

DIALOG

A publication of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

Spring-Summer 2007

VIDEO GAMES FOR SENIORS!

NO QUEST FOR DRAGONS, BUT A SEARCH FOR MIND FITNESS

■ Kay Jordie plays video games every day. But no one is worried about how much time she spends on her electronic pastime. Besides, her games don't involve car chases or animated characters on a valiant quest. Instead, they offer her reminders of her youth, delivered by a technology designed specifically for older adults. Like many people in this age group, Jordie had never touched a computer in her life, but enjoys this cutting-edge—and fun—technology.

“Once you see how it's done, you can do it yourself,” says Jordie, a resident of Frey Village, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Middletown, Pa. “The first time I kept punching. The more you do it, the more comfortable you become.” Frey Village and Cumberland Crossings, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Carlisle, Pa., are the first such communities in central Pennsylvania to offer the new [m]Power brain fitness system, manufactured by Dakim, Inc., to help older adults stay mentally sharp.

The fully automated system combines fun with rigorous mental exercise, focusing on six different brain functions—long- and short-term memory, critical thinking, computation, visuospatial orientation, and language.

“I like that they play movie clips and music of my era and that's kind of fun,” says Jordie.

“You think about things that you haven't thought of for a long time and it brings back a lot of memories. It makes you think which is important—especially when you get older,” adds Marguerite Tussey, a resident of Cumberland Crossings. “I thought it would be more like a computer, and that it was

Kay Jordie plays video games every day. But no one is worried about how much time she spends on her electronic pastime.



going to be too much trouble to get into, but this is different. You just press a button or a photo, which makes it easy to use.”

Please turn to Page 6

TWINING VILLAGE RESIDENT FEATURED ON HISTORY CHANNEL

WORLD WAR II VETERAN TELLS HIS STORY, SPEAKS FOR MANY

■ One soldier. One story.
One 15-minute battle in a six-year war.



But in the telling, Leonard Lazarick's tale is that of any soldier, every soldier, in the thousands of battles that were World War II.

Lazarick, still known by the nickname his Army buddies used—"Laz"—was featured recently on a History Channel series about significant World War II battles.

Now a resident of Twining Village, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community in Holland, Pa., the 83-year-old veteran shared memories of his infantry division's attempts to take Nishibaru Ridge from Japanese control on the island of Okinawa in the Pacific. The island terrain was mountainous, poisonous snakes and spiders among its inhabitants. In the taking of Okinawa, which became a turning point in the war, more soldiers were lost than in any other battle.

The date was May 12, 1945. Laz recalls the smallest details of that day, as if it had just happened—the names of fellow soldiers, precise types of artillery, who was positioned where, how enemy soldiers

were close by. As Laz and a narrator related the battle minute by minute, World War II re-enactors provided the action on screen.

For years, Laz didn't talk much about his war service, except to the Army buddies he stayed in touch with and at reunions of the 96th Infantry Division. But he always carried memories of the war inside. He recalls his family telling him how he would wake up yelling from nightmares after he returned home. "My sisters didn't tell me until years later," he says, "but I thought something was wrong. I would wake up in pools of sweat."

A native of Camden, N.J., Laz returned stateside after he was discharged in December 1945. Without marketable skills—"No one needed a bridge blown up," he jokes—but with plenty of determination, he eventually found work as a draftsman and spent the next nine years at night school earning a degree in mechanical engineering. Laz worked for more than 27 years at RCA in the missile and surface radar department. Along the way, he married and reared three children, living in the Philadelphia area. He retired in 1984, lost his wife in 1996, and has lived at Twining Village for a decade.

To preserve the past, Laz wrote his memoirs. In more recent years, he was contacted by a World War II historian to share his stories for a book. He's spoken to other veterans and appreciative audiences, from the American Veterans Center in Washington, D.C., to third-graders at the elementary school down the road from Twining Village. On the 50th anniversary of the battle, he returned to Okinawa and stood in the places where he fought and where some of his friends died.



In terms of his long life, the years he spent in the Army are but a fraction, yet unmatched in their impact on his life. Laz speaks respectfully of the fact he is just one of 65 veterans who live at Twining Village. Among the others are helicopter and bomber pilots, submarine commanders, and combat infantrymen. Two were Marines; five are women. All served with pride.

"The 101st call themselves the Band of Brothers," says Laz. "But combat infantry fighters are indeed a unique fraternity. You gather great strength from your buddies. People use the word hero," he adds. "I came home in one piece. I was one of the lucky ones." ■

REUNITED WITH THEIR PAST

HISTORIC JOURNEY CHANGED THE LIVES OF AN LAC ORPHANS

They're men and women now, many with children of their own. In 1975, they were children themselves—babies, mostly—whose only “family” consisted of others abandoned like themselves at the An Lac Orphanage in South Vietnam.

As the country's government was about to fall to North Vietnamese forces, these little ones—219 of them—were airlifted out on the first leg of their journey to safety and their ultimate destination, the United States.

