Jim Graham

Even though Jim Graham has only been a resident at Cape May since 2006, his service and spiritual dedication to OPRS and the greater faith community reach back far beyond these past three years. Jim's spiritual journey is both impressive and inspiring. In 1966, he was ordained in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and began serving as a pastor at two Presbyterian Churches in Pennsylvania. His career as a pastor continued for 23 years, leading him to both New York and Illinois. Throughout his years of pastoral service, Jim also intermittently acted as chaplain for numerous organizations, including Llanfair Retirement Community where he functioned as its very first chaplain and director of program services.

Following his service as a pastor and chaplain, Jim began working with the Presbyterian Church’s Board of Pensions, first as a regional representative, which led him to the role of education specialist. In this capacity, he taught seminars on financial and retirement planning to ministers, church employees and their families. Today, even though technically retired, Jim continues to teach two to three seminars a year. He encourages people to apply what they believe to what they think and how they act – to fully fuse faith and life, rather than keep them separate.

Upon moving to Cape May with his wife, Sherrill, Jim played an integral part in founding the Spiritual Life Committee. He chaired the committee in its first year before getting involved with OPRS at the corporate level. He now serves on the OPRS Foundation Board, as well as chairs the Church Relations Council.

When Jim moved to Cape May, he was excited and grateful to be part of a community that truly understands the importance of spirituality, and makes it part of the mission to integrate it into daily living. He believes a spiritual environment is essential to a person’s well-being, and looks at spiritual life with a “wholistic” approach. “A spiritual environment entails being aware, on a day-to-day basis, that we are whole people with needs in all areas of our lives – physical, emotional and spiritual – and loving one another as we would like to be loved, as God would love us,” Jim says.

Much like at OPRS, spiritual life is at the foundation of Jim’s life, guiding him through each day and providing him with support to nurture his mind, body and spirit. OPRS is fortunate and very proud that Jim is part of the OPRS family.

“Spiritual life is what holds the rest of life together. It’s that relationship with God and the community of God’s people that gives meaning and purpose to what we think, do and say. It’s a way of looking at life, of interpreting life, of seeing God in our lives.”

– Jim Graham
The OPRS mission recognizes the meaningful relationship among physical, mental and spiritual well-being. One of OPRS’ commitments to the spiritual aspect of the mission statement can be seen in the Church Relations program. This program serves as a resource for churches throughout Ohio on issues and concerns of older adults. The Church Visitation staff carries out the work of the Church Relations program by forging strong relationships with area churches where OPRS has a retirement community or a presence through the home and community based services division, Senior Independence. The Church Relations staff serves as the main contact for churches and oversees delivering key messages to the churches, as well as coordinating workshops and seminars.

The “Tools for the Servant” seminars are one example of a resource offered through the Church Relations program. These seminars are open to area churches in the communities served by OPRS. Materials and meals are often provided at these seminars at no cost to the participants. Whether a group is looking for more joy and how to share it with others, or learning how to express an individual’s wishes at the end of life, a myriad of topics fall under the “Tools for the Servant” banner.

Topics covered can be lighthearted, like “It’s not your Grandmother’s Nursing Home Anymore,” yet still be pertinent and poignant. They can explain things that many people struggle to understand, such as understanding memory loss. Knowing that mainline churches want to help their congregations grow into elderhood, a “Tools for the Servant” seminar was created on the topic of “How to Develop and Grow an Older Adult Ministry at your Church.”

Practicality is also important and the “Senior Living Options: What are they and how do I pay for them?” seminar can answer questions and provide guidance and direction. Another important topic offered through the program, “Respecting Choices: Let’s talk about it,” is helping families deal with end-of-life issues. This seminar provides a step-by-step workbook that guides conversations to begin answering the tough questions surrounding the end-of-life. And finally, there are topics that offer hope and a lighter outlook. For example, the “Running Through the Rain” seminar shows participants how to live life to its fullest, bringing meaning and a sense of peace to their daily lives.

Certainly, one might say these are tools that everyone can use!
Throughout our lives, things around us are in a constant state of change. The price of gas is no longer 10 cents a gallon, the beehive hairdo isn’t exactly the cat’s meow anymore and computers have made typewriters all but obsolete. While the world around us may be in a continual state of flux, there are two things we can count on to remain constant – our hearts and our faith. In times of joy, faith will be there to take part in the celebration, and in times of despair, faith will hold our hand and guide us through the dark. As the famous Russian novelist and philosopher Leo Tolstoy put it, “Faith is the force of life.”

OPRS understands the value of faith, which is why nurturing spiritual life for residents is of key importance. Each campus is dedicated to further enhancing options available, providing residents the freedom to express individual spiritual belief and grow in personal faith.

The different programs and services available to residents are numerous. Many locations offer weekly Bible study, where residents gather together to study God’s word and talk about the wonderful way the Lord is working in their lives. Worship services are also available at OPRS communities, where friends from all areas of campus gather together in faith and prayer. Many campuses have even created their own choirs and instrumental groups that perform during these services.

Spiritual Life Committees have also been formed throughout the OPRS communities. These committees have many different roles, all aimed at improving spiritual life for fellow residents. Some develop assessment tools that are used to survey residents in an attempt to identify unmet needs or desires, and determine what current programs residents find beneficial. Other Spiritual Life Committees assist in leading the singing during worship services, arrange for greeters and, most importantly, help bring residents from the different levels of care to the services.

Unlike many other retirement communities, OPRS employs full-time chaplains (pictured top right) who work hard to foster the spiritual life that is so important to residents. Through their dedication, wonderful events are planned, often bringing in outside congregations and religious leaders to speak or lead worship services.

