

HERITAGE of Care

THE BETHESDA LETTER

BETHESDA HOME...independence, respect, dignity since 1899

The Activities Department Specializing in Life Enrichment

The Activities Department at Bethesda could be better described as the “Life Enrichment” department. For Gayle Voth, Director, Gail Graber, Chaplain and Bonnie Ratzlaff, Activities Assistant, it’s about so much more than just providing activities.

Life experiences prepare us for our current roles in life and that is certainly the case for the activities team at Bethesda. Gail Graber has two adult sons with families of their own and five grandchildren. She was recently widowed. She lives in Moundridge and has served as the Chaplain for 11 and a half years. She is also an activities assistant at Bethesda. She previously served as a pastor in a congregational setting. Prior to that she worked as an receptionist/insurance clerk at a medical office and, long before that, was a cosmetologist. This is her fifth year as an activity assistant.

Bonnie Ratzlaff and her husband have four children and eight grand-children. She has worked here a little over four years and before that she worked at Mercy Hospital in Moundridge as a surgical technician. Making the switch from surgical technician to life enrichment has been a good one for Ratzlaff.

“I was used to being on call 365 days a year and that could get overwhelming at times,” she said. “There were a lot of night calls and, after almost 10 years, it was time for a change. I did enjoy the work very much but the switch to Bethesda has been great. The people here are wonderful,” said Ratzlaff.



The Activities Department team, pictured left to right, Gail Graber, Gayle Voth and Bonnie Ratzlaff.

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REMINDER

Please send us your email address if you would like to receive the newsletter and other communications electronically.

Send an email to pflaming@bethesdahome.org or call 620-367-2291.

Current and past newsletters can be viewed on our website www.bethesdahome.org under the “About” heading.

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Gayle Voth has been at Bethesda for eight and a half years. She started out as an assistant and has moved up to director. Prior to this job she owned the Kinder Haus Preschool in Goessel, which she operated for 37 years. She also did some substitute teaching. Gayle and her husband, James run Ratzlaff Draperies in Goessel, which they have owned since 1979.

"We have two adult children, Amanda is married to Anthony and they live in Goessel, with their two girls. Our son, Kelcy lives in Chicago and is also married with two girls," said Voth.

The role of the activities department at Bethesda is not just doing crafts, but to enrich the lives of the residents, and each one of these ladies has their own specialty.

"I really enjoy the activities (life enriching events), no question about that. I take part in almost all of them." – Fern Ensiz, resident

"When people hear 'activities,' sometimes they think that we are talking about doing crafts," said Voth. "We do less crafting and focus more on meaningful and enjoyable activities while assisting residents individually who need someone to talk to and interact with."

Graber has a more spiritual approach to the role of activity assistant because she is also the Chaplain at Bethesda. She finds that it can be challenging to do both because they are different roles, but she has also discovered that activities can sometimes lead to one-on-one interactions that fall more into the Chaplain role.



A resident delivers the newspaper to another resident.

"We make sure that we provide meaningful, enjoyable activities for residents, as well as helping to facilitate individual activities each resident enjoys," she said.

Opportunities are always provided for growth and interaction while doing an activity. Hence the shift towards life enrichment.

"Bethesda provides a home-like atmosphere where residents and staff treat one another like family. We support and care for each other continually," said Graber.

Graber does a Bible study and a reminisce group that is very popular. Many times residents are able to recall things

that happened long ago with much more clarity than things that have happened recently and this gives them a chance to share those times with the group and reflect on life back then.

Ratzlaff's specialty is the activity called "That's History." She will do a lot of research on a certain topic. It can be anything from the orphan train to the history of the general store.

"Residents really enjoyed [the history of the general store] because I had different things setup for them to experience as if they were actually entering one of the old general stores," said Ratzlaff. "I had kerosene set out for them to smell along with pickles, coffee and I even gave them some old fashioned candy on their way out. It is important to work in the whole sensory experience for them with the activities. That helps them to interact and get more out of it," said Ratzlaff.



Voth reads aloud to the residents.

Voth brings her teacher mentality to the job. She really enjoys planning and presenting things to the residents. She gets to interact with residents one-on-one and doing a read aloud is always a hit.

"I am able to enjoy the rewards of getting to know the residents, who still have so much to offer and a rich life history to share," said Voth.

While the job can be very rewarding it can sometimes be challenging as well. For Ratzlaff the main challenge is making sure that residents enjoy the activities and if they don't want to participate, realizing that it's up to them.

"They can do as they wish. This is their home and we just approach it that way," she said. "If there's not a huge turnout for something that's okay. We try to provide a



Residents enjoy the Valentine's Day party.

wide variety of activities to appeal to the most people we can. We invite everyone and try to encourage them to come and participate if they feel up to it."

Music is a huge draw for the residents as well as the staff at Bethesda. That works perfectly for the team—Ratzlaff plays the piano while everyone sings. There is also the Kristal Bell choir that many residents enjoy.

