Senior Living

||||||||||||| **RETIREMENT** ||||||||



Residents of Landis Homes maintain a social distance while taking an exercise class outdoors. Once a pandemic necessity, the outdoor classes have become so popular they will likely continue.

COVID-19 brings challenges, promising changes to local retirement communities

MARGARET GATES | MGATES@LNPNEWS.COM

t the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, residents of Landis Homes would line a roadway into the Lititz campus on Friday afternoons, cheering on the retirement community's workers with signs and noisemakers as they left or arrived for work. When the campus resident council suggested a more permanent show of appreciation, Landis Homes residents donated over \$10,000 toward a Garden of Gratitude, a new park on two-thirds of an acre featuring walkways, greenery and a gazebo offering views of surrounding farmland. Not every retirement community has such a tangible symbol of gratitude, but many share the sentiment.

"The pandemic has brought out an appreciation of how good we had it before and has been a reminder of how important community and family are," says Jonathan Hollinger, CEO of Pleasant View Communities.

While local senior living communities have faced many physical and financial challenges over the past year, they also see many positives that point to a promising future.

The challenges

"Coming into the pandemic, continuing care retirement communities in general were enjoying high occupancy and financial stability," says Lisa McCracken, a Lancaster County resident and director of senior living research and development for Ziegler, a Chicago-based investment-banking firm.

"We entered this pandemic on re-

ally solid footing," she says.

But COVID-19 has taken its toll. First quarter 2021 statistics from the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing & Care show senior living occupancy nationally at a new 15-year low.

CCRCs show an overall occupancy of 84.3%, a 7.2% drop from the same period last year.

Within those CCRCs, however, the independent living segment has fared the best, with an occupancy rate of 88.6%. While the skilled nursing segments of CCRCs fared the worst at 76.5%, their occupancy was still nearly 3% higher than skilled nursing facilities that are not part of a CCRC.

"Nursing homes were impacted way worse than retirement communities," McCracken says. "If you take a look at all the residential options



Jeff Coon of Fulton Theatre performs in an outdoor wagon concert for residents of Garden Spot Village in New Holland.

 CCRC held up the best of any of them."

The fact that skilled nursing fared worse during the pandemic is not surprising, she says, given that even under normal circumstances they tend to have the frailest residents and a higher turnover. Adding to the challenge was the reduction in short-stay residents — those requiring a temporary stint for rehab after a hospital stay or surgery. Fear of COVID-19 prompted more hospital discharges straight to intensive home care, while the temporary halt in elective surgeries further reduced referrals.

Locally, at Fairmount Homes, residential apartments and cottages remained full, but personal care and health care occupancy took a hit, notes Mitchell Hanna, director of marketing.

"We had some family members take their loved ones home to care for them there because of visitation limitations on our campus," he says.

Adds Nicole Michael, corporate director of sales and marketing for Moravian Manor Communities, "Why would you admit your loved one into long-term care if you are unable to visit?"

In some cases, the reduced occupancy was by choice. Amy Kenn, community director for Luthercare, writes in an email that Luther Acres **GRATITUDE**, page 2

Gratitude: Retirement communities reflect on a challenging year

Continued from 1

halted new admissions in its skilled nursing health care center to keep numbers down and residents safe. The same was true at Masonic Village, says admissions supervisor Jeanie Hummer.

"With COVID-19 precautions in place, and to protect our current residents, we have not had as many move-ins from the local community to our personal care, nursing and memory support areas, resulting in lost revenue," Hummer says, noting occupancy is down 15%. She anticipates those levels will improve once they can reopen to the public and increase their marketing efforts.

Reversing those occupancy numbers, however, isn't the only issue. Communities also have to deal with a national health care staffing crisis, Kenn writes. The staffing shortage has affected many CCRCs in Lancaster County.

"We have many great jobs available right now," writes Christina Gallagher, director of marketing for Homestead Village, in an email. "The pay and benefits have never been better; but they remain unfilled."

Hands-on LPN and CNA classes have been rare over the past year, reducing the supply of available new employees, says Michael, of Moravian Manor. Burnout is another factor. "Wearing N-95 masks, gowns and protection for extended periods of time is exhausting,"

In addition to the physical health issues of the pandemic, the resulting isolation has had severe mental health ramifications for both residents and team members, says Hollinger, of Pleasant View. There are financial ramifications as well, not only from lower occupancy but also from additional costs for all of that personal protective and screening equipment.

Most of the county's retirement communities are nonprofit, and many rely on fundraisers. Fairmount Homes canceled or scaled back many of its regular fundraising events, including a book sale, sandwich sale, Heritage Days and a benefit auction, Hanna

To address the fundraising issue, United Zion Retirement Community held its firstever online auction and virtual gala in late April to benefit its Heart of the Home campaign to build a new chapel, notes Megan Weiss, director of marketing and develop-

The bright spots

A virtual fundraiser is just one of the ways local retirement communities have adapted to the pandemic over the past year. CCRCs have gotten creative in their delivery of programs and services out of necessity, but many say some changes have been so successful they will likely become permanent. Here are just a few:

Virtual programming

"Video has become one of the key ways we communicate internally, and while that medium has been steadily growing, during quarantine it became the primary way we engaged our residents," writes Tara Ober, vice president of communications and resident life for Brethren Village, which has both a YouTube channel and an internal TV net-

President and CEO John Snader used those mediums to broadcast regular COVID-19 updates. They've also been vehicles for everything from worship to exercise. "Daily Dose of Wellness," a 30-minute fitness program geared to all levels, is particularly popular and will continue to air on Brethren Village's TV network even when the pandemic is over.