As the heart is at the core of the human body, spiritual life is at the core of OPRS. Strong and steady, spiritual life will continue to pump love and guidance to its residents throughout the state.
A Special Service Moves Residents to Tears

On January 20, 2009, Park Vista experienced a worship service of an extraordinary kind. The Most Reverend George Murry, bishop of the Diocese of Youngstown, came and celebrated Mass with Park Vista residents and their families. He was also joined by Monsignor Robert Sifrin and Father John Keehner.

The Gathering Room was overflowing as both Catholics and non-Catholics wanted to take part in this special event. Bishop Murry gave a moving homily on growing older and how the love of God never leaves you – through aches, pains and illnesses, He is always there. Many of those in attendance had tears in their eyes.

After the Mass, refreshments were served and Bishop Murry visited every person in the room to personally say hello and talk with each of them for a few minutes. “It was truly an event that exemplifies the spiritual aspect of life in an OPRS community. When so many residents attend, you know how important spiritual life is to them. How wonderful that we, as communities, recognize and honor that for our residents,” said Diane Garthwaite, church visitation director.

OPRS Celebrates Retired Clergy and Paid Church Staff!

OPRS is recognizing retired clergy and paid church workers for their dedicated service through The Honorable Service Grant Program. This new program honors ministry by providing significant discounts on entrance fees or monthly fees for apartments and homes at OPRS communities. Retired clergy, missionaries, church staff members and their spouses from all faith backgrounds who are 65 or older and have at least ten years of paid church service may be eligible to apply.*

For more information, please talk with the marketing staff at your local OPRS community.

* Must not currently be residing in an OPRS community.
Breckenridge Village:
On September 25, 2008, under brilliant blue skies, vibrant sunshine and wonderfully warm temperatures, the Brownstone at Northridge was dedicated.

Residents, employees and numerous dignitaries, including the city of Willoughby’s Mayor David Anderson and OPRS President and CEO David Kaasa, lined the brownstone walkway as Rev. Don Grauer gave an official blessing and a ribbon cutting ceremony was performed.

The new residents invited family and friends to tour their new homes and enjoyed refreshments, including a cake designed in the shape of the brownstone.

Campus News

Congratulations go to Breckenridge Village as they were recently accepted as an Eden registered community! Becoming a member of the Eden registry shows ongoing commitment to creating an atmosphere focused on resident choice filled with spontaneity, variety, meaningful relationships and joy. Great job!

The residents of Breckenridge Village were excited to attend the dedication ceremony for the Dr. Alfred C. and Mrs. Marian R. Mahan Cultural Center that took place on November 14, 2008. The afternoon was filled with wonderful speeches, entertainment and refreshments. Each attendee received a bookmark and an anthology of writings entitled, “Creativity Comes Home to Breckenridge” that contained writings submitted by Breckenridge residents. This new addition will promote creativity by providing residents with a learning center, multi-room arts studio, a business resource center and a multi-purpose room. It was a lovely afternoon that marked the beginning of a new wave of creativity and expression at Breckenridge.

Cape May Retirement Village: Resident Mary Cochran (pictured below) has led a life of true spiritual devotion. At age 10, she began playing the organ at her hometown church in Westboro. She went on to attain her Bachelor of Theology degree and her Master of Education degree. Mary, staying true to her roots, came back to the Westboro Church and served as their minister for 52 years! During this time, she also taught social studies at Morrow High School for 25 years and then was the guidance counselor for 10 years. Since moving to Cape May, Mary has provided Vespers once a month, been requested as a speaker for special events and recently held a memorial service, with fellow resident Jim Graham, for all residents who had passed away. She has also been a member of the Home Health Care Board for Clinton Memorial Hospital, a hospice and community volunteer and a recipient of the 2005 “Outstanding Women of Clinton County Award.” Talk about devotion!

Dorothy Love Retirement Community: Dorothy Love resident Nancy Smith (pictured below) is doing something really special. As a devoted member of the First United Methodist Church, she leapt feet first into volunteering at the Alpha Center. The Alpha Center, started by the Methodist Church, is an active community outreach center for the underprivileged where they can attend chapel services held weekly, receive meals, play games and log on to a computer. Nancy has graciously taken charge of coordinating which church will come in each week to perform chapel service and provide the meal. When she’s not helping at the Alpha Center, Nancy plans and assists with all the funeral dinners at her church, teaches water aerobics at the local YMCA and brightens everyone’s day with her bubbly personality.
Lake Vista of Cortland: During the week of Valentine’s Day, Lake Vista residents and employees held a “Give From the Heart” food drive to support the Cortland Area Cares food bank. They collected and donated non-perishable food items, cleaning supplies and paper products. The volunteers of Cortland Area Cares were immensely grateful for the amazing generosity of Lake Vista’s residents and staff. The unemployment rate in Trumbull County is the highest in the state, which has led to a greater need for assistance to families who have lost their jobs. What a great way to show just how large their hearts are at Lake Vista!

Over the holiday season, children from the College Hill Presbyterian Church Sunday School class spent a morning of their time with Llanfair residents. Smiles lit up the faces of the residents and students as they created multicolored Christmas paper chains to decorate trees and rooms. Each strip was imprinted with a little part of the account of Jesus’ birth and, when completed, the chain told the whole story. This special event brought both children and adults together to share the love of God and a good time was had by all!

