

THE BETHESDA LETTER

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

HERITAGE
of Care

Chaplain's Chat

Greetings to you all! My name is Eldon Epp and I'm the new chaplain following Gail Graber's retirement. I started part-time at Bethesda in June of 2021, and I'm becoming aware of how large the shoes are that are left for me to fill!

By way of introduction, I grew up on a cattle farm south of Buhler (in the sand hills). We raised beef cattle and had a pretty good garden, and sometimes a watermelon patch. Not many experiences beat eating watermelon right out in the patch! (The local raccoons thought so too...)

But I digress. After college at Hutchinson Community College and Bethel College, I worked on a year-round team managing Swan Lake Christian Camp not too far from Freeman, S. Dakota for 2 ½ years. After a few months cleaning crankshafts at Consolidated Remanufacturing in Hutchinson in 1977, I headed off to the Mennonite Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana.

In 1981 I started pastoring the new Mennonite Church in Salina, KS, and in 1988 went to Ames, Iowa for a ½ time post with the campus-related Mennonite Fellowship there.

In 1993 I began 2 years of chaplaincy training at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita, followed by 3 years at the Manhattan, KS Mennonite Church. Following that was a stint



Eldon Epp is excited to be at Bethesda. He is on campus Mondays and Wednesdays.

as chaplain at Mercy Regional Health Center in Manhattan, and then several odd jobs before I moved to Wichita in 2007.

I began at First Mennonite Church in Ransom, KS in 2009, driving there each weekend from Wichita, and concluded there in August of this year. It was a ½ time post, as is the chaplaincy position here at Bethesda. I am at Bethesda Mondays and Wednesdays.

It is a privilege and a blessing to be here. From all that I hear and see, Bethesda home is a very good place to live and to work.

I look forward to getting to know you all and to being your chaplain. Please know that my door is always open to you.

I leave you with some thoughts from the Psalms 103:

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget

What's Inside?

- Message from the CEO
- Life Enrichment Report
- Development Update
- 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

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CEO's Corner

Just like that, summer has gone and fall is slowly arriving. I love fall and all that it offers – cooler temperatures, pumpkin spice everything and a slower pace. Each year I eagerly anticipate fall but for some reason, not as much this year. COVID has negatively impacted many things these past 18 months, and it continues to. For nearly everyone, this rings true. For the residents and staff, COVID has wreaked havoc on our little Bethesda family. The hope that summer brought of “normalcy” has been quickly swept away.

Frustratingly, we are a year and a half into this pandemic and there are still people that don't believe in COVID. It appears, in so many ways, that COVID has become a political matter, which has created division amongst so many. I don't care what your political take is; if you are far to the right, or far to the left or perhaps right down the middle. None of that matters. What matters is that people are losing their lives and we can all choose to make choices that might help someone else!

I struggle to share my feelings of doubt with you, the constituents and family of Bethesda. I am to be uplifting and encouraging, but in the world we live in, even the

most positive people are tired and worn. Bethesda is going through hard times and it is now that we need prayers and support more than ever. Not only has COVID torn through our community, but now we struggle with the potential mandate that all nursing home staff must be vaccinated. While I 100% agree with the vaccine, I am saddened that our already difficult shortage of staff around the country will only worsen with this mandate.

My prayer this fall for Bethesda and for Goessel is that COVID would stay away from our community. I pray that people would choose to get vaccinated to protect others even if they are not concerned about themselves. I pray that people opt to work as there are people depending on them. And I pray that God's LOVE is over us all – as HE is the reason we are here!



Sara Hiebert, CEO

SAVE-THE-DATE: Pillars Banquet November 7

Save-the-date for Bethesda's Annual Pillars Banquet! Due to COVID-19, the banquet will be held as a drive-through at Tabor Mennonite Church on November 7th, from 5:30-6:30 PM. Chefs Elaine Unruh, Lynette Duerksen, and Laura Unrau will provide platefuls of homemade goodness for you to enjoy in the comfort of your home.

The Pillars Banquet is our celebration of our donors, and also raises money to support our Benevolent Fund.

Last year, we were so blessed with the support all of you showed in a difficult time – the 2020 Pillars Banquet raised nearly \$5000 more than the 2019 Banquet! We praise God for the support of our community, and look forward to seeing and thanking you once again at the 2021 event.

