

# Senior Living

LNP SPECIAL SECTION

LIFESTYLE



LAURA KNOWLES

## OUT of the COCOON

*In jewelry and in life, Merle Weismer finds a way to transform the ordinary into something bold and beautiful.*

LAURA KNOWLES  
LNP CORRESPONDENT

As a designer, Merle Schwartz Weismer always has an eye out for unusual materials to create her innovative jewelry pieces.

It may be vintage sari scraps in shades of deep amethyst or burgundy. It may be bits and pieces of rich silk crepe from a Philadelphia fashion designer from India. Maybe it's a handful of buttons or beads or twisted T-shirts. It could even be empty silk cocoons, dyed in a rainbow of gorgeous colors.

"Most of the materials I use are repurposed," Weismer says. "That's a huge trend right now, even with designers like Stella McCartney, who is teaming up with Adidas to liquefy old clothes to create yarn for new clothing."

Growing up in the '60s and '70s, Weismer is well aware of the vast waste of old clothes, which usually make their way to landfills. At 66, she has taken that perspective to create a line of high-fashion jewelry that is bold, dramatic and made from recycled materials.

She describes her own style as "artful city style," which often makes her stand out in places like Lancaster Central Market. She is part of a movement of 55-plus women who embrace their age and wisdom to dress however they please, with a generous dash of panache.

"I didn't really come out of my shell style-wise until I was in my early 60s, and suddenly I started getting compliments," Weismer says. "I started thinking, 'Do you want to be an old version of your younger self or a new version of your older self?' I'm a new version of who I am now."

That mindset has opened doors for the Lancaster designer. She has discovered that there is an entire industry devoted to women over 55. After all,



LAURA KNOWLES

Merle Weismer displays her artful style, including the high-fashion jewelry she makes from recycled materials.

"I started thinking, 'Do you want to be an old version of your younger self or a new version of your older self?' I'm a new version of who I am now."

— Merle Weismer

they are more likely to have the money and confidence to dress in high style. One of her favorite designers is Jane Mohr, who owns Dress To Kill and is representative of many high-end boutiques across the United States, like

IE, Planet, and Alembika, that cater to older women at local shops like Tiger's Eye in Lititz.

Weismer likes to wear loose-fitting,

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Top: Some of Merle Weismer's jewelry made from recycled materials, including leftover silk cocoons.

Right: Weismer works on a necklace made from flattened cocoons.

Far right: A model wears one of her creations.



LAURA KNOWLES



JANE MOHR

### HOUSING

## A new twist on campus living

*Retirement communities offer creative options beyond their borders*

CATHY MOLITORIS  
LNP CORRESPONDENT

Lancaster County was recently named the No. 1 place to retire by U.S. News and World Report, and that has helped make the county more popular than ever as a retirement destination.

Due to an aging population, combined with an increase in potential residents, many retirement communities in the county are looking for creative ways to expand their facilities beyond their main campuses.

Moving off-site has several benefits, says Kristen Oleary, vice president — marketing and communications for Luthercare, which operates Luther Acres in Lititz.

The community opened Luther Acres on Pin Oak Drive in March, adding 10 new townhomes on property bordering the southern side of the Luther Acres campus.

"The 10 homes are part of Lititz Reserve, an EGStoltzfus townhome community," Oleary says. "Those who reside within Luther Acres on Pin Oak Drive receive all the benefits of being part of Lititz Reserve and Luther Acres. The project has created an extension of our Lititz senior living community into the greater community. Residents have a short walk to the quaint shops, restaurants and activity of downtown Lititz, and all of our campus amenities and services are just steps away."

The one-story townhomes are either 1,515 square feet or 1,480 square feet in size and feature two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a fireplace, 9-foot ceilings, an open kitchen with granite countertops, a two-car garage and more.

"We had immediate interest in this new twist on campus living," Oleary says, noting that two-bed, two-bath cottages, especially ones with garages, are the top choice for many prospective residents on the main campus.

"Luther Acres on Pin Oak Drive allowed us the opportunity to offer this choice without having to overcrowd the limited space on our existing campus or disrupt any current resident's day-to-day experience."

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# Housing: Communities offering options off campus

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She says the project offers an alternative to living directly on a retirement campus.

"It is an investment for the future, freeing you from the responsibilities and hassles of homeownership, enabling you to do the things you love, while providing you the security and benefits of Luther Acres' continuum of care," she explains.

And, the homes meet the needs of today's seniors, who are wellness-focused and active, she says.

Luthercare is the owner of the new townhomes, and residents enjoy all of the amenities and activities available on the main campus, including access to the wellness center, campus restaurants and transportation services.

Two entrance fee plans are offered, one which requires a lower upfront investment and the other which preserves residents' assets, she says.

"Residents also pay a monthly service fee, which includes all basic utilities, interior and exterior home maintenance, landscaping services, snow removal, trash removal and more," she notes.

Currently, only one 1,480-square-foot townhome is available.

## A wider economic audience

Like Luther Acres, Landis Communities has been looking for options for residents beyond its main campus. It has offered off-site housing for residents since 2013, when it opened Steeple View Lofts, and 2015, when Mountain View Terrace opened.

"Steeple View Lofts is Landis Communities' first middle market, independent living, rental community, with 36 apartments and currently 45 residents," says Ed Kaminski, director of Landis Quality Living. "The property was developed by Zamagias Properties as a mixed-use property and Landis Communities has a master lease of the residential units. The building has a 55-plus age designation. The resident



Luther Acres on Pin Oak Drive includes 10 new townhomes purchased by Luther Acres in Lititz Reserve, an EGStoltzfus neighborhood bordering the retirement community's Lititz campus.

