

# HERITAGE of Care

# THE BETHESDA LETTER

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



*Galen Miller and Mark Woelk pause for a photo in Bethesda's maintenance shop. Miller will take over for Woelk at the end of this summer.*

## A Legacy of Work and Service

Bethesda Home has been extremely blessed by the service and tenure of Mark Woelk. Over the years, Woelk has worked behind the scenes to make sure that the campus of Bethesda is running smoothly, up-to-code and properly maintained.

That's not all Mark has been up to for the past 40 plus years. According to Woelk, it all started back in 1975, when his career at Bethesda began. It was his senior year in high school.

"I started washing floors and helping with small maintenance tasks after graduating from high school. After a couple of years doing that, I worked at a few other jobs and came back to Bethesda after taking a CNA class," said Woelk.

Woelk split his time as a CNA and doing maintenance for a couple of years and was then asked by the administrator to be in charge of maintenance. This was only three or four years after graduating from high school. This experience proved to be very valuable to Woelk as he learned the ropes of managing a team and working together to accomplish the tasks at hand.

"I attended Vo-tech classes for a year while continuing to work at Bethesda. The laundry and housekeeping departments were then added to my responsibilities and I was named Director of Environmental Services," Woelk said.

Learning from the Vo-tech classes and his co-workers, Woelk caught on fast. Air conditioning and general maintenance along with some carpentry were the first things that Woelk learned.

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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](mailto:pflaming@bethesdahome.org) or call 620-367-2291.

Current and past newsletters can be viewed on our website [www.bethesdahome.org](http://www.bethesdahome.org) under the "About" heading.

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Follow Bethesda's current news and resident activities on our Facebook page.

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We welcome your comments.



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Some of the highlights of Woelk's career have been working with his father and brother, guiding Bethesda through the total building remodel and learning from the residents as he interacts with them during the course of his daily tasks.

Woelk and his father, Charlie and brother, Rick were all working together in Environmental Services. This was a time that will always be remembered for the way the Woelks were able to come together to solve problems that seemed impossible. Because of their success in problem solving, the phrase "Where there's a Woelk, there's a way!" was commonly heard around Bethesda.

The entire building was remodeled in 2008 which took a lot of planning and extra work on Woelk's part.

"It was probably the most rewarding experience during my entire career at Bethesda," said Woelk. "It was an amazing process. The planning started around 2006 and the project was completed in the fall of 2009. I enjoyed working with the architects, engineers, and Linda Peters, the C.E.O. at the time.

Woelk was directly involved in developing the project.

"I had been involved with some other smaller projects previously but this was different in that it was the complete building and the project needed to be completed with a full census of residents," said Woelk.

The challenge was to keep life as normal and clean as possible for the residents, even while demolition and construction was happening.

"The building contractor did a great job of working around all of the challenges and it was a lot of fun working with the crew," he said.

Challenges abound in the Environmental Services world but some of the greatest challenges that Woelk has faced have been related to keeping up with the ever growing number of regulations and life safety codes. Woelk does agree that the codes have made the facility safer for the residents and staff, but that they do come at a cost.

"Over the years it has become necessary to oversee the code and regulations more and more, which pulls Galen and I away from doing much of the hands on work or even much overseeing of the work like I once did," said Woelk.

Galen Miller has been working alongside Woelk for 10 years and will take over the reigns from Woelk at the end of the summer. Woelk is set to retire from his role as the Director of Environmental Service on August 31. This will allow Woelk to take some time off, enjoy some fly fishing in Colorado and get some projects around his own home finished. He won't be too far away and will still come back for about eight hours a week to work on preventative maintenance at Bethesda.

Galen Miller and his wife, Becky have two girls Edel, age 18 and Annalise, who is 15. The Millers moved to Goessel almost 13 years ago because they wanted a great place to live and work with a great school system for their girls. It was an obvious choice for Miller when he found some ground to purchase and build a house on.

"I grew up working for my dad who was a contractor and we built houses together," said Miller.

After working with his dad, he went on to work for his uncle in a dairy farming operation and eventually went to college to become a teacher. He taught high school agriculture classes in Illinois before deciding that it was time to make a change. Moving back to Becky's family farm in Missouri, Miller managed another dairy for seven years. Eventually the Millers found their home in Goessel.

"Goessel is our home and we felt very welcomed here. We just love it," said Miller.

Miller arrived at Bethesda Home just after the total remodel was done in the fall of 2009. He began working on general projects right away. One of which was to enclose the new sprinkler system lines with soffit. This was enjoyable for Miller who found working for the residents to be very enjoyable and life giving.

