

The Big Rock

Nicknamed the “Big Rock” by local historian Brent Carson, the outsized boulder on the campus of Willow Brook at Delaware Run always attracts attention. Carson, whose family owned this land before it was sold to create the Delaware Run campus, tells us the boulder likely rolled here from Canada during the last ice age.

Now in a natural wooded setting, the Big Rock was surrounded by cow pasture for much of the recent past. The Big Rock has a long history of being loved and revered. “We all climbed it and often gathered around it...and for us kids, many a campout complete with countless stories centered around it,” says Carson. The Big Rock is very special to Willow Brook, and like Carson, we often wonder how many Native Americans also held it as sacred ground.

Resident JoEllen Smith’s grandson, Josiah Smith, conquers the giant boulder on the grounds of Willow Brook at Delaware Run.

Photo by JoEllen Smith

Memories

Light the corners of my mind

Misty watercolor memories

Of the way we were

Marvin Hamlich
1944-2012

Come January, I'm going to lift my foot off the accelerator and coast through the lobby right up to the door, and take my final exit. Yep, Janet and I are retiring. I gave my board a heads up last February, the year's notice I had promised.

Janet and I actually were mulling retirement a couple of years ago, but Willow Brook was clenched in a furious war with Covid. For a while it seemed we were losing. People were dying. We had things locked down tight with residents holed up in their apartments, as if doing hard time in solitary confinement. At one point it seemed we might run out of PPE, leaving frontline teams defenseless against the raging virus. We scoured the planet for protective gowns, gloves and face masks and wound up getting them airlifted in from China, of all places.

I will tell you straight up, the Covid invasion has been the worst time of my 47-year career, bar none. My staff members were falling ill left and right; residents were dying without funerals – their families feared mourners could take sick or even die.

No way could I have dumped all that in the lap of an unseasoned successor.

January is creeping up. I will have logged 48 years by then. This ministry has been my life's work since 1975. I started out as a child of 25, and Willow Brook and I just sort of grew up together. I began as administrator of little Willow Brook Christian Home when it was only 25 beds, and we had just 25 folks on staff. Today we have 500. That little nursing home was all of 6,500 square feet. Today we have 684,000 under roof. My starting salary was a third of what we pay a nursing assistant today. Let's face it, even considering inflation, the board got a deal when they hired me, if I do say so myself.

Willow Brook has blossomed into a ministry that is nothing short of astounding. I have to confess, I don't put much stock in "marketing" or "branding." I don't pay a whole lot of attention to what our "competitors" are

doing. In fact, I'm going to let you in on a little secret – all that corporate mumbo jumbo I hear in continuing education sessions each time I go to a convention kinda bores me. But I have always maintained a laser focus on finding answers to two basic questions: How can we best serve our residents, and how can I best serve my 500 team members? I believe that if I/we keep our undivided attention there, the results will be... well, what we have – Willow Brook!

Just because I am retiring, it doesn't mean I won't be around. Janet and I are planning to stay right here in Central Ohio. Some were predicting we would head off for Vermont. After all, we visit there a couple times each year. Not a chance. Our family and friends are here. Our church is here. We have lived here since the start of forever.

That's all there is to say

by Larry Harris, CEO

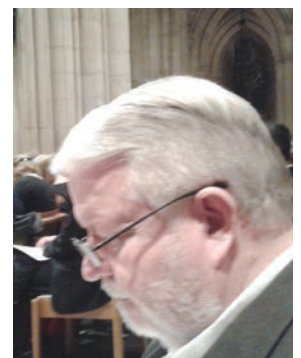
And while we do love Vermont, I have learned that what you immerse yourself in, you soon take for granted. Here is where we belong.

So Janet and I plan to continue with our little Willow Brook dinners each week where we invite small groups of residents to join us in one of our restaurants. We have been doing this once a week for 15 years (minus two that Covid stole from us), and plan to continue. We'll be showing up for some of Willow Brook's special events. And I'm telling you now, if we don't get an invitation to our legendary staff Christmas parties, we will crash them.

I approach retirement with deep competing emotions. I am looking forward to more time with Janet and our family (including a precious little granddaughter). I am looking forward to more travels with Janet (if we can afford the gas and soaring plane fares!). I am looking forward to more time with our backyard animals (Janet and I have been growing a little woods there for 14 years.) I am looking forward to reading books I have been buying compulsively for years, with each waiting patiently on its assigned bookshelf.

But I will miss everybody here so much – my residents and team members I have served for nearly five decades. And my board – the 18 volunteers who serve this ministry free of pay and thanks. I will miss everyone so much, and that's all there is to say.

Larry Harris, CEO
lharris@willow-brook.org



Excerpt from *Take time to cherish every birthday*

by Adam Metz, Chaplain



Last month, Eva Mireles was spending one of the last days of school with the fourth-grade students she had been teaching all year. Eva had one more birthday than I had, but it turned out her previous birthday was her last. On “Footloose and Fancy” day at school, Eva was murdered in cold blood by an 18-year-old young man who had brought a legally purchased war machine (a DDM4 AR-15-style rifle) and countless rounds of ammunition into an elementary school and ripped apart the body of Eva as well as 19 students who called her Mrs. Mireles.