LUTHER ACRES



PLEASANT VIEW COMMUNITIES



LANDIS COMMUNITIES

Left: A rendering of The Lofts at Lititz Springs, which Pleasant View Communities will open next year adjacent to the new Wilbur redevelopment project in Lititz. Right: Through a partnership between Landis Communities affiliate Welsh Mountain Home and HDC MidAtlantic, Mountain View Terrace in New Holland offers apartments for low- to moderate-income seniors.

council is actively involved in creating activities both on site and out in the community."

The lofts, at 118 N. Water St., offer independent living apartments without an entry fee and are available for rent.

"Residents can access home care services through Landis at Home if additional support is needed," Kaminski says. "These apartments are intended to serve the middle-income range."

Mountain View Terrace, located at 566 Springville Road, New Holland, was created through a partnership between Landis Communities' affiliate, Welsh Mountain Home, and HDC MidAtlantic. It was funded with Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

"The development has 36 apartments for low- to moderate-income seniors age 62 and over," Kaminski says. "HDC provides property management as well as resident services to the resi-

dents."

The additional properties allow Landis Communities to reach a wider audience of residents, he says.

"Landis Homes is a great option for some persons, and we have modernized and expanded Landis Homes in the recent years, but we are being very intentional about expanding our housing choices with living options for persons across a much wider group of financial resources and interests," he says. "Typically, CCRC's (continuing care retirement communities) serve persons with income in the upper 20% of persons, and we see huge needs for quality housing within the other sections of the population."

Rent for Steeple View Lofts ranges from \$975 to \$1,850 per month. Mountain View Terrace rents range from \$260 to \$787, he says.

Both properties offer

benefits to residents, he notes.

"Steeple View Lofts has our full range of home- and community-based services available to residents. It also has the office of the Lancaster Downtowners, part of the national Village to Village network. Lancaster Downtowners is a membership-driven, grassroots community that provides a support network for older people to thrive in their community and age within their home."

Residents of Steeple View Lofts enjoy living in the city, being able to walk to Central Market or the Fulton and taking an active role in a vibrant community.

"The apartments at Mountain View Terrace are located in an attractive rural setting, newly designed with a large community space, resident services and access to other services," Kaminski says. "For those with limited income, it provides affordable rental rates."

And these aren't likely to be the last options for Landis Communities to expand off its main campus.

"Both communities have substantial waiting lists, so we are actively working on creating new apartment communities with housing choices for

low- and middle-income seniors in both urban and suburban areas," he says.

## A different type of resident

Several projects are in the works at other retirement communities, including Pleasant View Communities, which plans to open The Lofts at Lititz Springs by the end of next year.

"The Lofts at Lititz Springs will be located in the heart of Lititz at 100 Warwick St., which is directly adjacent to the new Wilbur redevelopment project," says Keith Hoover, vice president of strategy and technology.

The 32-unit complex will offer modern touches with industrial flair and easy access to walking or biking trails as well as the shopping and dining options in Lititz.

"It is minutes from our Manheim campus, and residents here will enjoy the same access to amenities and services as all existing Pleasant View residents do," Hoover says. "This includes membership in our 'PV FiT' fitness center, worry-free maintenance and planned activities and cultural events. They will also be members of our life plan continuum of care, meaning they will have direct access to

our in-home care, personal care, memory care, rehab and skilled nursing if needed."

Additionally, the Lofts will be technologically advanced, he says, adding, "(They) will also be equipped with optional smart home technology that not only allows easy control over lights, locks, appliances, etc., but also will support aging-in-place with technology that can assist with fall detection and other health support. Pleasant View also has a mobile app which can be used for one-touch access to some of the amenities we offer."

Interest in the Lofts has been high, and the community is currently taking deposits, he says.

The Lofts gives Pleasant View the opportunity to reach a different type of resident, Hoover says, noting that the community is also expanding its services on its main campus with its West Lawn project.

"West Lawn will have similar amenities as the Lofts, but the experience will be different," he says. "While the Lofts are intended to benefit those more interested in a more 'urban industrial style' with walkability to all that the town of Lititz offers, West Lawn is ideal for those wanting countryside views and walkability to the Pleasant View main campus."

## City-loving seniors

Willow Valley Communities is also in the process of expanding its programs and services off its main campus in Willow Street to downtown Lancaster, with a project in the works at 17 W. Vine St, on the corner of Vine and South Queen streets in the former LNP production site.

Unnamed at this point, the project will be a satellite campus of Willow Valley Communities, says Brian T. Rutter, chief marketing officer. "We are really excited about this opportunity to reactivate and reenergize a key corner of the city that is currently lying dormant," he says. "We want to bring it back to life and restore what had been the southern gateway to Lancaster city."

The project will be a mixed-use, residential building, featuring a tower style.

"We anticipate 150 or so residential units and we're calling it mixed use, because on street level, there will be publicly accessible venues and amenities, like a restaurant or retail stores," Rutter says. "In planning this expansion, we want it to be a place that the community feels a part of, too, and that parts are accessible and open to them."

The satellite campus fulfills a unique need for today's seniors, Rutter says.

"There is a growing trend in seniors who wish to live in an urban setting or a city environment," he says. "They are looking for walkability. They want to experience the vibrancy of a city, and Lancaster today is a very exciting place to be."

All Willow Valley Communities residents are part of a Lifecare contract, which means although they may enter the community in independent living, if enhanced levels of care are needed later, a resident's monthly fee does not in-

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# Housing

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crease. This will apply to residents of the satellite campus as well, Rutter says.

Additionally, residents of the downtown building will have access to all activities and amenities on the main Willow Valley Communities campus.

"We envision a deep connection between the main campus and the satellite campus in Lancaster," Rutter says. "We plan to increase the frequency of transportation between the campuses and we will provide our residents who currently reside at the main campus of Willow Valley Communities easy access to Lancaster city."

Along with the residential tower, the project includes renovation of Southern Market across the street, which was purchased by Lancaster Equity, a nonprofit organization, and is being developed with Willow Valley Communities into a culinary hub.