Llanfair Retirement Community: The past three years, Llanfair has held a special celebration called “Longest Night Service: A Service of Light in the Midst of Darkness.” This Christmas season ceremony was born from the desire to honor and serve those residents and their families who were experiencing the loss of a loved one. The service always takes place on the solstice, the longest night of the year. Gathered in a room lit by battery-powered candles, participants begin by acknowledging their losses and end by celebrating that they are not alone in this journey. The Longest Night Service has become a very meaningful part of Llanfair’s Christmas celebration.

Mount Pleasant Retirement Village: One of Mount Pleasant’s residents recently received a special honor. Rudy Bors (pictured below) found out he is the winner of the 2009 “Outstanding Caregiver Award.” This award, given by the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio, recognizes an individual who provides reliable help to an older adult who, without consistent aid, could no longer live independently. Rudy lovingly cared for his wife, Katie, who suffered from Alzheimer’s disease, until she passed away. He fed, bathed, dressed, spoke for, and when no longer able to walk, carried her – all the while with a loving twinkle in his eye and smile on his face. Rudy was honored with his award at the annual dinner on March 17, 2009.

Park Vista Retirement Community: In November, the Youngstown CityScape Organization recognized Park Vista’s buildings and landscaping, honoring them with a “Beautification Award.” CityScape selected Director of Environmental Services John Gresko (pictured right) and the Park Vista environmental services team for their commitment to the appearance of Park Vista and its grounds. This award is given to businesses and homeowners in the city of Youngstown who are a source of pride and inspiration to the city, as well as the entire region. Awesome job! Keep up the fantastic work!

Every year the Ohio Department of Health surveys health care agencies to check for compliance with a comprehensive set of state and federal regulations. This year, Park Vista is proud to announce that they achieved a deficiency-free survey after an assessment of the Anne Kilcawley Christman Health Care Center was completed in October! This is an increasingly difficult accomplishment to achieve, and in the past three years, over 91% of nursing homes were cited for deficiencies. This achievement demonstrates the terrific dedication and commitment of the Park Vista staff. Congratulations!
Rockynol: Rockynol employees recently had to say goodbye to one of their own. This past November, Unit Manager Marylisa Kessler lost her battle with lung cancer. Marylisa was a vibrant ball of energy who had a wonderful sense of humor and was loved by employees and residents alike. Holding a special place in her heart, she chose to come to Rockynol when she needed skilled nursing care. On November 6, 2008, Marylisa passed away and over 50 people lined the halls to say their goodbyes. A “Celebration of Life” was planned and held in the Carrell Center at Rockynol, where photos of Marylisa were shown, her favorite songs were played and, upon her request, staff members wore Hawaiian shirts and ate hot dogs, her favorite food, for lunch. Rockynol was blessed to have known and worked with Marylisa and she will truly be missed.

Spearheaded by employees Jessica Goff, Karen Bakita and Jolene Wood, residents at Rockynol have been participating in a community service project called “Project Linus,” a nationwide non-profit organization. Each week, the Rockynol “blanketeers” eagerly gather together to construct no-sew fleece blankets. They have a great time chatting and sharing stories while they work. The blankets are donated to the Akron Children’s Medical Center to be handed out to seriously ill and traumatized children. To date, the group has made and delivered 37 of these fabulous blankets and plans to continue with “Project Linus” for many years to come!

Swan Creek Retirement Village: Ken Pauken (pictured below), a current resident and member of the Health Care Center Committee, recently completed what he calls a “labor of love.” After a committee meeting, the members decided they wanted to bring the gift shop to residents in the health care center, since many of them can’t make it there. Unable to find a suitable cart, Ken decided to make one and went on to set up a makeshift woodshop in his garage. Seventy-five man-hours, multiple coats of bright, apple green paint decorated with hand-painted flowers and over 100 pieces of wood later, the cart was completed. Now, he and members of the committee visit the health care center every other week, offering an array of items including magazines, toiletries, cards and smiles…which are always free!

The Vineyard on Catawba: Dave and Mary Jane Huffman (pictured right) have always been very active in their parish, the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. So much so, that in 1983 they helped organize the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry, a local outreach program that collects, bags and hands out food to needy families in the area. When they began, 27 families were assisted each month. Thanks to the Huffmans’ tireless commitment, as well as other dedicated volunteers, they now assist over 150 families of every faith and background every other week. Mary Jane is also the District Council President where she has 16 St. Vincent de Paul conferences in her jurisdiction, and Dave, an ordained deacon, serves as the spiritual advisor. Their continued involvement helps them live out the Christian Gospel every day.

Westminster-Thurber Community: This Christmas season, Westminster-Thurber helped make the holidays happier for others in two very special ways. In the fall, residents and staff participated in a community-wide project called “Operation Christmas Child.” They collected school supplies, toys and hygiene items, which they packed into shoeboxes and shipped out to needy children around the world. Residents and staff also donated $665 to cover the cost of shipping the 95 boxes they put together. Additionally, staff members of Westminster took part in an “Angel Tree Project,” where seven families of other staff members, with especially needy children, were anonymously supported, making their Christmas a little brighter. They helped children around the world, as well as in their backyard!

Senior Independence News
Senior Independence recently received some prestigious national recognition! The Central Ohio, Greater Cleveland and Southwest Ohio Senior Independence Regions have been named to the HomeCare Elite™ – a
A compilation of the most successful home care providers in the United States. The only one of its kind in the home health industry, this annual review identifies the top 25% of agencies whose service quality, overall improvement and financial performance are the best. This is a truly wonderful accomplishment!

**AOPHA Honors icaregiver.org** – Senior Independence’s Web site, www.icaregiver.org, received the “Excellence in Innovation Award” from AOPHA, the advocate of not-for-profit services for older Ohioans. The award recognizes innovative contribution through technology, education and unique programming. It was presented to Senior Independence at the 2008 Annual AOPHA Awards Celebration.