There are 19 children and two teachers

who will never celebrate another birthday. Some of them never made it to double digits. None of them got to be teenagers. None of them ever got their drivers license. None of them ever registered to vote. Two teachers didn’t even make it to half the number of birthdays our Willow Brook residents have. Twenty-one lives reduced to could-have-beens and we’ll-never-knows.

I understand the politics of guns is notoriously complex. I understand most gunowners are sensible and not violent. I understand the 2nd Amendment played a foundational role in our nation’s formation. I also

understand my children have grown up in a society where weapons like this have been used to murder children and teachers and concert attendees and movie theater patrons across the country. I understand that we have accepted conducting active shooting drills at schools as completely normal.

The generation with whom I work at Willow Brook were shaped by names and places like Pearl Harbor, Normandy, Hamburger Hill, and Saigon, but my children have exchanged those names for Sandy Hook, Stoneman Douglas, Sutherland Springs, and now Uvalde.

It is impossible to quantify the trauma these events are inflicting on our children.

I’m a chaplain, not a politician nor a lawyer. I’m well-versed in the Bible, not the law. I won’t speak to the 2nd Amendment or the right to defend yourself or increased background checks or red flag laws. I will speak to, however, those in our community who wear the name of Christ. It is time to reacquaint yourself with our Scriptures. Jesus was called the Prince of Peace. He told Peter to put down his sword. He proclaimed,

Jesus was called the Prince of Peace. He told Peter to put down his sword.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” He came in the tradition of the prophets who envisioned a day when swords

would be beaten into ploughshares. He taught that there was no greater love than someone who lays down his life for someone – not who protects him with his weapons.

This message is not tertiary, and these are not obscure references. While the law may be infinitely complicated on the matter of killing, the Christian Scriptures are not. As Christians, if we find ourselves arguing strongly for more weapons, more guns, and the right to defend ourselves, we are not doing so on the basis of anything Jesus ever taught.

This is an excerpt from Adam’s editorial published in the Delaware Gazette on June 10, 2022. Printed with permission.

Willow Brook’s 50 Years

In celebration of Willow Brook’s 50 year anniversary, we had a presentation and panel discussion with five Willow Brook “old timers”: founding trustee Leroy Bumpus (board member 1972-present), Margaret Dronsfield (director of nursing at The Home 1972-1990), Lucretia Wellman (on staff 1974-2020), David Chappell (Executive Director of Willow Brook Christian Home and son of founding trustee, Frank Chappell), and Larry Harris (CEO).



David Chappell was also part of the Willow Brook “old timer” panelists.

Photo taken at the Willow Brook Board Retreat. We had a special 50th anniversary presentation and panel discussion with five Willow Brook “old timers.” Pictured left to right: Leroy Bumpus, Margaret Dronsfield, and Lucretia Wellman.

Tribute Gifts Memorial Contributions

February 25, 2022 – June 5, 2022

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birthday**
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Shirley Brush
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Corinne D. Esau
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Dave Wright continued...
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Willow Brook Christian Village
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Delaware, Ohio 43015
Phone: 740-369-0048

Willow Brook at Delaware Run
100 Delaware Crossing West
Delaware, Ohio 43015
Phone: 740-201-5640

- *Independent Living*
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- *Adult Day Program*

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Photo of Gallant Farm, summer 2022. Photo by Christina Dresdow, social media coordinator at Willow Brook.



Charlotte Gallant, high school graduation photo, circa 1935.

Remembering Charlotte Gallant

This past winter, Willow Brook Christian Village and the Delaware County community lost a beloved woman, Charlotte Gallant. Charlotte died peacefully on January 18, at the age of 104. She was a kind, soft spoken, and wise woman; influential within the Delaware community through not only her work as a librarian, but also her work with Delaware's Preservation Parks system.

If you live in Delaware County, the name Gallant is probably familiar to you because of Gallant Woods Preserve and Gallant Farm, both a part of the Preservation Parks system. In 1997, Charlotte donated 83 acres of land to Preservation Parks - the land that had once been her grandparents'

farm. She donated the land to save it from development, but also held a hope that it would one day be used to teach children (and adults) about farms and nature.

Charlotte became a dedicated volunteer of the Preservation Parks system and was always very involved in the work done at Gallant Farm and Gallant Woods. Today, the Gallant farm house living-history museum holds many old furnishings and fixtures of Charlotte's childhood home on Liberty Street in downtown Delaware.

Charlotte leaves behind a legacy that will be remembered forever through her generous giving, and here at Willow Brook, we miss her dearly, as well as the stories of the "farm" and her time spent there as a young girl.



Ukraine Relief Bake Sale

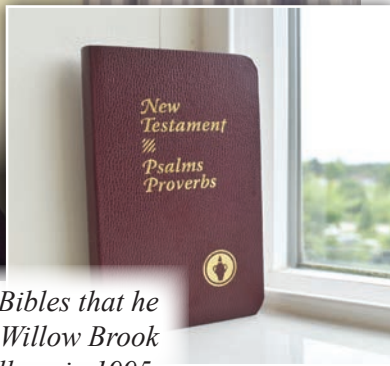
Led by Chef Bob Keen and resident Mary Zaye, Willow Brook Christian Village residents and staff were able to raise \$1,745 in relief funds, through Lutheran Social Services, for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine who are suffering in the war. Please continue to join us in prayer for them and our world.