Willow Valley Communities' main campus is currently developing SouthPointe at Lakes, featuring villa homes and luxury apartments on the southern end of the campus. But, when that project is complete, the community will have used all of its 200-plus acres, so a satellite campus just made sense, Rutter says.

Although the downtown Lancaster project does not have an opening date scheduled yet, Rutter says he anticipates about a two-year construction process once ground is broken.

"We aren't building a waiting list yet, but if someone is interested, we will gladly take their name and info and we will contact them when we have more information," he says. "We're building a growing interest list."

## CAREERS

# 'You need to get out of the chair'

At 77, nurse Nancy Groff is running her own business and following her own advice

LAURA KNOWLES  
LNP CORRESPONDENT

Nancy Nichols Clure Groff isn't one to let the sun go down on her sunset years.

Bright, smiling and full of energy, the petite powerhouse is passionate about starting a whole new career as the owner of a business dedicated to health care compliance.

In 2017, Groff became the founder of Nursing Educators Resource Group LLC, which was started in response to state health surveys showing that a high percentage of nursing homes were found to be out of step with many procedures, leading to a higher rate of patient readmissions.

"Both Medicare and insurance groups are trying to avoid this, in view of the costs and in the best interests of patients," Groff says.

Nursing Educators Resource Group provides lectures, demonstrations and training to various organizations and local hospitals. Groff and her team also help with the training at Pennsylvania College of Health Sciences, using the state-of-the-art simulation lab for their students.

## A long road to nursing

In her 77 years, Groff has always focused on caring for others.

"I wanted to be a nurse from the time I was 4," says Groff, who got sidelined from that career when she married young and had a family.

Graduating from Manheim Township High School in 1960, she married her husband, Lee "Buddy" Groff, in 1961. He worked for RCA and they had two children, daughter Tammy, who has cerebral palsy, and son Charles, who has an intellectual disability.

"Everybody dreams of having perfect children, so that wasn't exactly what we expected," says Groff, adding that it took a while to make sure her children were doing well



LAURA KNOWLES

before she started her lifelong dream of a nursing career.

Tammy Groff graduated from Solanco High School and now manages the laundry at Evergreen Estates. She is an accomplished cook and does beautiful cross-stitch work, her mother says. Charles Groff attended Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 classes and works with Friendship Community, painting artwork and note cards.

With the goal of becoming Nancy the Nurse, Groff took classes at Lancaster County Career and Technology Center, then Millersville University. In May 1987, she graduated from Brandywine School of Nursing after also attending Immaculata University. She was 45, but she wasn't done yet.

After years of working as a nurse, Groff returned to Immaculata University for her Bachelor of Science in nursing degree.

"So at age 63, I finally completed my dream," she says. "And I was on

the honor roll, which had never happened to me before."

During those years, Groff worked as a nurse at various hospitals and health care facilities, including St. Joseph Hospital medical surgical nursing, Lancaster General Hospital cardiac unit, Garvey Pharmacy as a nurse educator and IV therapy nurse, Home Health as a home care nurse and case manager, Willow Valley as a nurs-

ing supervisor and educator, and Quarryville Presbyterian Retirement Community as an educator, teaching nurses aide classes and as a certified CPR instructor. She says the best job she had was teaching nursing students in the LPN program at Lancaster County Career and Technology Center.

"My specialty with the students was med/surg floors, but particularly at Conestoga View with the

ventilator, IV, high-tech and very compromised patients. It was extremely rewarding," says Groff, who still meets her students in the work world.

## Retirement and a new career

Knowing that she could have an impact on others' lives served as the impetus for finding a new career after retirement. Then came the idea for Nursing Educators Resource Group.

To get her business off the ground, Groff turned to SCORE Lancaster-Lebanon, working with Tom Murphy as her business mentor.

"Being a registered nurse, I knew nothing about starting a business, about setting up a business plan, taking out taxes, the legalities of creating a small business," Groff says. "My SCORE mentor had me complete a 12-step plan and I attend roundtable workshops. All of these gave me tools that helped me prepare for the business side of my project. I would have been lost without SCORE."

"I am very impressed with Nancy's initiative," says Murphy, whose business and education background involves owning a bed-and-breakfast inn, teaching and serving as a school principal. "She began with an idea of providing quality professional

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HEALTH

# Memory Café: a community connection

**ELANCO**  
offers social  
opportunities  
for those with  
memory loss

**CAROLE DECK**  
LNP CORRESPONDENT

Joyful laughter comes from a group sitting around a table at the new Memory Café in New Holland on a summer afternoon in July. It's not unusual for friends to enjoy a fun time together with refreshments. But these are strangers who share a common bond: the stigma of dementia.

"My wife, Anne, and I decided to visit the café for socialization with other people experiencing dementia problems," says Jim Montgomery of New Holland. Anne, 51, was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's three years ago.

Lucie von der Heide also likes the idea of a place in the community to interact with others faced with memory loss.

"It sounded helpful for those with dementia as well as caregivers," says von der Heide, a caregiver for her 86-year-old husband, Werner, whose dementia has gotten progressively worse over the last four years.

The Memory Café is an initiative of the ELANCO Dementia Friendly Community Committee. In existence for about two years, the committee seeks to raise awareness and educate people in the Eastern Lancaster County area about dementia. The committee consists of community representatives from



VINNY TENNIS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Above: Lucie and Werner von der Heide chat during the Memory Café at Trinity Lutheran Church, New Holland. Below: Volunteer coordinator Crystal Yunginger, right, asks Anne Montgomery to pick out her favorite song by The Who.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- 5.8 million Americans of all ages are living with Alzheimer's. 5.6 million are age 65 and older, while approximately 200,000 under age 65 have younger-onset Alzheimer's.
  - There are over 80 forms of dementia with 70% of cases being Alzheimer's.
  - 16.1 million Americans provide care for people with dementia.
- Source: Alzheimer's Association



local businesses, public service, health care, faith-based organizations and those impacted by dementia.

