



Resident Jack Buchan shakes hands with Rainbow Kid Cora Drayer while her brother, Augie, and mother, Aubrey, await their turn.

Photo: Nicole Garrett

Rainbow Kids Light Up Residents' Lives

Laughter. Love. Music. You'll find it in abundance at Willow Brook Christian Village when a special group of children, the Rainbow Kids, visits each Wednesday morning.

The Rainbow Kids, who range in age from kindergarten to high school, come with their parents to The Village to sing, dance and talk with residents in the assisted living, nursing home and memory care units.

Connie McNeal, activities director at The Village, started the Rainbow Kids program in 2004.

"I wanted to create an intergenerational connection for our residents through music, activities and fun," she

says. "I never would have imagined that some children would stay with our group through high school. Several have even gone on to become employees."

A typical morning kicks off with children, parents and residents singing popular and patriotic songs to put everyone in a good mood. Then families jaunt around the room to shake hands with residents.

"It's a way for us to love on the residents," says Jennifer Fashian, whose five children have participated in the program.

Now that a warm connection has been made, families and residents start chatting, inspired by

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You are the sun in my day, the wind in my sky, the waves in my ocean, and the beat in my heart. Love, S.

Anonymous posting on a wall
at Polaris Fashion Place in Columbus
Winter 2020

I have morphed into a mall walker. My first symptoms appeared 18 months ago when I was seeking an escape from the prison of a punishing back injury. I could hardly walk. I swallowed my pride and used a rollator at first, but as I reclaimed strength and the injury faded, I tried it sans walker. I now vigorously pound out a couple of miles a day at Polaris Fashion Place in Columbus, a ginormous indoor mall with 1.6 million square feet underroof. Most evenings you will find me there with Janet and daughter Becky, briskly hoofing a mile-long course to its terminus and back.

Polaris is a happy trail mix bag of human diversity. It feels like a concourse at JFK. We weave our way through throngs of shoppers with a full spectrum of complexions and attire – everything from blue jeans with ripped-out knees to Muslim hijabs, to Indian sandals, to American sloganized t-shirts. The outfitted multitudes speak a medley of languages and accents imported from far reaches of our little planet.

Kiosk workers, cleaning crews and roaming security guards know us. Other walkers blink smiles of unspoken comradeship. We have claimed Polaris, and we intend to use it until Amazon et al., drops it to its knees. Digital shopping networks have levied a grievous tax on retailers. Around the nation, stores are closing and malls are downgrading to flea markets with parking lots that need weed whacking. We are rooting for Polaris, hoping it will buck the trend.

The Polaris Sears store closed a year ago, leaving an abandoned cavernous monument to the decline of American retail. Mall management took steps to conceal the store's 80-foot yawning entrance from the mall's promenade by installing drywall across the void. Effective but boring. This winter, as a run-up to Valentine's Day, they fashioned a huge pink heart of Post-it notes smack in the center of the wall alongside bold three-foot letters that spelled "Post Your Love."

They supplied dozens of pads of blue and purple Post-it notes and invited shoppers to declare who or what they loved. Some three or four thousand took up the offer and plastered the expanse of wall surrounding the heart with a potpourri of their loves. It was pure, non-digitized passion.

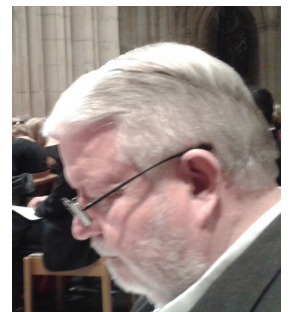
God and Jesus figured prominently in many. And our pets. There were enough first names to fill a book of baby names for mothers-to-be, and much, much more. Here's a sampling...