Landis Homes added a new closed-circuit TV channel that broadcasts live concerts, exercise instruction and lectures, says Sarah Short, director of residency planning. Woodcrest Villa also turned to its in-house TV channel to provide fitness programs, entertainment, news and updates, writes Connie Buckwalter, director of marketing for Mennonite Home Communities, in an email.

"Residents loved them all — especially 'The J&J Show' — a weekly news update program featuring our director of residential living, Jennifer Bicher, and social worker Jessica Perry," Buckwalter says. "The show has turned out to be a 'must watch' now for many of the residents!"

Online programming at Willow Valley



Communities includes fitness videos, cooking demos, classes, lectures and performances, notes Maureen Leader, publications and communications manager. It's also become an effective marketing tool, along with video tours of the campus and residences.

"As prospective residents visit and subsequently move to Willow Valley Communities from nearby and across the country, we have observed that many enjoy viewing an online video tour of our campus or other virtual experience before coming for an inperson visit," she says.

The great outdoors

Landis Homes residents are spending more time outdoors exploring the campus walking and biking trails, woods, wetland and park areas, Short says. For safety reasons, the community also brought some of its exercise classes and other programs outdoors, a move that has been so popular it likely will continue in the future.

Stacy Schroder, director of wellness and prevention at Masonic Village, notes that while the pandemic created the need for Zoom-based personal training, wellness coaching and support groups, it also inspired the staff at the Baird Wellness Center to develop more outdoor programming, like cornhole, kickball, biking and walking groups.

Masonic Village also started bringing food trucks to campus every Wednesday to give residents a chance to socialize outdoors. The community plans to continue the Wednesday tradition through October.

Entertainment

To give residents the live performances they were missing, Garden Spot Village introduced wagon concerts. Performers rode in a wagon pulled by a tractor that made stops at eight outdoor locations on the New Holland campus over the course of two hours. Residents could safely gather and physically distance at each of the locations while enjoying a mini-outdoor concert, explains Juanita Fox, director of media experience and storytelling.

"We invited a number of local performers from Servant Stage, Fulton Theatre and even local high school and college students," Fox writes in an email. "The performances were amazing and life-giving for everyone who participated."

Fairmount Homes similarly held concerts on wagons in areas where residents could listen from their windows and balconies.

Fox says Garden Spot Village plans to continue the concerts this summer.

Technology

A number of communities report that residents who were previously fearful of or resistant to using technology are now comfortable using platforms such as Zoom, Skype and FaceTime to communicate with family and friends.

"It's a wonderful way to connect residents with their out-of-town family members and loved ones, and we will continue to utilize technology for this purpose," says Kenn, of Luther Acres.

Residents are also increasingly using technology to communicate with medical facilities and physicians, says Mark Eyer, director of retirement living at Masonic Village. "There is a comfort level now with virtual meetings, and while we believe residents will still prefer face-to-face get-togethers, it's good to have this as an option."

Health and safety measures

From improved infection-control practices to new airflow systems, local retirement communities put measures in place that will last beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

An Accushield kiosk at Luther Acres' health care center screens temperatures of team members and visitors and includes a check-in/check-out system and health questionnaire, Kenn notes. It will continue to be an effective tool during flu season or future outbreaks, she says.

Among the many steps Fairmount Homes took to prevent infection, one of the most significant had benefits beyond the community's borders.

"Most importantly, we gained the knowledge of how to convert a wing of our rehab center into an isolation wing," Mitchell Hanna writes.

In late March 2020, Fairmount converted a hallway of its rehab center into a secure isolation area designed to treat not only its own residents who tested positive, but also patients from area hospitals and other nursing and personal care facilities. Along with specially trained staff, they equipped the wing with negative pressure to prevent cross-contamination.

In a span of 11 months, Fairmount Homes treated 122 patients in its isolation wing, Hanna says.

Personal space

United Zion made some changes in 2019 that turned out to be fortuitous over the past year, Weiss says. They included a conversion to all private rooms and a neighborhood model, where a small cluster of rooms has its own gathering space and kitchen/dining space. The community also completed planned renovations to its Lexington Restaurant in 2020, allowing for more spacing between tables and separate areas for personal care and residential living.

"Private rooms and being able to easily close areas helps slow and reduce the spread of infections," Weiss says. "Although we didn't have a pandemic in mind when we developed these plans, these last five years of renovations are key to being ready in the future for another pandemic."

Looking to the future

Some local retirement communities note that the pandemic seemed to reinforce a common public perception that CCRCs are much the same as traditional nursing homes. Leader, of Willow Valley, anticipates that stigma will fade as prospective residents visit their campus.

"We have found that residents and prospective residents have concluded that community living is truly safe living," Leader says. "In addition to relief from isolation and loneliness, support services like meal/ grocery delivery, 24-hour nursing care (and) engaging online programming provided our residents, as well as their families, with relief and comfort that was much appreciated."