The head and heart of that rescue mission was a woman named Betty Tisdale. Moved to aid these youngest war victims by the work of Thomas Dooley, an American Navy doctor and author, Tisdale, a former aide to U. S. Senator Jacob K. Javits, had developed a network of friends to support her effort.

When the plane full of tiny passengers eventually landed at Fort Benning, Ga., Tressler Adoption Services—one of the forerunners of today's Diakon Adoption & Foster Care—was asked to find families for all of the children. Working day and night, adoption staff members quickly met their goal.

“This story is so big,” says Elisa Esh, Diakon's current director of resource family recruitment. Esh recently sat down with several large boxes containing the documents, military communications, newspaper clippings, and other items representing Tressler's role in the personal history of those young lives. “They changed the lives of so many,” she says. Esh had delved into the history of the effort because she had been asked to speak at a reunion of the now-grown Vietnamese children, organized by one of them, Dan Burkholder of Lancaster County.

Burkholder had seen an NBC “Dateline” segment on Betty Tisdale last year and set about locating her. He eventually visited her at her Seattle, Wash., home, inviting her to speak in central Pennsylvania about her experiences with the airlift.

Please turn to Page 15

Betty Tisdale, center, reviews documents about An Lac with reunion participants.



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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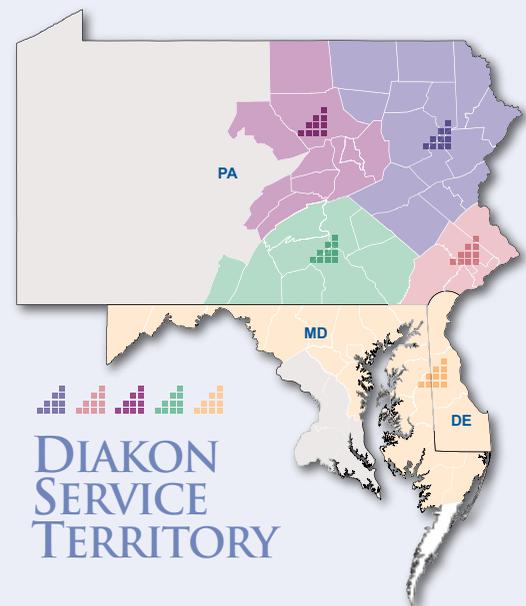
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DIAKON
SERVICE
TERRITORY

THE PRESIDENT'S DIALOG



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

I am delighted to share exciting news with you about the future of senior living services at Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries.

As I've described in previous communication, we're embarking on a project to expand, renovate, and

enhance our senior living communities to offer a full continuum of accommodations and services, while underscoring that effort with a new training program on gracious service and hospitality.

In 2005, we commissioned market studies at our senior living communities to provide data on which to base expansion and development efforts. Following receipt of that information, we began a comprehensive campus master-planning process involving local community leadership, Diakon senior management, support and financial services staff, and external architectural and engineering experts.

These groups—one for each senior living community—worked diligently to create plans that incorporate both the market-study data and invaluable local input. Among these groups' goals was to make certain their plans:

- Take into account new trends in senior living services, so that Diakon can offer cutting-edge accommodations and services.
- Correspond to local markets and demographics, so that we can effectively serve more persons at affordable prices.
- Can be accomplished with available financial resources.

Meeting these goals is important because of the magnitude of this effort. The potential expansion and renovation work at all of our communities is designed to increase the total number of accommodations/units from approximately 2,600 to 3,000. For that reason, Diakon must approach the project in phases. Working in phases will allow us to maintain sufficient cash-flow and income from existing operations while also generating additional funds from the first phase of expansion.

We're pleased to announce that the first phase of expansion involves the tentative construction of new senior living homes on the following campuses:

- Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village, Lewisburg, Pa.
- The Lutheran Home at Topton, Topton, Pa.
- Ohesson Manor, Lewistown, Pa.
- The Village at Robinwood, Hagerstown, Md.

It's important to note that our board authorization applies only to continuation of the planning process. Financial authorization must still be given by the board and is subject to continuing feasibility analysis. We're hard at work making certain we can offer homes older adults want at prices in line with local markets.

It is equally important to emphasize that all Diakon senior living communities are involved in efforts to expand and enhance services, even if not part of the first phase of work. Each campus has developed a master plan on which we will be working and investing capital dollars throughout all phases of the overall project. Just a sampling of steps to be taken by all campuses includes:

- Continuation of local task-force meetings to plan services and improvements to enhance each campus.
- Assessment of internal space for improved use.
- Evaluation of opportunities to improve local services and programming.
- Implementation of the gracious service and hospitality educational program for all staff throughout Diakon.
- Continued expenditure of capital dollars at all communities.
- The study of ways in which we can integrate services offered by Diakon Family & Community Ministries within our senior living communities, such as home-care services that allow people to remain in their homes as their health-care needs change.
- Integration of a wellness focus within campus services.

In addition, as we move through the first phase of expansion, we will continue to plan for additional project phases, to potentially include more senior living accommodations and new or renovated assisted living and nursing centers.