"Sleep" "Rocco. R.I.P. wonderful puppy." "French fries" "Davis, the man who doesn't love me, but I somehow don't mind." "7/17/17" "My cat Nicholas" "Baby Leigh" "I love my Nana, because she gave me so many good memories." "Mom, Dad, both grandmas, and all my family – I love you guys to the moon and back, Audrey" "My heart was stolen 9/1/13, and every day you've made it smile, Amy" "My little family" "My wildflower Adelynn" "Taco Bell" "My future boyfriend" "To travel" "The only man I ever wanna be with – you've turned my life around. I love you." "Disneyland and Christmas" "Peanut, Olive, and Lil Lizard" "Ohio State football" "Your Mom's gravy" "Coffee" "Food I gave up on my diet" "My cat Wilbur" "Morgan. I could not have created a better daughter." "I love you Randee" "I love my life and every opportunity I get to enjoy it." "My sister Trinity" "The mall" "Books" "I love you Path, and I miss you." "My pets (boyfriend included)" "My husband Michael and our new home" "God, Mommy, and my family"

Then there were the ones that tore my heart out by its roots...

"My dog Davis. I hope you're running free in heaven baby. Momma loves you." "R.I.P. Grace. I never got to say goodbye." "My sissy Danielle. Be strong beautiful." "My Dad. I miss him so much." "My life. I failed in a suicide attempt last year, and I'm kinda glad I'm still here." "Please get well Mom. I pray for that more than anything. I love you." "Stay strong, Anne. It will be hard, but it is worth the effort. You've made it so far, and I am proud of you."

Larry Harris, CEO
lharris@willow-brook.org



Post Your Love

by Larry Harris, CEO

(They) invited shoppers to declare who or what they loved. Some three or four thousand took up the offer...

Pet-Friendly Tree Brings Twix Home

At Christmas-time, Amy Santarelli, companion services coordinator at Delaware Run, and her energetic team decided to decorate a tree that would keep on giving after the holidays.

They couldn't have known that their giving tree would do so much more.

With needy pets in mind, they festooned the tree with treats, toys and food for furry friends. After the holiday, they donated everything to the Delaware County Humane Society.

While at the Humane Society, Amy's team spotted a lovable little dog named Twix who needed a home. They immediately thought of Judie Peterson, a Delaware Run resident who had recently lost her dog. Peterson had said she wasn't ready for a new pet. That all changed when the companions texted her a picture of Twix.

The next day, Peterson rushed to the Humane Society and adopted the pup.

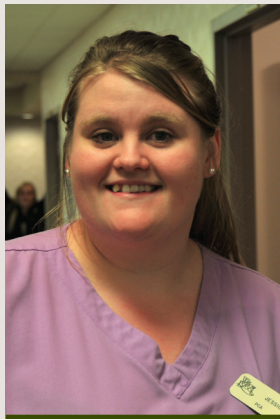
"He's such a good dog," Peterson says. "He loves people and always wants to be close to me, either on my lap or right next to me. He's a true joy."



A creative Christmas tree (left) helped bring together Judie Peterson and Twix.



Menchi Iballar
The Home



Jessica Jones
The Village



Dyana Welch
Delaware Run

Congratulations to the 2019 winners of the prestigious Second Mile Award. Recipients are Menchi Iballar (Personal Care Attendant, The Home), Jessica Jones (Personal Care Attendant, The Village) and Dyana Welch (Front-Desk Manager, Delaware Run). These devoted staff members have earned the love and respect of their colleagues and residents for their outstanding service to Willow Brook and for always going the extra mile to help others.

2nd Mile Award 2019

Tribute Gifts

Memorial Contributions

November 11, 2019 – February 23, 2020

Richard C. Atkinson

Carol A. Roden

Helen C. Baker

Frank & Deanna Shirley

Keith Ball

Carolyn Chabot

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

Jean W. Baskwill

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

John & Jo Ann Bill

Dave & Julie Duff

Anna Blamar

Deborah Brookshire

Thomas & Melissa Mischik

Anita & Marion Blaszkowiak

Irene C. Blaszkowiak

Jamie Brown

Harvey Eugene & Vada Brown

John R. Burns, Sr.