"The goal of the café is to provide an informal social opportunity to bring those with memory loss out into the com-

munity with their care partners in a safe environment," says Crystal Yunginger, café coordinator.

Memory Cafés offer community connections for those with dementia as well as provide brain stimulation through group activity.

Located in the Trinity Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, New Holland, it's the first Memory Café in the Elanco area and one of two being introduced by the dementia-friendly community committee. The other is at Conestoga Mennonite Church in Morgantown. While Morgantown is in the northeastern part of the county and partially in Berks County, the location was suggested by a volunteer social worker on the committee as an area to reach participants where there's limited resources.

A registered nurse at WellSpan Ephrata Community Hospital, Yunginger has a bachelor's degree in nursing, a mi-

nor in gerontology and a passion for the aging population. As a New Holland resident, she joined the ELANCO Dementia Friendly Community Committee and became a member of the Memory Café committee, enthusiastically volunteering to be café coordinator.

She credits Christina Haeusler, director of adult day services at Garden Spot Village and a café committee member, with helping to launch the cafés. Café volunteers all have dementia training. Yunginger and Haeusler hosted the New Holland opening in July.

For an hour and a half, the couples enjoy conversation prompted by suggestions from Yunginger such as favorite music, travels and sharing stories about their lives. Refreshments are available plus resources about dementia. Café attendees can also choose a range of optional activities such as games or art.

Anne Montgomery's struggle to find the right

## RISK FACTORS FOR DEMENTIA

● **Genetics:** Research shows those with a parent, brother or sister with Alzheimer's are more likely to develop it. The risk increases if more than one family member has the disease.

● **Age:** Dementia does increase with age. Reports show 32% of people age 85 and older are currently diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

● **Being a female:** Some researchers believe there is a greater risk for women due to biological and genetic variations or different life experiences (education, work, etc.). However, research is limited and studies are ongoing in this area.

## PREVENTION OF DEMENTIA

● **Brain health:** Protect your brain with similar strategies used to protect your heart. n Don't smoke. Keep blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar within limits and maintain a healthy weight.

● **Physical exercise:** Regular exercise could help lower risk of some dementia types. Exercise benefits brain cells by increasing blood and oxygen flow.

● **Diet:** Heart-healthy eating has greatest impact on brain health.

## HEALTHY BRAIN FOOD

● Research shows a Mediterranean diet — with little red meat and more whole grains, fruits, vegetables, fish and shellfish, nuts, olive oil plus other healthy fats — may benefit the brain.

● The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) low-sodium diet is also beneficial.

## BRAIN GAMES

Research has shown games offer both social and mental stimulation for those with dementia, and they slow down deterioration of cognitive abilities. Some favorites are card games, bingo, puzzles, visual, video, word and picture games.

Sources: Jeremy Bland, director of marketing and communications, Alzheimer's Association Greater Pennsylvania Chapter, Harrisburg; Juanita Angelini, memory support resource coordinator, Willow Valley Communities, Lancaster; Caregiver Support for Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias, Center for Neurobehavioral Health, Plattsburgh, N.Y.

words doesn't affect her friendly personality. She continues to stay in shape physically, playing soccer on the Spooky Nook Lanco Women's Soccer League. Jim Montgomery says he is grateful that he is able to work full time as a scheduler/planner at BAE Systems, York, thanks to caregiving support from the couple's two sons, Patrick 20, and Andrew 27, along with friends.

Werner von der Heide, who was a creative woodcarver, chuckles as he listens to the group and chimes in on occasion, sometimes reticent due to a hearing problem. Lucie von der Heide says she feels fortunate the couple lives at Garden Spot Village, where she can access monthly caregiver meetings and Werner attends adult day care.

Chet Yoder, director of pastoral services at Garden Spot Village and chair of the demen-

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# Memory

Continued from 4

tia friendly community committee, says startup costs for the café have been minimal. Funding for snacks and supplies has been donated, and the two churches provide space at no cost.

“An objective of the Dementia Friendly Community Initiative is community partnership,” Yoder says. “It’s been great to see that happening with the Memory Cafés.”

Both couples enjoyed their time at the café and say they plan to return. The committee hopes to develop more cafés to meet the growing need. The Memory Café directory lists 15 in Pennsylvania, including two in Lancaster County in Lititz and New Holland.

“We have great expectations for the cafés,” Yunginger said.

## Café hours:

Conestoga Men-nonite Church, 22779 Main St., Morgantown, 6:15-7:45 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month.

Trinity Lutheran Church, 221 E. Main St., New Holland, 2:15-3:45 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

For more information, call Yunginger at 717-487-6223.



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## FINANCES

# Don't fall for these Social Security myths

LIZ WESTON  
NERDWALLET

Researchers tell us that most people would be better off waiting to claim Social Security benefits. Yet most people file early.

More than half apply for Social Security before they reach full retirement age, which is currently 66 and rising to 67 for people born in 1960 and later. More than 30% apply as soon as they can — at age 62. Only about one in 25 applicants waits until age 70, when monthly benefits max out.

Some people have little choice, of course. They may have no savings and no job. Others have better options, but don't realize it.

A 2013 survey by Financial Engines found that 77% of pre-retirees felt confident about their Social Security knowledge, but 95% could not correctly answer eight questions about how the program works.

Here are the myths most likely to cost you money:

## It doesn't matter when I take Social Security

Social Security benefits increase by about 7% each year between 62 and your full retirement age, and by 8% each year between full retirement age and 70. This actuarial adjustment aims to ensure that people who opt for larger checks for a shorter period don't get less than those who get smaller checks for longer periods.

But longer life expectancies, current low interest rates and rules re-

garding survivor benefits mean that most people are better off delaying, says researcher Sita Slavov, a professor of public policy at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia, and a faculty research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Social Security also provides insurance against longevity. People who live longer than expected can run out of savings and wind up depending mostly or even entirely on Social Security. That alone is a good reason to delay benefits.

