



Kellie's heroes. The Home's director of nursing Kellie Korpieski (front) and some of the workers who rose to the COVID invasion this spring. They are (from the left) Pauline Gilliam-Brewu, Isha Kamara, Jim Korpieski, Mary Waruiru, and Kristen Waby. We are grateful to all staff who put residents' welfare above their own safety. We will be forever in debt to these angels.

A Message from the CEO

We have made an uneasy peace with the coronavirus. After suffering a withering invasion at Willow Brook Christian Home this spring, all three of our communities are free of the microbes, thanks to aggressive defensive measures. At our healthcare centers and main buildings on each campus, everyone entering is screened (including a temperature check); masks are required to be worn by all; we practice safe distancing in gatherings; and both staff and residents are tested regularly.

These protective steps are our only defense until an effective vaccine is developed and deployed. So far they are working.

More than 40 percent of the nation's 200,000 COVID-19 deaths are linked to nursing homes and assisted living centers. Those who have come to live with us, along with their families, are counting on us. I accept their faith in us as a sacred trust, and we are doing our absolute best to honor that trust.

Larry Harris, CEO

You know what the great thing about babies is?
They are like little bundles of hope.
Like the future in a basket.

Lish McBride, American author

Janet and I have two cats. One is Nicholas, a big squishy indoor feline who all but owns our house. His name isn't on the deed, but you'd be forgiven for thinking it is. He and I argue every evening over a recliner in the family room. It always comes down to squatter's rights. Who got there first? If it was him, I wouldn't think of evicting him. I will confess, though, that I have been known to sometimes trick him out of the chair by going to the kitchen and shaking his food bag. He falls for it every time. He leaps out and comes dashing to his dish, thinking it was his idea.

I always jiggle out a few pellets for him, just so he won't think me cruel. Then, with him preoccupied, I rush to a pre-warmed La-Z-Boy and flip on the talking heads, leaving the kitty on his own to find an alternate napping venue. He really has never complained, but I confess I always feel a pang of guilt.

Our second cat is a little stray that adopted us last October (or did we adopt *him* – I forget). We are guessing he was

dumped by someone who was tired of cats. I don't know about you, but I hope there is a hot place in hades waiting for those heartless souls.

We fed him on the front porch that first chilly night. We just couldn't help ourselves, and of course he was ours from then to the end of time. So we picked up a little heated kitty house that kept him warm as toast all winter. We fattened him up, and now he's captain of our porch. His name is BJ – short for Ben and Jerry's. His coat is white with black splotches, like a Ben and Jerry's cow.

Both cats are living pampered lives on our nickel, without a care. I am thinking how nice that must be. They know nothing of COVID-19, and all the fear,

anxiety, and heartbreak it has thrust upon us. They don't fool with a facemask or paw washing, and they pay no heed to safe distancing.

Yes, it must be nice.

Someday, after we have shaken off these vexing bugs, we'll look back on these troubling times and wonder how we ever tiptoed through all the landmines. For sure, there will be legions who will have hit one. Already there have been 200,000 American funerals, with many more to come before

they sound the all clear. If we get through, we will forever look back on these days as a crazy, unnerving dream.

For my family, though, this pandemic hasn't been

total nonstop angst. We were granted a respite in August when Janet and I became first-time grandparents. Our third-born child, Stephen, and his wife, Kristin, presented us with grandbaby Ora Rose. Her glorious entrance into our family was a burst of dazzling light in these dark, dispiriting days.

With this wretched virus still raging, Janet and I will be denied a grandparent's pleasure of holding and loving up on that little child, and her mommy and daddy. There will be no touching until we wake from

this nightmare. We are safe-distance visiting a lot. Who knows how long it will be until we are able to cradle that child in our waiting arms. For the sake of our angel Ora, we will

follow the virus rules as long as we must.

I am shaking my fist at these malevolent microbes!

Looking into her sweet sleeping face, we come to see that little Ora Rose, like our cats Nicholas and BJ, is completely oblivious to the pandemic storm howling around her. Sleep baby, sleep. One day we will tell you of this scary world you were born into, and how you were wrapped, safe and protected, in a cocoon of love.