Of course, Diakon already has one expansion and renovation project under way. Begun more than a year ago, Southgate at Luther Crest in Allentown, Pa., already is serving its first new residents. In addition to the new homes in Southgate, the project involves renovation of existing apartments and common areas, the development of a wellness center, renovation of health and personal care centers, and expanded apartment offerings. We believe this effort throughout Diakon will position us well to meet the needs and wishes of our current residents and those who come to our senior living communities in the years ahead.

Of course, this work will take many years to complete. We will, as always, continue to keep you fully informed as progress is made.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daun E. McKee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D' and 'M'.

The Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D.
President/CEO

DISASTER RESPONSE CREATING HOPE AND WHOLENESS FOR SURVIVORS

For many years, disaster response meant waiting until something happened and then trying to fix what was left. But an onslaught of natural disasters in recent years has built a growing awareness that there is value in preparing for emergencies. As the lead agency in the Lutheran church's Delaware-Maryland and Upper Susquehanna synods for Lutheran Disaster Response, Diakon has been in the forefront of this movement.

Lutheran Disaster Response forms agreements with social ministry organizations to be its “eyes, ears, hands, and feet” in assigned territories, says Rebecca Albright, Diakon's former director of disaster response services. “It falls on Diakon to help Lutheran congregations and their members prepare to respond to disasters,” she explains. “We serve as a conduit for funds to flow into an area after a disaster. We train and coordinate volunteers who rebuild homes and work with assigned families. And we arrange meetings for survivors with the many government officials and agencies that provide benefits and determine what processes have to be followed in clean-up and rebuilding.”

Diakon is capable of this support because of its experience in so many human service areas, Albright says. The ability to access the expertise of its support service areas, such as finance, technology services, and communications, has proven essential to Diakon's recovery efforts as well. Albright and the Rev. Cindy Camp, Diakon's disaster recovery liaison, often are asked to support efforts outside of their lead territory. The pair represents Diakon in a regional



Above and below: At Camp Noah, children take broken tiles to create a mosaic depicting hope and wholeness.

partnership known as the Lutheran Disaster Response of the MidAtlantic. “Because of our similarities in geography and demographics, it is likely whatever impacts one state or synod will impact another. Out of a spirit of partnership, we help others,” Albright says. “We work together so that, in the event of a disaster, we know what is happening and who has what human and physical assets available that would

be helpful to our response.”

Diakon also participates in Pennsylvania's chapter of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, or VOAD.

VOAD partners have certain resources, knowledge, and expertise that they bring to the table, notes Albright, who serves as secretary for the state chapter. “When a disaster occurs, we coordinate who is doing what and where,” she says. “We don't want to spend time, money, or resources doing the same thing as somebody else.” These

partnerships served survivors well following flooding along the Delaware River in April 2005 and June 2006, as well as in the response to multiple hurricanes, including Katrina, which devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005. At this time, Diakon and its partner organizations continue to serve more than 100 families who were affected by the flooding in Pennsylvania.

“The reality in disaster response is that many agencies are there in the beginning, but then they stop services and folks are left with homes and lives to rebuild,” says Camp, who is considered a national expert on spiritual and emotional care after disaster. Many survivors do not understand that FEMA is designed only to help them make the first step in recovery. What remain are insurance, and the support of organizations such as Lutheran Disaster Response.

“For Diakon, our ministry is being ‘many hands, one heart’ for folks who are going through this, as well as being committed to the long-term recovery,” Camp adds.

Video Games continued.

Each [m]Power unit presents thousands of games, puzzles, and other mind-exercising activities on a touch screen with no mouse or keyboard, enabling use by persons with little or no computer skills.

Activities incorporate current research on maintaining brain wellness, using colorful screen images, stories, voice-overs, and age-appropriate film and music clips to keep users engaged. Exercises range from anagrams and name-that-song challenges to TV-style scenes and narrated literary passages complete with special effects. The narration includes follow-up questions requiring use of short-term memory and deductive reasoning.

“It is more entertaining than doing a crossword puzzle because it’s interactive,” says Amy Young, Frey’s executive director. “It’s always positive; even if you get several questions wrong, the system adjusts itself so you get several questions right and ultimately end on a positive note. You can’t leave the session feeling ‘down’—it won’t let you.”

The village’s marketing director agrees. “It is neat to walk by some days and hear them laughing because of the funny clips or phrases said by the narrator while they are strengthening their minds,” says David Manton. “There’s been so much research that shows the more you stimulate and utilize your long-term memory, the longer you can maintain it. [m]Power targets the games to their generation and uses skills we don’t use everyday and that helps to keep minds sharp.”

In addition to entertaining her while strengthening her mind, the old movie clips and trivia questions helped Jordie to recall a sweet

memory from when she was first married—one she had long since forgotten.

“When my husband and I were first married, we went to a movie theater twice every week because they gave dishes away. It was nice. We got to see a movie and every week got a different dish—

a plate, a saucer, or whatever they were giving away. I hadn’t thought about that in years,” she recalls.