## If I have a shorter-than-average life expectancy, I should claim benefits early

Most people underestimate how long they are likely to live, according to the Stanford Center on Longevity. A 65-year-old man today can expect to live to 84, according to the Social Security Administration. A 65-year-old woman can expect to live to 86.5. Couples who are 65 today stand a 50% chance of having one spouse live to 92, according to the Society

of Actuaries. Life expectancies are even longer for those now in their mid-50s. One in two women and one in three men will live past 90, the actuaries say.

Even if you're right about having a shorter life expectancy, claiming early could shortchange your mate. Married couples will lose one of their checks when the first spouse dies, which can cause a serious drop in income. The survivor will get the larger of the two checks the couple was receiving. That gives the higher earner in a couple a strong incentive to delay so that the survivor's benefit is larger.

## If I claim benefits early and invest them, I'll come out ahead

No investment offers a guaranteed return as high as what you can get from delaying Social Security. To match that return, you'd have to take a lot of risk. Even the most prudent investor can get hurt by a bear market or real estate downturn.

their applications.

Also, you don't have to wait until 70 to get substantial returns. Delaying four years, from 62 to 66, can mean a 33% sustainable, annual increase in your standard of living, Slavov says.

## I need to apply before Social Security goes bankrupt

Social Security is not “going bankrupt.” If Congress doesn't act, in 2035 the system will be able to pay only about 80% of promised benefits — which is not the same as zero. If and when Congress does get around to fixing Social Security, the changes are likely to affect people further from retirement. “Locking in” your benefit early just means settling for smaller checks for life.



GETTY IMAGES

## I have to claim Social Security as soon as I quit working

You don't have to start Social Security when you stop working, or vice versa. Financial planners often suggest people tap their retirement funds or other savings if that allows them to delay



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RETIREMENT LIVING

# 18 communities host open house Oct. 19

MARGARET GATES  
CUSTOM CONTENT EDITOR

If you're considering a move to a continuing care or life plan retirement community, there is no shortage of options in Lancaster County. So how do you choose the right one for you?

Explore Retirement Living, a collaborative effort of 18 local retirement communities, aims to help by hosting its ninth annual open house from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 19.

Visitors are free to tour any of the 18 communities with family and friends, ask questions and gather information. Food and beverages will be served at most locations.

Not sure which communities to tour? Find out below what's new in each community and how they are responding to trends in retirement living as well as the desires of current and future residents.

For additional information, visit [exploretirementliving.org](http://exploretirementliving.org).

## Brethren Village

"More and more people are looking to customize their retirement experience and we are able to accommodate them," writes Tara Ober, vice president of communications and resident life.

The campus offers a variety of dining experiences, including casual dining with different food stations at the Village Center Bistro and full-service dining at Chives American Grill. On Saturday nights, Chives by Candlelight provides white tablecloth service with a fine dining menu. Special events and pop-up dining venues also add variety.

The community's wellness offerings include:

- A highly attended free yoga class.
- Quarterly adventure trips, such as snow tubing, zip lining and horse-



Brethren Village's wellness offerings include monthly adventure trips, where residents can check off bucket-list items like ziplining.

back riding.

- Intramurals such as bocce, cornhole, ladder golf and billiards.

- A new golf simulator.

— The community's synchronized swimming group, The Mermaids, who star in YouTube videos and perform an annual show open to the public.

## Calvary Homes

Calvary Homes is nearing completion of a major two-year construction project designed to advance the privacy, dignity, personal choice and homelike environment expected of senior living communities today, writes Marlene Morris, marketing director. Among the improvements:

- Transforming semi-private rooms in the Bausman Health Care facility to 39 private rooms and three semi-private rooms, each with its own accessible full bath.
- Reorganizing the health care center into

two, smaller and more residential neighborhoods, each including a country kitchen and dining area, a homelike living and activity room, a secure outdoor garden and porch, and a whirlpool spa.

- Expanding therapy services to accommodate restorative functions and training for activities of daily living.

— Increasing personal care capacity and quality. Renovations to Nissley House will include adding accessible showers to resident room baths and a redesign of the core common areas.

- Completing the new three-story Hurter Community and Administrative Center with expanded resident amenities, including a library and media center, game and social room, craft room and meeting spaces.

## Fairmount

"Residents' interests today are different than those of residents who

joined the community 10 years ago," writes Mitchell Hanna, director of marketing.

Fairmount gauges likes and dislikes by continually seeking feedback from current residents and those on its waitlist, he says. Through informal focus groups, the community can tailor activities to meet interest levels.

One example of responding to resident input is the centrally located courtyard at the new Wheat Ridge Apartment building.

"Through conversations with residents, we learned that a bocce court and putting green are features that our residents would enjoy," Hanna writes. "Additionally, residents with a green thumb expressed that they would like to continue their hobby of gardening. Others requested us to consider ways to use this courtyard to build our community feel and were interested in a fire pit to enjoy with their neighbors on crisp evenings. As we design our new courtyard, we are including these features."

## Garden Spot Village

Garden Spot Village's innovative, award-winning Sycamore Springs neighborhood is especially appealing to baby boomers because it offers single-family homes with two-car garages clustered around a common green space, writes Juanita Fox, the community's storyteller.

The next phase of 50 new homes is currently underway and more than half are already spoken for. Sycamore Springs has drawn new residents from Wilmington, Delaware; Philadelphia; Phoenixville; West Chester; Kennett Square; Maryland; New Jersey; North Carolina; Massachusetts; and beyond, Fox says.

Baby boomers find the neighborhood's front porch living appealing, Fox says, along with the opportunity "to live with purpose in community."

## Homestead Village

**Innovation:** The Carriage Homes at Homestead Village are an answer to residents who want the space to continue the lifestyle they enjoy without worry about maintenance. All homes include two bedrooms, two baths and a two-car garage. Other options include a second-floor loft, deck, patio and basement.