A Cocoon of Love

by Larry Harris, CEO

**Someday, after we have shaken off
these vexing bugs, we'll look back on
these troubling times and wonder
how we ever tiptoed through
all the landmines.**

Larry Harris, CEO
lharris@willow-brook.org

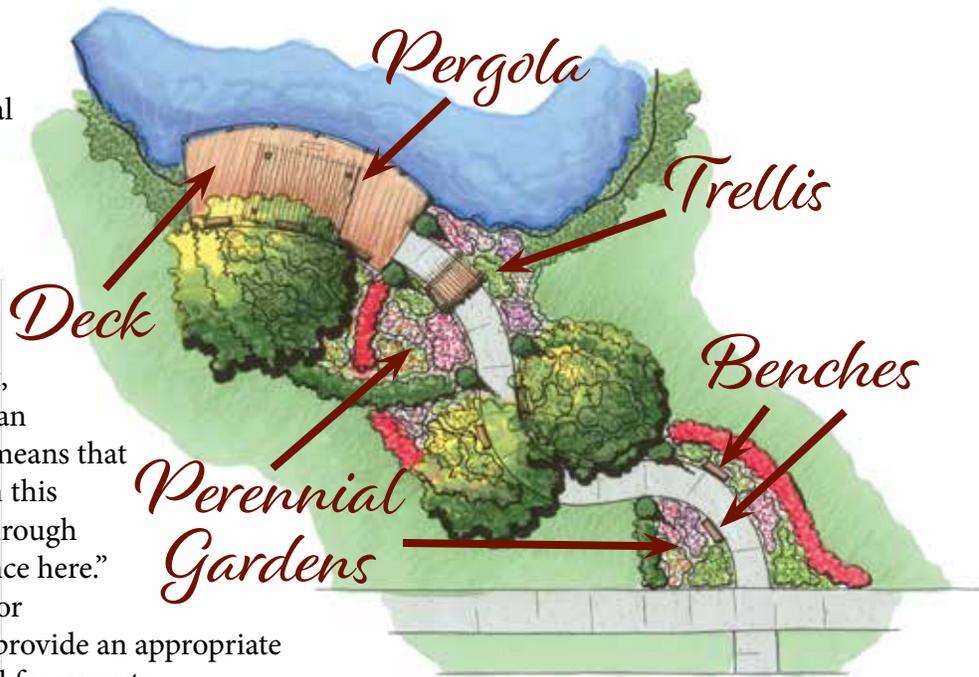


The Blaine-Ankney Memorial Garden

Construction has started on a memorial garden at Willow Brook at Delaware Run, where cremated remains can be scattered. The garden is named the Blaine-Ankney Memorial Garden thanks to a generous donation from Delaware Run residents Lynn and George Ankney.

Bill McCartney, Delaware Run resident, noted, "This beautiful garden will become an inspiring place for quiet reflection. It also means that after spending the final years of our lives in this remarkable community, we may choose, through scattering ashes, to have an ongoing presence here."

McCartney is leading the fundraising for the garden. "By donating, you can help us provide an appropriate remembrance for so many people, now and for years to come," he said. Contact 740-201-5640 for information.



Ashley Leahy
The Village



Ann Tyler
Delaware Run



Allyson Woods
The Home

We are proud to announce our 2020 Gift of Love winners. This award is presented annually to a volunteer at each campus who provides loving service to our residents and to the community.

Ashley Leahy is the Village winner. Ashley has volunteered in Willow Brook by Day, the adult day program at the Village, for eight years and has tallied 5,000 hours of service.

Ann Tyler took the honors at Delaware Run, where she is a resident. Tyler leads food drives for People in Need, a local food bank, and helps her

Gift of Love Award Winners

fellow residents by taking them to appointments, running errands and visiting people.

Allyson Woods of Accent Draperies won for The Home. This Central Ohio company made hundreds of masks for Willow Brook during COVID-19. At a time when masks were in short supply, Woods arrived with these lifesaving donations to protect our residents and employees.

All of these winners light up our lives at Willow Brook. Thank you!

