

THE BETHESDA LETTER

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

HERITAGE
of Care

Lehman Wiens Joins the Bethesda Family



Matt Lehman Wiens

A new face has joined the Bethesda Home staff in the office, although he's been working for Bethesda for several months now. New Director of Development, Matt Lehman Wiens has been working from home, as his office was part of the COVID-19 response ward. Now working in the office, he's stepping into the large pair of shoes left by former director, Pete Flaming.

Lehman Wiens grew up in Northeast Ohio's Amish Country before attending college at both Hesston College in Hesston, Kansas and Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana. He met his wife Ruth at Goshen, and they relocated to Wichita in 2013 so she could pursue her medical degree. For five years, he worked in the development office at Mennonite Mission

Network, first as an associate and later as the department director. During that time, he also completed a Master's degree in business from Eastern Mennonite University, focusing on leadership and environmental sustainability.

Before coming to Bethesda Home, Matt worked as the director of development for Radio Kansas, an NPR and classical music station based in Hutchinson. In his new role with Bethesda Home, he's excited to make new connections and continue Bethesda's long record of excellent service to the community. In his spare time, he enjoys knitting, writing, cooking, and spending time with Ruth and their eight pets. As COVID-19 moves to the rear-view mirror, hopefully for good, Matt looks forward to visiting with you soon!

Simply Buying Groceries Helps Bethesda

You can support Bethesda Home every time you need to fill the pantry or stock up for a summer BBQ! First of all, you buy gift certificates to Goessel Grocery & Deli from Bethesda Home, or from Crossroads Credit Union and Citizens State Bank in Goessel. Up to 5% of each dollar spent on these gift cards goes right back to Bethesda Home.

It's also possible to support Bethesda by shopping at Dillon's and Kroger stores. Go online to dillons.com, and link your shopper's card to Bethesda Home. Once you've done this, your grocery points will benefit Bethesda Home. If you have any questions, call Matt Lehman Wiens at 620-367-2291, or by emailing mlehmanwiens@bethesdahome.org.

What's Inside?

- Message from the CEO
- Life Enrichment Report
- Giving Opportunities
- And more!

REMINDER

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

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

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

Follow Bethesda's current news and resident activities on our Facebook page. "Like" us!

We welcome your comments.



Find us on
Facebook

CEO's Corner

Greetings Bethesda Family and Friends!

THANK YOU!!! Those might be the only words that I have for this newsletter. So much has happened this past year. So many attempts have been made to put together a newsletter, and all attempts have failed. There are so many items to share about, but the one that continues to resonate in my heart is the utmost thanks and appreciation I have for each of you. Thank you for the hours of time you spent sewing masks and gowns at the beginning of March 2020. Thank you for the cards and pictures sent to all the staff and residents that provided encouragement. Thanks for the gifts of food, Easter Lilies for all the residents, selfcare items, roses for all residents and staff, phone calls, window visits, and emails. I could go on and on! But above all, THANK YOU for the prayers of support and encouragement. THANK YOU for the grace and understanding you showed with all the new rules that were thrown upon us. THANK YOU for trusting us to care for your loved ones when you couldn't come in and see them. THANK YOU for walking alongside us through 2020 and into 2021. We, Residents and Staff, say THANK YOU!!!



Sara Hiebert, CEO

-Sara Hiebert, CEO

COVID-19: Hope for the Future

March 13, 2020 is a date that will never be forgotten for those of us working at, living in, or who had a loved one living in a nursing home. That was the date in which we were all told to lock our doors and restrict all visitors from entering. Visitors included family, friends, doctors, dentists, hairdressers, vendors, repairmen, and more. Basically, if you didn't have a Bethesda name badge you didn't come in. And in reality, even if you were an employee, you were not guaranteed entrance. Some staff at this time were asked to work from home in effort to keep only "essential" workers in the building. "Essential" became an everyday term in 2020. My definition of essential and CMS's definition is different, but we did follow the recommendations and kept people out to protect them.

Masks became a mandatory piece of our dress code. Even residents had to abide by the new rule. Eating socially became a thing of the past and everyone ate alone, in their rooms, being served by administrative staff. Activities stopped happening as they always had. BINGO was done in the doorways and most of the other activities happened via our inhouse television station. Connections were lost – instantly.