Curtis & Genevieve Burns

Paul Busche

David Litle

Westerville Sew-N-Save

Frances Carlton

April L. Jackson

Mary Ellen Cerrato

William & Marianne Burke

S. Frank & Betty Chappell

John & Karen Botti

Larry & Janet Harris

Karen Susenna

Jean Cooper

Thomas & Kathryn Brod

Anna F. Lasley

Judith E. & Michelle Cyrus

C & L Improvements

Dorothy Dawson

Chris & Penny Matthewson

James “Richard” Dawson

Chris & Penny Matthewson

Nancy DeTray

Lisa Mack

Don Dillemoth

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

Verne Edwards

Dolores I. Edwards

Nancy Johnson

Harry Featherstone

Corinne D. Esau

Janet Gallant

Corinne D. Esau

Barbara Ulrich

Phyllis M. Wood

Mary Beth Green

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

D. Jeannine Hall

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

Audrey & Alberta Harris

Larry & Janet Harris

John T. Hayes

Karen S. Hayes

Ronald & Donna Moore

Maebelle Henry

Mervin Cabral

Faye Jackson

David & Margaret Jackson

James E. Jackson

Mitchell & Dyana Welch

Leo Korpieski

Paula Korpieski

Warren Lallathin

Delores V. Lallathin

Curt & Ruth Morrow

Thomas J. Lasley

Thomas & Kathryn Brod

Betty Leslie

Larry & Emma Dixon

Corinne D. Esau

Kristen Leslie

Diana McComas

Martha J. Seelenbinder

Barbara Ulrich

Lucretia M. Wellman

Phyllis M. Wood

James Leslie

Kristen Leslie

Barb Lewis

Martha J. Seelenbinder

Charlotte Luedemann

Alice Caniglia

Irene Ralls

Bruce & Harriet Smith

Evelyn Messina

Tim & Lynn Cook

Harry & Nancy Johnston

Gregory & Jennifer Manter

Kristen Manter

Alford Noland

Dianne L. Almendinger

John & Sue Dickman

Corinne D. Esau

Beverly Flender

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

Margaret Roberts

Veterans of Foreign Wars of

Ohio Charities, Post 3320

Nancy D. Woodman

Florence Poulson

Thomas & Sara Poulson

Gene & Emma “Maude” Prince

Ben Harris & Christina Barry

Larry & Janet Harris

Rebecca L. Harris

Robert “Bob” Prince

Larry & Janet Harris

Randy & Jill Yates

Lucille Reinhard

Fred & Betty Worley

Theresa Ritzman

William D. Ahonen

Corinne D. Esau

Martha J. Seelenbinder

Barbara Ulrich

Lucretia M. Wellman

Phyllis M. Wood

Mary C. Roden

Carol A. Roden

Don Rost

Thomas & Sara Poulson

Carolyn “Carrie” Schild

Rick & Nancy Reichert

Charles & Mary Ringholz

David & Marian Schild

Ann Simons

Mariella C. Dunnan

Corinne D. Esau

Douglas & Elaine Palmer

Helen J. Reppart

Virginia Slider

John & Sue Dickman

Betty Jean Gray

Joann Stash

Susan Dlott

Richard Nagel

Rosa Waller

Corrine Snyder-Poulson

Thomas & Sara Poulson

George F. Wellman

Lucretia M. Wellman

Vivian Wesley

Dianne L. Almendinger

Dorothea Wiget

David Wiget

Max Wildermuth

Jayne W. MacKay

Nicki V. Zanetos

Lisa Mack

Lowell & Marian Zechiel

Linda Keiber

Bruce & Barbara Reiersen

Tribute Gifts
to honor the living

Dolores I. Edwards

Thomas & Deborah Burke

Larry & Janet Harris

Robert & Linda Gaffey

Nancy Jewett

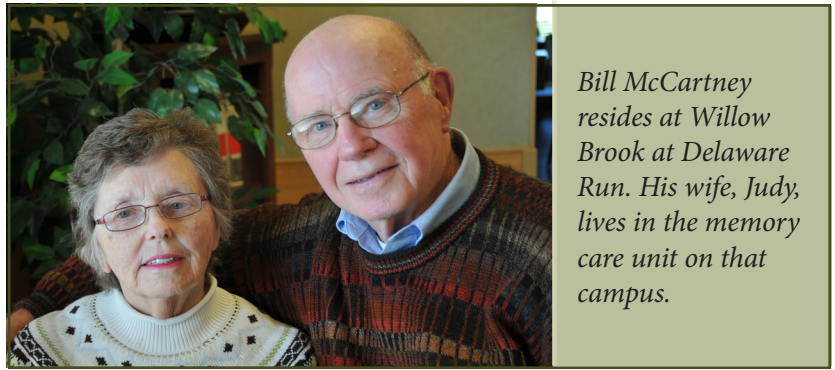
Emilie Brown

Willow Brook Staff Fundraisers

Kristen Manter

Gifts of the Heart Abound in Memory Care Family

By Bill McCartney, Delaware Run resident



Bill McCartney resides at Willow Brook at Delaware Run. His wife, Judy, lives in the memory care unit on that campus.

If there's a "secret" for turning a place of sadness and despair into a place of joy and love, it is found abundantly in the memory care unit of Willow Brook at Delaware Run.