Tribute Gifts

Memorial Contributions

June 3 – August 27, 2020

Robert Allman

Uleta M. Allman

Richard C. Atkinson

Carol A. Roden

Marion & Anita Blaszkowiak

Irene C. Blaszkowiak

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Frank DeWitt continued

Clyde Gosnell & Louise

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Keye & Cathy Simpkins

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Dianne L. Almendinger

Tim Flahive

Dianne L. Almendinger

Ardina “Dena” Guglielmo

John Nincehelser

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George & Dianne Shaffer

Edward & Gail Ullinger

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Jack & Shirley Baker

Audrey & Alberta Harris

Larry & Janet Harris

John T. Hayes

Karen S. Hayes

Marcia Heurman

Thomas & Vickie Andres

James & Pauline Kossow

Harry Humes (In honor of his birthday)

Corinne D. Esau

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Mitchell & Dyana Welch

Betty Leslie

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Thomas & Sara Poulson

Gene & Emma “Maude” Prince

Larry & Janet Harris

Rebecca L. Harris

William Reidenbach

Dianne L. Almendinger

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Nanci Gregg

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Mary C. Roden

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William Wilson

Uleta M. Allman

Nicki V. Zanetos

Lisa Mack

Tribute Gift
made to honor the living
Pauline Kaple's 100th birthday
Donald & Katherine Santos

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Delaware, Ohio 43015

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Willow Brook at Delaware Run

100 Delaware Crossing West

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An Uppermost Room

by John Brinkerhoff, Delaware Run Resident

Every evening the poet ascends his mountain
from a base camp near the foyer.
He is alone and infirm now,
evidence of a successfully self-destructive nature.
He requires rich air for the climb
and rest at every turn.

After gathering strength at the bottom of the slope,
the poet lugs his oxygen tank up the first step
then the next
and the next,
twelve in all
to the first landing.

His vision had by then tunneled inward,
daring a falter to show itself,
but he is released on level ground
to collapse onto a chair he has left there.

He pants for awhile as his enfeebled lungs
labor to repay their debt to his effort.
No one can suppose the proceedings
of the poet's mind, but certainly
reflection and study are at work
on recollections from a life of leaf-broken light,
darkness and brilliance inseparable,
that sought to dapple every cleft and mound and
river and road
under the sun;
not to conquer them, not to conquer—
but to extract the meaning of them,
which he refined with his own fire and poured out
as talismans and mythic totems
made of words.
Onward.

Stubborn resolve prods him to his feet.
The poet plods to landing two
where he again bends himself into a waiting chair
for further introspection and recasting.
Perhaps a word or two or three will emerge
that demand to be remembered in the morning,
or perhaps he will discover that he has lost hope
by finding regret among them.

He is near rooms—bedrooms, office, bathroom—
but the poet will not stop here.
He will move on, up one more flight, to the summit,
to a space below the roof,
and a bed beneath a skylight.

In the company of books at attention on low shelves,
the poet rests his head on a pillow,
against a flimsy fan of long white hair.
His breathing slows as he contemplates the night sky,
closer here, above the obfuscation of trees,
where darkness and brilliance are inseparable,
while,
with the compassionate embrace of motherhood,
all of spangled creation
watches over him.



Our "poet laureate" John Brinkerhoff lives with his wife, Jan, at Willow Brook at Delaware Run. His inspired writings have become a staple in Reflections. He learned this summer that he has

stage-four lung cancer, and has begun a regimen of chemotherapy. Our poet knows his odds are long, yet he has risen mightily to the challenge. An Uppermost Room, his most recent creation, was written before his diagnosis, yet seems to speak to his condition. Be strong, John. We are rooting for you!

COVID Times

Times are challenging for Willow Brook and other senior living communities due to COVID-19. But we're committed to keeping our residents and staff safe. Here's an update on our key initiatives.

Testing

When COVID-19 first hit our nation six months ago, it was close to impossible to get access to tests for the virus. Recently, though, the Ohio Department of Health has greatly increased efforts to test employees and residents of long-term care facilities. Near-universal testing now takes place every two weeks or so.