Senior Independence Hospice’s latest success is its start in the Mahoning Valley and Greater Cleveland Regions. The successful hospice program in the Central Ohio Region, started in 2006. Since then, the Akron/Canton, Southwest and Miami Valley Regions have become hospice certified.

**Akron/Canton Region:** This Christmas, the Akron/Canton Region Senior Independence reached out to the Akron Citizen’s Coalition for Emergency Shelter Service (ACCESS) to help meet the needs of the women and children they serve. Having assisted several Senior Independence employees who found themselves, through no fault of their own, faced with eviction, the Akron/Canton office decided they wanted to give back to ACCESS this holiday season. Staff truly enjoyed the opportunity to deliver gifts and gift cards to ACCESS Executive Director Lynn Budnick and Volunteer Coordinator Andrea Schoops for distribution for those in need.

**Miami Valley Region:** Congratulations are in order for the Miami Valley Region Senior Independence team. Under the leadership of Administrator Heather Elsner and Interim Executive Director Ann Heringhaus, the team received a perfect Ohio Department of Health-Home Health survey this February for the second time in a row! As if that weren’t impressive enough, this great achievement was made while both Heather and Ann are doing double duty. Ann is also the executive director of the Toledo Senior Independence office and Heather works as the corporate Senior Independence health information manager. Awesome job!

**Greater Toledo Region:** On December 18, 2008, Greater Toledo Region Senior Independence attained a perfect score on their Ohio Department of Health Survey report! This awesome accomplishment was achieved through outstanding teamwork, as well as the leadership of Ann Heringhaus and Tammy Easton. What a great way to start the New Year!

The Senior Independence Adult Day Center in Toledo had special visitors on Martin Luther King Jr. Day – the day before the inauguration of President Barack Obama. The local ABC affiliate, WTVG Channel 13, stopped by and interviewed clients Katie Morris and Willie Elston. The TV station spent the day gathering differing points-of-view on the historic election from Toledo residents of varying ages, cultures and races.

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**A Special Invitation for All OPRS Residents!**

Shortly after you moved into an OPRS community you might have said, “I wish I would have done this sooner.” Many residents have said this because they found that by living in an OPRS community, they were freed from the worries and burdens of home ownership, and that they’d developed a plan for their future care.

We know that you have many friends and family members who could also benefit from living in an OPRS community. Who are they? We’d like to know! As a special incentive, we are offering you a $1,000 credit for any new referral that leads to a move-in at any of our 11 retirement communities.

We hope you will take this opportunity and spread the word about OPRS and all the wonderful things we have to offer.

**To find out more, please contact the Marketing Director at your community.**
The Marjorie Noble Lyons Chapel at Breckenridge Village's Nason Center was established as a testament to one woman's spiritual devotion. Marjorie Noble Lyons gave often and generously to the campus she called home. Self-described as having been “brought up in the church,” she made the lead gift in 1991 for the new chapel. Marjorie also made provisions in her estate to endow spiritual life programming needs at Breckenridge. At the Program Level of the Named Endowment Circle, this endowment is one of the most generous ever received at Breckenridge.

The Lyons Chapel is large enough to serve the campus's estimated 500 residents. A balcony enables second-floor residents to enter the chapel easily from the Nason Center assisted living and Fairmount Health Center. Three large panels of stained glass windows depict traditional Christian symbols, various denominations of residents and faith-based programs.

What began as a small resident movement at Dorothy Love in 1997, quickly evolved into a full-scale campaign to raise funds for a new chapel. The Peg and Oliver Amos Chapel is a unique octagonal structure connected to both the Amos Community Center and the health care center. The late Peg and Oliver Amos had given generously of their time and money for various needs on the campus throughout most of their lifetimes. In fact, Oliver was present as a Boy Scout when Russell Hall, the first building on the Dorothy Love campus, was dedicated in 1924.

Perhaps most surprising is the story behind the eight stained glass windows, designed by a 16-year-old high school student. The artist's father, a Dorothy Love board member at the time, asked the budding artist if he would like to draw some preliminary sketches for the windows. The board, without knowing the source of the drawings at the time, liked them enough to approve them for production. These modern designs, depicting the seven days of creation and the resurrection of Jesus, complement the modern architecture of the chapel.
The Margaret Jean Wells Chapel at Llanfair is currently under construction, thanks to a lead gift from Ed Wells as part of The Mission, The Vision, The Promise Capital Campaign. This chapel fulfills a great need on the campus – the current chapel is a small room in the main building with pew seating for only 30 people and no space accommodation for walkers or wheelchairs. The stained glass windows from the exterior wall of this small space will be relocated to the new chapel.

The Mary H. Kittredge Chapel at Mount Pleasant is the largest in OPRS, seating more than 200. Funded by numerous residents and friends through The Mission, The Vision, The Promise Capital Campaign, the chapel’s lead donor was a longtime friend of the campus. A resident of the Dayton area all her life, Mary Kittredge served on the Mount Pleasant Board of Directors and was a contributor for more than four decades.

Designed like a traditional church – complete with a steeple – this chapel is built to serve the diverse ecumenical needs of the large resident base. Connected to the newly constructed assisted living building and accessible from the health care center, the Kittredge Chapel provides a spiritual home for residents who are no longer able to make the trip off campus to their home churches.

During the construction of Park Vista South in 1971, Mrs. Roy Park made a gift used to build this chapel in memory of her husband, a Youngstown pharmacist. Located conveniently off the main lobby, the chapel continues to be supported by numerous donors through the decades, giving it the provisions and reverent environment conducive to a spiritual retreat. When Park Vista purchased the vacant church next door for use as a senior center, its stained glass windows were relocated to the chapel to complete its spiritual ambiance.