The system also helps to combat depression.

“When a person is having short-term memory loss or signs and symptoms of dementia, they often become depressed,” says Young. “[m]Power verifies and credits what they are doing. They’re answering questions correctly, and enjoying a session. It validates their brain power and they look forward to doing it every day.”

Jordie emphasizes the system’s many benefits. “After I finish a session it confirms that I’m smart! You feel good that you know how to do it and can answer all the questions.”

The system employs photo-recognition to identify users as soon as they touch the screen, greeting them by name and adjusting for ability levels, which range from active seniors to those with early-stage Alzheimer’s disease. Content is updated every 24 to 48 hours to ensure that users don’t experience the same activity twice.

“Researchers agree that successful aging requires ongoing mental stimulation. The operative word is ‘ongoing’ because the benefits seem to lessen if you stop. That means that a brain fitness program designed for seniors has to be enjoyable enough to keep people coming back for more,” says Dan Michael, Dakim founder and CEO. “[m]Power is the first and only system created with that goal in mind. It may feel like a game, but it’s really a rigorous workout for your brain.”

Manton is thrilled with residents’ response to the system.

“No one else in our market except Cumberland Crossings currently has this system. It’s another service that we can provide to our residents to keep them mentally active. You see completely opposite ends of the spectrum—here we have a senior playing with space-age technology and not even knowing it! And it’s so easy that they don’t even think about it. It’s a beautiful marriage and it works.” ■

To learn more about [m]Power, please contact Cumberland Crossings at (717) 245-9941 or Frey Village at (717) 930-1200.

“I like that they play movie clips and music of my era and that’s kind of fun,”

—Kay Jordie



MURDER, SHE WROTE

CUMBERLAND CROSSINGS, A DIAKON LUTHERAN SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY IN CARLISLE, PA., WAS RECENTLY THE SITE OF A SCANDALOUS MURDER.

The unfortunate victim: Rob U. Blind, brokerage owner and stock broker of Shearum and Leavum.



It's a Wall Street murder mystery left to Cumberland Crossings residents, staff, and guests to solve. And they did just that—over dinner.

Thankfully, *A Scandalous Murder on Wall Street* is a dinner theater play written by Cumberland Crossings resident Bev DeVore. “I write plays because I have a vivid imagination,” she says. “When you write, nobody tells you what to do or how to say it. You can say anything you want to, within reason, and it’s all your own idea. It’s

Photographs by the Carlisle Sentinel.

amazing—it gives you a feeling of peace and tranquility.”

Cumberland Crossings residents and staff members served as actors in the twisted tale about the murder of a New York stockbroker with whom a series of characters have invested their money, the safety of which is in question. With this work, her fourth play, DeVore collaborated with Diakon to establish a scholarship to benefit nursing education for Cumberland Crossings’ employees. Overall, the play raised more than \$8,000 to launch the program.



DeVore knows the challenges of nursing firsthand. “I am excited that we can do something good through the play like setting up a scholarship for nurses, not just because I was a nurse but also because I know what it takes to do what they do. I think if we can give money to a fund like that you are really doing something good,” she says. “It takes a special person to be a nurse in a retirement community,” she adds. “You need a lot of compassion and love for life.”



Play participants, left and above, included, left to right, Oliver Hazan, Dora Addams, Rich Bigelow, and Louise Timbrell.

LIFE HAS COME FULL CIRCLE

FOR NANCY HOWARD



Adopted into a warm and loving family at the age of nine months, she opened her own heart and home to an adoptive son—and has now begun a career helping other children find families through Diakon Adoption & Foster Care.

many brothers and sisters. I am the person that I am today because of the love and support system I have from my adoptive family and I want to give that to others,” says Howard, who works as a family recruitment specialist at the program’s York office.

She was the first of 24 children adopted by the same family.

“I was always told that it was me that started the large family. I often felt my mother was on a mission to save children from never having someone to love and call their own family. I truly believe that my mother was an angel,” she says.

“I am who I am today for one reason—I had permanency in my life. That is why I work in this field. I want to help children find permanency and always have somewhere to call home,” she says. I consider myself a very blessed person. Not only did I have the love of two parents who did not give birth to me but also the love of so

Howard’s biological daughter, Shannon, also has been influenced by her mother’s experience. She works for Pennsylvania’s Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network, or SWAN, which Diakon administers. ■

DIAKON PLACE

“Family Fun Day”

In late fall, Diakon sponsored “Family Fun Day” in East Baltimore to introduce area residents to Diakon Place, which houses the Diakon KidzStuff child-care center as well as offices for Diakon Family Life Services – Maryland and Diakon Housing & Community Development, as well as, potentially, other businesses. Diakon spent several million dollars refurbishing the former auto center and supermarket into a family service center as part of efforts to reinvigorate one of Baltimore’s most economically challenged neighborhoods. Some 400 persons attended the event, which featured games, pony rides, food, and tours of the child-care center. ■



