

ABHOW Words

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Communities Create Masterpiece Living



Like many residents in American Baptist Homes of the West continuing care communities, 78-year-old Ruth Buneman is no stranger to active aging. She hikes, bikes, swims, gardens, volunteers at a biological reserve and chairs the resident-run Healthy Living Committee at Pilgrim Haven in Los Altos, Calif.

So it's no surprise her community's executive director, Karen Jenney, asked Buneman to travel with Pilgrim Haven staff members to Tampa, Fla., in June to see what Masterpiece Living looks like in action.

The cutting-edge Masterpiece Living program is the latest means by which ABHOW communities are strengthening their whole-person approach to successful aging. It's based on MacArthur Foundation research that shows how daily lifestyle choices — physical, intellectual,



emotional, social and spiritual — can make aging a time of growth rather than decline.

“As the name suggests, Masterpiece Living is about creating a lifestyle that is memorable,” Jenney says. “It’s about residents exercising their bodies, minds and spirits – all of their gifts – to make a beautiful life.” Soon, all ABHOW continuing care communities will offer the program. At Pilgrim Haven, Judson Park near Seattle and San Joaquin Gardens in Fresno, Calif., it’s already in motion.

On her trip to Tampa, Buneman took part in a current events discussion and an exercise class, and she found that Masterpiece Living will fit beautifully with activities already in place at Pilgrim Haven. For some time now, her community has offered a variety of events, outings and classes — including Posit Science, the computer-based brain fitness class — and residents there have set up social visits to those with mobility impairments and a casual, ongoing kaffee klatsch.

When it launches officially in October, Masterpiece Living will foster even more social and intellectual stimulation — and physical, emotional and spiritual activity as well. “I think the difference it makes is keeping people going instead of sitting back and saying, ‘Oh, I’m retired now, I don’t need to do anything,’” says Buneman. “It’s a matter of providing stimulation. You can’t force people to do anything; you’ve got to make it attractive.”

Lifestyle coordinators at each ABHOW community will help residents develop individual wellness plans. Lisa Bartlit, who fills that role at Pilgrim Haven, says the process starts with a self-administered assessment of values, interests, social activity, health risks and exercise patterns. “Next is a mobility review, done by a licensed physical therapist assistant to test balance, strength, flexibility and endurance. Then there’s a more specific medical review. The three reviews are submitted through the Mayo Clinic Web site, which shows what areas residents are doing well in and what areas they might need to work on. It gives residents tools to

continue with successful aging.”

In anticipation of the full program launch, Bartlit has already begun offering balance classes and additional exercise classes. Neurobics, a non-computer-based “aerobics for the mind,” will begin soon. “Some other new programs will come out once we launch, and some will expand,” she notes. “We’re waiting to see what the residents desire.”

Encouraging people to take on more of an active role in their aging is very important, Bartlit says. “The residents who have that attitude are very vibrant and energetic. You really see the difference with residents who take control and make the effort to go out in the community and be active. That really pays off.”



Lisa Bartlit, Pilgrim Haven’s lifestyle coordinator, coaches resident Betty Erlandson.

“People can create their own program,” points out the Rev. Bill Painter, director of spiritual care — or, in his words, “The Padre” — at Judson Park, where Masterpiece Living has been in place since March. “They can say, ‘I need more social interaction or more aerobic exercise or stretching.’” As at Pilgrim Haven, Masterpiece Living at Judson Park expands previously existing offerings, like recent classes on world religions and the power of myth. Painter says residents have blossomed since the new program began and common areas have become livelier places.

Keeping residents at their highest possible level of functioning has always been part of ABHOW’s philosophy, but Masterpiece Living provides a context for doing that in new and innovative ways. For instance, Painter

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and Judson Park fitness coordinator Glenda Wood have already developed programs that integrate spirituality with fitness. “Spirituality is the thread that holds the tapestry of life together,” Painter points out. “We’re integrated beings.”

In their new Perfect Balance class, Wood leads exercises that help residents with physical balance and Painter leads a meditation. Residents have told him the class helps them relax and feel centered, he says. “And they’re talking about more than just physically.”