That "secret" is alive in the compassionate care provided by nurses and aides, and it is made visible by the family members who visit regularly and bring gifts of the heart to their loved ones.

Their love is as simple as being there. It includes meal-time companionship, even feeding loved ones.

They sit with them in the garden, take them for a walk or to doctors' appointments. No wonder residents smile quickly when relatives arrive.

Just witness these stories.

A wife travels 25 miles daily to be with her husband. One resident receives love from a remarkable team that includes three siblings and their spouses, a stepsister, a childhood friend and a former girlfriend. A husband faithfully visits his wife of more than 70 years. Another husband spoon-feeds his wife every lunch and dinner. An endless cadre of relatives bring love that serves, that affirms, that comforts.

This testimony still doesn't reflect the full extent of love's "secret." You will find it in the remarkable support

Even in the passing of one resident, this close friendship provides comforting solace and joyful confidence in memories that will never die.

these family caregivers offer one another. When a new resident arrives, his/her loved one is surrounded by support from those who have been walking the path of losing a loved one day by day. These "veterans" understand the anxiety. Their concern eases the pain of this terrifying transition.

That kindness continues to grow, welcoming the newcomer into the fellowship of loved ones. Offers of help and counsel abound. Evidence of comradery flourishes. Spontaneous humor helps everyone to maintain sanity in challenging times.

And when a resident dies, the arms of fellowship grow stronger.

This transition is faced, not in isolation, but in a circle of others. Even in the passing of one resident, this close friendship provides comforting solace and joyful confidence in memories that will never die.

Ultimately, this caregiver love is not a secret. That's a misnomer, because it is not hidden like other secrets. It is visible every day in words and actions, hearts and souls of those who give generously of themselves to their needy loved ones – and to others traveling the same path.



Sam Dorsey, Kerry Boss, Tiffany Chutes and Gary VanBuskirk (back) of Willow Brook Christian Home's outstanding therapy department.

Getting People Home Faster, Thanks to Blue Sky Therapy

Willow Brook is proud to partner with Blue Sky Therapy, which provides short-term rehabilitation and therapy on all three of our campuses. Time and time again, we've seen their dedicated therapists deliver great results for physical, occupational and speech therapy. That means our clients are able to get back home as quickly and safely as possible.

Retirement Life

by Bernard Murchland, Village apartment resident

I like sitting on my balcony
Looking at the pond below and the trees above
I find peace there and can gather my thoughts
In time of stress I seek the solace of nature's rhythms
Sitting on my balcony
Looking at the pond below and the trees above

Inspired by T.S. Eliot's *Teach Us to Sit Still*

Bernard Murchland is a resident of Willow Brook Christian Village. He is a retired philosophy professor at Ohio Wesleyan University and author of a book "Becoming a Philosopher: Selected Reviews and Essays 1960-2015."



Keith Ball

Beloved Minister Faithfully Served Willow Brook

Willow Brook suffered a tremendous loss upon the death of Keith Ball, who served as a minister of the Delaware Church of Christ in Delaware, Ohio. Ball died suddenly in October during his annual trip to India.