Masonic Village

started bringing

Elizabethtown

campus every Wednesday to give

residents an op-

portunity to safely

socialize outdoors

and enjoy a variety

of foods when they

indoor restaurants.

could not dine at

The popular food truck visits will

continue through

the fall.

food trucks to its

Ober reports that Brethren Village has seen an increase in requests for information and campus tours, a sign that seniors aren't shying away from retirement living. For their part, CCRCs are continuing with expansion and renovation projects and other initiatives to make themselves even more attractive to potential residents.

"We're hard at work shaping the future of the community and strengthening our offerings to current and future residents. We're re-envisioning health care services and increasing resident choice through infrastructure, care and service enhancements," writes Dave Shenk, president and CEO of Tel Hai Retirement Community, in an email. "We know the value, freedom, and flexibility found in a continuing care community is and will remain - extremely attractive to seniors looking to secure their financial future while accessing the full continuum of care, amenities and related services."

Buckwalter, of Mennonite Home Communities, is already seeing that sentiment in ac-

"We are absolutely thrilled with the level of interest we have been experiencing in our community," she writes. "The housing market has made it a great time for people to get the most value from their home sale and then move to a retirement community like

That robust housing market was also a reason for the strength of CCRCs before the pandemic, says McCracken, the director of senior research for Ziegler.

While aging in place has become a popular option, it is not always practical for everyone. That may turn out to be particularly true for the baby boomer generation, Mc-Cracken says - and particularly beneficial to senior living communities that can offer residents both an active, independent lifestyle and a continuum of care that includes assisted living, memory support and skilled nursing, should they ever need it.

"Baby boomers are a much more chronically ill population than people in older generations," she says.

Boomers are also more likely to be divorced, leaving them without a spouse as a caregiver. And before you suggest a son or daughter for that caregiver role, consider this, McCracken says: The percentage of boomers without children is higher than any other generation.

The caregiver ratio — the number of people available to provide care to those who need it - is dropping dramatically, she adds.

"We're in a period of reflection and reexamining and redefining," McCracken says. "It's important to know what lies ahead of



Getting back to summer travel? Here are some tips

METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

One of the perks of getting older is having more time to devote to recreation and traveling.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are roughly 52 million people who are age 65 or older in the United States. With a \$1.6 trillion total net worth, seniors spend more on groceries, pharmaceutical items and travel and leisure than any other demographic.

With more people getting vaccinated and travel opportunities more likely, here are tips to ensure those trips are both safe and memorable.

1. Consider risk.

The coronavirus pandemic has taught us that situations can change rapidly. Before booking any travel, weigh the risks and the benefits of a trip. Determine if COVID-19 is spreading where you live or at your destination. Older adults have a higher risk for severe illness from the virus. If you are not vaccinated, it may be best to wait to travel.

2. Use senior-friendly services.

Seek out travel services that offer the best perks for older adults. Many travel providers no longer offer senior discounts, but they may offer other benefits, such as early boarding or assistance with traveling from gates to baggage areas.

3. Get travel insurance. According to Liz Dahl, cofounder of Boomer Travel Patrol, a website featuring expert advice geared toward the baby boomer demographic, travel insurance can be essential for older travelers.

Seniors may be more at risk of falling or getting sick and some may need extra medication if travel is interrupted or delayed. Travel insurance can provide extra coverage for a relatively

low price if something goes wrong.

4. Don't advertise your absence.

It may be tempting to upload photos of your beachside vacation to social media as you are immersed in paradise. Unfortunately, seniors tend to be targets for thieves because they are seen as vulnerable.

Don't make the job easier by advertising you are away from home. In addition, have a neighbor periodically pick up your mail and set lights on timers to give the impression you are home.

TRAVEL, page 5

LIFESTYLE

Where to live in retirement? 'It all depends'

GAYLE JOHNSON

FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

A medical tsunami struck Marian Martenas's parents about 10 years ago. First, her father suffered a stroke, followed by her mother's heart attack. Bob McKeegan would need 24-hour care for the rest of his life. Wife Barbara recovered and could live independently in the couple's Lancaster apartment. They just couldn't occupy the same space in any nursing home or retirement center the family investigated.

"It shattered our hearts that they couldn't be together," says Martenas, who talked with her three brothers and two sisters about a solution for the incredibly close older couple. Marte $nas, husband\,Wayne\,and\,son$ Michael invited the McKeegans to move into their four-bedroom Lititz farmhouse.

Martenas family The moved to two bedrooms upstairs. Barbara McKeegan took over the master bedroom downstairs while Bob lived across the hall in a guest bedroom. The family remodeled a downstairs bathroom for Bob, replacing the tub with a walk-in shower large enough to accommodate a wheelchair, and widening doorways around the house.

Barbara lived for four more years; her husband for five. Martenas doesn't regret the crowded space and occasionally raised voices that came with five people in one house.

"This is what we wanted to do," she says.

Martenas's solution may not work for other families. However, it's one consideration for older residents deciding where to live after retirement. Lancaster has consistently ranked in the top five of U.S. News and World Report's list of the best places to retire in the country. But, what does living here look like for seniors?

"It all depends on the situation," says Sheri Snyder, who supervises case workers at the Lancaster County Office of Aging.

The agency offers advice to all and free services to those who qualify by income. Some people have family and supportive neighbors nearby to help them stay in a home. Others may value the ease of moving to a retirement community where others take care of most de-

Harris and Jean Coleman chose the latter. The couple, from Mt. Vernon, moved into an apartment in an independent living section of Willow Valley Communities nine years ago rather than stay in their five-bedroom

"We don't paint, we don't repair and we don't fix meals," says Harris Coleman. "Our days of washing dishes and doing yardwork are over."