"A couple of residents liked to play the piano too, so we encourage them to do that whenever they like," said Ratzlaff.



Sing-A-Long with residents.

For devotions, Rick Woelk plays guitar and he and Voth lead singing. Everyone at Bethesda has the opportunity to experience a wide variety of musical entertainment and participation in singing both sacred and secular songs.

"For the last two years we have had the Music and Memory program here. Most every resident has an iPod with music that they enjoy loaded onto it. They can listen to their favorite tunes whenever they like and in many circumstances it can help to calm down an agitated resident," said Voth. "Having their own play-lists has been fun for them."

Sometimes while working to help enrich the lives of residents the experiences help to enrich the lives of the staff as well. The team works well together and feels that the three of them can accomplish much more than they ever could individually.

"I think we feed off of each other," said Voth.

"And we just enjoy each others' company," said Graber.

"I think we've become like sisters," Ratzlaff agreed.

With a team as in tune with each other and with the residents it's easy to see how life enrichment can better the lives of the residents. Life can really be much more enjoyable and enriching when we interact with one another.

"I'm glad I'm here. I love it! I enjoy the outings, activities, etc." – Otto Guhr, resident

Mary Rauh and Rosi Reimer are other Activity Department employees on the team that help to fill in several hours a week during the evenings and weekends.

They help to round out the Activity Department for Bethesda.

"I have always felt from the beginning that Bethesda Home provides a home-like atmosphere where residents and staff treat one another like family, they are supportive, caring, and care for and about each other," said Graber. "When I was associate pastor at our church, I visited numerous nursing homes and there is just something unique here that isn't everywhere."

"I think we are pretty fortunate. The administration has seen the importance of the life enrichment model and allows us to be available to offer much more than just healthcare to our residents," said Voth.

For those that want to keep up with some of the events that are going on, the activity calendar is always posted on the website: <http://bethesdahome.org/events/>.

Some of the highlights for residents are the Fall Carnival, Christmas party, bus tours, shopping and dining trips and museum outings. The Generation Bridge program is also a wonderful experience where the 5th Graders come in every week throughout the school year to interact and get to know residents.

"I'm especially impressed with the way we celebrate events with parties. We celebrate events that are important in the outside world. They bring them here and make it fun to get together with creative ideas and special refreshments. They take away the hum drum and make life here more fun."

– Evie Schmidt, resident

"We also have a Junior volunteer program in the summer months for ages 10 to 14 and have around 20 participants each year. They go through an orientation. They have to read a code of conduct booklet and sign off on it. We schedule activities on our calendar and they sign up for what they would like to help with. Each of them logs between 1-4 hours per week," said Voth.



Generation Bridge students make peppernuts with residents.

There are many other volunteers and staff that help us. However there is always a need for more volunteers and if anyone feels called to help in this way, please contact Gayle Voth. gaylev@bethesdahome.org

Blessed

A Message from the CEO



Blessings to you!!

I have often heard friends and family say that each year they choose a word for the year that signifies them or holds purpose for the year ahead. I have never really thought about that for myself until I started to write this article for the newsletter. My word: BLESSED. I am BLESSED.

Bethesda has been a blessing to me since I was a sophomore in high school; my first job, my first encounter with someone dying, my first time truly understanding what I was called to do. My goal was always to come back to Bethesda after obtaining my Social Work degree but never did I know that it would happen and that I would be where I am today.

I am BLESSED. I am BLESSED that I answered God's calling to say yes to the job offer of CEO/Administrator of Bethesda. I am honored and BLESSED to work and care for the residents; they are your family members and your friends and they so quickly become our family members

and our friends. I am BLESSED to work alongside some of the greatest people. The staff here is a blessing to me each day. I often say that to them in email communications and face to face visits and I often think the staff probably say "she always says that but I am sure she doesn't mean it." But I do. I am.

I am BLESSED. I am BLESSED and happy to share that our annual survey this year resulted in NO Deficiencies. This is a huge accomplishment and one we do not take lightly at Bethesda. To have a team of four surveyors in your building for four days, watching everything you do, questioning you on why you are doing what you are doing and then watching you even more can be intimidating, stressful and just plain overwhelming. But for the staff and residents at Bethesda those four days were just like any other day. Staff showed the surveyors how they love and care for each resident in the building and the residents told the surveyors how they are loved by the staff. The surveyors left our building with tears in their eyes for the care and love shown. For this I am BLESSED.

Thank you for blessing me and may we at Bethesda bless you.

- Sara Hiebert, CEO

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AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support Bethesda Home every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate .5% of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. Every little bit counts.

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On your first visit to AmazonSmile, smile.amazon.com, you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Type in "Bethesda Home" then scroll down to "Mennonite Bethesda Society" – end of 1st page. Amazon remembers your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation.