Willow Brook Christian Village residents check out the baked goods (yellow & blue in honor of the Ukrainian flag) at the bake sale to raise money for Ukraine relief. willow-brook.org 5



Ken Stanfill, resident of Willow Brook Christian Home, chuckles as he recalls a humorous story.



One of Ken's Gideon Bibles that he placed in each room at Willow Brook Christian Village in 1995.

Veteran Storyteller

by Cathy Courtice, Director of Community Relations

Ken Stanfill first stepped foot in a Willow Brook community nearly 30 years ago. He had come as a member of the Gideons International to ask CEO Larry Harris if he could distribute Bibles at the newly-opened Willow Brook Christian Village. Larry agreed, the Bibles were placed, and life went on.

As fate would have it, this spring Larry was joining a group of Willow Brook leaders for a tour of Willow Brook Christian Home. As he passed by a group of men chatting after lunch, he heard, "Mr. Harris!"

It was none other than Ken, a new resident of the Home since March 2022. The two had a delightful reunion, remembering their first meeting from all those years before. Larry, always one to sense a good story, encouraged me to meet with Ken to catch up on those missing years, and I readily agreed.

A couple weeks later, I am in Ken's apartment. Our first topic of discussion is the family photo collage at his desk. As he tells me about each picture and loved one, he pauses to hand me the obituary of his late wife, Barbara, ("my angel"), who passed away in May 2021. We are silent for a moment as his eyes become misty.

Another shelf on his desk holds various military badges and awards and a prized Korean War

His eyes well up with tears as he remembers his comrades and his interpreter, whom he knew only as "Junior." Ken tells me that Junior saved his life twice.

baseball cap. Ken's emotions are written all over his face as he shares with me his experiences in the war. His company lost half its 158 men on the Chinese border. His eyes well up with tears as he remembers his comrades and his interpreter, whom he knew only as "Junior." Ken tells me that Junior saved his life twice. "I loved that man," he says.

Ken then leads me to an elaborately enameled box containing a scrapbook that Junior made for him. His hands and voice shake as he pages through the book, recalling stories and memories of his great friend Junior. Because he knew him only as "Junior," Ken has never been able to find out what

became of his friend after the war, and this weighs heavy on his heart.

Plastered on Ken's walls are framed awards and legislative commendations. As it turns out, Ken played a critical role in bringing industrial technology to Ohio. He taught engineering and design development for many years at Western Michigan University, coming back to Ohio after then-Governor James Rhodes allocated funds to create vocational schools in the state. Ken then dedicated his life to designing and building vocational schools throughout the country, including the Delaware Joint Vocational School, which we now know as Delaware Area Career Center (DACC).

Two well-spent hours later, I reflect on the importance of telling one's stories, and the privilege, too, of truly hearing them. Thanks, Ken.

A page from the scrapbook made for Ken by Junior; his interpreter during the Korean War (pictured, Ken in his uniform).



CONGRATULATIONS!



Line cook at Willow Brook Christian Village, Evan Rosario (pictured in the gold), receives a gold medal at the State level in the Skills USA Culinary Competition.

Pictured above, Evan Rosario, receiving a gold medal at the State level “Skills USA Culinary Competition” held in Mitchell Hall at Columbus State Community College. Evan is one of our line cooks at Willow Brook Christian Village. He is a student in the culinary program at the Delaware Area Career Center (DACC). This award is a prestigious one, and it is probable he will be invited to compete at the national level now. Congratulations, Evan!



Evan Rosario poses at The Courtyard Restaurant at Willow Brook Christian Village, in his bright red chef's coat, worn by line cooks on Pizza Night.



Willow Brook Christian Home's new activities director, Christy Turner (R), and new assistant activities director, Chris Cerminara, discuss the calendar of events.

New Activity Staff at The Home

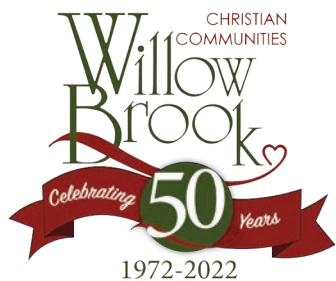
We are pleased to announce that after many years of serving as the assistant director of activities (and 25 years of working at Willow Brook), Christy Turner has stepped into the director of activities role at Willow Brook Christian Home. Chris Cerminara, formerly a server at Willow Brook Christian Village for eight years, has moved into Christy's former assistant role. Congratulations, Christy and Chris!

Reflections

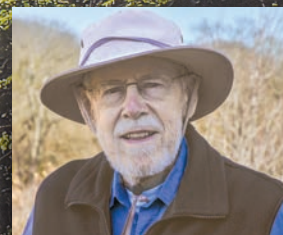
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*The walking path at
Willow Brook at
Delaware Run.
Photo by resident
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