The staff worked hard behind the scenes to keep up with the everchanging regulations. Hours and hours were spent on webinars and phone conferences trying to learn the newest changes. Residents were given education and instruction on changes, but the very next day were told to forget what we had said as it had to be done in a new way.

For the next 9 months there was nothing "normal" about their days, or for that matter, anyone's days. However, our residents and staff showed resilience and grace through it all

During this time, every effort was taken to keep us all safe. As frustrating as it was at times, we worked hard to follow every single rule given to us by CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services), KDADS (Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services), KDHE (Kansas Department of Health and Environment) and our local county health department. What I think has been most difficult for some to understand has been the rules restricting visitors. These were not our rules; they were the rules placed by those that govern us. In order to care for those in need and to continue to receive payment from Medicare and Medicaid, we must follow what has been placed upon us.

For months, Bethesda was blessed beyond measure with healthy and happy residents and staff. We were confident our trainings, education, and proficient infection control practices were paying off. And then came December, and our world turned upside down almost instantaneously. Residents and staff starting falling ill to this dreadful disease; COVID-19 had struck Bethesda. There is no way to describe the feelings experienced as we tested residents and staff.

Neighborhoods, one at a time, were turned into COVID units. Plastic barriers were built at the ends of halls. Isolation carts lined the hallways and personal protective

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COVID 19: Hope For The Future continued

equipment (PPE) became an every day attire. Bethesda Home looked very little like a home and much more like a hospital. I would have liked to invite those who say COVID isn't real to Bethesda during those 2 months, just to experience for a day what our residents and staff experienced. Discouragement was felt but hope was ever-present. Everyday there was hope that there would be an end. We didn't know how long that tunnel of darkness was going to be, but there would be an end.

We also had no idea how many residents would be affected and we prayed that no lives would be lost to this horrific virus. Each week was filled with deflating moments of positive after positive test. Some residents would rebound and move off the COVID unit, but another resident would quickly fill the room. In the end, all but 7 residents in Healthcare had COVID and 10 of those lost their life. Not only were we saddened and grief stricken, but also ridden with guilt and anger that our dear residents and families had lost nearly 9 months of time together. Again, we know we had to follow the rules and do what was right, but this does not change how much it hurt each and every one of us. I can honestly say that I don't think our residents or staff would have gotten through this time without the prayers from all of you. Encouraging cards, emails, and gifts of food all helped to get us through this time. And with your prayers and God's saving Grace we were saved and the light finally showed through!

Ecclesiastes 3 serves a reminder that there is a time for everything; just as we have gone through a dark winter, we are now entering into a new time for Bethesda Home.

Now we are to the stage where vaccines have been offered and given to all residents and staff who desired. Visitation is happening again inside the walls of Bethesda. The visits are scheduled and with a time limit (so sanitation can be done) but they are happening and they have been wonderful. There have been so many tears of joy by residents, staff and family and friends. It's hard to describe the emotions that have been felt.

We've also been able to make improvements to Bethesda, including a new and improved call system. Our old call system crashed just days before the new system was up and running – it was installed not a moment too soon! Hammers and construction are also joining the birdsong in the air as we replace the soffits of our roofing. These maintenance improvements will help ensure our building remains in good shape well into the future!

As with the rest of the country, we are not out of the woods yet, but there is hope and we are grateful. COVID has been detrimental in many ways. It has disrupted many relationships and routines; it has caused emotional and social stress; it has caused financial hardship; AND yet in the chaos of it all, it has created beauty in the relationships between residents and staff.

It may be months yet before Bethesda can freely open the doors and life can return to "normal" but we are hopeful for each new day that comes. Thanks be to God for His unfailing Love during 2020 and all the support given to Bethesda. THANK YOU!

-Sara Hiebert, CEO

Bethesda Home Receives Walmart Grant

Bethesda Home is pleased to announce that we have received funds from the Walmart Community Grant to support our Friendship Meals program! In 2020, the program served an average of 181 meals to people in the Goessel area who are unable to cook for themselves. The Friendship Meals program receives no federal funding, so the funds from Walmart are greatly appreciated!

Coffee and Conversation in the Courtyard

Before COVID-19, director of development, Pete Flaming, often spent time visiting donors to Bethesda in their homes or around the community, thanking them for their support and raising funds for the important work Bethesda does. The continued presence of COVID in our community has made these visits untenable over the last year.