While in India, Ball was bitten by a mosquito and infected with the Chikungunya virus. Ball had done mission work for many years in India, where he helped train young ministers and spoke at many

churches.

Ball also served at Willow Brook for more than 20 years. He conducted weekly Bible studies with residents and visited residents one-on-one.

"Keith's death is a great loss to Willow Brook," says Connie McNeal, activities director at The Village. "He loved us, and we loved him. He was a shepherd to all of our residents. You can't describe the layers of impact that his life had here."

continued from front page

questions that McNeal tosses out to get the conversation rolling.

And McNeal often introduces an American history lesson to teach kids about important eras and interesting figures.

Talking about history also provides a way for residents to share their experiences.

“We learn so much and hear such amazing stories,” says Becky Adams, who accompanies her daughter Alayna, 7, each week.

“I like the singing part,” says Alayna. Which is great, since sessions wrap up with more songs and dances.

“We love coming here,” says resident Helen Bower, who joins her husband Dean each week. “The children are so attentive. It’s a wonderful opportunity for them to learn and for us to get to know them. I wish there’d been a program like this when I was young.”

Several times a year, the Rainbow Kids

present a musical for the entire Village campus. They are joined by the Willow Brook Singers, a group of independent Village residents.

Musicals have included “Pioneer Days,” “Land of Liberty,” and “Broadway Showtunes.” Up next is “Shall We Dance.”

McNeal has taken shows on the road to the Ohio Historical Village, Ohio State House, Ohio Wesleyan University and other venues.

While the shows give the Rainbow Kids a chance to shine in the community, it’s the close connections forged at the weekly gatherings that mean the most to everyone.

“I still walk by the group all the time to see everyone and say hello,” says Joshua Fashion, information technology specialist, who was one of the first Rainbow Kids. “One of my favorite things was watching residents’ faces light up when we sang to them.” His four siblings happily continue the family tradition.



Connie McNeal, activities director at The Village, leading the Rainbow Kids in song.

Willow Brook Christian Communities

Delaware, Ohio

Willow Brook Christian Village

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Willow Brook at Delaware Run

100 Delaware Crossing West
Delaware, Ohio 43015
Phone: (740) 201-5640

Worthington, Ohio

Willow Brook Christian Home

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Reflections is published by
Willow Brook Christian Communities.
Erin MacLellan, editor
Joel Hornsby, designer



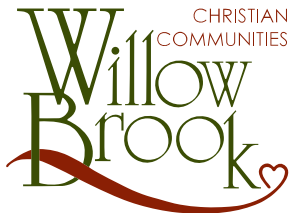
Elizabeth Folefac (left), RN charge nurse, and Theresa Agyepong, nursing supervisor, are two of the many immigrants that share their talents at Willow Brook Christian Home. Folefac is from Cameroon, and Agyepong is from Ghana.

Reflections

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Delaware, Ohio 43015

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What Makes Willow Brook So Unique?

A church friend recently asked me, “What makes Willow Brook so unique?” I’d always considered Willow Brook to be a special place, but “unique?”

My exposure to Willow Brook began in 1972 when my wife and I moved to Columbus with our baby son. When I learned my new church conducted a quarterly worship service for The Home, I volunteered to preach and lead singing.

Forty-eight years later, I’ve seen so many changes. We’ve added buildings, residents and staff. But the biggest growth has been in the positive, dynamic Christian atmosphere that dominates Willow Brook.

Reflecting on the catalyst for

this change, I’ve decided that our CEO Larry Harris brought this Christian culture here with him. Larry and his staff have continually nourished this culture and created the Christian community we have here today.

Since joining the Board of Trustees in 2016, I’ve had the opportunity to observe Larry and his staff as they interact with each other and with residents. The positive, friendly interactions that I’ve seen are consistent with the attitude of Jesus Christ and the Willow Brook mission statement.

As a result, our residents and staff have created an unmatched culture that is “uniquely” Willow Brook. I am thrilled to be a part of this culture with each of you!



Paul Gartman
President, Willow Brook Board of Trustees