In the early 1990s, Westminster-Thurber embarked on a capital campaign for a connecting structure to include a restaurant-style dining room, an auditorium and a chapel. Thanks to a donor, who wished to remain anonymous, a lead gift was secured for the chapel, giving Westminster-Thurber residents a spiritual home. This chapel is kept reserved for services and meditation. However, its moveable partition enables the room to open into the auditorium for larger services and events.
What Is Endowment?

Endowment funds provide a measure of financial stability to not-for-profit organizations. When donors make gifts to endowment, they are stating that they believe in the organization’s mission, and expect it to serve that mission far into the future. Only income from an endowment may be used; the principal may never be spent, leaving it as a permanent asset of the organization.

How Does Endowment Help Spiritual Life?

Breckenridge’s spiritual life endowment is the largest in OPRS. Income from this endowment pays much of the cost for chapel supplies and spiritual life programs at the campus. And, thanks to its current spiritual life endowment efforts, previously part of The Mission, The Vision, The Promise Capital Campaign, Dorothy Love is well on its way to joining Breckenridge in these ranks.

Universities typically have endowments for academics and athletics. Hospitals may endow facilities or research programs. It is a goal of OPRS to continue to grow endowments at each of its communities – for programs such as spiritual life and other life-enhancing initiatives – to help protect them for years to come.

How Can I Make An Endowment Gift?

Endowment gifts come in all shapes and sizes. Many donors choose to make endowment gifts through will commitments. Cash gifts are common, but donors are increasingly discovering the benefits of planned gifts, such as Charitable Gift Annuities, trusts, IRA gifts, estate notes and more.

Father’s Pledge Inspires Family Commitment

In a truly selfless gesture, Dorothy Love resident Richard Roeth asked his family to stop giving him presents. Altogether. Not on his birthday. Not on Father’s Day. And not even on Christmas.

He asked instead that his family make charitable contributions to the Dorothy Love Spiritual Life Endowment, a program that’s grown very close to his heart.

To make it official, Richard made a significant pledge to be paid from his own gifts, as well as gifts from his family. He has also taken advantage of the current IRA charitable legislation, making two gifts directly from his IRA for this purpose.

In April 2008, Dorothy Love recognized the family’s unique display of generosity by dedicating the chaplain’s office in honor of The Richard and Nancy Roeth Family Fund.

Remember Your Church

Even if your church does not have a sophisticated planned giving program, you can still make a significant impact on its future. When you establish a Charitable Gift Annuity with OPRS, you may add your church as a second beneficiary. As long as OPRS is at least a 50% beneficiary of the annuity, the OPRS Foundation will be glad to handle the gift arrangements for your church.

Call the OPRS Foundation at 1-800-686-7800 for more information about this service.

Pictured in front of the chaplain’s office is Richard Roeth (third from left) along with his children (left to right) Mike Roeth; Cheryl Boyer, chair of the OPRS Foundation Board of Directors; Rick Roeth; Terry Roeth and Debbie Cassity.
Martha struggles to open a can of soup, one of many simple tasks now hindered by swollen, arthritic hands. Martha wishes she could have just a little help sometimes — just enough to make life a bit easier. In a nearby neighborhood is Jane, who has more spare time now that her children are grown. She considers volunteering, but wants to know she’s really making a difference.

Enter Faith In Action of Lake County, part of a national initiative that brings volunteers of different faiths together to fill unmet, non-medical needs of their homebound neighbors who may be living with chronic health conditions or disabilities. Best of all, it builds relationships.

The United Way of Lake County has taken notice and provides generous support to sustain this program, which is facilitated by Senior Independence of the Greater Cleveland Region in collaboration with numerous local churches and organizations. One church providing volunteers is the Holy Transfiguration Byzantine Catholic Parish in Mentor-On-The-Lake.

“The need continues to grow, and so far, the Lord has provided us with the volunteers we need,” says The Very Rev. Dr. Bryan Eyman, who serves on the OPRS Church Relations Council. “It helps us live out the Gospel of life in Jesus Christ.”

Faith In Action volunteers provide many forms of non-medical assistance such as transportation to medical and other appointments; help with shopping, reading or bill-paying; minor home repairs; friendly visiting and telephone support; and respite care for family members. Last year, volunteers with Faith In Action of Lake County provided 1,477 hours of service.

This initiative also collaborates with the Senior Independence Parish Nurse Program in the Greater Cleveland Region, whose focus is on wellness, prevention and care coordination. Parish nurses help match volunteers with needs, while looking at the combined physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

Donated funds, such as those from the United Way, enhance these important programs and ultimately help residents of the area maintain independence in their own homes. The United Way of Lake County has been a member of the OPRS Foundation’s President’s Club since fiscal year 2006.

Can you think of something you’ve done for others once a month, every month without exception, for more than eight years? One Park Vista resident can. **Ruth Kyle** has made a large charitable gift to Park Vista every month since October 2000, a portion of which supports the Ecumenical Religious Fund.

Ruth believes that spirituality is vital to life. That’s one reason she volunteered regularly in the chapel, even creating flower arrangements for services. In the mid-1990s, she made a large capital gift to support the chapel. She also provided the funds needed to relocate the stained glass windows from the senior center next door – a former Lutheran church – to Park Vista’s chapel. Ruth’s many years of giving have placed her in the OPRS Foundation’s Trustees’ Roundtable and Named Endowment Circle, and she is an annual member of the President’s Club.
A Picture’s Worth…

Every year, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization holds a Photography, Film and Writing Contest where members of their organization can submit their art for judging. In October, Sue Brookins, home health and hospice administrator for Senior Independence’s Central Ohio Region, won third place for her photo entitled “Gift of Music.” Sue’s photo (shown at right) was submitted by Sarah Grim, corporate director of program services, and was chosen for third from over 200 entries.

