



Corporate director of culinary services, John Lindeboom (top), casting his net to save the fish from the draining pond at The Village. Jake Schuman (right), maintenance, releases a large catfish to its new home at the Delaware Run pond.



The Great Village Fish Rescue

By the time this newsletter reaches you, the pond at Willow Brook Christian Village will be dry as a bone. That's right, drained to the bottom, to facilitate the repair of an important structural column that holds up part of the Village Commons Apartments. The only way this project was going to go forward is if our CEO Larry Harris could minimize the loss of fish from the pond—and thus, The Great Village Fish Rescue was born.

A true team effort, the thousands of fish rescued were safely re-homed at both Willow Brook at Delaware Run and a private pond. The Village is just not the same without the pond and our aquatic friends, so look for a happy update in our next issue.

“Some people talk to animals. Not many listen though. That’s the problem.”

A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh

The three Willow Brooks are absolutely jam-packed with life. Four-legged, two-legged, double-winged, furry, feathery, hoofed, slithery, scaled and all manner of leafy green. The woods and meadows and ponds of our 86 rolling acres host many thousands of specimens native to the Upper Midwest.

Hike the woods or rest by the water and you are all but assured of sightings – deer putting on for the camera, demure red-winged blackbirds lying low in the cattails, a little mallard family plying the water.

Canada geese will splash into our ponds each spring, hatch out their young’uns, run them through flight school, then take off with their brood for parts unknown. Thank goodness. I mean, we love our annual geese visits and all, but have you seen the mess they leave? Or stepped in it? We welcome a few each spring, but a year-round gaggle of 60 or 80 would be insufferable. I guess there really are some limits to my animal love after all.

But we do take seriously our assignment as custodians of these acres, knowing our time here is only a split moment in the unfolding epic tale of Planet Earth. We have planted thousands of trees and let them rise to undisturbed woodlands, trying as best we can to live in harmony with the flora and fauna that share these acres. I learned long ago that no lifeform is safe as long as there are humans lurking in the vicinity. We are the great destroyers and exploiters of all that is good and sacred. I am trying hard to break that stereotype at Willow Brook.

At our Willow Brook Christian Village, a sprawling community of homes, apartments and healthcare centers, there is a hidden pond about the span of a suburban McDonalds with attendant parking and picnic table seating – two or three acres in all – bounded by sheltering trees and three-story apartment wings. One of those wings bridges the water, supported by 13 concrete piers rising from the pond’s bottom.

Last winter we noticed some cracks in one of those supports. Concrete chunks actually had fallen into the water. Not good. A structural engineer warned

that repair was essential to maintain full support. To accomplish this, we would have to drain the pond so workers and machinery could move in Moses-like on a dry bed. Fair enough, but what about the fish? Twenty-three years ago we stocked the lake with seven species of aquatic creatures. They have had all those years to be fruitful and multiply, and establish a happy aquatic community beneath the water’s surface. Unless we undertook a massive rescue project, those gilled citizens of Willow Brook would be doomed.

Our corporate chef, John Lindeboom, a fisherman and lover of nature, stepped forward and volunteered to head up the mission. He recruited a first lieutenant, maintenance director Jeff McIntosh. Together they wrangled a team mostly from the ranks of our maintenance staff, and launched a campaign to save the fish. (See the story and photos on page 1.)

The plan called for draining the lake to three or so feet (normal depth is 15+), netting the fish and plunking them into 500-gallon aerated tubs on trailers, for transport to the lake at Willow Brook at

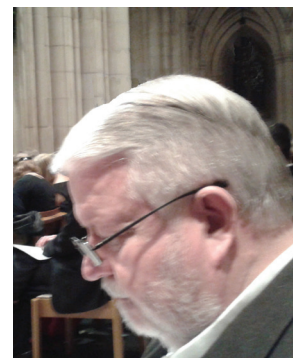
Delaware Run, our sister community across town. It was an inspiring, beautifully-coordinated project. Over a three-day period, the chef and his recruits saved upwards of two thousand catfish, bass, bluegill and a multitude of

others. Many were as long as your forearm.

Truth be told, we were returning some of those fish to their rightful home. Let me explain. Sixteen years prior, when we began construction of Delaware Run, we seined the fish from a farm pond on that site that was destined for destruction, and hauled them over to the pond at The Village. They now have been returned full circle. Chef Lindeboom oversaw that endeavor as well. We owe him a double thanks.