Photo Courtesy of Glenwood Jackson Photography

Ray Lewis Foundation

Diakon Place in East Baltimore served as a site for the Ray Lewis Foundation’s annual Thanksgiving food distribution, corporately sponsored by Unilever. The Baltimore Ravens linebacker, as well as other players, was on hand as some 400 families received a box containing a 12- to 14-pound turkey, personal care items, fresh vegetables, dinner rolls, and assorted snacks. “It is important for me to give back to my community in Baltimore,” says Lewis. “I grew up in some of the same conditions as a lot of these people and I know how good it feels to have someone reach out and help.” Diakon Place houses the Diakon KidzStuff child-care center as well as offices for Diakon Family Life Services – Maryland and Diakon Housing & Community Development. ■

COMMUNITY FINDS ROBINWOOD CENTER

A HEALTH, FITNESS RESOURCE



Members of the Health and Fitness Center gather for a water exercise class.

■ Residents of Hagerstown, Md., are swimming to better health, thanks to the pool at The Village at Robinwood, a Diakon Lutheran Senior Living Community. Stephanie Badoud enjoys how conveniently she can fit swimming laps into her life. Tom Palamar appreciates how well-equipped the pool is, and how close it is to his home. Both say Robinwood's Health and Fitness Center has become an integral part of their lives.

"I plan my whole schedule around swimming here," says the 66-year-old Badoud. "It's good exercise and a stress-reliever. I get in the pool and get out feeling better." Palamar, 71, does water exercises to stay active. "I try to do it four days a week," says the former baseball player and physical education teacher. "I started swimming after having triple bypass surgery, and it's probably prolonged my life."

Badoud and Palamar are just two of about 30 older adults who have discovered the Robinwood center. First used as an adjunct location for classes provided by nearby Hagerstown Community College, the center now also offers community memberships for those 55 and older. The heated indoor pool and hot tub are popular, but the fitness center is often busy as well. It features a

treadmill, stationery bikes, a weight bench, free-weights, and a Bowflex exercise system.

"The fact that it's just for people 55-plus is appealing," says Tricia Murray, health and fitness coordinator at the village. "They're respectful to each other. They come to exercise and swim and to socialize." Community members share the center with residents of The Village at Robinwood. Staff members see great value in being connected to the community in this way. "The program brings people to our campus to see all that we have to offer," says one. ■



PROGRAMS WORK TOGETHER TO SERVE RESIDENTS

■ When Cathy Francavage encounters residents of The Lutheran Home at Topton who could continue to live in their senior living residence if they just had some assistance with daily tasks, she knows exactly where to turn.

Diakon Help at Home.

Residential clinical coordinator at the Diakon senior living community, Francavage helps residents review all their options, but notes they often choose the home-care program. The Berks County-based program offers a range of services including meal planning and preparation; assistance with bathing, grooming,

and dressing; home exercises; medication monitoring; transportation; and much more.

“When I’m out in the community with our independent living residents and I see a need [related to] changes in health ... a hospital stay, or the resident just not being able to do those everyday household chores anymore, I know I can call Diakon Help at Home. There are multiple services that they can perform to keep a resident in his or her home.”

Francavage frequently works with Katie Catchmark, Diakon Help at Home director, on the goal of keeping residents in the least restrictive environment possible. Recently, the pair teamed to help Harold and Naomi Brown of Fleetwood, Pa.

Diakon Help at Home had been providing service to the Browns while Mr. Brown recuperated from a fall-related injury. “Two hours a morning, we went in and helped with things like laundry and making sure they had a meal,” Catchmark explains. “The family wanted us to make sure



Above and left: Linda Bauer of Diakon Help at Home works with Harold and Naomi Brown to help them continue to live independently.

Mr. Brown was well and that Mrs. Brown didn’t overdo it trying to take care of him.”

When the Browns decided to move to an apartment at The Lutheran Home at Topton, they wanted Diakon Help at Home to continue to help them.

“We stayed in contact with their admissions director,” Catchmark says. Diakon Help at Home staff “helped with organizing and packing their house, as well as figuring out where everything went in the new apartment, taking them around campus, showing them where to get their meals, and how to get out and about.”

The Browns’ son feels better knowing someone is there to make sure things are okay. “It just relieves a lot of stress,” says Ken Brown. “There is a comfort level knowing somebody is going to be knocking on their door.” ■



OHESSON MANOR

TELEVISION SYSTEM BRINGS
SENSE OF CONNECTION

Dave Borland with Ohesson Manor's new television system.

With the press of a button, Ohesson Manor resident Dave Borland can participate in spiritual devotions and church services on campus or check out campus happenings—and he does it all without leaving the comfort of his home. It's customized closed-circuit television and it's the latest technology to come to this Diakon Lutheran senior living community in Lewistown, Pa.

“From the very start, I thought it was a good idea,” says Borland, who played a significant role in the \$20,000 project. “There has always been good communication on campus, but this is one more way to bring the community closer together. For those who can't get out of their rooms or for those too busy to attend campus events, they can tune in to find out exactly what is happening.” By turning their televisions to Channel 11, residents can view a wide array of programming selected just for the Ohesson community. In addition to watching programs featuring live or recorded campus events, residents can tune in to view bulletin boards, important announcements, or even emergency information.