Senior Independence has launched a new program in northeast Ohio that’s helping people better prepare themselves to make critical end-of-life decisions. The program is offered at all the senior centers, community centers, libraries and churches throughout the communities that Senior Independence serves in the Greater Cleveland Region.

Thanks to a $97,000 grant from The Cleveland Foundation, this 12-month advanced care planning program helps people gain a greater understanding of the benefits of advanced directives, and develop a larger comfort level about end-of-life and other palliative care options. The Cleveland Foundation’s funding for this program was made possible through a $35,000 donation given by the Douglas C. MacDonald and Marguerite C. MacDonald Fund, and a $62,605 gift given by the Elroy J. and Fynette H. Kulas Fund.

The pilot program has been a terrific success. Program Director Diana D’Angelo has been in high demand, being asked by churches and small groups to come and present her information, while doing private, one-on-one meetings as well. The informational sessions are open to anyone interested, but primarily focus on older adults and their families. The sessions offer tips and ideas on ways to broach the subject with loved ones, clarify what documents are used and explain the many terms used in health care. Participants also receive booklets containing many of the needed documents.

Breckenridge Village residents John and Elsie Blazek had the opportunity to attend one of Diana’s small group meetings where she explained the importance of advanced directives. With Diana’s help, the Blazeks discussed their plans and completed the forms, making their final wishes known. “This is something that Elsie and I had wanted to do for a long time, so later we had a private meeting with Diana,” John said. “It gives you a sense of freedom when you have done everything possible and know that your family doesn’t have to make those difficult decisions.”

Diana is extremely pleased with the initial success of the program and is excited about its future growth. “It’s so good to know that people see the importance of addressing end-of-life issues, and gratifying for me — knowing, that by doing this, they gain a wonderful peace of mind having made and communicated these important decisions,” she said.

Advanced Planning Brings Peace of Mind
Fred Bird was born in Fleetwood, England. He was very passionate about his home country and loved to reminisce about the place he called home for so long. The hospice team suggested that a letter be written to the Queen of England to inquire if she would send a personalized letter to Fred. To everyone’s excitement, a response from England was received from the Lady-in-Waiting soon after the inquiry was sent! Sadly, Fred had already passed away. The letter from England was instead presented to his family and they were very touched by the gesture. Fred’s granddaughter is incorporating the letter into a memory book about her grandfather.

Whether it’s a ride on a motorcycle, a family gathering or an autographed photo of a favorite actor, a new Senior Independence program entitled “Make it Happen” is making a difference in the lives of clients and families. The goal of “Make it Happen” is to enhance clients’ lives by attending to non-medical needs, which helps improve their quality of life. Employees feel empowered and honored to fulfill clients’ wishes, providing lasting memories for their families.

“This program is really in its infancy, but we already have numerous stories to share that really go to the heart of all we are doing,” said Nancy King, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Senior Independence. Here are two of those stories...

Cora Paige loved her “Make it Happen” 90th birthday party. The evening was spent with many friends and family members. Senior Independence planned a Hawaiian-themed lobster dinner and had entertainment provided by an authentic Hawaiian dancer, dressed in traditional attire, as well as a woman who taught African dance. Cora made several speeches throughout the night, telling her life story to her family and friends. Most of the stories were full of laughter, though a few were tearful, but as Cora put it, they were “tears of joy.” It was a memorable occasion for all, but especially her grand and great-grandchildren.
Technology Trends

New technology is a fun fit for OPRS Residents

OPRS residents are having a great time keeping mentally fit thanks to the Dakim BrainFitness System, a recent investment that promises to help our residents reduce their risk of memory loss and dementia. The Dakim system is designed for use by virtually all older adults, from those with the sharpest minds to those who have mild cognitive impairment. It’s also of aid to those at risk for Alzheimer’s disease and even people with moderate dementia. The technology is fun, engaging, friendly and inviting. As a result, many of our campuses have waiting lists of 20-30 people who are eager to try out this new system.

How it Works

The Dakim BrainFitness System helps older adults preserve brain function by using a touch screen mental stimulation system, an appliance that requires no mouse, keyboard or computer knowledge. A constantly changing series of rigorous but entertaining multimedia activities keeps users entertained while helping maintain their brain function at the same time. The system uses interactive puzzles, stories, word scrambles and other activities. It also employs pre-1950s film clips and other older adult-friendly references. The Dakim system is also the first to provide regular exercise updates to ward off boredom for frequent users. It is currently the most widely adopted brain fitness system in retirement communities and growing in popularity.

Big Fun and Big Rewards

Recently, the majority of OPRS communities have installed the Dakim BrainFitness units on their campuses. Early opinion suggests the new technology is fun and effective – and a hit! “Already, resident response has been overwhelmingly positive,” said OPRS Executive Vice President/COO Daniel J. O’Connor. “Our residents find it easy and enjoyable, but still challenging, which means they will return to it often and reap powerful benefits for brain health.”