Reserve your spot before October 31 by contacting Sara Hiebert at shiebert@bethesdahome.org, or by calling (620) 367-2291

Chaplain's Chat: continued

not all his benefits.

Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases.

Who redeemed your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

Bless the Lord, you his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments...

Bless the Lord all his hosts, you ministers of his that do his pleasure.

Bless the Lord, all his works, to all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul.

The Psalms challenge me to 'bless the Lord' through all the ups and downs of life. Sometimes that's hard to do. But God knows, loves, and understands us. The more we can lay hold of God's love, the better our walk through life will be.

I'm looking forward to getting to know you all.

-Eldon Epp

Development Update

Although the fiscal year ending in 2021 contained significant outside challenges to Bethesda’s operations, charitable contributions were not noticeably impacted. While FYE 2020 appears to be an exception, there is a steady trend of approximately \$275,000 received per year. FYE 2020 saw extraordinary estate gifts, including one gift of over \$370,000. Without this gift, FYE 2020 contributions are at approximately \$279,000. This contributions level matches the trend established by FYE 2019 and FYE 2021.

Focusing in on FYE 2021, there are a few other items of note. Although an in-person Pillars Banquet was not held, the contributions from the banquet exceeded the previous two fiscal years. I believe that this is due less to the takeaway format of the banquet, and more to the strong desire of the community to support Bethesda in the midst of a global crisis.

Grocery Rewards, AmazonSmile, and Newsletter Responses also increased significantly, possibly in response to the unique circumstances of the pandemic and the following lockdowns. Shopping for essentials and for online goods both increased, and newsletters were distributed to a homebound populace hungry for both news and reading material.

Overall, it is clear that Bethesda is blessed to be a part of an incredibly generous, passionate, and caring

Giving History Summary			
Fiscal Year*	FYE 2021	FYE 2020	FYE 2019
Total Gifts Received**	\$ 273,496.00	\$ 656,816.90	\$ 281,916.00
Cash Receipts	\$ 272,132.00	\$ 649,224.94	\$ 278,456.45
In Kind	\$ 1,364.00	\$ 7,591.96	\$ 3,459.55
Capital Campaigns	\$ 11,573.00	\$ 49,531.14	N/A
Estates/Bequests	\$ 60,125.08	\$ 398,614.95	\$ 129,837.96
Pillars Banquet	\$ 32,987.73	\$ 28,187.31	\$ 24,638.72
Memorial Gifts	\$ 8,072.00	\$ 31,705.18	\$ 17,902.50
Church Offerings	\$ 16,743.37	\$ 15,854.79	\$ 14,890.57
Newsletter Responses	\$ 11,300.00	\$ 6,862.00	\$ 8,418.00
Grants	\$ 6,384.98	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 4,550.00
Grocery Rewards	\$ 3,815.22	\$ 3,685.37	\$ 3,595.81
Year End Giving	\$ 25,862.18	\$ 27,033.88	\$ 34,659.46
AmazonSmile	\$ 158.57	\$ 100.52	\$ 101.75

*Bethesda’s Fiscal Year is from April 1 to March 31
 **Not all sources of income are listed below. For more info, contact Matt Lehman Wiens

community. Without splitting hairs over the numbers too much, it seems fair to say that Bethesda retains high regard in the minds of its supporters. We are so grateful to each of you who have donated to Bethesda and who continue to support us with your gifts and your prayers.

Bethesda Receives Grant from the Kroger Foundation

Bethesda Home is pleased to share that in July, we received a grant from the Kroger Foundation for \$2500. This grant will go to support our Friendship Meals program, which provides nutritious meals and social connections for Goessel residents who are unable to prepare food for themselves. In the last 18 months of the

pandemic, this service has served as a vital lifeline for many. Because of this, the Kroger Foundation saw fit to increase the grant amount from the \$2000 we received in 2020. Bethesda Home thanks the Kroger Foundation for its incredible generosity!

Resident Life Enrichment Campaign Update

Before the pandemic, you may remember hearing about our Resident Life Enrichment fundraiser. The goal of the RLE Campaign was to update our facilities, and allow us to provide the best possible care to our residents. You may also recall hearing that construction prices have been much higher recently, due to increased demand for building materials. This has also meant that the campaign expenses have increased accordingly.