"Another very rewarding project was when the singleplex was built," said Miller. He and his crew at Bethesda finished the entire house out instead of contracting the work out. This saved a lot of money and allowed Bethesda to allocate funds to other important areas.

"The work was second to none and the project turned out wonderfully," said Woelk.

Miller is also the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at Bethesda. He is the local Fire Chief in Goessel and brings a wealth of knowledge to the table about fire regulations. He is always on call which is a very positive thing for the Bethesda residents and staff.

Coming into this role feels natural for Miller and he has found that the past 10 years have prepared him for this role exceedingly well.

"I don't feel like I have to come in and fix anything because everything has been well taken care of to this point. Following Mark will make the transition very easy for me," said Miller.

Sara Hiebert, CEO at Bethesda Home, has nothing but praise for Woelk and the job he has done over the years.

"I don't think that any of us have enough praise for Mark. The care and concern that he shows for this building and to the people who reside here is very evident," she said.

Sara has seen first hand the results of Woelk and his team's efforts.

“Surveyors and prospective residents who come to visit all marvel at how well kept the facility is. That goes back to Mark and speaks to his work ethic and longevity here,” she said. “People don’t realize the time that he puts in. He is here after hours all the time. He has always been on call 24 hours a day. He is the one who knows everything and will have a solution to whatever the problem might be.”

Hiebert also has high praise for Miller and his abilities as well.

“It is very evident that Galen will pick right up where Mark left off. He clearly is the right fit for this position and over the last nine years that I have been here, looking back Mark has been grooming Galen for this transition and that foresight has paid off in many ways for Bethesda. We feel very blessed,” said Hiebert.



## Affordable Independent Living

### Bethesda offers affordable IL for you or your loved ones

27 of the 28 Independent Living units at Bethesda offer either Monthly Rental Agreements, or an opportunity to select from four Life Lease Agreement options to fit your budget. All IL units are one-level and range in size from 600 sq. ft. of living space to 1950 sq. ft. Twelve of the units have above ground safe rooms built into the unit with easy access from the garage. All units have access to a lit concrete walking path. Units are equipped with all appliances, either one or two car garages, space for small gardens, back yard patios, and some have screened-in patios.

The monthly maintenance fee that covers all yard work/snow removal, light bulb replacements, plumbing maintenance, etc. is \$305/mo. Treat yourself to maintenance free living, good neighbors, and the benefits that Bethesda offers. We would love to have you join our Bethesda family! Call Sara Hiebert 620-367-2291 to check out availability of existing units, or the possibility of building a new unit on lots that are available in

the Emma Creek Meadows addition.

Here is what current residents say:

*“We really appreciate the good care and maintenance of the landscaping and buildings, and how the Bethesda administration and employees show concern for all the residents.*

*The IL Unit was available when we were at a point in our lives where it was becoming difficult for us to do proper maintenance on the 12-acre property where we were living and it seemed to be a perfect fit for what we needed. We like the whole complex layout. It has a spacious, relaxed, open feeling.*

*We feel like the Independent Living unit is a great way to transition to a time when we need help to take care of ourselves. That time will come for all of us as we age.”*

– Lloyd & Marlene Voth

*“The living space of the unit is all very organized with easy access to all cupboards, etc. I also like the walking paths. Where I lived previously all we had was the street to walk on. I like*

*that the mailbox is on my porch by the front door. I am so pleased to have some very nice neighbors. I miss my friends in Emporia, but I really like it here. I have heard that Bethesda is a very good nursing home, if and when I need it.”*

– Louise Hinrichs

*“I appreciate being part of a caring community, and having neighbors close by to drop in or see if help is needed. I enjoy having an attached garage, which I never had. We have used that extra space to expand room for a play area for the great-grandchildren when we have family gatherings.*

*Making this move gave opportunity for my husband to socialize more and for both of us to take part in activities. It made financial sense to make the investment for our retirement years at that time. The spaciousness of the unit enabled us to take much of our household items with us, which made the transition easy.”*

– Josephine Voth



## CEO Corner



Sara Hiebert, CEO

June 13-20 was C.N.A week, a week that we celebrated our most unrecognized staff that deserves the most gratitude. Our C.N.A.'s are the glue that holds our organization together. They do the day to day tasks that are often not the most glorious and they do it with love, dignity and utmost care. Thank you to all the C.N.A.s at Bethesda for

what you do and for the heart that you give to your family here at Bethesda. We love you and thank you!