“It has long been my dream to further tie the campus together with some kind of communication other than written,” says

Cork Leiter, executive director. “We may be able to purchase DVDs of shows like ‘Andy Griffith’ and ‘The Dick Van Dyke Show.’ We may also be able to play old movies and more current ones that would be of interest to our population,” explained Leiter. Assisting with the capital campaign for the system, Borland “often worked behind the scenes to make things happen,” says Leiter. “Dave is the kind of person who does a lot of things for the community—not only in Ohesson, but in the community at large.” “The project is good all around,” says Borland. “If you have the health, I feel you should do what you can do for the community.”

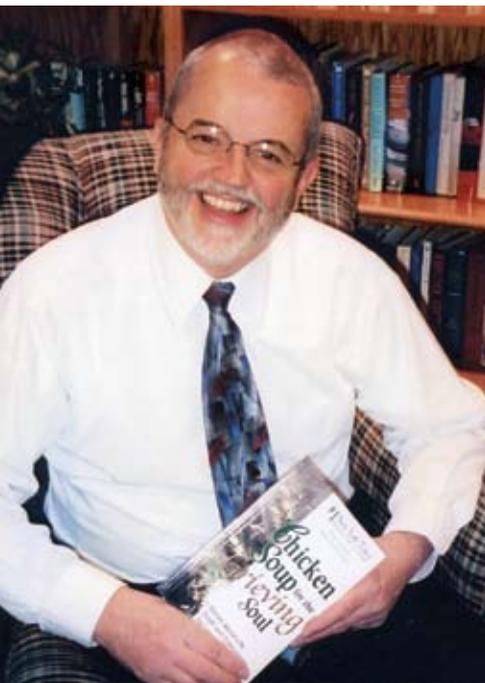
“Without the support of donors, Ohesson Manor wouldn't have seen this project become a reality,” says Donna Schuck, the Diakon advancement director who coordinated fund-raising efforts. “The closed-circuit television enhances the quality of residents' lives. It is really impressive how donors and friends came forward to make this happen.” ■

For those who wish to contribute to the closed-circuit television fund, donations are still being accepted to purchase special programming, maintain equipment, and plan for future upgrades. Contact Ohesson Manor at (717) 242-1416.

BOB PERKS: INSPIRATIONAL WRITER

When Bob Perks became a Diakon Hospice Saint John volunteer coordinator three years ago, he learned something he never expected. “I came to hospice to learn about dying, but what I’ve really learned is how to live,” he says.

His realization would probably not surprise those who meet Perks. The part-time volunteer coordinator is also an inspirational speaker and author whose writings have earned him the title of “philosopher of everyday moments,” by Beliefnet.com, one of the world’s largest independent spiritual Web sites.



As author of the book, “The Flight of a Lifetime! A Journey of Discovery for a Person of Importance. . . You,” Perks has had poems and stories published in several of the “Chicken Soup for the Soul” editions, as well as in “Stories for a Teen’s Heart, Book Three,” “Stories for a Women’s Heart, Second Collection,” “[More] God Allows U Turns,” and “Touched by Angels of Mercy.”

“I write about everyday things that I go through—finances, family problems, my son’s cancer, Marianne’s [his wife] breast cancer,

my struggles. . . . We are all connected by life and we need to feel significant and have hope. Story-telling often touches a spot in the soul that most people could not let you touch or let you get near.”

One of his inspirational stories, “When You Come Home,” a soldier’s tribute, has been made into a video, with Perks narrating his heartfelt writings over powerful military images. The video not only was distributed to troops in the Middle East, but is also posted on Beliefnet.com, where Perks is a featured author.

“I talk about mom’s meatloaf. They didn’t like it before they left, but somehow I think they will appreciate it now—Dad’s war stories and scoops of ice cream—I talk of all the things they’ll do when they get home,” he says.

What may be his most popular work is his signature poem, “I wish you enough!,” which circled the globe via the Internet and was inspired by a goodbye that he witnessed at an airport. “There was a father saying goodbye to his daughter. His daughter didn’t know it, but the father was dying and it might have been their final goodbye. He kept saying I hope I did enough for you and the daughter told him that he had done more than enough.”

Perks began his inspirational venture in the 1990s after losing his job to corporate downsizing. Saddened, he realized he wanted to do something to help others facing similar situations—so he organized and led an inspirational seminar for the unemployed. He was soon asked to speak at business seminars. Before long, he wrote his first book.

Perks finds inspiration in what many take for granted, turning his awareness of life into hope and encouragement for others. Following a hospice retreat, “I noticed a leaf on my windshield. It hung on for the entire ride home, but when I turned in it fell gently off—it had its final journey. How significant is this? Hospice staff accompanies patients during their final journey. They take them down a road they have never been before until they reach their final destination.” ■

“I WISH YOU ENOUGH!”