How do I shop at AmazonSmile?

To shop at AmazonSmile go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device.

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Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile?

Yes, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

In Memory

Since November, 2017

Jacolin Haworth – 11/25/17

Elma June Long – 11/26/17

Milton Goertzen – 12/30/17

Milton Harder – 1/30/18

Calvin Molzen – 2/12/28

The Right Time - Les & Ann Flaming

"There's no time like the present" is a saying that has never been more true for anyone than for Les and Ann Flaming.

For their entire married lives, the Flamings lived just a few miles straight east of Goessel on an acre and a half yard and 13 acres of grassland. For most of that time, Ann worked as a nurse-aide in the Hillsboro hospital and Les worked in assembly at Excel Industries in Hesston, KS.

"In our early fifties, we thought we would live there for the rest of our lives or until we needed to go to a nursing home. By age 65 it became hard to keep up with the work that needed to be done. Our two daughters and their families, who live in Wichita and Shawnee, Kansas, reminded us that their families and work didn't lend itself to coming to our house to help with emergencies or long term care."

Les and Ann had been on the waiting list for a Bethesda Duplex for a while and had declined to move on two earlier opportunities. Upon receiving the third letter, it was as if God's hand was in it and everything just fell into place.

"We noticed that many of the residents lived in their duplex for quite a long time. You never know what will happen in the future and if we don't do it now, maybe we won't

be able to secure a duplex later on," said Les.

"We knew that it was finally time to make the move," Ann agreed.

With groceries and banks nearby, big city amenities with small town traffic makes living in the Bethesda duplexes ideal.

"We moved in August 1st of 2017. We have good neighbors, just like in the country. We don't have to climb steps, we have a storm shelter, lots of cupboard and closet space and Ann loves walking the trail," Les remarked.

The Flamings are also enjoying Bethesda's maintenance team.

"Les says a quiet thank you when he sees Lyle mowing the lawn, and

the maintenance crew is always on call," said Ann.

"We have only needed them three times but each time they arrived so fast we had barely hung up the phone and there they were," said Les.

With yard work and repairs taken care of, the Flamings are free to pursue activities on and off campus.

"Our hobby right now is being custodians at Alexanderwohl Church," said Les.

"Everyone's circumstances are different but we are so glad that this duplex was available to us and we would encourage anyone thinking about this next step to not hesitate too long. It's been a really smooth transition," said Les.



Ann and Les Flaming feel right at home in their Bethesda Duplex.

Join the Bethesda Mission Advocates Membership

Bethesda Mission Advocates are generous individuals and/or businesses committed to giving \$1,000 or more annually to enrich the lives of the frail and elderly that we serve.

Become a member of the Bethesda Mission Advocates with either a single donation or by contributing toward your qualifying \$1,000 donation for this calendar year (that could be an \$85/month reoccurring ACH gift – approx. \$2.80 per day).

To be a monthly donor via an Automatic Withdrawal from your checking or savings account, you may request the form by calling Pete at 620-367-2291 or via email pflaming@bethesdahome.org Or you may go to www.bethesdahome.org

and click on the "Giving" tab – "Automatic Withdrawal" hot button. We invite you to join those who are currently making contributions via either payroll deduction or monthly Electronic Fund Transfers. The reason for consistent giving is that God's work goes on daily at Bethesda and everywhere.

The Bethesda Mission Advocate Members will be honored at the annual Pillars Banquets.

Thanks!

Thanks to the Walmart Foundation for their \$1,000 contribution to our Friendship Meal Program!



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Do you enjoy reading the Bethesda newsletter? A 5\$ donation would help us keep the Bethesda Letter coming in the future. A gift of any size is a blessing to our residents. Thank you!

Pete's Opportunity for Philanthropy



Remember – Purchasing food and pharmaceuticals can also support Bethesda. Kroger companies (Dillons, Bakers, and Gerbes supermarkets) contributes to Bethesda every time you swipe your Plus Card. To create an account, log on to www.dillons.com/communityrewards or www.bakersplus.com/community or www.gerbes.com/community, whichever store is in your area. Complete the required information and add your Shoppers Plus Card to your account. Then sign in and enroll Bethesda as your charity choice - #10035. For details on how to enroll, see <http://bethesdahome.org/make-a-donation/>.



Keith donates 4% of every dollar of gift cards purchased (his preference over paying the credit card company that amount). \$50 value cards can be purchased at Keith's Foods in Goessel, the local Citizens State Bank, Crossroads Credit Union, and Bethesda Home.

Do you have a will or a trust? If you don't, the State has one for you that may not include your wishes. Be proactive and don't put it off any longer. If you have some questions before meeting with a lawyer, feel free to contact Pete at pflaming@bethesdahome.org.

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HE IS AN ENTREPRENEUR LOOKING FOR PARTNERS**
God has a business in this world of changing lives. Be a partner in His business.