I believe all of God’s creatures are deserving of our respect and protection, including the lowly fish in our ponds. John and his team have done a good thing, and I am very grateful. Tubs of fish are grateful, too.

Larry Harris, CEO
lharris@willow-brook.org



Custodians

by Larry Harris, CEO

**...we do take seriously our
assignment as custodians of these
acres, knowing our time here is
only a split moment in the
unfolding epic tale of Planet Earth.**

Dispelling the Nursing Home Myth

When you hear the words “nursing home,” what comes to mind? Speaking honestly, perhaps you have heard they smell, are understaffed, or that the food is terrible. Sometimes these things are true, there is no getting around it. But we have a different experience to offer at Willow Brook Christian Home.

For years, Willow Brook Christian Home has been affectionately referred to as “The Home,” which is apt—it is impossible not to notice its home-like atmosphere. “The Home is a special place to many who walk through our doors,” says executive director David Chappell, who has served with Willow Brook for nearly 30 years. “Our job every day is to help our residents live to their fullest potential.” In many cases, that means a short-term stay, getting people rehabilitated from an illness, surgery, or other hospitalization, and ready to go back home. When that is not possible, The Home has assisted living and long-term skilled nursing care.



Resident Frank Thompkins sharing a laugh and a dance with aide Irene Lohre

stay, which is why we are so proud of our Five-Star rating. Twenty-three percent of nursing homes in the United States currently have a Five-Star rating by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The rating system looks at health inspections, staffing, and quality care measures before issuing a score ranging from one to five. The Home, as well as Willow Brook Christian Village's Cherith Care Center, has maintained this excellent rating almost continuously since the rating system began in 2007.

Dedicated, long-term staff are also essential to The Home's success. Activities Director Lora Detlor has worked at The Home for 23 years. She says, “During that time The Home has changed and grown. I have stayed because The Home feels like family. I've gotten to know the residents, some have been with us a very long time, and the families, and of course my co-workers. I have also learned so much from the residents: how to make noodles

by hand, homemade donuts, and chocolate sauerkraut cake (don't knock it till you try it—it really is good!). I have learned a lot about life and how to make do. One of the biggest blessings in my life has been to hear the stories shared by wise souls about the past, family, and just life.”

If you or a loved one ever needs a nursing home, Willow Brook Christian Home looks forward to serving you.



An intense game of Chicken Feet led by activity staff Tom Johnson with Carolyn Alcorn-Simpson (left) and Sue McGarvey.

The Home is the longest-operating of Willow Brook's three campuses, having been established in 1972. At 76 total units, it is also the smallest. This gives the staff the ability to take the time needed to develop authentic relationships with both residents and family members, whether they are staying two weeks or indefinitely.

Quality care is the most important factor when it comes to a rehabilitation, long-term, or assisted living

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William Warner
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WBCV Residents
Advisory Council
Evelyn Winter

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Barbara & Robert Kimball
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WILLOW BROOK CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

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Dementia and the Divine

by Bill McCartney, Resident of Delaware Run

My wife's long struggle with dementia (Judy's been in memory care at Delaware Run for over six years) has given me some intriguing insights into one's relationship to God. Over recent months, I've made two interesting observations.

The first relates to hymnody. Since Judy cannot speak or understand much, I spend most of my time with her by singing hymns. I started with our hymnal's opening hymn – and then sing the hymns that I can master. When time runs out, I put a paper clip at that page – and resume there my next visit. When we get to the last hymn, I start over.

This ritual means I've sung through our hymnal maybe 20 times since the memory unit re-opened after the COVID shutdown, allowing me to visit Judy in her room. I've discovered there are many hymns that I know well enough to sing. Of course, there also are a number I have trouble singing. If I can whistle the tune, maybe I find I can sing the less familiar hymns.

The significant realization, however, is how many of our hymns – including many I love – seem to be so self-centered. I've found a disproportionate number of hymns focused on making people "feel good." If that's so, it means too few hymns are calling us into service – be it of evangelistic zeal or social responsibility. It seems too few of the "beloved" hymns call for any kind of sacrifice from us – or even accountability about how we "love our neighbor as ourselves."

(The one hymn category to which I give a "pass" on this is the African-American spiritual. These hymns, birthed in times of slavery's endless privations, have an understandable emphasis on the joys of eternity, when they have "crossed the Jordan.")

My second discovery is personal. During my times with Judy, my overwhelming awareness is of my love for her – and my profound awareness of her generous love for me over our 66

years of marriage. In my time with her I can – and do – offer her my love by holding her hands, hugging and kissing her, and singing hymns.