Written by Bob Perks © 2001

*“I wish you enough sun to keep
your attitude bright.*

*I wish you enough rain to
appreciate the sun more.*

*I wish you enough happiness
to keep your spirit alive.*

*I wish you enough pain so
that the smallest joys in life
appear much bigger.*

*I wish you enough gain to
satisfy your wanting.*

*I wish you enough loss to
appreciate all that you possess.*

*I wish you enough “Hello’s” to get
you through the final “Goodbye.”*

NOT JUST HORSEING AROUND

■ Staff members from several Diakon programs that serve children and youths recently toured the Manito Life Center in Allentown, Pa., to determine how a collaborative relationship could be developed to better serve children and families using a technique known as equine-assisted psychotherapy—an emerging field in which horses are used as a tool for emotional growth and learning. A non-profit organization, the Manito Life Center serves at-risk youths through therapies involving horses and the natural environment; it provides a number of services using social workers, horses, and horse professionals as the treatment team.



Above and left: Staff members from several Diakon programs visit the Manito Life Center to learn about equine-assisted psychotherapy.

“Our hope is to secure funding to offer treatment services to youths who may have difficulties responding to traditional counseling services,” says Lauren Conzaman, executive director of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care. “We are also exploring ways to use these services to provide grief and loss support.” ■

YOUR GENEROSITY IS APPRECIATED

Most of the Diakon programs and services depicted in Dialog provide benevolent care in a variety of ways. Diakon depends on generous donations from corporations, synods, congregations, and individuals to enable it to serve so many people, especially those with limited financial resources.

You, too, can make a difference in the lives of people in need. Simply use the blue envelope in this issue of Dialog or log on to our Web site’s convenient and secure donation form to make your gift.

For further information on how you can support one or more of our ministries, please call our Office of Advancement at 1-877-DIAKON-7, option 2, extension 21219. Thank you!



Artist's Grandmother Shares Special Memories

Most of the world knows Keith Haring as an artist whose distinctive style of bold lines and figures brought him international renown, whose murals decorated such historic locations as the convent of the Church of Sant'Antonio in Pisa and the Berlin Wall at Checkpoint Charlie.

For Emma Haring, however, the artist—who died in 1990—was a cherished grandson. “He could be annoying, like all boys,” chuckles the resident of The Lutheran Home at Topton, a Diakon Senior Living Community.

Recently, Lutheran Home staff members made special arrangements for the 94-year-old to view an exhibit of her grandson's work at the Reading Public Museum. Her son and Keith's father, Allen, joined her at the museum, where she especially enjoyed works she had never seen before.

“I never knew he painted a crib and a chest of drawers,” she says. “And cooking utensils ... I liked those.”



But the piece the former Kutztown resident holds dearest is one that receives little public fanfare and probably never will. It shows two human forms with interlocked heads—bringing to mind wedding bands—that Keith created in December 1984 for her and his grandfather's commemoration of their 50-plus years of marriage.

“It makes me think of a heart,” she says. “And that's my favorite.” ■

BUFFALO VALLEY EXPANDS REHAB SERVICES TO COMMUNITY

It's always great when help is close to home.



Glen Vonada receives outpatient physical therapy from Alex Cristobal.

For Glen Vonada, that help was just across the street. Having injured his shoulder during a fall, the resident of senior living accommodations at Buffalo Valley Lutheran Village simply crossed campus to the village nursing care center's new outpatient rehabilitation department. “It is definitely convenient, and the care is excellent,” says Vonada. “My doctor just gave me a referral and I was able to come here. The therapists are very knowledgeable.”

Although it continues to serve nursing care center residents, the newly remodeled and expanded rehabilitation area is now open to the Greater Lewisburg community.

“The remodeled rehabilitation suite has larger private areas and a separate outside entrance; it also houses new equipment,” says Lennea Brown, executive director of the Diakon Senior Living Community in Lewisburg, Pa. “This project is just another indication of our commitment to serve those in the community.”

Outpatients of any age can benefit from occupational, physical, and speech therapy.

“We can help almost anyone,” says Cheer Cole, occupational therapist and rehabilitation coordinator. “We work with arms, hands, shoulders, rotator-cuff injuries, knees, hips, gait dysfunctions, and balance issues. Through speech therapy, we can also help those who have had mild strokes or those with difficulty swallowing.”

The decision to expand services arose from the success of therapy with village residents. “The nursing care center discharges many people to home, where they lead independent lives,” says Brown. “There are many factors that come into play in that success, but rehab plays a large role.” ■

Creating Hope continued.

Both Camp and Albright returned to the Gulf Coast in the last year to help with the region's continuing recovery. Albright provided technical expertise and leadership, helping volunteers formalize systems, processes, and procedures. "We put in the technology infrastructure that tracks services to disaster survivors and trained the caseworkers and disaster coordinators in how to use it," she explains, adding that they also developed a policies and procedures manual. "In disaster response, numbers are money. The more you can track, demonstrate, and report, the more effective you will be and the more funding will come your way."

