcare centers are converting medical charts from paper to digital format. Nurses, aides, and other direct-care personnel can be seen tapping iPads and wall-mounted touch screens as they enter information related to resident care.

"The new electronic records will facilitate record storage, analysis, and exchange of information with doctors and pharmacies," says Kellie Korpieski, director of nursing at Willow Brook Christian Home. "I am happy with the way my nurses and aides are embracing the new technology."

New computer replacement systems also have been installed recently in the accounting department, human resources and admissions offices. Says CEO Larry Harris, "We are undergoing nothing short of an e-revolution throughout the Willow Brook ministry. Few departments and personnel are untouched, and I am proud of the positive can-do spirits of most every staff member. These positive attitudes have made a difficult process much easier."



Nursing assistant Hyacinta Simmons taps in information on a resident record, using one of the new touch-screen kiosks at The Home.



# To Honor and Remember

## Memorial Contributions

through April 18, 2014

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George & Gail Wylie

**Margaret R. Wylie**  
George & Gail Wylie

*The background photo is presented in memory of Marie Elkins, former resident of Willow Brook Christian Home.*



### Gifts were made to honor:

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Mary Jean Roach

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Teresa J. Ryan

**Elizabeth K. "Bebe" Conant**  
Anson S. Knoderer

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Corinne D. Esau

**Mary Jean Roach**  
Marla M. Campbell

**Warren Shively**  
Corinne D. Esau



*Irene Blaszkowiak models an apron from The Global Mamas, who are batikers and seamstresses from Ghana, and shows a handmade wooden bowl from Nicaragua.*

## Fair Trade Highlighted at Style Show

A standing-room-only crowd filled the Summit Room of Willow Brook at Delaware Run for a luncheon and style show featuring funky fashions and accessories from the Global Village Collection. Global Village is Delaware's not-for-profit fair trade store.

The event was an opportunity to learn about fair trade while enjoying a delicious meal and delightful company. Proceeds of the event supported Global Village.

Fair trade stores commit to assuring that their global partners pay a fair wage, educate their children and refrain from using child labor. They also must employ sustainable farming methods and support their communities.

Fair trade items from the Global Village Collection will be on sale at the Market at Café 100 when it opens in Willow Brook at Delaware Run on May 27.

