

The first bite of my oatmeal is hot.
The last bit is cold, and time
will have passed, slipped away
as I read a poem or a few pages
of my newest favorite book. Small
increments of time compose my life.

On the pond the pairs are sticking close –
the Mallards and Canadians – lest
some intruding males infringe on their mates.
They're out cutting the still pond into wakes
of triangles, lines, and later coursing
through rough, wind-tossed waves.
It is breeding season, competition fierce,
the ladies choosy, the males sometimes brutal.

The robins came back today, early after
a warm winter. Two joust for scraps
on my lawn. And there, a single red-wing
sits atop the gazebo, making battle plans
no doubt for protecting his territory. Sparrows
chatter and squabble, flitting in and out
of the dense, tall junipers. Increments
of outside joy, they accrue and build.

Within I have placed where each day
my eye falls on treasured gifts of love,
beautiful or fond things, not tucked in closets
or drawers – actual or of the mind. A tiny
bluebird of happiness, present of a friend,
a simple pink rock of unknown origin
but teasing smiles each time I look.
A favorite bowl for my peaches or apples,
a blooming cyclamen, glorious in color.
Humming birds cross-stitched by hands
of a loved daughter-in-law, soft yellow
towels the gift of another. Touches of cheer.

These things not bold or expensive, brash
or grand, yet they fill my days with happiness,
increments of joy, an answer to living well,
a good life.

Small Increments

by Marilyn Schroeder, resident of
Willow Brook at Delaware Run



This cedar waxwing is one of thousands of wildlife photos Willow Brook Christian Village's Joyce Stambaugh has taken on campus.

You do not wake up one morning a bad person. It happens by a thousand tiny surrenders of self-respect to self-interest.

Robert Brault

Since day one of our marriage, Janet and I have grocery shopped together. Lately our trips are small – four or five bags max. I don't recall the last time we set off on a good old-fashioned Saturday morning shopping binge that ended with a mounded cart. Modest trips multiple times per week, that's what we do. So we were grateful several years back for the introduction of the cute little mini carts that hold maybe a fourth of a full-sized one. They're easy to maneuver through crowded aisles and can do a one-eighty on a dime if you need to back track.

Since all our trips are small, we generally make use of the U-Scan checkout, where we swipe bar codes and bag our purchases in flimsy plastic totes suspended on a rack mounted to a scale that's calibrated to detect thieves. Start to finish, we never talk to a human being. The whole process is chaperoned by a computer-generated female voice that puts me in mind of a patient second-grade teacher who kindly instructs her little students in the lessons of the day. The soothing one-sided conversation makes for an almost pleasant conclusion to our shopping trips.

That was until a few months ago. Through some misbegotten line of reasoning, the grocery chain converted to a voice with an irritated, almost angry edge. Did they not listen to it before they hit "install"? Did they not focus group it? To boot, they amped up the number of verbal prods. Now a digital grocery scold badgers me through the entire checkout process. "Place the item in the bagging area!" she hounds when I'm a little slow. And if I'm still not quick enough, she repeats the command through clenched teeth. Then, "Remove the last item bagged and scan it!" she chides when I know for a fact that I did scan and bag it by the numbers. And when I can't figure out how to comply with her order, she locks the scanner and rats on me: "Attendant has been notified!" Excuse me? This computer nag and I *do not* get along.

This digital faultfinder is iconic of too many people I encounter. I swear I've heard that voice behind the counter at the auto license agency. Or down at my Post Office, there's this Ichabod Crane character running the counter, a crotchety old man who, without a word, glares at me over his spectacles when he's granting permission to approach. I'm guessing his favorite *Seinfeld* episode is Soup Nazi.

Mean people. There are just too many.

When I drive the speed limit on the freeway, I get flipped off in an angry pass. People everywhere, it seems, now traffic in gossip and take glee in the pain they inflict.

And when you marry meanness with anonymity, oh boy. Our digital world lets you hide. Read a blog on Hillary Clinton. You'll see hateful, abusive entries that spew lewd epithets of contempt and hostility, followed by a barrage of vulgar threats of violence. Read a story on Yahoo News about Kate Middleton's baby. It will inspire in you warm thoughts of kittens and puppies and cooing babies. Then scroll down

and read the comments – nasty, hate-filled, profane remarks are thrown at the baby. A baby, for goodness sakes!

They say the true measure of character is what you do when you think you won't be found out. These internet trolls represent the very worst of humanity, and they chill my blood.

This past political year, legions of bigots have been granted license to slither out of their closets. And some don't even know they're bigots. A selfish me-first mentality has infected our public discourse in Washington, D.C., and out in the hinterlands.

Enough! I am so tired of all the meanness. Please, surround me with kind, gentle folk who love themselves and others in equal measure. Fill my cup with grace and goodness and kindness. Draw near to me those benevolent souls who are slow to judge, quick to pardon, and who will remove the log from their own eye before looking for a dust speck in yours.

Please people, let's stop the meanness.

