

The Heartbeat

United Church of Christ Homes

A place to be yourself and celebrate your life

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On My Mind...A Message from UCC Homes President/CEO Beth McMaster

*"It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving."
~ Mother Teresa*

In autumn, we gather and store for the winter months. We are thankful for the rich harvest and the gifts of the earth. Our thoughts turn to the thankfulness we feel as we surround ourselves with family at a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

As I reflect on what I am thankful for, my thoughts turn to you, our faithful supporters. You who routinely open your hearts and invite us in. Through prayerful uplifting of our work, supporting our staff through your volunteer hours, and generous financial donations, you are a never-ending support to us as we continue to fill our mission.

As you read this, we have been already experiencing your generosity in yet another way. The Christmas gift cards you provide that have started to arrive enable our staff to purchase meaningful small gifts for every resident. This is a time-honored tradition that brings cheer to so many. We often hear the surprise and delight in the residents' voices as they receive their gifts. I hope that you experience the same joy in giving that we experience as we don our Santa hats and distribute the gifts.

My prayer for each and every one of you, "Heavenly Father, God of abundance, our hearts are full of gratitude for those who give willingly and generously. We ask for your richest blessing to be poured among them. Amen."

Resident Spotlight on The Lebanon Valley Home

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

Many people experience amazing adventures and make new friends when traveling but few people can say that they met their spouse while traveling alone. Mrs. Jane Straub, a cottage resident at The Lebanon Valley Home, never dreamed she would meet and fall in love with someone she met on a bus trip but that is exactly what happened.

Growing up in Weavertown in North Lebanon Township, Mrs. Straub's family took advantage of exploring many of the historical landmarks and areas within driving distance, including her father's favorite, Gettysburg. It was always educational and fun, especially when they attended the historical reenactments. Visiting the New England states secured a place on her bucket list but didn't become a reality until much later in life.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Geneva College in Beaver Falls (she proudly interjects it is the home of Joe Nameth), Mrs. Straub began her career in education with the Northern Lebanon School District, where she worked for 30 years before retiring. She loved teaching and developed lasting friendships with fellow teachers and former students, several with whom she remains in contact. One special class told her that, "We will always be your children," which she shared with a huge smile on her face.

After many years of teaching, she took an opportunity to take a sabbatical during the 1983 to 1984 school year. During her sabbatical she took two bus trips to New England, still on her bucket list. One trip was to western Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and a side trip to Rhode Island and the other to eastern Massachusetts, including Boston, Plymouth, and Cape Cod. It was on the second bus trip where she met Greg Straub, her future husband.

When she arrived at the Trailways Tour meeting site, a group of women invited her to join them, as they noticed she was traveling by herself. They welcomed her into their group and became quite friendly during the trip. At that time, it was still common for the tour company to share the names of all the passengers with other passengers on the same tour. There were only two "single" names on the list, Jane and Greg. Greg had taken other bus trips and knew their tour guide. The tour guide and other passengers began to play matchmaker, as they thought Jane and Greg would make a nice couple. On the way home, the group stopped at the Daniel Webster Tavern for lunch and somehow it ended up that Jane and Greg were seated next to each other. The waitress asked if they were together and Greg replied, "Oh I wish." Upon arriving back home at the drop off point, Greg and Jane exchanged phone numbers and two weeks later they went on a date! They were married for almost 34 years at the time when he passed away.

Even after retiring from teaching, Mrs. Straub was able to use her skills as she helped care for her mother, mother-in-law, aunt, and uncle, researching care options, coordinating appointments, financial planning, and advocating for their needs. Her mother had been a resident at Kindred Place for about seven years and she loved it there. Seeing firsthand the challenges that the family members faced, moving to a cottage at The Lebanon Valley Home was a proactive move for the Straubs. A framed cross-stitch of Bless This Home, beautifully crafted by Mrs. Straub, hangs prominently in her cottage and is a reminder of the many blessings in life.



Mrs. Jane Straub

Meet a Resident at Thornwald Home

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

Music and dance have the power to connect people in many ways. For Mrs. Frances Sanders, Personal Care resident at Thornwald Home, music and dance has been instrumental throughout her life, uniting her with her husband and great joy by sharing her musical talents with others.