Another group of people who often do not get recognized are the Bethesda Board of Trustees. These community members give generously of their time to attend meetings, prayerfully make huge decisions for the benefit of Bethesda and have a desire to keep the mission of Bethesda going for years to come. Our Board is the best! Currently our board consist of 11 community members: Darla Banman, Lynette Duerksen, Marjean Harris, Bonnie Janzen, Jared Jost, Stephanie Regier, Pat Rupp, Eileen Schmidt, Duane Unruh – Board Chair, Jason Unruh and Verney Voth. I would like to extend a huge thank you as



well to Karl Brubaker who just finished his third term on the board. Karl has served several three-year terms over the years and has provided great leadership and direction to the board and administration. Duane Unruh will begin as the new Board Chair.

If you ever have interest in serving on the Bethesda board, please contact me or a current board member. I believe you will get more from your time serving then what you have to put into it. Our board is such a wonderful group of missional people and I am blessed to have the opportunity to work with each one of them. Thank you!

## Volunteer Opportunities

Bethesda Home is always looking for friendly, compassionate and reliable volunteers to help us with day to day life enriching activities, special events and outings. There are a wide variety of jobs available to volunteers, so no matter what your interests are, we will have a way for you to help out!

Some suggested life enriching volunteer opportunities include:

**Provide Life Enrichment Activities.** We provide a variety of activities for our residents, and welcome others to share their gifts and talents i.e. storytelling, Low German conversations, singing or playing an instrument, painting, dancing, sharing of hobbies, etc.

**Share on the big screen.** Slideshows, power point presentations, videos are all visual avenues to provide conversation, cognitive stimulation and reminiscing for our residents. If you have traveled or found some old photos of yesteryear, we are ready to see and hear about them.

**Develop social relationships with Bethesda residents.** Some residents, due to cognitive decline, are only

marginally involved in planned activities. These residents benefit from 1 on 1 time by visiting, reading, singing, and/or coloring with them, showing them pictures, etc. to provide stimulation and social engagement.

**Assist in maintaining the Butterfly Garden.** Just a few hours per month from Spring through Fall could benefit the garden a lot, for things such as weeding, dead-heading, etc. Contact Nancy Stucky, Butterfly Garden volunteer coordinator for details – [bnstucky@mtelco.net](mailto:bnstucky@mtelco.net) or 620-367-2610.

A full list of volunteer opportunities is listed on the web site under the Ways to Give \$ and Time tab.



# Life Enrichment Director Report

The halls at Bethesda are teeming with youngsters, ages 10 to 14 years old! This is the fifth summer of our Jr. Volunteer Program. We have two sessions of volunteers, with around 12 in each session. The volunteers attend orientation, then they sign up for the activities in which they want to help and receive an official badge with their name and picture on it.

Kristal Bells (hand bells), Bingo, Baking, Gardening, Coffee Time, Science Lab, Match-Up Game, Memory Activity and Table Games are some of the activities in which volunteers can choose to help. They also can sign up to help the dietary department at meal time, where they pass out plates and drinks to the residents, as well as pick up plates when the meal is over.

All of the activities in which the Jr. Volunteers are involved provide opportunities for interaction and visiting with residents. The activities also allow youngsters to experience what work in a nursing home is like, as well as being in a workplace in general.

The elders seem to enjoy having young people around, and the staff appreciates the extra help and opportunity for more interaction between elders and the young. The majority of volunteers choose to come back a second or third year, citing building relationships with the residents as their main highlight.

To the Jr. Volunteers and their parents, we say a huge "Thank You" for spending some of your summer here at Bethesda! We appreciate each one of you!



*Some of Bethesda's 2019 crew of Jr. Volunteers - L-R Levi Schrag, Cody Jay, Eli Gaeddert, Betsy Duran, Jadyn Conrady, Noah Schrag, Delaney Gibson and Adriana Duerksen. Riley Hartvickson - not pictured*



*The second group of Bethesda 2019 Jr. Volunteer members – L-R Morgan LeClair, Paige Fletcher, Jasmine Woelk, Cali Stucky, Nick Johnson and Abigail Johnson. Volunteers not shown in group photos are pictured below.*