**Range of services:** Homestead Village's "Thrive where you are" program is based on the idea that residents want to enjoy an inviting home and receive services that promote their health and well-being in that setting. Homestead Village Homecare Services is a fee-for-service, no-entrance-fee program that assists clients both on and off campus. For residents who choose to downsize to an apartment, each of the community's 111 apartments is licensed for personal care, so when someone needs some extra help, they don't have to move.

**Leadership:** Residents sit on the board of directors, chair life enrichment committees and lead the new resident welcome committee.

## Landis Homes

"Retirees today are interested in leading lifestyles that include health, wellness and stimulating endeavors," says Sarah Short, director of residency planning.

At Landis Homes, that includes:

**Dining:** The Owl Hill Bistro opened in 2018 to meet the desire for healthy and delicious dining choices from wide-ranging cuisines.

**Wellness:** All campus apartments connect under one roof with the new indoor pool and fitness center, wellness studios, educational classes, a variety of services and all dining venues.

**Technology:** The fitness center includes state-of-the-art equipment that self-adjusts to the needs of each user. Residents also can access community information through an app on their smart device.

**Education:** The Pathways Institute for Lifelong Learning offers 40 classes each semester.

**Engagement:** Residents serve on the community's board as well as other committees.

**Recreation:** The campus recently added a large outdoor patio and Crossings Green, designed for outdoor concerts and other events.

## Luther Acres

### St. John's Herr Estate

"Today's seniors who are exploring Luthercare communities are active and focused on total wellness," communications director Amy Kenn writes. "To meet their expectations and needs, we are continually re-investing in our campuses to offer a vibrant lifestyle, the freedom of choice and the full continuum of care services."

Two-bedroom, two-bathroom cottages, especially those with garages, are the top choice for many prospective residents, Kenn says. In response to that demand, Luthercare created an extension of its Luther Acres community in Lititz by adding 10 new townhomes in nearby Lititz Reserve, an EGStoltzfus townhome community. (See related story on Page 1.)

Similarly, there are plans to build 14 new two-bedroom, two-bathroom cottages, with two-car garages, at St. John's Herr Estate in Columbia.

At both campuses, residents will have the opportunity to customize a home and have plenty of storage space, which they find very appealing, Kenn says.

St. John's Herr Estate has two additional renovation projects in the works. The first will add a new dining area to the personal care community, while renovating the current dining space to cater to apartment and cottage residents. Menus will feature bistro-style, made-to-order items with an emphasis on fresh, local ingredients. The second project will add a secure 20-bed memory support personal care center to the campus.

At Luther Acres, updates continue to Healthcare Center

TOUR, page 7



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# Tour

Continued from 6  
rooms and common areas, creating a contemporary health and rehabilitation experience and responding to both the health care needs and lifestyle choices of residents and the community, Kenn says.

**Masonic Village**  
Over the last three years, Masonic Village at Elizabethtown has offered residents the benefits and convenience of advanced technology with the implementation of smart home automation and the construction of state-of-the-art living environments, including 48 townhomes and 72 cottages.  
Residents have easy access to Village Connect, an application which features dining menus, event calendars, campus news and other resources, as well as enhanced connectivity with family and friends.  
“We try to follow trends but mostly rely on feedback from current and future residents when deciding what to implement,” public relations manager Debra Davis says.  
That feedback has led to a new tavern, new clubs, an outpatient rehabilitation clinic and an enlarged pharmacy located at the front of campus, which offers pickup and delivery.  
And new services introduced over the past decade — including home health, home care and hospice — provide residents (and those in the local community) with care where they want it: in their homes.

**Moravian Manor**  
**Warwick Woodlands**  
Over the past year, Moravian Manor and Warwick Woodlands introduced several new initiatives:  
— The Owl’s Nest opened on the Warwick Woodlands campus, offering Lititz its first “farm and sea to table dining” restaurant using fresh local ingredients. The Owl’s Nest also offers a liquor “club license” for Moravian Manor and Warwick Woodlands residents only, but dining is open to the general public, no reservation needed.  
— The Oaks Campus Center opened recently at Warwick Woodlands. It includes a SmartFit studio, Hall of Fame room and Tree Top Terrace rooftop garden with grilling station.  
“We also recognize that residents today desire more choice and flexibility, so we are moving toward more of an ‘a la carte’ approach to



WILLOW VALLEY COMMUNITIES

Willow Valley Communities offers a complimentary design service to help residents customize their new space.

services, which includes minimizing meal plan requirements,” writes Nicole Michael, corporate director of sales and marketing.  
— Moravian Manor introduced a new clinical specialty that includes virtual reality, which has shown to be effective in reducing pain and anxiety, in particular when settings involve nature surroundings, meditations or simple/nonstressful games. The technology immerses residents in a 360-degree environment with a synchronized headset that allows staff to help them navigate.  
— Moravian Manor also offers “No Resident Dies Alone,” a program coordinated by the chaplain and staffed by a group of hospice-trained volunteers. The program ensures a 24-hour compassionate presence is available for actively dying residents when family and friends cannot be there.

**Pleasant View**  
“At Pleasant View, we have found that retirement living can mean many different things to different people. While some prefer country views, others are drawn to downtown living,” writes Missy Lenge, director of sales and marketing.  
In response, Pleasant View is offering two expansions, Lofts at Lititz Springs and West Lawn. (See related story on Page 1.)  
The Lofts at Lititz Springs is part of the Wilbur Chocolate factory revitalization project that also includes an upscale hotel, market and restaurant. The Lofts will feature 32 senior living apartments that offer residents walkability to Lititz shops, restaurants and events, while still being part of Pleasant View’s life care community.  
The West Lawn project will comprise two buildings, each with 18 apartment homes that feature private, open-concept designs, refined finishes and a rooftop

experience overlooking a sunset view of the countryside. It’s also an easy walk to Pleasant View’s new farm-to-table restaurant, Hearth and Harrow, and the PV-FiT fitness center, which includes a hot tub, sauna and golf simulator.