Instead, the Colemans take advantage of more than 100 available clubs in the community. Jean Coleman leads the 55-member Quilt-



Lancaster Downtowners, from left, Eva Hochberg, Kathleen Ramey and Allan Eustis, with his dog, Lucas, take a long walk through Lancaster city. The walking group meets every Saturday morning to walk between two and three miles through the city.

ing Guild. Both belong to the camera club and often submit photos revolving around a certain theme. Harris devotes time to a group that helps preserve farmland in Lancaster County.

"We can do a lot of things we never had to chance to do because we were taking care of the house," Harris Coleman says.

Before making any decisions, people should examine their finances, support network and preferences.

"It's usually something seniors have already decided before they come to me," says Marci Miller, a Lancaster elder-law attorney with Gibbel, Kraybill & Hess.

Retirement communities

About 18,500 out of 100,500 residents over 65 who live in Lancaster County reside in some sort of care facility, according to figures from Lisa McCraken, who researches senior living for Ziegler, a Chicago-based investment firm.

One main benefit to an allinclusive retirement community comes from never having to move again as residents transition from independent homes all the way to 24-hour nursing care, with stops at personal care and assisted living.

Miller tells clients to remain realistic about healthcare needs and to look for a community they won't have to leave.

"I counsel families about things to consider so that their preferred housing option can remain as permanent as possible."

Retirement communities also offer a built-in social life. "Isolation and loneliness are primary reasons why people decline rapidly," says Brian Rutter, Willow Valley's marketing director.

For instance, the community offers a fencing club, debate organization and sailing group. "We run the gamut."

"They provide meals, help with daily activities and transportation," says Allyson Stanton, a licensed social worker and aging lifecare manager in Columbia, Maryland. "It's one stop for resources."

Some properties require a large buy-in fee and then provide wide-ranging care as long as monthly dues are paid. Other communities offer a smaller entrance fee but will ask for more money and an increased monthly payment as residents move between levels of care. Residents usually don't own their homes, and heirs may inherit only a small portion of the initial payment.

Miller tells people to visit as many communities as possible and talk to residents. "Is it a more conservative community? Are televisions allowed? Does it feel too stuffy?"

Stanton advises touring every living situation offered at a community. "Marketing people may want to show you the beautiful lobby or the pool." See the skilled nursing and assisted living areas, she says. Talk to the director of nursing. Find out the ratio of nurses to patients.

Cost may be one downside to moving to a retirement community. Be prepared to show your financial records and prove that you have enough money saved to pay for 20-25 years of care, Stanton says.

Miller advises having enough money up front to show a community you can pay for skilled nursing for three or four years — about \$450,000. Learn about payment options, she says. "Be prepared to make a full and complete financial disclosure."

Aging in place

Most Lancaster County seniors who downsize stay in their own homes or move in with family. Miller sees an increase in older residents choosing this after more than a year of COVID-19 restrictions.

"Aging in place in your own home, or in a child's home, has become a more desirable option since the pandemic because seniors have more freedom to interact with family and friends in person," she says.

Also, examine your support network, Stanton says. Do you have family and friends in the area? Will you have transportation to doctor appointments, especially if you live in a rural area and have to go into a city? Will you be able to install equipment such as grab bars in a shower or widen doorways for a wheelchair? What about paying for home health care?

Senior living experts say help to stay in a home is available. The county office on aging can send someone to a private home to make recommendations for safe living, Snyder says. Social workers there can answer questions and point residents to free or reducedcost services.

"There's no such thing as a dumb question," she says.

The Lancaster Downtowners, a nonprofit group, provides a support network for those who want to age in place, says executive director Melissa Ressler. About 200 seniors belong to the organization, which charges annual dues based on member income. The agency oversees walking groups, book clubs, supper clubs and educational programs to any senior who doesn't mind coming to downtown Lan-

Members also rely on each other for transportation, meals and even pet babysit-

Molly McKitterick, 69, says she and husband Allan Eustis, 72, "wanted an adventure" when they retired to Lancaster from Washington, D.C., two years ago without any family or friends nearby They purchased a 3,000-square-foot home in

Olde Town. Joining Lancaster Downtowners provided "an instant social network," Eustis says. He also volunteers at the organization to provide transportation for people

who no longer drive. They remain realistic though. "We know at some point we won't be able to stay in this house," McKitterick says.

Right now, though, life seems wonderful. "I didn't think it was going to be this perfect," Eustis says.

The Colemans marvel at how easy life is right now at Willow Valley. The couple travels but no longer has to worry about who will watch the house, water the grass or pick up packages left at the front door.

"We just shut the door, and away we go,"Jean Coleman



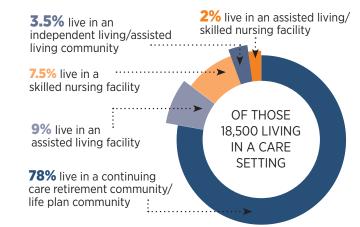
LANCASTER COUNTY SENIOR LIVING

100,500

Approximate number of people 65 and older living in Lancaster County.