For more information on Dakim, please visit http://www.dakim.com. The technology will also be available to home consumers. A home unit has been announced and is scheduled to be released this April. For more information on this home unit please visit http://www.dakim.com/?m=community&s=blog&r=54.
A Call for Compassion

Denise (DD) Creatore, housing manager at Park Vista, was nominated by Vivian Barricella for spending her evenings, more than once, away from her young family to be at the hospital with a resident in their final hours. “She doesn’t want them to be alone and sometimes this involves several days of these evening visits. She sits, cries, prays and generally is present to see them take their final journey,” stated Vivian. Many people have a great fear of dying and with DD there, they were less afraid. She is a true “daughter” to each resident. Her heart stretches to reach each of them and she holds their hand on the journey home. “It drains her emotionally, but she feels satisfied knowing that they left embraced by love,” said Vivian.

Donielle Hadden, Rockynol STNA, was nominated by Kara Hanzie for being a “true leader to our 1st floor Ledges nursing team.” Kara stated, “Donielle is known as the aide to go to on the floor when there is a problem to solve or an honest opinion is needed. One of the remarkable traits of Donielle is her ability to gather her fellow co-workers’ input and lead them to make life better for our residents at Rockynol. When one of our employees came to Rockynol to spend the last months of her life, it was Donielle who stepped up during this difficult time. It was an extremely unique situation that none of us had been in before, but that did not stop Donielle from taking the initiative to ensure that our friend had her privacy and dignity. There were many mornings when Donielle would take our friend outside for a walk to get a breath of fresh air, ensuring that her last days were that of comfort and peace. Several family members have shared with me stories of Donielle leading them through a difficult time with a loved one’s death.

At times when a family member didn’t know how to talk to or approach a dying resident, Donielle has been known to put her arm around them and go into the room with them for support and comfort. She truly believes in our mission and demonstrates the passion to make the residents’ and families’ lives better.”

Marie George, RN and Fairmount Health Center assistant director of nursing at Breckenridge Village, is described by Chaplain Don Grauer as a long-term employee whose care and compassion for residents are exemplified by her proactive thoughtfulness, friendliness and daily interactions. “One situation involved one of our long-term Breckenridge Village residents admitted to the health center with terminal cancer. I went to visit this resident in her room, only to find that her bed had been moved for the day into Marie’s office. I asked Marie about the arrangement and learned that our resident had been agitated and disquieted all day, and that Marie couldn’t bear the thought of her being alone and frightened. This kind of sensitivity, compassion and service is typical of what I have seen evidenced in Marie, and in many other caring staff, over my six years as Chaplain. I am proud of Marie George, and I celebrate her ministry of caring and wellness for all our residents,” stated Don.

Delores Hall is a home health aide with Cleveland Senior Independence who has worked in home care for over five years. For the last several years, she has been the aide for a 98-year-old gentleman. Lois Youmell offered the following story. “When our client went into the hospital last week, it was apparent

The following six entries were selected as those chosen to be spotlighted. Congratulations to all!
that he was a hospice candidate. He was barely conscious and on continuous oxygen, but he kept talking about Delores. We contacted Delores and she was there within an hour! When Mr. V. saw her, he was visibly moved. She held his hand and sang a song to him that they would share during her visits. When he tried to sing along but was too weak, she told him that he could rest and she would do the singing for both of them.

We received a phone call from the hospital the next morning that our patient had died peacefully. The call came from the ICU social worker who told us that she had to call and let us know of his passing because she was so taken by the concerns and commitment of our staff. Her words were, ‘I have never seen an agency so good with their client.’ We all know that our client is at rest and that Delores has a special angel in heaven finishing their song. I am proud to have Delores and all of her staff at Cleveland Senior Independence who go above and beyond for our patients as part of their regular day!”

The staff of Park Vista was nominated by Josie Polis, director of marketing and admissions. She said:

“My grandmother lived with my parents for over 40 years and four years ago, at 87, she fell. At the same time as my grandmother’s fall, my father was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease.” Josie’s mother made the difficult decision to search for a new home for her grandmother. Josie also shared, “I am not going to say it was easy because it wasn’t, since placing a loved one in a nursing home is difficult and so final. It was nice knowing that she would have the people I work with and loved taking care of her. My grandmother died this past July and about six months before her death she said something to me that I will always remember. ‘Josie, the workers here are my extended family. They care for me when you can’t.’ When she died, they came to her funeral and cried with us. As I packed up her room with my sister, my co-workers were there for me. Executive Director Brian Kolenich not only made sure my family was taken care of with food the day she died, but put together a breakfast basket and personally delivered it the day before we buried her. To name just one person would not be fair. Cheryl Lloyd, Denise Creatore, Joan West, Christy Wilush, Vivian Baricella, John Gresko and the maintenance crew, Lucy Zinz and her dietary staff all made sure our annual corn roast was a big success. My grandmother died during this event. God brings people into our lives for a reason. I was blessed that He brought all of these people into my life when He did. They have all become a part of my extended family!”

Breckenridge Village Fairmount Health Center Activities Director Suzanne Smith works proactively throughout the year to demonstrate tangible care and affection for all its 100 short and long-term residents. Chaplain Don Grauer stated, “On December 24, Suzanne and staff traversed the halls distributing personalized gifts to every resident from his/her secret Santa. One resident was dying and his family sat with him in his room, surrounding his bed, attending to him in all possible ways. The Santa group came to the door, and Suzanne asked if the gift could be offered. The gift and sentiments were shared with the family. The tearful family received the package, opened it, and found a beautifully hand-quilted lap blanket in the colors red, white, and blue.” It was explained that it represented staff appreciation and gratitude for this resident’s World War II combat service in Italy as a member of the U.S. Army Tenth Mountain Division – a subject about which the 85-year-old had often spoken. The family lovingly placed and smoothed the quilt on his bed, deeply touched and moved by the handwork and the demonstration of thoughtfulness. The resident died two days later on December 26. During funeral home visiting hours, his family expressed to the chaplain how much the staff’s love and care had meant to him. In addition, they said that over the four years of his residency they were grateful for all the extra measures of caring such as Suzanne Smith demonstrated throughout those many long and difficult days.