Putting decisions into the hands of residents and encouraging them to set individual goals is central to the Masterpiece Living approach, says Natalie Wilcox-McCann, director of resident services at Judson Park. “We had a goal-setting meeting with residents, and one lady very astutely said, ‘Normally, we’re spoon-fed information, but you’re telling us that it’s up to us to make changes.’ That was a breakthrough for us. We said, ‘Yes, exactly.’”

Wilcox-McCann has already noticed other changes since the Masterpiece Living program has been in place.

“On some of the trips that we offer residents, in areas that are very challenging, like hills or gravel areas, they’re a little more confident. You can tell the people who are regular participants [in Masterpiece Living classes] by their willingness, their confidence and their balance.”



Pilgrim Haven resident Marylea McLean works on a Posit Science Brain Fitness exercise.

Back to School

By Vivienne Krikorian

Why am I interested in attending the lectures that are available at California State University, Fresno? I don’t want to retire, even though I am living in a wonderful retirement community. I want to keep my thinking active and learn about our world and what is developing in it.

When I was in high school, I skipped two grades, which resulted in my being 16 years old with a group of 18-year-olds. This didn’t bother my learning abilities, as I was consistently on the honor role for good grades in a class of 400 students, but it did result in my thinking I was much older than I actually was.

As a result, I eloped at age 16 and had a baby at 18. My husband graduated from college. He was two years older than me. I was employed as a billing clerk when I graduated from high school.

In as much as I was working full time, I was not able to further my education. Now, enjoying life in a retirement community, I am anxious to learn new things and know what is happening, and has happened, in our world.

I want to learn something every day!

Vivienne Krikorian is a resident of San Joaquin Gardens in Fresno, Calif.



Resident Relishes A Good Ramble



Ruth Buneman, 78, has finished another long hike, this one a seven-mile trek through the El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve, located west of Skyline Boulevard.

How does the Pilgrim Haven resident feel? A one-word reply will suffice, and not because Buneman's out of breath. "Elated," she says.

Every Wednesday or Thursday for more than five years, Buneman has hit the trails with the San Mateo hiking section of the local chapter of the Sierra Club. That section is made up mostly of retired people.

With good company on challenging hikes, Buneman is energized. "Because you've achieved something," she says, "and you come out of it feeling" – she pauses for that right word – "elated."

Buneman has hiked for many years. She and her husband logged hundreds of miles in the Sierras, on the John Muir Trail, and through the Marble Mountain Wilderness of the Klamath National Forest. She was a leader in the backpacking section of the local chapter of the Sierra Club and enjoyed at least one big hike each summer. After her husband's death in 1993, Buneman joined up with another Sierra Club group, the Singleaires.

Rambling in the outdoors is really a lifelong habit for Buneman, who grew up in the Midlands of England. "In England we simply walked, we didn't hike," she says. "It was the way you got around. You walked."

Buneman left home as a teenager to go into nursing. She trained in several locations, including the University College Hospital in London. When she married, she joined her husband at the University of Cambridge, where he was a lecturer in engineering and she worked part-time as a nurse in the women's colleges.

An invitation to her husband to do research at Stanford University brought the family of four to the Bay Area. They built a home in the Los Altos Hills in 1962. After her two sons were in school, Buneman went back to work as a nurse. Colleagues suggested a bache-

lor's degree would be beneficial, so Buneman enrolled at San Jose State University, where she later earned a master's degree in public health.

She volunteered for the Palo Alto chapter of the American Red Cross and later joined the staff in blood donor services. She also picked up part-time nursing assignments through Manpower Health Care. That's how she first learned of Pilgrim Haven, working in the Health Center.

The beauty of the campus and the commitment to quality impressed Buneman, and the experience influenced her decision to move here in 2005. "I knew it from the inside, so to speak," she says.

Since her arrival she has kept busy. Every evening in the summer months she works in a garden plot on campus, growing vegetables and some native plants. Often she walks to the nearby 24 Hour Fitness to swim.

It's no surprise she is chair of the community's Healthy Living Committee, a resident-led group that makes sure Pilgrim Haven offers a full range of activities that promote health in the broadest sense – physical, intellectual, spiritual and social wellness.

Pilgrim Haven is using a new program called Masterpiece Living to connect this whole-person philosophy with



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successful aging. Buneman and her committee will help make Masterpiece Living part of the campus culture. They can't compel people to join healthy living activities, "but as long as those things are available, people can be encouraged to participate," she says.