**Quarryville Presbyterian**  
Activities and programs are designed to help residents “Retire the Ordinary and Live the Extraordinary,” writes Karen Dickerson, director of marketing and communications.  
Among the specialized wellness offerings is Super Noggin, a comprehensive brain fitness program designed to maintain and improve cognitive function for participants of all ages. Team members are trained and certified as instructors for the program, which was created in 2009 by LEAF Ltd., a private foundation and nonprofit dedicated to promoting cognitive wellness.

Super Noggin helps those with normal aging memory challenges, and parts of the program have been identified as Alzheimer’s prevention strategies.  
A social-based program, Super Noggin offers a variety of activities and things to learn. The yearlong cognitive fitness program includes individual and group activities, education about lifestyle choices affecting brain health, and progress tracking.

**St. Anne’s**  
St. Anne’s offers a number of amenities and lifestyle features that reflect new trends in retirement living for active adults:  
— Flexible dining options: Residents are not locked into a certain number of meals per day in specific dining rooms. They can choose to eat where and when they want with their changing schedules.  
— Mechanicals on the outside of the Village Apartments: Residents are not disturbed when maintenance is being

performed on their utilities.  
— Customization of new apartments/cottages: Residents can customize the look of their new home.  
— Weekly happy hours: Residents bring their own drinks, and St. Anne’s supplies the snacks, offering opportunities for socialization in a relaxed setting.  
— Breakfast hour: Time to chat and catch up on last night’s ballgame, the latest news, etc., over coffee and light Danish. All are welcome, but it’s mainly geared toward the men.  
— Weekly outdoor activities (weather permitting) such as bean bag toss.  
— New apartments have two bathrooms. Even one-bedroom apartments have an additional half bath. They also have private outdoor living areas, such as a deck or patio.

**Tel Hai**  
Tel Hai launched a new initiative, the Ready-Set-Go Program, to prepare future residents for their move to the com-

munity. As part of the program, future residents are invited to view available residential living accommodations first. They also have access to special, member-only events to experience life at Tel Hai. The program is free upon acceptance of their application.  
Tel Hai also offers a Moving Resources Program that provides move-related services to make the transition even more organized and convenient. Through the on-campus Custom Design Center, new residents can customize and personalize their new home with high-quality finishes to enhance the appearance and style of their retirement retreat.

**United Zion**  
“United Zion Retirement Community focuses on building an active and engaged close-knit community based on the individual interests of the residents,” writes Megan Weiss, director of marketing and development. “Current interests have been continuing learning, technology training, wellness, crafting, volunteering and gardening.”  
To address those interests, the community upgraded its computer lab and will offer technology support classes, started a monthly educational speaker series on a variety of topics, enhanced its volunteer programs and improved community gathering spaces, including a new game room and new dining spaces.

**Willow Valley Communities**  
Willow Valley Communities will showcase

its Lakes campus during the Explore Retirement Living open house. The community will also have information about its newest expansion, SouthPointe at Lakes. Located at the south end of the Lakes campus, SouthPointe will feature 88 deluxe villa homes ready for occupancy beginning mid-2020, and 120 luxury apartments. Apartments will be available in two floor plan designs: two bedroom/2 1/2 baths or two bedroom 2 1/2 baths plus study.

Complimentary design services allow future Willow Valley Communities residents to customize their new residence at Willow Valley Communities’ Design Studio, which visitors can tour as part of the Explore Retirement Living open house.

**Woodcrest Villa**  
With more than 88% of people over 50 using the internet, Woodcrest Villa wants to “connect” to residents in various ways. Complimentary high-speed wireless access is now included for all new residents moving into apartments and villas. Also, this fall, the community is introducing a new tool from Vibrant that allows residents to use an online portal to make dining reservations, register for events or request services. Residents can connect to the portal via cellphone, tablet, computer and kiosks within the Woodcrest Villa campus. The community also has a full-time staff member dedicated to helping residents navigate tech waters.

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# Groff: Retired nurse still teaching

Continued from 3  
compliance advice and direc-  
tion to area health care pro-  
viders. She is now ready to  
expand her services region-  
ally, to states and eventually  
nationally.”

Groff calls Murphy “a jewel”  
who is always giving her pep  
talks. One of Murphy’s direc-  
tions to Groff was to obtain  
a lawyer. Her cousin, Will  
Watt Campbell, is a lawyer  
and guided her to Christo-  
pher J. Churchill, a health and  
Medicare lawyer with Barley  
Snyder. Churchill’s wealth of  
knowledge proved to be criti-  
cal to the nursing entrepre-  
neur.

“We know these services are  
needed because we have all  
worked in the hospitals and  
retirement homes in Lancas-  
ter County,” says Groff, noting  
issues like recurring urinary  
tract infections have been  
linked to incorrect insertion  
of a catheter, which can be cor-  
rected through education on  
proper procedures.

“The mission of Nursing  
Educators Resource Group is  
to provide advice and training  
to the community, organiza-  
tions, schools and health care  
facilities,” Groff says. “Our  
group has more than 25 years  
of experience in multiple dis-  
ciplines of nursing and clinical  
practice.”

Groff works closely with re-  
tirement communities like  
Moravian Manor in Lititz, set-  
ting up in-house services that  
cover topics such as ethics,  
medication, disease processes,  
new Medicare rulings, phar-  
macology, new drugs, wound  
care, colostomy care, diabetes,  
Alzheimer’s disease, demen-  
tia, respiratory care and more.