However, there's so little she can offer me as any kind of loving response. (One exception, she's quick to pucker up to invite my kisses.) In other words, my love for her is "fueled," not by her loving responses, but my memory of her endless love for me since our courting days in 1954.

I realize how natural, how honest it was for my love for Judy to be energized not by what I wanted to receive from her – but by what I already had received from her. Suddenly I knew that's how and why we're to love God.

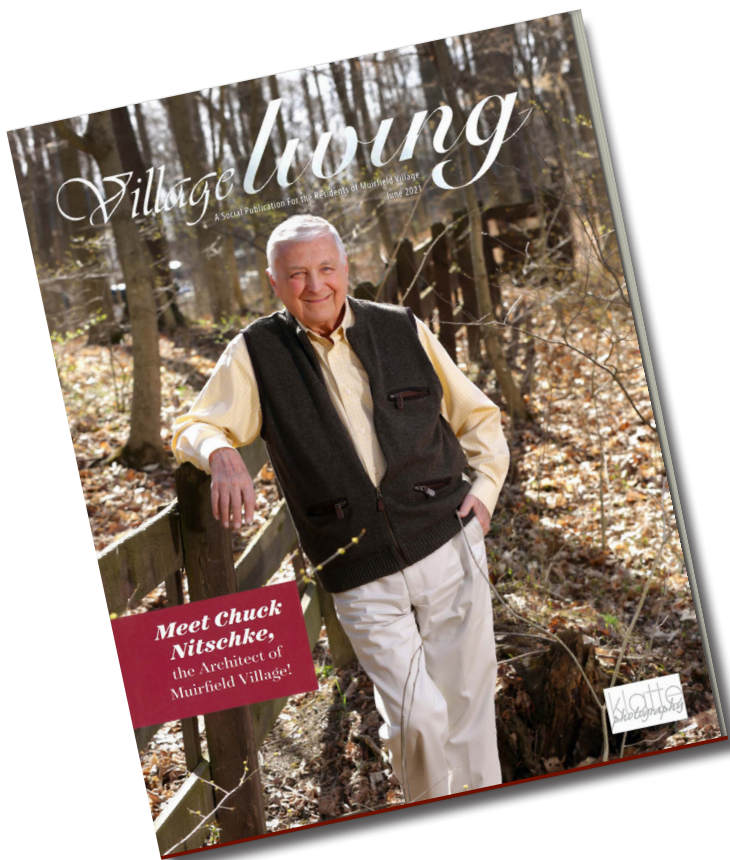
I'm not offended by those whose motivation for goodness is their hope for God's promised eternity. I'm delighted they take discipleship seriously. But maybe there's a more significant reason for loving God. Ultimately I'm convinced the primary reason for loving God – is because God first loved us!

Some of Jesus' words on this, found in the Sermon on the Mount, seem to disdain loving someone in hopes of getting a benefit for doing so. Our love for God is not a conditional thing, is not our offering in hope of future reward. Rather our love for God is an act of gratitude – for what God has already done for us.

“..to be energized not by what I wanted to receive from her – but by what I already had received from her.”



The author shares a special moment with Judy, his wife of 66 years.



Chuck Nitschke: A Grand Design

Did you know that Willow Brook is home to a legendary Columbus architect? Chuck Nitschke's renown precedes him, but you are unlikely to hear it from him. We recently sat down to talk with this thoughtful, humble man in our midst.

Columbus born and bred, Chuck earned a degree in architecture from The Ohio State University, then served in the Korean War. Once home, he began designing houses, banks, and churches before getting excited about city planning.

Chuck is perhaps best known for his work on projects that have revitalized downtown Columbus, including The Scioto Mile riverfront development; the Interstate 670 connecting the airport with the east and west outerbelts; and historic Trinity Episcopal Church's basement restaurant.

Known for creative solutions, in 1985 Chuck's firm designed Wexner Heritage House, the nation's first stand-alone Alzheimer's care unit. Still in operation today, the design created an industry