Buneman, for sure, doesn't need any persuading to stay active. "It's the way to enjoy life," she says.

Yet she's not immune to a little bit of "luxury," as she calls it. She likes that she doesn't have to push a vacuum at Pilgrim Haven. And she notes that her studio apartment is right above the campus dining room. "It's very convenient," she says, "because all I do is walk downstairs to dinner."

This article originally appeared in the Summer 2007 edition of Pilgrim Haven Insight.



11TH ANNUAL
ABHOW
FOUNDATION
GOLF CLASSIC

SAVE THE DATE
Monday, October 8, 2007

This year Lucy Himmel began a new adventure in her life. Having lived in Southern California for many years, Himmel decided to relocate to Northern California to be closer to her son.

Having investigated several retirement community options, Lucy and her son decided upon Grand Lake Gardens and she moved into to her apartment last October.

Part of the appeal of Grand Lake Gardens for Himmel was the sense that it is an older community with a new soul. Over the past year, Grand Lake Gardens has been invigorated by new staff, renovated common areas, a movie theater, fitness center and revived marketing efforts.

An exciting chapter in the life of Grand Lake Gardens began a year ago when Adnan Hasan was selected as the new executive director. Hasan had worked at Grand Lake's nearby sister community, Piedmont Gardens, for six years and accepted the new position recognizing that many challenges lay ahead. Significant among these were low occupancy and a real need to spruce up the physical plant, services and programs.

"I am very fortunate to have the support of Tara McGuinness, regional operations manager," says Hasan. "Without her creativity and vision we could not have developed the plans to make the changes we have made over the past nine months."

From top to bottom there have been significant improvements in many of the common spaces. Each floor of Grand Lake Gardens has a resident lounge and elevator lobby. Betty Will, a longtime resident, observed that these lounges looked outdated and unappealing. Will joined with former resident Frances Street to donate new furniture for one of the lounges. "I was hoping that the others would be redecorated as well. I am so excited that they now have been," Will says.

Based upon feedback from residents, new themes were introduced for each of the lounges. The Berkeley Lounge has an arts and crafts theme with leather couches and chairs, oak mission-style accent pieces and beautiful stained glass lamps. The Oriental Lounge has rosewood tables and side pieces with custom-ordered Chinese silk upholstery. The Rose Garden Lounge has pleasant rattan furniture with bright floral upholstery. New, brighter lighting was added to each lounge, and the overall effect is appealing to residents.

"The new lounges are a great place to schedule programs," says Scott Sebastian, director of resident

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Adnan Hasan (center), executive director of Grand Lake Gardens, Nate Runas, dining services director, and Pat Jones, director of administrative services, have a lot to smile about at their community.



Marketing efforts at Grand Lake Gardens were enhanced with the hiring of Glen Belka, who has many years of experience at other ABHOW communities, including Plymouth Village and Judson Park. Faced with the challenge of achieving 29 move-ins for the fiscal year, Belka dove in, and the goal has almost been met.

services. “We have had poetry readings in the Berkeley Lounge and afternoon teas in the Rose Garden Lounge, and the response from residents has been great.”

The most significant changes occurred on the first floor. A new billiards room, movie theater, computer lab and administrative offices were created. The billiards room has a beautiful pool table and accompanying game tables. “It has been exciting to see the number of residents who enjoy pool and are socializing together more,” says Hasan.

The movie theater, complete with leather seating and a popcorn machine, has been a great hit among the residents. The new computer lab offers Posit Science Brain Fitness classes five days a week and is available for residents to sharpen their computer skills throughout the day. One resident reports that prior to the computer lab being created, she had never touched a computer but now finds it an exciting challenge.

The top floor of Grand Lake Gardens includes the dining room, Grand Assembly, library, wellness office and fitness center. Both the fitness center and wellness office are new and have been created over the past year. Previously, the wellness office was on a different floor as was the outdated fitness center. The new fitness center is bright, has access to the outdoor rooftop walking path, and has new, state-of-the-art fitness equipment.

More changes are on the way as Grand Lake Gardens begins renovation of its main lobby. “Our goal is to create a gathering spot for residents, families and community groups,” Hasan says. Currently the main lobby area is broken up into a smaller lobby, reception room, offices and storage rooms. The plan is to relocate the marketing office to this floor and eliminate the remaining offices, thus creating a more appealing gathering space.