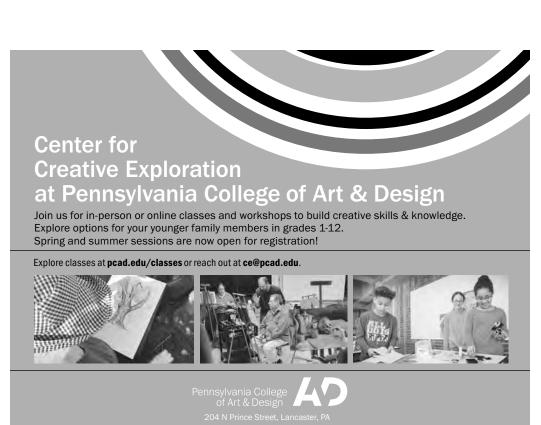
18,500 Number of those seniors living in a residential or care setting (continuing care retirement community, skilled nursing,

assisted living).



of those who reside in some form of senior living community in Lancaster County come from within a 50-mile radius of the community. (That number drops to 79% when considering only continuing care retirement communities, which are more likely to attract residents from a larger geographic area.)

SOURCE: ZIEGLER





PERSONAL CARE Feel at Home.

Live as independently as possible through assistance with day-to-day activities in comfortable rooms and apartments, without a long-term commitment.

Supporting your peace of mind:

- Fresh and delicious meals
- Engaging social, recreational and educational opportunities
- Professional medical oversight
- Full range of therapies



To find out more, call Jenn at 717.381.3548. 1001 E Oregon Rd | Lititz, PA 17543-9205 | LandisHomes.org **TOGETHER**

Senior communities explore racism, diversity

REBECCA LOGAN

FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

It's been nearly a year since Marilyn Langeman joined around 80 fellow residents of Landis Homes for a silent, outdoor vigil following the death of George Floyd.

"A number of people who were there, afterward, said we need to continue our work," Langeman says. "We decided to begin with education and examining our own racism that we maybe don't recognize."

An anti-racism resident group formed at Landis and now meets monthly, primarily via Zoom. Members have added a related bookshelf to the library and have amassed a virtual mailing list of residents who are given updates with suggestions for books and online courses.

"There are people here who think that we're overblowing it, we're exaggerating," Langeman says. "But there are many of us here who are interested."

The same can be said of residents of some other Lancaster County retirement communities where similar groups formed last year. And the point isn't lost on those involved that this is happening in a type of community that — both locally and nationally — is predominantly white.

Consider the racial breakdown of communities nationally for which leaders were surveyed in "Diversity in Senior Living Communities: Insights into Creating a More Diverse Census." Residents in those communities were described as 95% white, 4% Black and about 1% Asian.

That 2018 national study was by Love & Co. Inc., a Frederick, Maryland-based, senior-focused marketing firm. CEO Rob Love says he's pleased to hear of resident-driven initiatives in Lancaster County and says he is seeing similar pushes elsewhere.

"Residents have grown very active over the last couple years — and particularly over this past year — looking more at roles they can play and what they can do internally and externally in their greater community," Love says.

His firm's diversity study followed an increasing number of discussions and questions — many coming from some Quaker-run senior living communities across the mid-Atlantic, he says.

We have very social-minded residents, and we also have very educated residents here. So when they're looking at a topic, whether they agree or disagree, they want to learn more ... They also want to know how they can be part of the

- Jennifer Shutt, director of community services, Moravian Manor Communities

change..

"The residents at those communities - reflecting the overall Quaker philosophy - tend to be more welcoming and understanding and receptive to all facets of diversity, whether it's race or sexual preference or whatever," he says.

Some retirement communities are out of financial reach for many seniors regardless of race. A host of issues complicate matters further when race is consid-

'What can we do?'

"Every culture is different when it comes to working with your aging families," says Jennifer Shutt, director of community services at Moravian Manor Communities. "We are inclusive. We would like to be more diverse. We would love to have a very diverse population."

Moravian residents also organized 8 minutes and 46 seconds of silence in June in response to the killing of George Floyd.

a push for us to talk about create a library of racial eqdiversity and awareness," Shutt says. "So we started to get a number of speakers together."

The first was Kevin Ressler, president and CEO of the United Way of Lancaster County.

"He really gave his own, personal testimony (via Zoom)," she says. "The title of the program was 'Beyond Southern Sentiment. Racism Feels at Home in Lancaster.'"

"A question was posed: mittee was certainly formed

'What can we do?' " Shutt

Ressler gave some suggestions. The group continues looking for more.

Shutt was also approached by Chris Kennedy — a locally-based national consultant on issues related to aging to help her pilot an intergenerational program.

For that, a few Moravian residents were paired with college students connected to Bright Side Baptist Church in Lancaster. They shared life stories, worked on art projects and presented those to friends and family.

"We have very socialminded residents, and we also have very educated residents here," Shutt says. "So when they're looking at a topic, whether they agree or disagree, they want to learn more ... They also want to know how they can be part of the change."

Making a difference

Cynnie King is a member of the racial justice committee formed last year at Homestead Village.

"We're all seeking a sense of purpose and mission. Maybe that's particularly important as you move into retirement," King says. "How do you hold onto that? And what does that look like as you move into the next chapter?"

She sees a need to develop honest, respectful and productive conversations.

"It's just like everywhere else. There's a political spectrum here ... which creates its own sort of sensitivities," King says. "You don't want to pull the community apart because of strong points of view."

The racial justice committee and the life enrichment staff at Homestead Village have worked together to sponsor four interactive diversity and inclusion train-"After that there was just ings provided by the YWCA; uity books and resources; hold a six-week learning series provided by QUEST; and hold conversations about cultivating diversity and identifying practical ways to encourage it.