*Brayton Base*



*Cambry Duerksen*



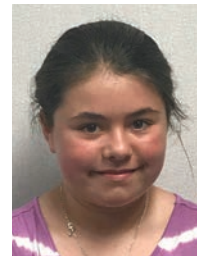
*Colby Nafziger*



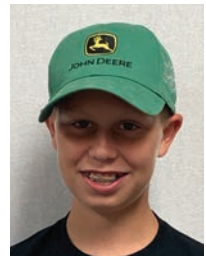
*Derek Goerzen*



*Griffin Cook*



*Natalie Church*



*Sam Abrahams*

## In Memory — Since March 8, 2019

Elva Plett – 3/18/19  
David Lewis – 3/25/19  
Mary Cornies – 3/31/19  
Leroy Franz – 4/22/19  
Phyllis Litke – 4/25/19  
Odessa Thaw – 5/26/19

Norma Hiebert – 6/1/19  
Helen Schmidt – 7/2/19  
Julia Tarwater – 7/5/19  
Alice Funk – 7/17/19  
Walden Duerksen – 7/18/19



# No Sand Volleyball Tournament Scheduled for 2019

A big thank you to the Threshing Days Sand Volleyball Tournament founders/organizers Jason Peters, Patrick Flaming and Neal Brubaker for their countless hours of service to Bethesda and the community over the last 22 years (1997 through 2018 – the first one was organized by Yvette Peters-Nickel and Matt Flaming for a Jr. class fund raiser). This was an event that brought young people together with tournament sponsors for a weekend of fun in the Goessel Park. The weather wasn't always the greatest but this didn't seem to dampen the enthusiasm for the men's, women's and co-ed teams that participated.

"One year we had 22 teams. We started Friday evening, went all day Saturday and finished up Sunday evening", said Flaming. Tournament participants initially started with a lot of local young people, and in the last several years, drew competitive teams from Wichita, Salina, Manhattan and Kansas City. Positive feedback was often given - comments like, "This is

one of the best run tournaments that we have ever played in."

Thanks to all of the participants who competed and had fun over the years.

A big thank you also to the 42 business and/or individual tournament sponsors who supported the event over the years that generated \$23,102 for Bethesda projects during 20 of those 22 years. Proceeds helped fund the following projects: Emma Creek walking path, walking path lighting, activity equipment, Emma Creek storage shed, BCCL campaign, nursing care equipment, bus/van garage, Benevolent Care Fund, office equipment, resident power lift and maintenance equipment.

If there is someone who would like to rejuvenate this 20-year tradition of summer fun and fundraiser for Bethesda, the previous organizers will be delighted to share their wisdom and notes to help you get started. Contact Pete Flaming at Bethesda Home if interested.



## 31st Annual Pillars Banquet on November 3

Mark your calendars! The 31st Annual Pillars Banquet is November 3rd at the Tabor Mennonite Church new Fellowship Hall Center – 5:30 social hour, meal at 6 p.m. We will be celebrating our 120th Anniversary with some fun/exciting entertainment. Watch for more details on our web site, area posters, and area church bulletins.

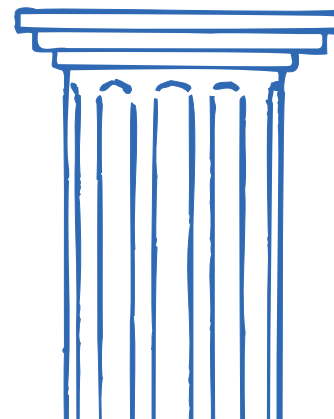
The Sunday morning message at the centennial celebration in 1999 focused on Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." The

Lord has blessed truly Bethesda with another 20 years of generous donors to complete three (and soon four) significant renovations to the facility to enhance the life enriching care that our dedicated caregivers give to our residents in their sunset years of their lives. We trust that God will continue to bless the Bethesda ministry for many more years. Join us at this years Pillars Banquet to make it the best ever – exceeding the first year's attendance of 202

at the Goessel Grade School in 1989.

Suggested contributions this year are \$150/plate (*less than 2% per year inflation since the initial \$100/*

*plate event in 1989*), \$75 for first time attenders and \$35 for children 12 & under. Donations from non-attenders are also encouraged. All proceeds go toward the Resident Life Enrichment project of 2019.



## 2019 Employee Recognition

Bethesda is blessed with committed and dedicated employees, for which we are very grateful. At the annual Employee Appreciation event on May 17, eight employees were recognized for their years of service ranging from 5 – 35 years (in 5 year increments). Following are those recognized and some fun facts of their commitment to Bethesda:

**Tara Lehrman** – 5 years – Tara is a Certified Medication Aid and is in the process of taking classes to complete her Nursing degree. You will find her at Bethesda more or less anytime of the day, as she picks up hours on all shifts. Tara has a loving spirit towards the residents and also fills in for Rehab and Transportation.