“Overall, the look and feel of Grand Lake Gardens is enhanced,” Hasan says. “We are well on our way to reaching our goal of creating a thriving community that is a great place for our residents to live.”



The history of Bellflower Friendship Manor rests squarely upon the shoulders of a small but seriously committed band of church members who envisioned a retirement community to meet the needs of the senior population in and around Bellflower.

By volunteering their time and donating a significant portion of the initial funding this determined group laid the foundation of the Manor; not just literally but figuratively by putting their faith in action



through volunteerism. Almost 40 years after the formation of Bellflower Friendship Manor, the single identifying distinction of the Manor is its faithful volunteers who by

faith, words and deeds not only ride upon the shoulders of the founders but offer their shoulders to the next generation of volunteers.

Let me highlight a few of our volunteers and volunteer-driven programs to demonstrate why Bellflower Friendship Manor rises above the local retirement communities. Here is Jack, or more formally Jasper, a man obsessed with having a beautifully landscaped garden. Jack is up early each day watering, weeding and (I think) praying over his flower beds. Jack is one of many fine garden volunteers we have who take a certain pride in their home and do what they can to keep it beautiful inside and out. And then we have our “boutique” ladies who sort, fold, hang, price and sell a boatload of donat-

ed items each month in the Resident Council Boutique every day. Their volunteer work goes beyond the couple of hours a day that the ‘store’ is open; these generous residents spend a good portion of their week doing all the above so that funds can be raised for the rest of their resident neighbors’ parties and sightseeing trips.

The tradition of Bellflower Friendship Manor extends beyond the acts of giving from our wonderful residents; it also stems from being formed by a faith-based organization. Like many retirement communities built over the years, Bellflower Friendship Manor was swaddled in the vision of those founders who saw it not only as a community for folk to call home, but a haven of rest and renewal for many people in the latter days of their life’s journey. I don’t think a month has gone by since the doors opened that there weren’t weekly prayer meetings in the resident apartments. These have been mostly resident-led prayer groups who feel a compulsion to pray over the Manor and its inhabitants for safety and spiritual well-being, and we have reaped the benefits of their dedication and commitment.

The Rev. Randy McConnell is administrator of Bellflower Friendship Manor.



Resident Jasper De Hoog (photo at left) volunteers at the Manor. And residents regularly convene prayer groups (above).

Three times a year the ABHOW Board of Directors meets to review the policies and progress of the corporation. At every meeting, residents participate as presidents of their communities' Resident Councils. They bring reports and hear the board's deliberations. They help the company discern its future.

Resident involvement has been a keystone of ABHOW governance for more than a decade. Indeed, the state of California followed ABHOW's lead when devising regulations for governance of multi-facility organizations. The state's requirement for resident participation is more modest than ours, but we kept our practice in place. When it comes to resident engagement, there's really no going back.

In all facets of senior living, resident engagement is the future. Residents shape services through their annual feedback in ABHOW's Resident Satisfaction Survey. Their desires determine menu selections and campus design, and their leisure choices drive activity programming.

Moreover, residents play a role in deciding how our campuses reach out to surrounding neighborhoods and cities. And they determine how new residents are welcomed and integrated into our common life. In other words, residents help create the communities.

The shift in language alone is telling. ABHOW is moving away from "taking care" of people to "providing opportunities" for personal growth and fulfillment. But

it's more than just language. Increasingly, our programs and services focus on supporting residents in their journey toward successful aging. Our aim is to design environments where people flourish.

ABHOW is not alone here. Our industry peers also recognize that a philosophical shift is underway. Many of our organizations were founded to preserve the dignity of residents. Although the goal is noble, sometimes our actions may seem patronizing. That's the unintentional shadow side of "taking care" of others.

We are learning that the preservation of dignity is really about self-determination. This is true whether a resident is fully independent or requires 24-hour nursing care. Expressing wishes, exercising the right to choose, shaping the life that is theirs - these are the practices of self-determination. We honor the dignity of others when we acknowledge their power.

I mention a philosophical shift, yet it may be more accurate to say resident engagement is consistent with our mission. Resident engagement fulfills and extends the dream that drives all our work: "American Baptist Homes of the West, as an expression of Christian mission, seeks to enhance the independence, well-being and security of older people through the provision of housing, health care and supportive services."