Larry Harris, CEO
lharris@willow-brook.org



Mean People

by Larry Harris, CEO

They say the true measure of character is what you do when you think you won't be found out.

An Example to Others



Robert Hammond, member of the Ghanaian congregation at the Northland Church of Christ in Columbus, proudly presents a check to board president Corinna Owens. The church had collected money for Willow Brook's benevolence fund. Robert referred to the gift as "the widow's mite". CEO Larry Harris responded, "I contend that it is much more than that. Your gift will be added to a fund that will allow us to care for those who lack the means to pay. And, perhaps most importantly, it will serve as an example to others."

Senior Sharing Time

A day of spiritual rejuvenation for older adults

Tuesday, October 10, 2017

9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Light Up Our World

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"Light up our World with your Positive Outlook"

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Willow Brook Christian Village

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Phone: (614) 885-3300
*Rehabilitation, Skilled nursing,
and assisted living*

Delaware, Ohio

Willow Brook Christian Village

100 Willow Brook Way South
Delaware, Ohio 43015
Phone: (740) 369-0048

Willow Brook at Delaware Run

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

*Full-service
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Volunteers Recognized with Gift of Love Award

Volunteers were feted this spring at the annual volunteer reception where one person from each campus was given The Gift of Love Award for exceptional volunteer service.

Village director Nicole Ketron described honoree Davie Esau as a "standout" at the Village. Esau drives residents to community events, makes seasonal placemats for the tables, leads in collecting coats for People in Need, and opens her home to prospective residents. And, she uses her talents as an award-winning ballroom dancer to entertain residents.

Of George Alexander, the honoree from Willow Brook at Delaware Run, CEO Larry Harris said, "As a retired Presbyterian minister, George served the Ohio prison system for 25 years, first as a chaplain and later as a warden. While acknowledging the horrendous acts committed by some of his prisoners, he looked past their violations and insisted that they be treated as individuals worthy of respect."

George brings that gift of love to Willow Brook by visiting residents who are sick and making building rounds every evening to make certain that doors are locked.

David Chappell, director of Willow Brook Christian Home, said award recipient Deb Myles has been a volunteer for many years. She established volunteer days and recruited people to play games with residents, write letters, visit, and push wheelchairs on zoo trips. She leads a monthly Bible study and continues to help recruit project volunteers.



Above are Davie Esau and George Alexander, award recipients from Willow Brook Christian Village and Willow Brook at Delaware Run. Below is Deb Myles, recipient from Willow Brook Christian Home.