Also, through a Moving4Change! Initiative, Homestead Village residents raised \$5,000 for Advantage Lancaster, which helps teens within the

School District of Lancaster. "The racial justice com-





As part of the pilot project "Racism and the Art of Intergenerational Conversations," white older adults from Moravian Manor and students of color from Bright Side Baptist Church and Opportunity Center created artistic representations of their shared ideas. Above is art created by Alyssa, a student, top, and Carla, a resident at Moravian Manor.

over the events of the past of the broader organizayear. And they are on an education journey," says Homeare fundraising. And we encourage them to make those efforts. We've supported it as part of our life enrichment budget."

Promoting diversity

In addition, Motter says, Homestead Village, like other local communities, is looking at how it can be more diverse.

That includes taking "very aware and deliberate" steps toward a more diverse leadership and governance, being mindful of those who interact with perspective residents, he says.

"We can't control the applicants. But we can certainly adjust our approach to trying to be more inclusive in all aspects of our organization," Motter says. "You've got to start somewhere."

Landis Homes is part

tion Landis Communities, which currently also instead President Douglas cludes Steeple View Lofts, Motter. "But they also want a 55-plus apartment comto make a difference ... They munity in downtown Lancaster; Mountain View Terrace, an apartment complex in New Holland for seniors with qualifying income; and Welsh Mountain Home, a personal care home.

> While most residents on the Landis Homes campus are white, about 5 percent of residents of other Landis Communities locations are people of color as are more than 16 percent of team members, says Landis Communities spokeswoman Beth Trout.

> Landis Communities leadership issued a statement after Floyd's killing citing the need to be more aware of inequalities and create a more inclusive culture. The organization is working through a series of goals for putting words into action, she says.

From a purely economic perspective, reaching a broader range of potential

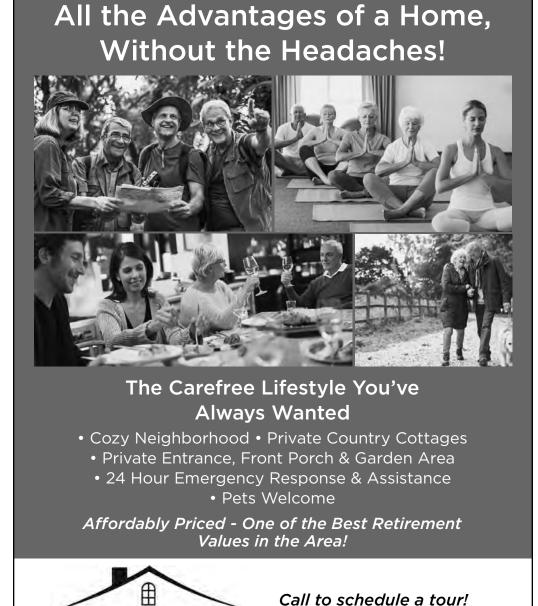
residents might not have an automatic bottom line payoff in a county where waiting lists are the norm for senior living communities.

"In Lancaster, it's just an extraordinary hotbed of very successful communities," Love says. "But it's not really indicative of the country as a whole."

Nationally, retirement communities tend to average 93% occupancy, he says. So casting a wider net could be beneficial on the fiscal front, he says.

Race and retirement savings is getting a lot of attention. In March J.P. Morgan Wealth Management announced plans to hire 300 additional Black and Latinx advisers by 2025 and noted for those groups a "lack of trust in financial institutions, lack of access to solutions and investments education, and systemic issues all lead to lower ownership of wealth-building prod-

The company also cites DIVERSITY, page 5



800.343.9765 | LancashireTerrace.com

6 Terrace Dr., Lancaster, PA

Lancashire Terrace

A Cottage Living Community



Diversity: Seniors

 $Continued \, from \, 4$

Federal Reserve data that indicates that only 34% of Black families have retirement accounts compared to 60% of white families and that the median retirement balance is \$46,100 versus of \$151,000 for white families.

Many Black seniors know the struggle of using savings to take care of older relatives and children at the same time, says Jim Johnson, who is himself Black. He's the William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship at The University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School.

"I'm 67 years old and I've had 10 family members to die in the last decade — folks who are responsible for helping me get to where I'm at today," Johnson says. "So when my white colleagues were investing in retirement properties and horse farms, I was putting a roof on my 97-year-old uncle's house because he's sitting with two pails in the middle of the living room.

"But there are some (Black seniors) who can afford to live in these communities," he adds. "Why they're not looking at them is the question."

Johnson and some colleagues took a swing at answering that with a 2018 national study called "Race and Residence in Continuing Care Retirement Communities/Life Plan Communities." They interviewed groups of Black residents who live in those communities and Black seniors who don't. Some of the latter don't want to.

"If I'm going to ... have a reasonably healthy and happy retirement I'm not going to sit around and listen to people who spew racist remarks on a daily basis," Johnson says. "That was the biggest kind of response that we got. I've lived this every day in my working life. I'm not going to live it in retire-

On the flip side, Black participants who were current and soon-tobe retirement community residents "were seemingly un-phased by the lack of diversity," according to the study.

Seniors who are affluent enough to afford such communities are typically those who are already used to being "first of" — be it in school or their careers, Johnson says. Still, "race fatigue" is real, he adds.