David B. Ferguson is ABHOW's president and CEO. This article originally appeared in the September 2007 edition of ABHOW E-News, the company's periodic e-newsletter. To be added to the mailing list, go to <http://www.abhow.com> and click on the blue "Sign Up Now" graphic in the lower right-hand corner.



Karen Jenney never set out to work in a retirement community, much less be the executive director of one. But her calm and consistent leadership of Pilgrim Haven has earned her the respect of employees, residents, and all of ABHOW. This month the corporation named Jenney Executive Director of the Year.

“Among her peers she is a person of few words, but when she speaks, everyone listens,” said Jeff Glaze, ABHOW’s senior vice president and chief operations manager, when presenting the award Sept. 10 at Pilgrim Haven in Los Altos, Calif.

Glaze noted that Jenney does not manage from afar but regularly “rolls up her sleeves” to help her managers, staff and residents. While helping comes natural for Jenney, she didn’t set out to work in a retirement community.

After an 11-year hiatus from nursing to raise her children, Jenney was taking a refresher course when she got an assignment to interview for three jobs. Nursing positions were scarce in 1981, and Jenney went looking neither expecting to find a job nor wanting to work more than part time if she landed one.

Heading home after two interviews, she pulled over at a nursing home just to finish the assignment. Despite her objections, the nursing home wanted to hire Jenney. She was the only one in her class of 35 to be offered a job.

A pediatric nurse by training – she worked with children for seven years at Stanford University Hospital

– Jenney enjoyed the engagement with seniors. So when her newspaper-delivering son handed her a Los Altos Town Crier in 1982 with the ad “Nurse Wanted, Pilgrim Haven,” she figured it was a providential sign.

Yet she never would have guessed that, 23 years later, after guiding the Pilgrim Haven Health Center, she would be named executive director.

“My boss, Tara McGuinness (former Pilgrim Haven executive director, now an ABHOW regional manager), encouraged me to complete the administrator-in-training program. I told her I would never be an executive director, but I felt that the information that I would learn in this process would help me be a better health services director. I also wanted to see if I could study and pass two exams in ‘my later years’ – a challenge to myself. I did and my role now is just an extension of what I had been doing for years ... working with our team to make the best life possible for the residents.”

This year was the first that ABHOW used executive director performance standards, which measure resident satisfaction, quality of care, and financial management. No executive director in the company received as many “superior” ratings as Jenney, Glaze noted.

“Her community is the only community to achieve 95 percent occupancy across all levels of care and, compared to the 2007 financial targets, no community has fared better,” Glaze added.

With characteristic humility, Jenney attributes Pilgrim Haven’s success to her team. “When you have a great team, good things happen,” she said. “I have a superior team and I had a superior mentor in Tara. Still do.”



The 11th Annual ABHOW Foundation Golf Classic will once again raise money for ABHOW affordable housing, but golfers and sponsors will also generate funds for a nonprofit program that provides transportation and reassuring phone calls to seniors.



A portion of the net proceeds from the October 8 tournament will go to Senior Helpline. Based in Lafayette, Calif., the nonprofit serves thousands of people each year in Contra Costa County by connecting volunteers with seniors. In 2006 the organization received the first annual Contra Costa for Every

Generation Provider of Excellence Award. Senior Helpline also received the 2006 Senior Transportation Award from the Contra Costa County Council on Aging.

“Senior Helpline is a natural partner in our



mission to improve the quality of life for seniors,” says Joe Anderson, the Foundation’s senior vice president. “We are excited to include the organization in this day of playing for a great purpose.”

Since 1997, the Golf Classic has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars. Proceeds support the Affordable Housing Assistance Grant

Fund, which provides grants to purchase equipment and amenities that enhance the quality of life in ABHOW affordable housing communities.

There’s still time to register for the tournament, sign up as a sponsor, or donate an auction item. To learn more, call Suzette Flynt at 800-222-2469 ext. 7151 or go to <http://www.abhow.com/foundation/golf>.

ABHOW Words

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“American Baptist Homes of the West, as an expression of Christian mission, seeks to enhance the independence, well-being and security of older people through the provision of housing, health care and supportive services.”