While the coast still isn't totally clear for new director of development, Matt Lehman Wiens, to make visits to homes or businesses, the on-set of nice weather does open a window of opportunity! For anyone wanting to hear an update on Bethesda Home, or to meet the "New Pete" call Bethesda Home at 620-367-2291 or email Matt at mlehmanwiens@bethesdahome.org. We can schedule a time to chat in Bethesda's courtyard, allowing for conversation and coffee at a safe distance, and in a beautiful setting. Matt's looking forward to meeting you!

Chaplain's Chat



Gail Graber, Chaplain

It is over a year since the word COVID became a household word. Walking into its shadow of unknowing at that time, we have learned and are learning to be where we are. Where we are now means wearing masks everywhere and all the time; washing our chapped hands all the time; ordering pick-up and take out. We are also learning that we are

resilient and strong; that we can adapt to ever-changing regulations, that smiles and laughter are possible even with our faces covered. We are learning our love and care for our residents doesn't waver and we long, as they do, for 'normal.' And so it is with hope that we carry on.

For now, carrying on means watching Morning Prayers and Bible Study on in-house TV. The resource I have been using for Morning Prayers is *Take Our Moments and Our Days, An Anabaptist Prayer Book*. If you are not familiar with this resource each day included in the format are several scripture readings and a Call to Intercessory Prayer. In this prayer format a "You" statement describing God is said followed by a "We pray for" statement. Following each is a time of silence in which folks can name their own prayer, and then together we say "In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer." As the prayer closes, we say "The Lord's Prayer together. Of course, residents are in their rooms for Morning Prayers. Nevertheless, there is still a sense of collective prayer we offer together along with the prayers of our hearts.

Included in the prayer are opportunities to pray for ourselves and those dear to us, for communities and neighborhoods, for the church, and for the world. While we know and greatly appreciate that so many are praying

for Bethesda, in this way we at Bethesda are praying for you. It is a small, but significant way to stay connected; through prayer for ourselves and for the broader community and world.

Prayer is a word heard often these days; even more so than usual. It is a life-line, not merely as a request list for God, but as a way of being in the silence listening for God's word to us. Over the course of our lives, hopefully most of us learn we don't know everything and we can't control everything. As we grow into this realization, often through prayer, we can learn that life is what is; the hard times and the great times; the joyful and the sorrowful times; the sun and the storm; all making up the seasons of our lives. And each day is a gift and an opportunity to live with what is; to be present. Most importantly to be present to God's Presence. It is how we manage each situation and each day.

Perhaps we can draw wisdom and hope as we recall the words of a couple of the ancient Christian mothers. Julian of Norwich lived from 1342 to around 1429 during the worst pandemic in European history - the Bubonic plague. It is recorded that 40-50% of Europeans died during The Great Pestilence, as it was called. In time spent with God Julian received visions from God and wrote about them. Her words are relevant for our time as well: "And all shall be well. All shall be well. And all manner of things shall be well."

Teresa of Avila who lived from 1515 to 1582, became an invalid for three years during which time she developed a love for contemplative prayer. Even though she stopped praying for a time after her recovery, she returned to active religious life. She offers these words: "Let nothing trouble you, let nothing frighten you. All things are passing; God never changes. Patience obtains all things. He who possesses God lacks nothing: God alone suffices." As we ground ourselves in prayer, may we, like these women and others, carry on with hope during this time; and always.

In Memory

In January, Bethesda Home grieved with Kelli Kidd, our director of nursing. Kelli's husband Rob passed away from COVID-19.

Bethesda Board of Directors

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Bonnie Janzen, Jared Jost, Stephanie Regier, Pat Rupp,
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Life Enrichment Director Report