One Black resident of a retirement community resident interviewed for the study said she was frustrated by being asked to join the diversity committee with the assumption she could automatically speak for her race. Others were asked to be photographed for marketing materials before they even moved in.

"I need to know that you're not going to wear the hell out of me taking my picture for every magazine," Johnson says. "I need to be able to go and sit down with my wife and eat my hamburger without 10 people coming up and saying, 'Oh, y'all are so cute.'"

The Love & Co. national study asked people about their preferences for retirement. Only 2% of Black respondents said retirement communities were their preference. Seven percent of white respondents and 7% of Asian respondents said so. About 14% of Hispanic respondents gave retirement communities as their preference.

The study notes that results may indicate support for increasing marketing efforts to Hispanic populations located in the same vicinity as retirement communities. However, Love says he wonders if there was some sampling error - perhaps related to the geographic locations from which Hispanic respondents were pulled.

Love says time will make a difference. The average age of someone entering a retirement community today is 80, he says. For Blacks born in 1940, who reached adulthood before the civil rights movement of the '60s, there may be reluctance to be the first person of color to move into a community,

Now consider those born in 1960, who are now 60 and considering retirement.

"They really came of age after all the civil rights stuff. Not a perfect world by any stretch of the imagination, but at a place that was so different from 1940," Love says. "If you're thinking of the people who are affluent enough to be able to afford a life plan community, they've been much more integrated and it's not as a big of a deal.

"Maybe I should say I hope, but I believe, that over time it will naturally change and evolve as the generations change," Love adds. "But I wish there was some way we could have it move faster."



THE NEW YORK TIMES

HEALTH

Important medical checkups you don't want to neglect

ANAHAD O'CONNOR

After getting vaccinated for COVID-19, some people are scheduling doctors' appointments they may have put off for a year or more. Here's a handy list of screenings and procedures you need at every age.

SENIOR LIVING

Throughout adulthood

- Get your tetanus booster every 10 years and your flu shot annually.
- Find out if you're at risk for diabetes. The older you are, the higher your risk.
- Check your blood pressure (every 2 years).
- Check your cholesterol (every 4 to 6 years, or more if you have a high risk of heart disease).

Starting in your 40s

 Get screened for colon cancer. People at average risk of colorectal cancer should begin regular screening at 45.

You are at average risk if you do not have: a personal or family history of colorectal cancer or polyps; a history of colitis, Crohn's disease or other inflammatory bowel diseases; hereditary colorectal cancer syndrome; or a history of radiation treatments in your abdominal or pelvic areas.

Starting in your 50s

- You may need a daily aspirin. Discuss the pros and cons with your doctor.
- Get the shingles vaccine.
- For women, get a regular breast exam. Women who are average risk should get screened every other year starting at age 50.
 - For men, begin prostate screening at 55.

In your 60s and beyond

 Get your bone density tested, and get the pneumonia vaccine

Travel

Continued from 2

5. Share your itiner**ary.** Keep family or friends

apprised of your general travel itinerary at all times, AARP recommends. This is especially important if you are traveling solo. Also, keep a mobile phone on you at all times.

6. Pack copies of important documents.

In the event paperwork is lost while traveling, request copies of prescriptions and/ or statements of medical conditions from each physician and medical treatment center so you have a second set. Keep copies of your passport, driver's license, insurance cards, travel tickets and other documents as well.



More moments as a daughter (or son) ... and fewer as a caregiver!







Balancing work, family, self-care, and caregiving is a challenge. Wouldn't it be reassuring if mom or dad were independent yet had access to care 24/7, a home-like supportive neighborhood, and life enriching activities to stay active, social, and safe?

At Moravian Manor Communities, you can feel confident in the care your parent receives.

- Dedicated team of caregivers for continuity
- Health management programs
- Freshly prepared meals served in the dining room and scheduled activities (following CDC guidelines)
- Exemplary continuing care on campus
- Benevolent care program serving as a safety net, ensuring they receive the care they need and won't need to move out

Open for Tours! Reserve Now... Move Later!

Assisted Living & Personal Care

- Submit application and \$1,000 deposit
- Reserve a room or tworoom suite
- Waived \$7,000 guest deposit fee upon move in (limited time only)

Call 717-626-0214 for a personal tour. Or for a virtual tour and how we're transforming resident care, visit moravianmanorcommunities.org.



RESIDENTIAL LIVING • ASSISTED LIVING • MEMORY CARE • SKILLED CARE • REHAB

717-626-0214 • 300 West Lemon Street, Lititz • F Pet Principles

Discover friendship, support, and security within our maintenance-free communities.

Available Now! 1- and 2-Bedroom Apartments in Several Designs

Our independent living apartments feature custom cabinetry and new appliances.

Supportive Living Personal Care suites also available at our Columbia community.



717.626.1171

Lititz, PA | Columbia, PA | Lebanon, PA

Independent Living • Personal Care • Skilled Nursing Care Memory Support • Rehab to Home • Home Care







Luthercare complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. **TECHNOLOGY**

Doctors keep tabs on patient health from afar

CAROLE DECK

FOR LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

Technology today offers unlimited opportunities to improve health care services. One of those opportunities is remote patient monitoring (RPM), a type of telehealth that uses digital technology to monitor a patient's health away from a health care setting.

With RPM, a health care professional in one location can see data collected in real time from a patient in a different location.