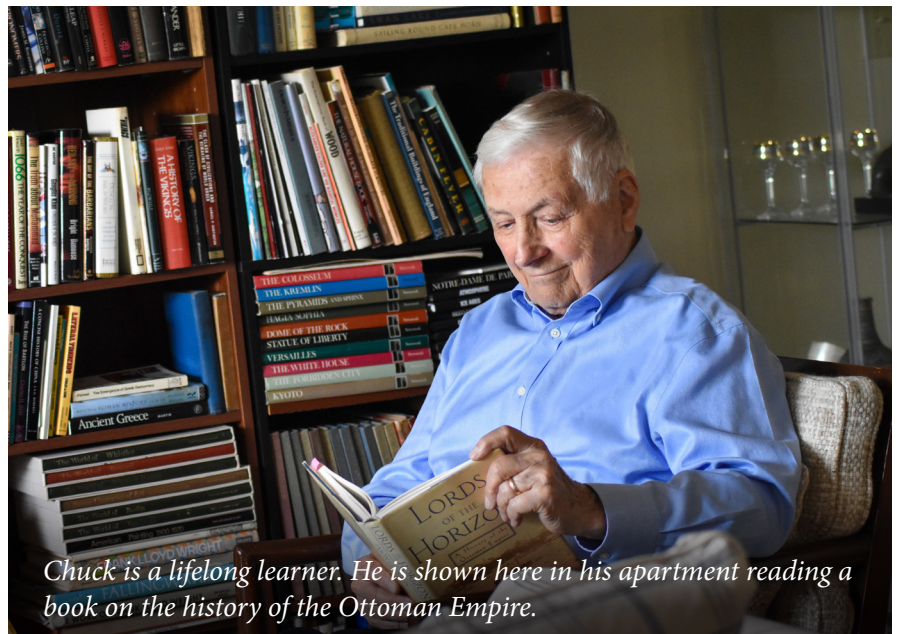
standard. Chuck was also the brains behind Muirfield Village, the upscale Dublin golf course and residential neighborhood developed by Jack Nicklaus in the 1960s.

Modeled after Hilton Head in South Carolina, Muirfield Village incorporated natural building materials and pedestrian paths into the natural terrain. The result was a private, walkable neighborhood that worked with, instead of against, the natural landscape – a very innovative quality for the time.

Some 50 years later, Chuck happily resides at Willow Brook at Delaware Run. He toured communities all over central Ohio before settling here. "Something was different. Even as a visitor, I felt welcomed," he says. His first-floor apartment is easily identified by his flourishing patio flower garden.

Chuck is passionate about reading, learning, and bringing people together. For the last four years, he and good friend and fellow resident Marilyn Schroeder have organized Sunday Conversations, a weekly discussion group where residents meet to talk about personal experiences, good memories, and why they chose Willow Brook, among other things. "I have some of the best friends here that I've had in my entire life," he says. "I get so much insight into other people. Even if we don't share an opinion, I come away understanding why they feel they way they do."

Whatever you do, please do not refer to Chuck as "retired." That word is not in his vocabulary. He says, "My job now is to get people out of their homes to meet others, have fun, and develop friendships."



Chuck is a lifelong learner. He is shown here in his apartment reading a book on the history of the Ottoman Empire.

Thank you to Village Living magazine for their permission to use information on Chuck's work at Muirfield Village and to Klatte Photography for allowing us to use their magazine cover photo.



Miss Me, But Let Me Go

“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Gen. 3:19)

On a warm June morning, the ashes of former resident Robert “Bob” Litt were the first to be scattered in our new Delaware Run Blaine-Ankney Memorial Garden. Bob’s family knew he wanted to be laid to rest here, next to the pond and amongst the flowers and quiet peace that is Willow Brook.

Sadie Visits The Run

Columbus Zoo Senior Safari made a special trip and visited our residents at Delaware Run recently with a few friends. Zoo staff shared some unique and interesting facts about their six animal ambassadors. Picture shown below is a swift fox named Sadie, which is native to the western plains. She is held by Ashton, one of the zoo’s educators.

Big thanks to Medical Mutual of Ohio for making this event happen.



Aide at The Village, Aly Ault, receives her vaccine earlier this year.

Delta: Not Just an Airline

Just when we thought the masks might come off for good, the insidious COVID-19 virus has roared back with a vengeance in the guise of the delta variant. This mutant has been in the news for weeks as the main cause of the latest surge, enabled by the millions who have refused vaccinations.

While nearly 100 percent of Willow Brook residents and 78 percent of staff agreed to the “jab,” we continue to be vigilant. We cautiously reopened dining, visitation, and resident activities. Masks and social distancing are still commonplace and resident and staff safety remains our number one priority. COVID-19 testing is ongoing, and vaccines are available at all three campuses. But we rejoice in the relief that has come our way.

Reflections

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I'm so glad I live in a world
where there are Octobers.

L.M. Montgomery

Willow Brook Christian Village residents
Bob Tannehill and Babs Tull