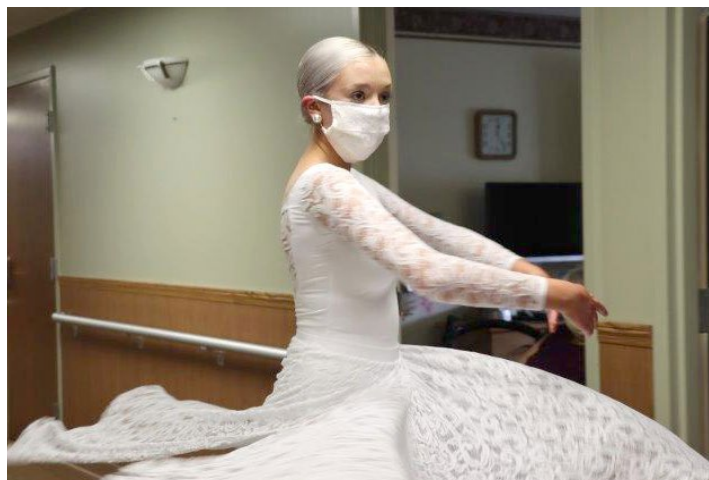
Gayle Voth

Just like many events all over the country, Bethesda has had to cancel many things this past almost-year. Looking back in my planner, I'm remembering that Pete Flaming's retirement party was cancelled, our bagpipe program for St. Patrick's Day was cancelled, the Easter Egg Hunt for employees' children was cancelled, numerous chapel programs were cancelled, and many

Thursday evening programs were cancelled. Our Jr. Volunteer Program didn't happen this past summer, and our picnic for residents and families didn't happen.

Many other things did continue to happen, but in very different formats. We have played games with residents sitting, masked, in their doorways; we've sung in hallways, danced in hallways, and rolled exhibits down hallways, all in an effort to entertain our residents. We have used our outside space for various celebrations and events such as yard games, our spring banquet, the Father's Day car show, our Kansas State Fair event, and our October luau. We have utilized our in-house T.V. station as never before! Rick Woelk has explored many different avenues and has willingly recorded many various activities, which have been shown on residents' T.V.s. We've attempted to entertain, educate, and sharpen memories through these "shows."

The area most lacking during all of this time has been the social aspects of living at Bethesda. I don't need to tell you that the most significant absence has been not having families visit. Window visits, zoom visits, and the short-lived outdoor visits with masks and sitting at least six feet apart isn't the same. In addition, residents haven't been able to eat together for almost a year. You might be



able to guess that appetites aren't great when you have to eat alone in your room. Parties, coffee time, educational and music programs, and special events normally all have social aspects to them. With social interaction resident-resident, and family-resident greatly diminished and a lack of visits from school children, preschoolers, special guests, and church groups loneliness and the feeling of isolation has been real.

On the flip side, we have been so thankful for the many posters, letters, and pictures by students that have been delivered to us, especially around Christmas time, but other times as well. We are also thankful for the wonderful caroling by the school children and others before Christmas. We have been conducting our "Generation Bridge" program through zoom, which allows a connection to be formed. Recently, we have begun a "Pen Pal" relationship between a few interested / capable residents and jr. high students. Although these relationships with children have taken a very different form, they are attempts at some normalcy.

In addition, we have been on the receiving end of gifts from our community and beyond. Letters and postcards for residents have been sent to us; roses for staff and residents alike; special valentine cards lovingly constructed; doughnuts for all; free coffee and cookies from our coffee shop on a few occasions. Additional food items and kind gestures have been given. For all of these, we humbly say, "Thank you." These gestures of support do make a huge difference!

I hope that by the time you read this, we will be on our way to operating more normally. Covid hit our facility and we experienced what many other long-term facilities had already experienced. I think we were all hoping we had "dodged the bullet" but that's not how it played out. We have high hopes that we are now on the backside of this pandemic and the damaging effects of it. In spite of the challenging past year, we are hopeful that the future will be brighter. A quote from one of our residents helps us stay centered—"We are going to have dark times; but there is SONshine ahead."

-Gayle Voth, DLE

*Life Enrichment staff,
Alexandria Nickel
dances for the residents
in the hallways as
residents each lunch.*





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is published by

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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!

In Memory

Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted. - Matthew 5:4

Donald Hiebert 3-18-2020	Lloyd Haworth 1-22-2021
Audrey Buchholz 3-28-2020	Leroy Duerksen 1-25-2021
Alda Mae Hiebert 5-1-2020	Mary Graber 1-28-2021
Jennie Marsh 9-1-2020	Willard Regier 1-20-2021
Robert Unruh 9-21-2020	Jerry Molzen 1-30-2021
LuVerna Duerksen 11-11-2020	Elaine Schroeder 2-3-2021
Viola Griffin 11-14-2020	Wilbert Schmidt 2-6-2021
Clara Penner 11-29-2020	Elma Goertz 2-7-2021
Erlene Unruh 1-8-2021	Theodore Lehrman 2-14-2021
Irvin Voth 1-22-2021	Julia Regier 2-15-2021

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.