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# *Caring* CONNECTIONS



Ohio Living  
Foundation

# New Memory Care Initiative to Improve Quality of Life for Patients, Staff

## Ohio Living Westminster-Thurber Pilots BBET

Between 2019 and 2025, the number of adults 65 and older with Alzheimer’s in Ohio will increase from 220,000 to 250,000 — only six states have higher Alzheimer’s rates.

To meet the growing demand of memory care while still giving residents personalized treatment, a new dementia program called Behavior-Based Ergonomics Therapy, or BBET will be implemented by Ohio Living.

Ohio Living Westminster-Thurber in Columbus is presently piloting the BBET program in its Bridgewater memory care unit.

“It is so exciting to have the BBET program here on campus,” said Janie Miller, charge nurse at Ohio Living Westminster-Thurber. “We now have hundreds of tools at our disposal to enhance the quality of life for our residents. Our community is so fortunate to have been chosen for this program.”

The non-pharmacological therapy provides each person with their own memory prop box, which is filled with personalized items they cherish including family photos, books or movies. Soothing videos and music are also selected for the resident, as well as games and puzzles to stimulate cognition.

BBET therapies, developed by Dr. Govind Bharwani of Wright State University, are individualized, providing both comfort and appropriate cognitive exercises that help with reducing stress, managing behaviors and engaging residents. Other service providers who have utilized BBET noticed an enhancement in the quality of family visits and interactions and overall improvement in each resident’s quality of life.

A study conducted by Wright State University’s College of Engineering showed that BBET improved mood and behavior issues by 67% and reduced antipsychotic medication usage by 65%.

“One primary aspect of BBET therapy is that families are involved in the journey,” explained Jean Morgan, Ohio Living’s corporate manager of memory care enhancement. “They help us glean as much information about the resident as possible, so we can tailor the four BBET therapies – music therapy, video therapy, stimulating therapy and memory prop therapy – to each individual’s interests and capabilities. The program also closely aligns with Ohio Living’s mission and values.”

Vincent Mazeika’s aunt, Mathilda Milauskas, is one of the Ohio Living Westminster-Thurber residents participating in the pilot BBET program.

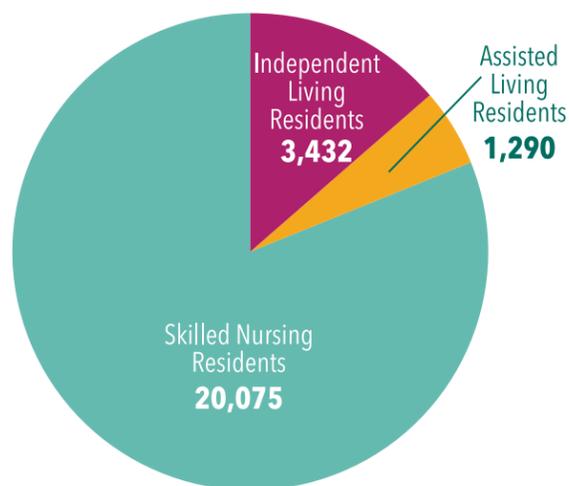
“My aunt is a truly remarkable woman who has seen a lot in her 95 years,” Vincent shared. “Her parents were both immigrants from Lithuania. She speaks two languages, remembers the depression, started working during the second World War and spent more than 40 years helping students at a small-town high school where she worked as a secretary.”

He continued, “About three years ago, my aunt had a bad fall in her apartment. She entered rehab and improved, but the team at Ohio Living recommended a transition to their memory care Bridgewater unit. Since the transition, she has improved dramatically. We are confident in the level of care she is receiving, and believe she is thriving in a wonderful setting. When the BBET pilot program kicked off, we were invited to an informative Zoom overview and asked to provide details and background to help with my aunt’s therapy. It has been helpful and very stimulating for her, and we like that it’s a research-based approach that focuses on engagement.”

Ohio Living has identified launching a new era of memory care across its system as a top priority for its upcoming Centennial Campaign. In the next issue of Caring Connections, we will spotlight another new memory care initiative being piloted at several Ohio Living life plan communities: I’m Still Here®, developed by the Hearthstone Institute.



### RESIDENTS IN OHIO LIVING COMMUNITIES IN 2020



Total Number of Residents Served  
**24,797**

\*Numbers based on Fiscal Year

# Giving for the Greater Good of the Community

## Resident Honors Her Mother With Generous Donation

For Karen Strelou, giving is more than an occasional practice; it's part of a greater family legacy and way of life.

Originally from Cleveland, Karen attended Wittenberg University for her undergraduate studies and went on to earn a Master of Public Administration degree from American University in Washington, D.C. She later attended Capital University law school and spent more than 28 years working with the Ohio Department of Taxation as a practicing tax law attorney before retiring in June 2016.