Finally, because of the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bethesda will be delaying the full remodel of our facilities for 1-2 years. This will give us continued flexibility to respond to the challenges of the pandemic and allow us to designate COVID wards if needed.

Our plan at this time is to do the necessary work of creating a separate conference room for staff. The creation of a private conference space at Bethesda will facilitate

the discussion of confidential information liked patient needs. For the sake of our residents, this is an essential improvement!

If you made a pledge to the RLE campaign, and aren't sure if you fulfilled it, please get in touch with us ASAP! We estimate we have another \$100,000 in costs to cover, and about that same amount in outstanding pledges. If everyone with an outstanding pledge would reach out to us, we'd be able to cover our costs for the new conference room immediately.

We also invite you to consider making an additional gift to the RLE Campaign, if you so choose. To find out about giving donations, please contact Matt Lehman Wiens in the development office, or send a check to Bethesda Home, PO Box 357, Goessel, KS 67053.

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.

Amazon Purchases Raise Money For Bethesda

Your purchases via AmazonSmile have generated revenue to Bethesda!! \$153.51 has been donated by Amazon to Bethesda since May, 2018. For details of how to use AmazonSmile go to our website, 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.

Bethesda Home's Board of Directors

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Life Enrichment Director Passes The Baton



Gayle Voth retires after 12 years at Bethesda Home.

“Relationships.” That’s what Gayle Voth said when asked what she’ll miss the most about her role. Voth retired August 6 after working for 12 years as Bethesda’s Director of Life Enrichment.

Ariel Kraus, who has stepped into Gayle’s shoes as the new Director, echoed this sentiment. Kraus has served as the assistant director since early 2020. While the day-to-day work of the Life Enrichment role is focused on planning events to enrich the lives of Bethesda’s residents, the over-arching theme of the job is on relationships.

In addition to sharing a passion for Bethesda’s residents and community, both Gayle and Ariel bring outside skills and creative ideas to the role. Voth, who started her career in child care, has worked to ensure that in addition to being fun, Bethesda events include aspects that engage all elements of development – cognitive, physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and more. This philosophy is one that interacts with the full personhood of each resident.

While embracing this philosophy, Kraus also brings her own skills to her new role as Director of Life Enrichment. With degrees in flute performance and music theory, she often performs for residents, filling our halls with music.

Of course, the pandemic has made the last year an interesting one. Ariel started with Bethesda in January of 2020 after volunteering in 2019, and both Voth and Kraus look forward to a return to normal. Programs



Ariel Kraus has stepped into her new role as Life Enrichment Director. She couldn't be happier to be at Bethesda! (Her dog is a mini Australian Shepherd)

like Generation Bridge and the Junior Volunteer program have been suspended since March 2020. These programs bring children into Bethesda to interact with residents and assist with their care. Further, the end of the pandemic will allow residents greater flexibility to participate in the community and see family members.

Whatever the future may hold, the Life Enrichment program, so well managed by Gayle Voth for the last 12 years, is in good hands. Already in August, Kraus held bus trips to Maxwell Wildlife Preserve, the Bethesda Olympics, and events around Threshing Days in Goessel.

If you happen to see Gayle around town, be sure to thank her for her years of amazing work, and if you see Ariel around Bethesda, be sure to welcome her into her new role!

Move Home To Bethesda

Interested in moving to Independent Living? Consider moving to a Bethesda Home duplex! Each 2-bedroom facility is located within walking distance of Goessel’s grocery store, post office, and neighborhood schools. The grocery store can deliver

to you each Friday, and residents of duplexes have first priority to our assisted living and nursing care.

Newly constructed building sites are also available in the Emma Creek Meadows addition. Call Bethesda Home today to discuss your options or schedule a tour!



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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

4/20/21- Robert Graham

5/10/21- Mary Moyer

5/11/21- Dora Unruh

5/27/21-Harold Unruh

7/2/21-Verene Eason

7/13/21- Esther Funk

7/16/21-Karen Diane Glaser

7/18/21- Charles "Chuck" Abrahams

7/23/21- Mary Ann Funk

8/16/21- Linda Bartel

8/19/21- Clark Wiebe

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.