But the program has not been without problems. This summer, testing of residents and staff at one of our assisted living facilities showed 25 positive cases. Yet not one was exhibiting symptoms. We re-tested by another method and found all 25 to be false positives. The state has suspended testing in all 760 assisted livings until it can ensure the integrity of the tests.

We are strong advocates for reliable testing and quick results.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment, which includes masks, gowns, gloves and face shields, is essential for



Photo: Jim Schrock

Resident town meetings at Delaware Run took place in smaller groups with social distancing and masks to keep everyone safe and informed.

healthcare workers grappling with infectious diseases. Six months ago, America's healthcare institutions were caught off guard as they came under COVID-19 attack. Stocks of PPE began running low. Suppliers often were unable to keep up with demand.

This was the case at Willow Brook last spring. We never actually ran out, but inventories were dwindling. We since have undertaken a massive effort to acquire supplies from far corners of the globe. Some suppliers, sensing an opportunity for fast profits, jacked up prices – sometimes six or eight times pre-COVID levels. Our commitment to inventory procurement has been costly, but successful. We are much better prepared today than six months ago.

Activities and Visits for Residents

Humans are social beings. So it was especially hurtful last spring as the virus was sweeping the nation that senior living communities coast-to-coast closed down group activities, family visits and communal meals. Residents suffered emotionally as loneliness and boredom took their tolls. We have been able to carefully and safely resume activities such as Bible studies, exercise, art, bingo and music. We make sure everyone is spaced six feet apart and wears a mask. And thanks to the nice weather, we've held outdoor musical performances and in-person family visits.

We are adapting to the new COVID reality, and living for the day when an effective vaccine is available.



LPN Paula Flora tests Sally Russell, aide, at Willow Brook Christian Home

I don't recognize me!

A resident said that to me one day when I asked if she'd like to FaceTime with her family.

It was one of many invitations to help her connect with her family, during the early days of our COVID-19 tuck-in.

And as usual, she declined.

This time I sat on the floor in front of her and let my body language tell her that I wanted to give her time ... time to share her thoughts.

Then I asked her why she didn't want to connect with those she loves most.

She said she wanted desperately to see her family, even if it must be through technology.

"I don't recognize me!"

by Connie McNeal

But as tears filled her eyes, she told me how embarrassed she was being seen by others: by the staff, her resident friends, "even those who don't like me!"

As she laughed at her own joke, the tears remained. "When I look in the mirror, I don't recognize me!" So I asked: What has changed, and how can I help? It took only moments for her to share what was deepest on her heart.

The mask! She said she didn't mind wearing it. She fully understood its purpose and importance. But it muffled the voices of those around her and made her feel distant.

And her hair!

The weekly salon visit was not only an enjoyable social event, but it maintained her appearance in the way that kept her confidence anchored.

As she shared, there were many jokes about the "wild hair" above the strange mask. We laughed! I left!

But I knew in that moment that our activities game plan was not just finding a way to play bingo with disposable equipment. Our team needed to help our residents recognize themselves again.

Our staff had already begun sharing their hidden talents. Who knew that some of our nurses were also hair stylists in earlier years? Or that many were willing to come in

on their free time to provide nail care?

Our portable sound system was placed in a rolling cart.

Yes, it makes all of our activity programs LOUD!

But it enables all to hear those who are speaking, overriding the muffling impact of our masks.

Staff-swapping has become a regular weekly plan. We feel less trapped by virus restrictions and enjoy finding way to "up our game."

It's working! We have a long way to go. And I'm guessing we'll have lots of time to try new ideas. But our residents are enjoying safe family visits. Laughter is with us daily.

Folks seem to be recognizing themselves once again.

"Our team needed to help our residents recognize themselves again."



*Connie McNeal,
Village activities director*

Reflections

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Delaware, Ohio 43015

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*Come walk with me in autumn woods,
Where October sun makes golden our lives.*

Resident Coe Huckabee
Willow Brook Christian Village

Willow Brook Christian Village housekeepers
Laura Lawrence, Pam Staton, and Soma Edemokula
take a break on the Village walking trail.