Prior to retiring, Karen and her mother, Doreen Strelou, started to look at senior living options together, with a special interest in the Columbus area. After attending a presentation about an up-and-coming independent living residence, Ohio Living Westminster-Thurber's Goodale Landing, they decided to sell their individual residences and move in together.

Soon after moving, Karen began to volunteer with various groups and resident activities on the Westminster-Thurber campus. She became the Computer Chairman, joined the library, computer and employee appreciation fund committees, and stepped up to coordinate the sale of Giant Eagle fundraising cards.

"You see – I was raised to care," said Karen. "Growing up, my mom always had us involved in everything from Girl Scouts to charitable donations that would make our community a better place. It is part of me."

In January 2020, Karen and Doreen decided to update their wills and review plans for charitable giving. Doreen passed away of natural causes shortly thereafter, in June of the same year.

To honor her mother's memory, Karen donated \$5,000 to the Ohio Living Foundation to be used for the area of greatest need, as determined by foundation leadership.

"I want to give back," stressed Karen. "The Ohio



Living organization has given us a lot. My mother and I participated in many of the activities – the social hours, bus rides to dinners and so on – but it's more than that. During this pandemic, the staff has taken every measure to keep us safe. They've arranged absentee ballots for us to exercise our freedom to vote and facilitated vaccine opportunities. They take care of us."

Karen's generous gift in honor of her mother accompanies a history of giving to the Ohio Living Foundation, as well as other charitable causes including the local food bank. Over the years, she's set up ongoing, unrestricted monthly gifts, given other memorial gifts and has also arranged for a percentage bequest in her estate plan to go to the foundation.

"I believe that we're here to help each other," Karen shared. "Every gift, whether it's time, resources or finances, makes a difference. 🌱"

### SERVICES PROVIDED IN 2020 AT OHIO LIVING HOME HEALTH AND HOSPICE

Individuals served in Home Health & Hospice

10,469

Visits and Services by Home Health & Hospice

324,840

\*Numbers based on Fiscal Year

# CARING

for our

# CAREGIVERS

## COVID-19 Funds Aid in the Purchase of New, Safer Equipment for Caregivers

### AUTOMATED TEMPERATURE SCREENING KIOSKS, NEGATIVE AIR MACHINE NOW IN USE

Thanks to generous individuals who have contributed to the 'Caring for our Caregivers' fund, safety equipment purchases like automatic temperature screening kiosks and a negative air machine are making a positive difference for Ohio Living residents and staff across the Buckeye State.

At the onset of the pandemic, in order to follow COVID protocols, many front desk employees began to shift their usual responsibilities in order to take the temperatures of all staff and vendors who visited their communities. This required someone to be available at all times and due to the ongoing nature of shift start times and vendor visits, it quickly became an overwhelming task.

The high-tech machines, which have facial recognition, can be preloaded with all of the employees' and vendors' faces. They ask several screening questions, as well as take temperatures. The screening questions, which must be answered before entering, include questions such as, "Are you experiencing symptoms?" and "Have you been directly exposed to COVID-19?"

Data from the machines can be printed out and shared for later compliance checks. Additionally, if someone has a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees, the machines will notify both the director of nursing and executive director at the life plan community.

"Thanks to the 'Caring for our Caregivers' fund, we have been able to purchase equipment that will keep us safe while allowing our staff to focus completely on daily operations," said Kara Hanzie, executive director of Ohio Living Rockynol. "We are grateful for this opportunity to continue to adapt to the new safety needs we've faced during COVID."

Ruth Walter, a front desk receptionist at Ohio

Living Westminster-Thurber added, "I'm very happy that we have this new technology now in place. It allows me to focus on other tasks and incoming phone calls instead of solely taking everyone's temperature."

Ohio Living Llanfair has also made use of the 'Caring for our Caregivers' fund, with the purchase of a negative air machine. This unique piece of technology cleans the air and creates negative air pressure, which isolates a space and prevents the spread of infectious pathogens.

Ann Roller, executive director of Ohio Living Llanfair, explained, "One hallway in our rehab area has been converted to an area for COVID patients. The negative air machine helps to keep the air contained in that area. This is a beneficial enhancement we would not have been able to incorporate without 'Caring for our Caregivers' funds." 🌱





# Transforming Outdoor Spaces in the Age of COVID

## Donors Support Revitalization Projects at Several Ohio Living Communities

As one of the safest ways to enjoy activities during a pandemic, outdoor spaces have become a focal point for many of our 12 Ohio Living life plan communities.

From wooded boardwalks to accessible pathways and gardening areas, our donors have made a tremendous impact in transforming outdoor spaces so that residents, staff and volunteers can enjoy themselves in a safe environment.

### A Wider Pathway Makes Room for All

A walking path revitalization project is under way at Ohio Living Breckenridge Village. Years of use mean that the existing path is well-worn and in need of an upgrade. Thanks to a donation from the Robert S. Malaga Foundation, this half-mile path is being redone and will be a source of enjoyment for residents and employees for years to come.