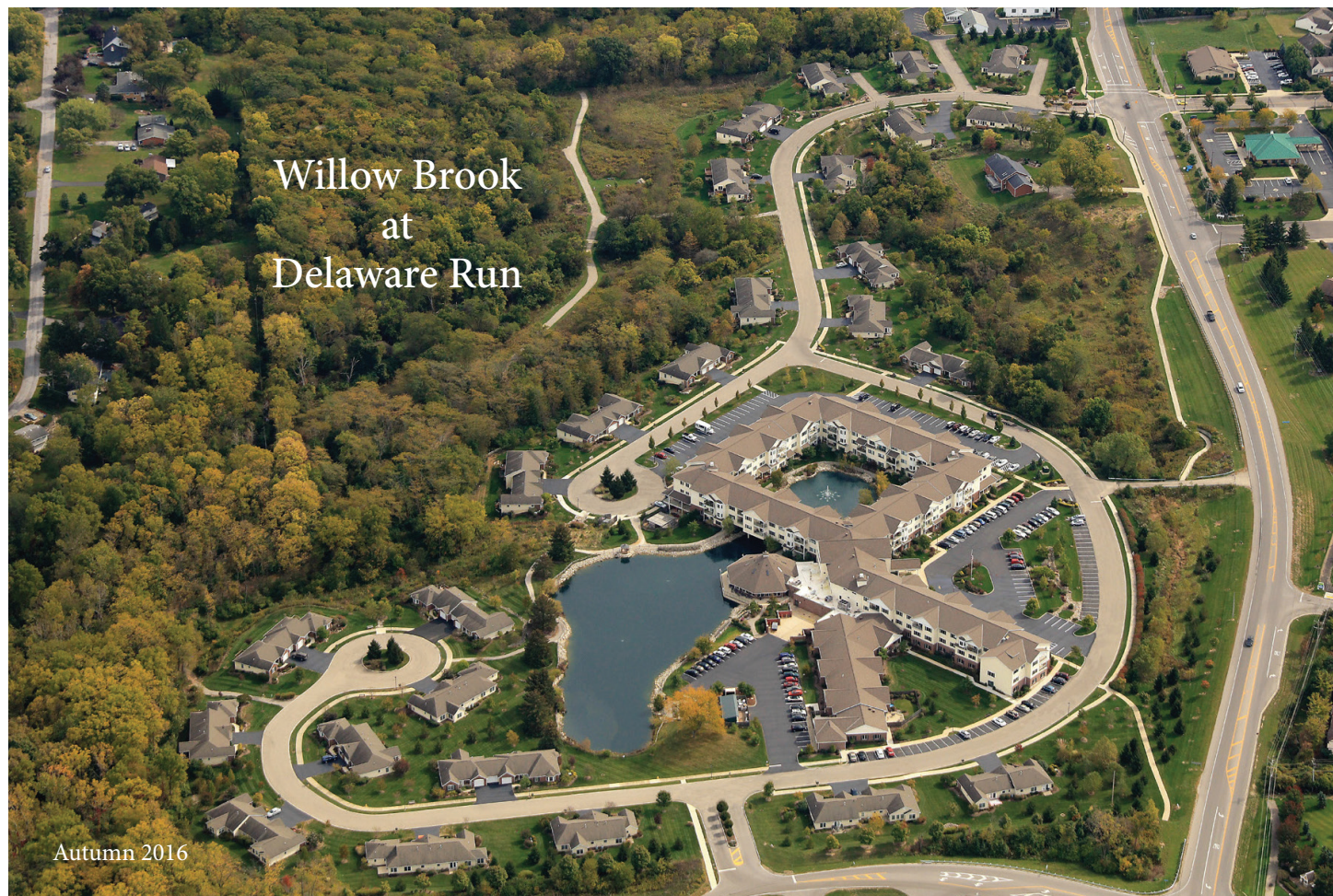
Honoring Our Veterans

A planeload of war veterans were greeted by wellwishers when they returned to John Glenn Airport in Columbus. They had spent a full Saturday in Washington, DC, through the auspices of the organization Honor Flight.

Among the crowd was Paul Hall, 10, welcoming Delaware Run resident Bob Johnson back after his long day at our nation's capital.



Last autumn an aerial photographer circled both of Willow Brook's planned living communities in Delaware, Ohio. Knowing that many of our readers have never seen our campuses, we thought you might like to have a bird's eye view.



Designer Bethany Baldwin and developmental psychologist Robin McNeal brought a first printing of their children's book to their third-grade teacher Lois Smith, a resident of Willow Brook Christian Village. The illustrations of the teacher in the book closely resemble Mrs. Smith, whose philosophy of education had been the inspiration for its creation. The book, created as a tool to help parents and teachers become better educators, is dedicated to her. Robin and Bethany are the daughters of Cherith activities leader Connie McNeal. Sadly, Lois passed away just two weeks after this photo was taken.

OUR STARS!



WILLOW BROOK RANKED #1 FOR FAMILY SATISFACTION

Families with a relative in Willow Brook's skilled nursing centers were happier with the care loved ones received at Willow Brook than anywhere else in all of Delaware and Franklin Counties. Willow Brook Christian Home received the highest satisfaction score in Franklin County, and Willow Brook Christian Village had the highest in Delaware County.

And the families of Willow Brook at Delaware Run's assisted living center gave it the highest family satisfaction score in Delaware County.

The Ohio Department of Aging conducts extensive surveys of all 967 skilled nursing/rehab centers and 600-plus assisted living centers in the state annually. They alternate between surveying families and surveying residents each year.

Questions about the quality of nursing care, housekeeping, and many quality-of-life factors are surveyed.

News of satisfied families followed other honors this year:

- Five-star ratings (the highest) by Medicare.gov's Medicare Compare website.
- Inclusion of both skilled campuses in U.S. News & World Report's list of top nursing homes in the country.
- Voted Best Assisted Living and Best Retirement Community in Delaware County by readers of the Delaware Gazette.

Each year residents and staff at Willow Brook nominate outstanding front-line staff to be honored for their caring service. We take them to a special luncheon sponsored by LeadingAge Ohio, our association of not-for-profit providers of senior living and health care. This year's honorees are (left to right) Tom Johnson, Stacy Hott, Brettney Culler (in front), Kathleen Barnhart, Laurie Campos, Tylor Hovis, and Agustin Antonio. Claudia Podolski and Sanooja Sunny are not shown.

Reflections

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Board member Judy Earich in a light moment at the spring board meeting. Fellow trustees Norm Lisle and Phil Barth have yet to catch the joke.

The Willow Brook Board

As a not-for-profit ministry, we are under the guidance and oversight of a board of trustees. Eighteen men and women keep a collective eye on all things Willow Brook. They are volunteers. There is no compensation for the time and wisdom they share.

Many nonprofits limit trustees' tenure, forcing board turnover. Not Willow Brook. Two of our 18 go back to Willow Brook's founding in 1972 – Leroy Bumpus and Frank Chappell. They, and others who have served for decades, hold long perspectives and actual memories of the triumphs and trials that have come our way. There is no learning curve for them. They are seasoned and ready for the perplexing issues that sometimes arise.

For the past 45 years, this board has provided the sure and steady leadership necessary to grow this ministry from a humble 25-bed nursing home to the \$100 million three-campus leader it is today.

Definitely not a mission for amateurs or the faint of heart!