She met her husband, Charlie, when they attended the same 7th and 8th grade dance. Mrs. Sanders had her eye on Charlie's friend and liked him better. It wasn't until they were juniors in high school that she began dating Charlie. During her high school years, Mrs. Sanders musical gifts exploded. She took private voice lessons and played the trombone and piano. She giggled when she shared that the only reason she started playing the trombone was because her older brother had it and her parents didn't have to buy another instrument. She played in the Marching Band and became so skilled at playing the trombone that she was selected to perform a trombone solo at her high school graduation. Her love of music, dance and drama were highlighted in the many operettas and plays in which earned roles.

During their 73 years of marriage, Mr. & Mrs. Sanders raised two wonderful children, a son and daughter, and treasure six beautiful grandchildren. Mrs. Sanders shared that they were blessed beyond belief. When her children were 12 and 9 years old, the Sanders had the opportunity to travel and teach in Micronesia, a subregion of Oceania consisting of approximately 2,000 small islands in the northwest Pacific Ocean. Mr. Sanders managed all the island schools while she, a special education teacher, taught. They relished the experience of being immersed in a different culture and meeting new people so much that they went back to visit many times over the years.

Helping others was woven into her life. For her entire teaching career, Mrs. Sanders taught elementary school special education within the Carlisle School district. Mr. Sanders, also an educator, began his career as a teacher but then transitioned to guidance counselor, Vice Principal and then Principal. During summers and some weekends, the Sanders would travel in their Air Streamer and eventually traveled to every state. The Sanders also traveled abroad to Germany, Italy, South America, and Australia. Making new friends during their adventures was always a bonus.



Mrs. Frances Sanders

Active members of First UCC in Carlisle, they were familiar with UCC Homes as part of their church life. Mrs. Sanders sang in the choir, taught Sunday School, coordinated Vacation Bible School and helped wherever needed. When they decided to downsize, they moved to a cottage at Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home, part of UCC Homes ministry, and enjoyed their life there, continuing to make new friends. Mr. Sanders eventually moved to Thornwald Home for skilled care when his healthcare needs changed. After his passing, Mrs. Sanders moved to Personal Care at Thornwald Home. Visiting her husband there regularly, she knew many of the staff, which made her transition to Personal Care a bit easier. Mrs. Sanders is now a welcoming face to her friends from Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home who transition to Thornwald Home as well as extending hospitality to other new residents in Personal Care.

At 92 years young, Mrs. Sanders feels great and loves going out with her family. She is thankful for the special friends she's made at Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home and Thornwald Home, residents, staff, and volunteers alike.

How to Manage Your Pain

By Tempest Gagnon, Director of Clinical Services and Education

Everyone experiences pain differently. Pain is your body telling you a part of your body is injured. The sensation of pain varies depending on the type, location, and how sensitive you are to pain. Some people have a higher tolerance than others.

Acute pain is usually associated with an acute condition such as a sprain, cut, burn, or fracture. This pain usually subsides as the injury resolves. **Chronic pain** occurs from a chronic condition such as arthritis, back pain, neuropath, or cancer.

If you experience pain, inform your physician or practitioner about it. Tell them everything about your pain to help your physician guide you on how to manage it. Consider the following to help describe your pain:

- When did it begin?
- Where is the pain?
- What does it feel like? Burning, pins and needles, aching, dull, stabbing, throbbing?
- Is it constant or intermittent?
- Does the pain radiate? For example, starts in the lower back and radiates down one leg.
- What makes the pain better? Laying flat or on one side, walking, repositioning?
- What makes the pain worse? Coughing, moving, walking?
- Does the pain interfere with your day-to-day activities such as eating, sleeping, or socializing?
- How severe is it?
 - On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 is minimal pain and 10 is severe, horrible pain.
 - Verbal pain description: mild, moderate, severe, horrible severe pain.

Non-Drug Pain Relief – These techniques can be used along or in combination. Heat, cold, distraction, meditation, relaxation, exercises, massage, or therapy.

Medicines for Pain Relief – There are many different types of medications that help control pain. Your physician will help guide you in choosing what works best for you.

There are misconceptions regarding pain medications. One is that by taking a strong medication now, it will not work later and another is it is better to wait until the pain is severe, so you do not become addicted. Both misconceptions are false. Studies show that if you take pain medication before the pain gets too severe it reduces the risk of pain becoming so severe that it becomes hard to manage. Taking regularly scheduled doses of pain medication helps to maintain a constant pain relief. A common concern about pain medication is the fear of becoming addicted. When you take pain medication for the control of pain it does not mean you are addicted. An addiction to a medication is psychological as well as physical.

Best practice is to inform your physician or practitioner if you have any new pain or trouble controlling your chronic pain. Being able to describe your pain in detail is important so they can help guide you on how to manage your pain most effectively.

Staff Focus on Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home

By Victoria Velez, Director of Public Relations & Fund Development

“If you give of yourself, you receive so much in return.” Ms. Pat Smith, former employee and now volunteer at Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home, professed that statement as a great life lesson. If this quote holds true, Pat’s cup is overflowing with love in return for all that she has selflessly done for others during her lifetime. Spending any amount of time with Pat, with her boisterous laugh and kind voice, is bound to lift your spirits and put a smile on your face.

Pat attributes growing up with one of her grandmothers living with them and the other next door as the spark that ignited her deep love for older people. Her mother always told her, “You have a young body and an old soul.” When Pat started her career in long term care, her mother told her that it was the perfect fit for her.

An employee of Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home since 1997, several months before it became part of UCC Homes’ ministry, Pat worked the 12:00pm to 8:00pm shift as an Activities Aide and eventually switched to day shift. She loved spending time with residents and tried to provide activities in which residents were interested and engaged. The greatest gifts she feels she gained from the residents are hearing their life stories and favorite shared recipes. Pat led the cooking club and many tasty recipes were created. One of her favorite recipes from a resident that she still makes is creamed corn with bacon and chicken biscuit crackers. In addition to the cooking club and craft activities, Pat always looked forward to shopping trips with the residents and special outings. She recalled one of the most vivid memories was an outing on the Pride of the Susquehanna Riverboat for a worship service on a Sunday morning in the summer. The river was low and the riverboat got stuck. It took at least four hours until the stuck riverboat was rescued. Pat, not being one to sit around and do nothing, began singing and entertaining not only the residents but also the other passengers on the boat. At the request of the Captain, she even assisted with making burgers, hot dogs, and milkshakes while they waited. Thank goodness for the stocked snack bar! The residents were happy for such an adventure and they all laughed about it for months.

After suffering two minor strokes, Pat decided to retire in 2019. Happy to have fully recovered from the strokes, her love of making people feel good and smile led her back to Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home, as a volunteer. Pat directs the eight-member bell choir twice a month, assists with bingo once a week, and visits with residents several times each week.

Pat’s service to others extends beyond her work life. She had a hand in raising three nephews, one who still lives with her. Pat also served as a Girl Scout leader for almost 25 years, working mainly with Brownies and Juniors. Over 50 years later, she has former Girl Scouts recognize her in the wider community and stop her to reminisce about fun camping trips, a few in Pat’s own backyard. In addition to walking a least a mile each day for good health, Pat shared that, “Volunteering is good for your health and makes you feel good all over.”



Ms. Pat Smith

With her bubbly personality and ability to engage anyone in conversation, bringing out the best in people is one of Pat’s most delightful gifts. She feels incredibly blessed that she is able to actively volunteer and thanks God for the good memories and loving friends she has gained throughout her time at Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home.



United Church of Christ Homes

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Camp Hill, PA 17011



UCC Homes

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(717) 303-1502
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www.ucc-homes.org

Community Locations

The Lebanon Valley Home
550 East Main Street
Annville, PA 17003
(717) 867-4467

Thornwald Home
442 Walnut Bottom Road
Carlisle, PA 17013
(717) 249-4118

Ephrata Manor
99 Bethany Road
Ephrata, PA 17522
(717) 738-4940

Kindred Place at Annville
One Kindred Place
Annville, PA 17003
(717) 867-5572

Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home
1000 West South Street
Carlisle, PA 17013
(717) 245-2187

Kindred Place at Harrisburg
4700 Oakhurst Blvd.
Harrisburg, PA 17110
(717) 657-7900

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Thank you for your support!

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