“Moravian Manor has found  
the partnership with Nursing  
Educators Resource Group  
to be one of strong value and  
quality,” says Lynn Swisher,  
vice president of health care  
at Moravian Manor. “Expert  
assistance with design of SIM



LAURA KNOWLES

Nancy Groff, left, got her business off the ground with the help of her SCORE mentor, Tom Murphy.

training modules, on-site edu-  
cation programs and one-to-  
one education has been such a  
benefit to the professional edu-  
cation of our staff. They are a  
valued education partner.”

## Pursuing other interests

One would think that run-  
ning a new business would  
keep Groff more than busy.  
However, she still manages to  
find time to write a book, sew,  
study history and follow poli-  
tics.

Her book is about the history  
of Watt & Shand department  
store, which graced downtown  
Lancaster from 1879 to 1992.  
Why Watt & Shand? She has a  
good reason.

“My grandfather was Peter  
T. Watt,” Groff says. “I am now  
just completing a book on Pe-  
ter and how he came from the  
Orkney Islands in Scotland to  
the USA, and how he met  
James Shand and they started  
the store together.”

Known for their custom-  
er service, Watt and Shand  
started their store in New  
York City. They then moved  
the store to Lancaster at 6 E.  
King St., adding new depart-  
ments over the years. In 1905,  
Watt & Shand acquired three  
adjoining buildings at 23 Penn  
Square, and the store contin-  
ued to grow until 1992, when it

was sold to Bon-Ton.

While Groff is fascinated by  
the history of her grandfather’s  
iconic store, she admits she  
never bought clothing there.  
That’s because she is a tal-  
ented seamstress who makes  
all of her own clothes, stitch-  
es curtains, does alterations  
and makes gifts like aprons  
for others. She is a member  
of the Lancaster Area Sewing  
Network and American Sew-  
ing Guild, sewing pajamas for  
Milagro House, baby outfits  
for preemies and Christmas  
stockings for veterans.

“Years ago I managed a fab-  
ric shop in Quarryville,” Groff  
says. “There is virtually noth-  
ing that I have not sewed, such  
as curtains, bedspreads, pil-  
lows, clothing, including cur-  
tains for a hearse. I made all  
kinds of adaptive clothing for  
my daughter. I would never  
think of going shopping for  
clothing, but I do love to go  
shopping in New York City for  
fabric and supplies.”

Groff sums up her vibrant  
outlook on life: “God granted  
us life, so let’s use it to the full-  
est. Why would a senior want  
to just sit in a chair? That is  
beyond me. Why would you  
want to stay in a shell? Enjoy  
this world and participate.  
Besides, there are multiple  
health reasons as to why you  
need to get out of the chair.”

As a nurse, she should know.

# Weismer: Jewelry

Continued from 1  
solid colors, most often black.  
For her, that provides a blank  
canvas for the bold colors of  
accessories that might in-  
clude a red hat, twisted black  
and white beaded neck-  
lace, bold bangle bracelets,  
chunky rings and power-red  
lipstick.

As it turns out, Jane Mohr  
saw some of Weismer’s jew-  
elry on Instagram and Face-  
book, and invited her to de-  
sign pieces for her fashions.

“Jane Mohr and I have  
been successfully selling at  
the fashion shows in New  
York City and California,  
pairing my necklaces with  
her outfits. She curates the  
Edge fashion show in New  
York, which is a collection  
of 30 designers over four  
floors in the Stewart Hotel.  
Boutique owners can shop  
this cutting-edge style as  
she promotes like-minded  
fashion,” says Weismer, add-  
ing that Lily Tomlin wears  
Mohr’s eclectic fashions on  
the Netflix show “Grace and  
Frankie.”

Weismer says she is thrilled  
to be bringing her creativity  
into play, by using all sorts  
of materials to design one-  
of-a-kind pieces that range  
from the museum-level silk  
cocoon fashion show state-  
ment piece to more afford-  
able necklaces. She has been  
hard at work building inven-  
tory for New York Fashion  
Week, taking place this week.

An artist at heart, Weismer  
earned her bachelor’s in fine  
arts degree in textile design  
from Moore College of Art  
and Design in Philadelphia  
in 1974. A native of New York  
City, she eventually moved  
to Lancaster. She continues  
her Philadelphia connection  
as a docent at the Philadel-  
phia Museum of Art, provid-  
ing educational tours of art  
exhibits, such as the recent  
Fabulous Fashion Dior ex-  
hibit.

Over the years, she’s wove  
large-scale tapestries for  
residential and commer-  
cial interiors, while creating  
small-scale collages for Arm-  
strong World Industries for  
their national flooring ads.  
She expanded her business  
in 1991 to include residential  
interior decoration. Later,  
she put her experience with  
fiber, collage and design to  
work on her unique jewelry  
creations.

“I look at them as being  
small sculptures for the  
body,” says Weismer, dem-  
onstrating a necklace that  
twists around and around  
with black fabric and red and  
magenta silk, accented by a  
lime-green ball.

Her newest discovery is  
repurposing leftover silk co-  
coons that were not usable in  
silk production. The cocoons  
are available dyed in a variety  
of colors, and Weismer takes  
advantage of the unique  
beauty of their oval shape.  
She uses silk fabric twisted to  
form a necklace that is em-  
bellished with a sculptural  
cocoon arrangement.

“I have recently started  
to experiment with flatten-  
ing the cocoons, and they  
are incredibly strong,” says  
Weismer, showing how she  
pounds them into a flattened  
shape, then builds a necklace  
from them.

Weismer is always looking  
for unusual ways to repur-  
pose materials that would  
otherwise be thrown away.  
Like a butterfly emerging  
from a cocoon, it’s the discov-  
ery of how an ordinary object  
can become something new  
and beautiful.

To learn more about Weis-  
mer’s designs, check her  
website at [www.iseearte-verywhere.com](http://www.iseearte-verywhere.com).



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Let us show you why so many of your former neighbors now call Willow Valley Communities home. Come see us for a warm and welcoming visit.

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**COMMUNITIES**