**Jason Meysing** – 5 years – Jason is a member of the Environmental Services crew. He has learned many different tasks during his time at Bethesda and is always willing and anxious to learn new jobs. His politeness and smile that he brings to work every day is appreciated by all. He truly loves his work at Bethesda.

**Bonnie Ratzlaff** – 5 years – Bonnie is truly a blessing for the Life Enrichment Department. She has a gift of decorating, and she always makes the main entrance to Bethesda

and other areas look so attractive and welcoming. She has started several activities such as “That’s History” and “On the Road”, which the residents greatly enjoy. She plays piano for memorial services and “Sing Along”, assists residents in Baking, and recently developed the Bethesda version of “Wheel of Fortune.” When she sees there is an opportunity to do one-on-ones, she steps up and spends time with residents taking them on walks or reading to them. Her friendly smile and great sense of humor make her a joy to work with.

**April Johnson** – 10 years – April started out as a CNA, and then became a Medication Aide. April has a calm demeanor and you will often find her calming down a distraught resident. She also helps out with Transportation and Rehab at the drop of a hat. She is always willing to help out with whatever is needed. April has a contagious smile and is always caring for the residents, while at work.

**Gert Malm** – 10 years – Gert celebrated 10 years of service to Bethesda as a dietary aide. She knows how to serve supper on each of the neighborhoods, helps PM cooks when needed, and will cover ANYONE’S shift in dietary, yes literally!!! She’s worked as many as 18-20 days in a row just because she

can’t say NO to help when staff ask. Her residents are her family and she wants to be here for them. She’s been known to come help over the dinner meal if someone calls in sick, or if it’s a holiday, she’ll come in early to help out.

**Melinda Cairns** – 25 years – When Melinda first came to Bethesda, she was a CNA, and then she became a Restorative Aide. Melinda worked a lot in the Dementia unit from 2000 - 2016. She has a great love for those residents. She is the one who takes care of the Nursing supplies and inventory. Currently, Melinda is the main person who transports our residents to doctor appointments and is a real asset as she is able to converse with the doctors and relay how the resident is doing. You will often see her taking residents out for a van ride and even getting them a Sonic drink or hamburger.

**Ron Soller** – 25 years – Ron’s work attitude, humor and willingness to do any project asked of him is really appreciated. One of many responsibilities in the Environmental Services Department that Ron has, is being the main carpet cleaner for the facility which involves some rather unpleasant tasks at times –especially during flu season. Ron always handles it with dignity and a great attitude.

**Brenda Franzen** – 35 years – Brenda celebrated 35 years of service to Bethesda!!! She’s currently our Cook 2 which consists of making the dessert for dinner, putting together salads, and making sure the salad bar is prepped and later sets it up. When she first began to work here, she was a 7:00 a.m. dietary aid. Brenda has seen many changes over the years including a whole kitchen re-model, going from the “old days” of nursing homes, to the present model of resident centered care homes.



Service Awardees L-R Tara Lehrman, Jason Meysing, Bonnie Ratzlaff, Gert Malm, Melinda Cairns, Ron Soller, and Brenda Franzen. Not Pictured is April Johnson.



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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!**

## REMINDER

### Tax-Free Gift Option for those 70½ and older

Persons over 70½ may make a donation of up to \$100,000 to Bethesda from their IRA account to avoid the disbursement as taxable income. Contact your account manager and have them direct your Required Minimum Distribution to Bethesda Home. They can be set up to be distributed any time of the year. THANKS to those who have already done so.

### Amazon shoppers take note

Your purchases via AmazonSmile have generated revenue to Bethesda!! \$125.21 has been donated by Amazon to Bethesda since March 16, 2018. For details of how to use AmazonSmile go to our website, [Bethesdahome.org](http://Bethesdahome.org), and click on the "Ways to Give \$ and Time" tab, then "Make a donation" and scroll all the way down to "Amazon Shoppers...". Thanks for naming Bethesda Home as your charity of choice for donations.

### Just For Fun...

- STEWARDESSES is the longest word typed with only the left hand and LOLLIPOP with your right hand. (Bet you will try this one.)
- TYPEWRITER is the longest word that can be made using the letters only on one row of the keyboard.
- There are two words in the English language that have all five vowels in order: "abstemious" and "facetious".

### Bethesda Board

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Marjean Harris  
Bonnie Janzen  
Jared Jost  
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