Compassion Honorable Mentions:

The following six employees had beautiful stories shared by their nominators. Congrats to the following: Patti Harris (Rockynol), Frank Mikolay (Rockynol), Joan Rufener (Akron Adult Day Center), Carla Biddle (Cincinnati Hospice), Angela Sturdivant (Senior Independence Cleveland), and Judy Wolf (Westminster-Thurber).

In addition to the aforementioned honored employees, congratulations go to the following employees who received nominations from their thoughtful co-workers:
Breckenridge: Betty Powell, Suzanne Smith, Ryan Wagner, Ed Gurecki, Carol Bowers, Michelle Tomlinson, Debra Erksa-Adams, Georgette Lawson, Becky Sutton, Jean Merkowski

Cape May: John Solomon, Brenda Damron

Dorothy Love: Shelli Neth, Earlene Moorehead, Angie Woodward

Lake Vista: Maureen Schneider, Barbara Dawson

Llanfair: Sherry Ray, Margie Love, Theresa Adams, Edna (Kat) Parker, Roy Pennington, Wendy Gilvin, Joni Kaser, Titus Cobb, Ebony Barnes, Cindy Spriggs, Cecilia Brewer, Bina Akther, Julie Brown, Karen LeMoine, Latrice Jones, Crystal Harris, Yana Lee, Ollie Williams, Jeanette Hairston, Joann Johnson, Audrey Moss, Michael Brians, Frank Tigert, Rosie Hairston, Gernice Johnson, Charlene Ferrell, Kimete Emini, Earl Kreimer, Larry Lackey, Dan Estenson, Brian Voegle

Mount Pleasant: Rosa Reed, Patti Allen, John Suiter, Tina Hester

Park Vista: Lucy Zinz, Sarah Hooker, Erika McKinney, Debbie Cobbin, Curtis Young, Kelly Rozzi

Rockynol: Sherrie Moore, Yolanda Newsome, Donielle Hadden, Beverly Raheem, Paul Tharan, Jan Horn, Susan Boros, Karen Bakita

Senior Independence Cleveland: Nancy Medves

Senior Independence Central Ohio: Elaine Leban, Julie Maynard

Swan Creek: Pam Golas, Mary Leahy, Shyra Newsome, Tyjuan Wormely

Westminster-Thurber: Jamie Hobson, Mark Arni, Melita Johnson, Linda Knapp, Chris Estep

Compassion Creativity:

In addition to employee nominations, we also would like to thank the employees who submitted poems and ideas on how to best share our sympathy and care when a resident or client dies. Of the thoughtful gestures provided, the teamwork of employee Joe Welker and resident Kenny Filbrun of Dorothy Love was inspiring. They are working on an idea that consists of sharing Dorothy Love-grown plants in specially molded planters. Great teamwork gentlemen!

We also wish to thank Sue Brookins (Senior Independence Columbus), Hollie Buckner (Lake Vista) and Gifford Tebb (Senior Independence Cincinnati) for their original poems.

One submission we wish to highlight is “The Psalm of OPRS,” written by Cindea Wilkins. Cindea has been a State Tested Nursing Assistant at Rockynol since 2005. Her prior profession was as a shipping/receiving clerk in a textile plant for 20 years. Cindea felt like she had a void after her father died and decided to search for meaning in a new career. Her grandfather used to live with her family when she was young and he took care of her and then she took care of him. Later, after both parents died, she realized she had the passion to continue to give care to others. Cindea said she loves working at OPRS because of the good pay, wonderful benefits and because of the Rockynol “Weekend Warrior Wonderful West Towers.” Cindea has been writing poems since she was a teenager and is a member of the International Poetry Society where, among other honors, she won a 2000 Merit Award in Washington, D.C. and has two poems on the world’s largest poem for peace. Please see below for Cindea’s sentimental psalm of the losses we’ve experienced in the OPRS family.

The Psalm of OPRS
written by Cindea Wilkins, Rockynol

At Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services, We must keep our composure, in conditions of hazard as well as stress A dear soul departs, as we cry in our hearts, And extend our Psalm of OPRS.

We grieve for you within our hearts, Your loss is Heaven’s gain Although, you may not see our tears, Please know, we share your pain.

Behold, the new dawn, as the dew drops on the lawn, reveal even Mother Earth has cried.

Yet, your loved one’s Spirit, paused but a Moment to hear it, as it soared, Home Eternal, to reside.

Thanks to all of the employees within the OPRS family – for all of their contributions, the ones not so obvious and the ones gloriously evident.
Choose Your Ohio Location

Breckenridge Village*
Willoughby
(440) 942-4342

Cape May Retirement Village
Wilmington
(937) 382-2995

Dorothy Love Retirement Community*
Sidney
(937) 498-2391

Lake Vista of Cortland
Cortland
(330) 638-2420

Llanfair Retirement Community*
Cincinnati
(513) 681-4230

Mount Pleasant Retirement Village*
Monroe
(513) 539-7391

Park Vista Retirement Community*
Youngstown
(330) 746-2944

Rockynol*
Akron
(330) 867-2150

Swan Creek Retirement Village*
Toledo
(419) 865-4445

The Vineyard on Catawba
Port Clinton
(419) 797-3100

Westminster-Thurber Community*
Columbus
(614) 228-8888

*Accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) – Continuing Care Accreditation Commission (CCAC) of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA).