

# DIALOG

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*Sharing many stories. Celebrating one mission.*

## PROGRAMS HOST FINAL RECITAL

Vesta Minnich's life ended on a high note. The 90-year-old recently performed a piano recital for fellow residents of The Lutheran Home at Topton, a Diakon senior living community. The recital was particularly special because it was one of the final performances she ever gave.

She passed away shortly after the event.

Mrs. Minnich had recently been placed in the care of Diakon Hospice Saint John, receiving primary medical services in the nursing and rehabilitation center at The Lutheran Home at Topton.

Because Diakon Hospice Saint John focuses on comfort and quality of life, staff members, after having learned of her musical skills, arranged for Mrs. Minnich to share her talents with other residents at the senior living community. With three large oxygen tanks by her side, she took her place at the piano bench, which her daughter called "her home away from home." While numerous butterflies hovered outside the windows just behind the piano, Mrs. Minnich



*Standing left to right: Cindy Odum, Diakon Hospice Saint John; Jim Ballat, The Lutheran Home at Topton; Angie Keller and Benjamin Kern, Diakon Hospice Saint John; and Peg Ruch-Vesta Minnich's daughter. Sitting at the piano is Vesta Minnich.*

played. Her still-nimble fingers tapped out familiar tunes including "Summertime," "How Great Thou Art," "Smile," and "The Pennsylvania Polka."

Playing mostly from memory, she shouted, "Why don't we have somebody singing here!"

Her daughter, Peg Ruch, and staff members from both Diakon Hospice Saint John and The Lutheran Home at Topton answered her call, surrounding her at the piano to lend their vocal support, as well as some tears. Residents touched by Alzheimer's disease and similar illnesses sang along, clapped, tapped their toes, and recognized music from their past. Originally scheduled to play just 15 minutes, Mrs. Minnich tickled the ivories for more than an hour.

Ruch agrees the recital was a positive experience. "Mom always loved to play for the Alzheimer's unit and she would come home and say 'what an experience.' She loved to see the flicker of the old songs bringing back memories to these people. She was so moved by that. It meant so much to her."

*Please turn to Inside Back Cover.*

*"I'll never come down to earth again,"*

*she quipped about the enthusiastic reception to her God-given talent.*

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# THE PRESIDENT'S DIALOG

## DIAKON LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES – “MANY HANDS. ONE HEART.”



The Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D.

*Many Hands.  
One Heart.™*

“The theme is very much a tribute to our staff members—the people whose kindness and concern make Diakon so great. We want to instill a new sense of pride in them for their work within an organization that provides so many valuable services to people in need.”

“Many Hands. One Heart.” We can’t think of a better way to describe Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries in so few words. Earlier this year, we were proud to begin a Diakon branding campaign—a campaign guided by our new theme, “Many Hands. One Heart.”

Where did this theme come from? In 2004, we conducted research to see what “Diakon” meant to the people we serve. We found that many in our audiences felt positively about Diakon, but weren’t aware of the extent of services that we provide. Each year, Diakon touches the lives of more than 70,000 people throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. We wanted to make it easier for people to identify our family of services and to seek out a Diakon community or program.

And that’s where “Many Hands. One Heart.” comes in. Simply speaking, the campaign was designed to help more people understand who we are and just how much we do. With just four small words, the theme line sums us up perfectly.

“Many Hands. One Heart.” captures the depth of Diakon—from the many services we provide to the many people involved in every aspect of caring for those we serve. The theme also conveys the way those services are delivered . . . with compassion and care, with gracious hospitality and service.

### Our people, our spirit. “Many Hands. One Heart.”

The theme is very much a tribute to our staff members—the people whose kindness and concern make Diakon so great. We want to instill a new sense of pride in them for their work within an organization that provides so many valuable services to people in need.



And we want our residents, clients, and neighbors to know they can look to Diakon when and where they need support at all stages of life. Our new theme line can’t tell you everything we do, but its warm and compassionate message captures our spirit. “Many Hands. One Heart.” evokes real emotion around the Diakon name.

The phrase “Many Hands. One Heart.” accompanied the “Diakon” logo in the television, print, and radio advertisements we have done this year; it is also featured in all of our communications materials. In addition to the theme, you may have noticed a number of other changes as part of our branding campaign. All of our communications, including our brochures and newsletters, have been redesigned to have a similar look and feel that is distinctly Diakon.

We are also incorporating “Diakon” into the names of all of our Senior Living Communities and Family & Community Ministries programs to further solidify their identities and reinforce the breadth of services we provide. Our Diakon Family & Community Ministries programs have changed, for example, from Hospice Saint John and Family Life Services to

*President's Dialog continued.*

Diakon Hospice Saint John and Diakon Family Life Services. Our senior living communities incorporate the Diakon identity into a tagline that has become part of their names, such as Frey Village, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community, or The Lutheran Home at Topton, a Diakon Senior Living Community.

Although we have completed the first phase of our television advertising, as well as our radio and outdoor campaigns, we remain very excited about "Many Hands. One Heart." as well as our branding campaign, which continues this fall with more television advertising.

As someone very special to Diakon, I'm sure you are excited about this campaign as well. For more information about the campaign or to view our television, radio, and print advertisements, I welcome you to visit a section on our Web site found at [www.diakon.org/heart](http://www.diakon.org/heart).



The Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D.  
President/CEO  
Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

*Electric Beds continued.*

related injuries and resident safety information compiled from Diakon senior living communities. Resident safety issues, and ease of use, were also considered.

"It was concluded that updating and standardizing beds could help assist staff with lifting issues, help residents move in and out of their beds in a timely manner, and promote other safety issues," said Snyder. "Diakon decided to purchase the very best and latest technology."

"It is always beneficial to pilot new products to be sure they will meet the identified needs," says Debby Reid, executive director of Manatawny Manor, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community at Pottstown, Pa., where such a pilot project took place. "The beds were tested by residents who were at high risk for falls. Together, residents and staff provided input regarding ease of operation, safety, and comfort."

"In all my years of materials management—since 1978—it's the largest rollout I've ever seen," says Richard Benjamin, executive of Diakon's materials management office who coordinated the installation project, which both residents and staff members said went exceedingly well.

*Vesta Minnich continued.*

Mrs. Minnich enjoyed a lifelong love affair with music, particularly with playing the piano. Reared in western Pennsylvania, she taught herself to read music and play the piano after just seven music lessons. Her professional music career began when she played for hoedown dances. After she was married, Mrs. Minnich sold accordion courses door-to-door. Eventually, she taught private piano and organ lessons and served for many years as organist for her church.

She had led a full life and her family sought quality care as her life drew to a close. "It [was] neat to see her come back. They did not expect her to see the Fourth of July. This event is because of the wonderful care she [received]," says Ruch.

"Vesta played piano all her life, since she was a little girl. It was something she had always gotten enjoyment from. At hospice, we focus on comfort and quality of life. She was depressed, tired of staring at the same four walls. It was very difficult to get her out of her room because she required so much oxygen, but we all worked as a team to do what needed to be done for her to perform the recital," notes Angie Keller of Diakon Hospice Saint John. "We were brought to tears by how happy we made her," adds Andrea Light, director of the hospice program's Reading office. "The team really does care. Our job is not depressing, but it is sad at times. I look at it as a beautiful way of sending people on their final journeys."

## OUR MISSION

In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries will demonstrate God's command to love the neighbor through acts of service.

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries is a leading provider of senior living accommodations and social services, including adoption, counseling, and home care, in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. With many hands and one heart, Diakon staff members each year touch the lives of more than 70,000 children, families, and older adults. Diakon's mission is to respond to God's call to serve the neighbor, and we are proud to continue a 138-year tradition of hospitality and care for people of all faiths.

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## NEW ELECTRIC BEDS MAKE ‘AMAZING DIFFERENCE’

Nancy Bullivant, director of nursing at The Lutheran Home at Topton, a Diakon Senior Living Community, has been in the field of nursing for more than 25 years. In that time, she says, she has not witnessed an initiative that positively affected care as has Diakon’s purchase of new electric beds for all of its nursing care centers.

Installed earlier this year, “the new beds have made an amazing difference—for both staff and residents,” she says. “Other companies purchase things in increments. They don’t have such dramatic improvement in providing quality resident care or demonstrate the exceptional caring for the health and safety of their staff. I can’t say enough good things about Diakon and what it has done.”

In an effort to reduce work-related injuries as well as increase resident comfort and safety, Diakon invested approximately \$1.5 million to replace all existing electric and manual beds with state-of-the-art electric beds. The installation of the new beds, which began on a community-by-community basis in January and ended in April, involved nearly 1,000 beds.

“Diakon could have spent the money elsewhere, but it was spent where it matters—right at the bedside,” says Georgine Snyder, director of safety and employee health. “What an astounding commitment to both groups of people.”

Approximately two years ago, Snyder approached Diakon’s Workers’ Compensation Task Force after studying work-



*Please turn to Inside Back Cover.*