It's no surprise remote monitoring programs increased in value when CO-VID-19 increased the risk of in-person office visits.

The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services expanded Medicare coverage for RPM and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a policy allowing approved non-invasive devices to monitor vital signs used in remote settings.

Smartwatches, clinical sensors and personal emergency response systems are all tools health professionals can use to track health data in real-time from remote settings. Currently, the most used devices are blood pressure monitors, weight scales and glucose monitors.

"Remote patient monitoring is developing and maturing and is especially important in the management of heart failure," says Chris LaCoe, vice president of virtual care for Penn State Health. However, he says there's uncertainty about whether reimbursement authorized for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency will continue after the pandemic ends.

There are tons of software apps and device manufacturers on the market, LaCoe says.







Melody Karick, director of memory support for Garden Spot Village's Meadow View community, demonstrates the SafeBeing platform for remote patient monitoring. It includes a smartband that collects data from residents, a caregiver dashboard and smartphone app.

WellSpan Health is using RPM through WellSpan Online Primary Care, currently only offered to their insured employees.

"A team of nurses monitors patient personal health and medical information collected via electronic technology from a remote location," says WellSpan spokesperson Ryan Coyle.

Coyle says RPM is helpful to evaluate the effectiveness of a new blood pressure medication or assess heart failure by monitoring weight gain or loss.

Research indicates RPM is a good tool for the senior population. Garden Spot Village in New Holland has partnered with Somatix Inc., a New York-based artificial intelligence software company that provides an RPM solution to health care providers.

Garden Spot rolled out a pilot program of the Somatix SafeBeing 24/7 monitoring platform to residents of its Meadow View memory support community in October 2020.

"Residents wear a smartband with a sensor, which collects, analyzes and communicates safety and wellbeing of residents in real time to staff," says Melody Karick, Meadow View director of memory support.

Along with Karick, the staff includes LPN supervisors, clinical care, admission and program coordinators.

The smartband uses Blue $tooth\,to\,connect\,to\,the\,cloud$ and currently is paired with cellphones which serve as a data collection hub, says Andrew Dietzel, Garden Spot Communities chief information officer.

The SafeBeing platform offers movement detection technology that monitors the following: decline in sleep quality or quantity overtime; decline in activity over a period of time; wandering beyond designated safe zones; risk of dehydration; emergency alert; reminder to wear the band.

"Garden Spot is a superinnovative organization and we're proud to be partnered with them," says David Futoran, head of partnerships and products at Somatix.

Futoran says Meadow View is a good test market for the noninvasive monitoring product and can help identify any problems.

The biggest problem, Karick says, has been keeping the smartband on residents' wrists 24/7. It was too easy for a resident to remove the snap-on/snap-off band. Futoran solved the problem by providing band cuffs to slide over the buckle, making it impossible to remove the smartband.

"The wearable band becomes our 24/7 physical eyes to profile patients' activities and detects variations creating cause for concern," Karick says.

The technology eliminates the need for hourly room checks, she says, so residents get better sleep for a better day ahead.

Along with the smartband, SafeBeing includes several other components. A caregiver dashboard or web interface alerts, reminds, notifies, and provides insights and predictive analytics to health care professionals.

There is also a user app for the resident's phone and a caretaker app for caregivers or family members. During the pilot testing of the platform, only staff are using the dashboard and apps.

Currently, four of the 37 Meadow View residents wear the smartband. Family members were given the option to have residents participate in the pilot program.

"We wanted the residents to feel comfortable and didn't want to pressure them to wear the band," Karick says.

Pleased with the monitoring results so far, Karick and Dietzel look forward to the updated SafeBeing platform Futoran expects to be available from Somatix by the end of the year. The new version will have enhanced functionality for better communication, heart rate monitoring, oxygen saturation, medication management and intake detection, a HIPAA-compliant chat feature and symptoms surveys.

"It will have Wi-Fi capability, eliminating the need for the data collection cellphone hub," Dietzel says.

Eventually, Garden Spot will use the SafeBeing technology campuswide. The community is giving independent living residents the opportunity to participate in a future pilot program with the smartband paired to a smartphone.

Steve Lindsey, Garden Spot Communities CEO, says he believes technology will play an increasingly important role in every health care environment.

"Wearables, such as the Somatix system will help identify health issues more quickly, provide documentation, improve outcomes, assist with communication and, ultimately, free up staff to spend more time with direct care of the people we serve," he says.



Peace of Mind.

We understand the balance of personal obligations, while caring for a loved one can be a challenge.

Allow us to partner with you to provide simplified accommodations, delicious meals, and engaging ways to keep your loved ones safe and strong.

We're here to help. 717.500.2218



PRESBYTERIAN SENIOR LIVING The Long Community

LIVING

600 E. Roseville Road | Lancaster, PA

www.psl.org/moreinlancaster

Confidence in Care:





ASSISTED







My mother always said, "Choose wisely."

Choosing a retirement community is a big decision. Make it the right one.

When I was a little girl my mother would say, "You'll have to make many choices in life.

Just be sure to choose wisely." I've made many decisions since then, but when it came to choosing a retirement community, I was reminded of her valuable advice. That's how I ended up choosing Brethren Village. It's a continuing care retirement community—a CCRC—which means I'll always have access to the care I need. With a wide range of residential options I found a perfect apartment that's close to everything and a financial option that fit my needs to a tee.

www.Z/.org