Camp's intent was to help counsel children of the region through a unique program called Camp Noah. Developed by Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, Camp Noah is a weeklong, faith-based

day camp for elementary children, focusing on the emotional and spiritual aspects of disaster recovery. In partnership with Lutheran Congregational Services, Allentown, Pa., Diakon helped to send three teams to different areas within the region, serving 151 children. "Camp Noah is an excellent way for us to reach out and offer care to the youngest survivors of the storms," says Camp, adding that having the skills and resources to offer spiritual and emotional care to disaster survivors arises from the very heart of Diakon's mission.

Whether providing technical expertise and leadership or spiritual care, disaster response is about creating hope and wholeness for people in communities torn by disaster. "No one agency has the key to that wholeness," Albright says. "Everybody contributes a piece of that pie." ■■

Daisy the Therapy Dog

■■ Daisy is a three-year-old lab/golden retriever mix that has stolen the hearts of residents and staff of The Lutheran Home at Topton, a Diakon Senior Living Community in Topton, Pa. They have even made the therapy dog a star. The Lutheran Home at Topton's Community Life Department has created a calendar featuring Daisy in different poses for each month of 2007. Proceeds from the sale of the calendar are being used to meet Daisy's needs including veterinary care, food, toys, treats, and anything else to keep her happy.

Daisy's duties include visiting residents and spreading love, happiness, and warmth. "The affection that Daisy gives to residents and they give to her is amazing," says Sue Fogel, activity coordinator. "She offers them companionship and love without expecting anything back. She's very laid-back and very pleasant. The residents, as well as the staff, think of Daisy as their own pet. According to studies, having an animal to pet and love promotes longevity and lowers blood pressure and we're hoping that is the case." Daisy, who has been at the senior living community for about a year and a half, works two full days and two half-days each week. She lives with Jeanette Ernst, activity assistant.

Daisy calendars are available by calling The Lutheran Home at Topton's Community Life Department at (610) 682-1400. ■■



An Lac Reunion continued.

With the date set, Burkholder reached out to other former orphans through public media and his own personal contacts; Diakon assisted in the effort as well as with aspects of the reunion. "I had no idea how many [An Lac orphans] would come, but we had a nice turnout," he says. "About 30 were there. I also wanted to reach out to people who had adopted internationally or who were interested in doing that."

Those who gathered that Sunday evening in early February at the Akron Mennonite Church in Akron, Pa., greeted one another warmly, gave Betty Tisdale a standing ovation, and posed for a group photograph. They pored over news stories about their extraordinary arrival in the U.S., barely recognizing themselves in old photographs. Some spoke of viewing their past in a new light.

"I guess I repressed a lot when I was young," says Daphne Ambrose, who, at six, was one of the older An Lac orphans. "As I got older, I began to appreciate what was done for me. What they did to get us here ... I know now it was amazing."

While some who attended the reunion traveled just a few miles, others crossed Pennsylvania or drove from nearby states. No matter the distance, their trips couldn't begin to compare with the journey they made as infants.

Certainly, Betty Tisdale will never forget the effort that made that venture possible. In her 80s now, she continues to support orphanages in war-torn countries. "What we did then ... I know some people thought I was crazy," she says. "Maybe I was, but I believe we have to do what we can." ■■

CLERGY WELLNESS

■ For 39 years, the Rev. Tom Eifert spent much of his time leading, caring for, and helping others, often ignoring his own holistic health needs. “I know it’s sometimes difficult for clergy to pay attention to their own health,” says Eifert, now retired. “But this neglect could also be the difference between healthy and unhealthy leadership.”

Recognizing the significance of clergy wellness, he approached Debbie Best of Diakon Congregational Health Ministries. With help from Dr. Norma S. Wood, professor emerita of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, and the Rev. Dan May, assistant to the bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, they organized two “clergy wellness days.” With sponsorships from the Wheat Ridge Foundation, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, the Upper and Lower Susquehanna synods of the ELCA, and several Diakon services, the programs offered valuable information to help clergy and laity obtain optimal physical, spiritual, and mental health.

At the Upper Susquehanna event, for example, representatives from Evangelical Community Hospital, Lewisburg, Pa., assessed body mass indexes and offered wellness information to its 85 participants on such topics as cancer, nutrition, and stress. About 35 religious leaders attended the Lower Susquehanna event in Carlisle, Pa. According to the Rev. Frederick Shilling, a seminar



The Rev. Wayne Muthler receives a blood-pressure check from Deana Clester, community health educator from Evangelical Community Hospital.

leader, participants learned many things including how to deal with heartbreak. “One of the subjects we looked at was pain ... pain as leaders, pain as humans, as well as spiritual pain,” he says. “A minister who serves the Lutheran church nearest the Amish schoolhouse shooting tragedy attended the Lower Susquehanna seminar with his wife. The seminar helped him to look at pain as a way of healing.”

Shilling adds that religious leaders often experience pain, but that pain should lead them to hope. “What we have to learn,” he says, “is that when we hit rock bottom, instead of allowing ourselves to sink in the quicksand, we have within us the ability to bounce back again.” ■



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