Sue Schambs, a Breckenridge Village North Resident, facilitated this \$100,000 gift through her passionate advocacy for the walking path project.

Phase one, which was completed in the fall, involved repairing, widening and repaving the existing path. This more than doubled the path in size, going from 4 feet to 8.5 feet, providing easier and more comfortable access for wheelchairs and walkers, and enabling residents to walk side-by-side with family members and friends. Additionally, the wider path will be accessible to snow plows, making the path safe and usable year-round.

“This project aligns with our mission of promoting quality of life and wellness of body, mind and spirit,” said Dean Palombaro, Ohio Living divisional executive director. “The enhancement of the path will provide an excellent opportunity for outdoor exercise and community building.”

Future phases of the project plan to expand the path in other areas.

### Creek Cleanup and Boardwalk Building

A scenic outlook and nature trail project is bringing a taste of the outdoors to Ohio Living Swan Creek. The first phase, finished this past fall, included the installation of a 70x16 deck overlooking the community’s woods and wetlands area.

Phase two began in January and included the removal of large downed trees on the trail and clearing log jams from the creek. Clearing the log jams will enable the water in Swan Creek to flow freely, which will make it possible for people to kayak in the creek.

“This project is a great example of our mission in action,” shared Nancy Hamilton, Ohio Living Swan Creek director of gift planning. “Nature has a way of centering people and providing peace and comfort, especially during these challenging times.”

“When the first phase of the project was completed, we had the opportunity to host four, socially-distanced outdoor concerts for our residents and staff on the deck, in the scenic outlook area,”

Nancy continued. “Since then, our residents have enjoyed many animal sightings, including deer and wild turkeys, and opportunities to get outside, have spiritual nourishment and be immersed in nature.”

The project is being done with a focus on nature preservation. Phase two was planned for the winter in order to protect the area from the heavy excavation equipment needed for the project.

The final phase of the project will remove and replace the existing boardwalk throughout the wooded area. Depending on weather, this phase is planned to go forward in the late spring or early summer.

### New Courtyard Brightens Outdoor Space

This summer, residents and staff at Ohio Living Cape May will be able to enjoy a new, updated courtyard, thanks to a combination of generous charitable gifts and capital dollars from Ohio Living.

The courtyard, which is located in the middle of Cape May’s main Cambridge building, will contain a pergola, water feature, meditation garden, outdoor entertainment area and a butterfly sanctuary. Residents will be able to enjoy this outdoor area when visiting with family and friends, holding celebrations and as a place for quiet meditation and prayer. Additionally, residents will be able to show off their green thumbs as they grow vegetables and herbs in the new raised

gardening beds.

“This much-anticipated update to the existing courtyard will be a great addition to our community, and will be open to everyone,” said Brad Reynolds, Ohio Living Cape May executive director and administrator. “A lot of partnerships and planning have contributed to this three-phased project. We appreciate the ongoing support and look forward to utilizing the outdoor space for many years to come.”

Phase one, which involved removing all of the previously existing plants and furniture, has been completed, and the project is currently in phase two, which consists of constructing the pergola, replacing drains and building vegetable and flower boxes. The next phase will include adding new landscaping and lighting, plus creating other amenities, such as the water feature, entertainment area and other various spaces. The courtyard is expected to open June 1, 2021. 🌱

Thank you to all of the individuals, foundations and organizations who have made these projects possible. The lives of our residents and staff will be enriched for years to come as they enjoy these outdoor areas.



Laurence Gumina, Ohio Living CEO  
Dan Ginis, Chief Development Officer

## Gratitude from Larry and Dan

We are always so honored and humbled by the generosity of our community. Even during these unusual times, so many of you, both long-time donors and those who are giving for the very first time, have chosen to give to the Ohio Living Foundation, and for that we are grateful.

Your generosity has truly made a difference. As we near the year-long mark of the pandemic, our organization continues to come together to overcome the challenges that we face, as well as to innovate and find the hope and the

possibilities that exist in the world. Your donations have made a meaningful difference as we continue to navigate this current reality.

With your support, the Ohio Living Foundation has secured COVID grants of \$443,387 from 12 grants to date, 31,200 bottles of hand sanitizer, tremendous amounts of life-saving PPE and safety equipment and \$436,860 in donations from over 1,100 donors. The impact of these donations and gifts has extended across Ohio, from our 12 life plan communities to our seven home health and hospice locations, palliative care services...and beyond.

We continue to focus on the wellbeing and quality care of our residents every day, and your support makes that possible.

At times such as these, the support of a community becomes even more important than usual, as we help one another stand tall in the face of great obstacles. We are incredibly grateful that you have chosen to help Ohio Living during this time. Please know that we could not have done all that we do without you. Thank you.

## Ohio Living Gift Planners

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### We've Moved!

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