On a beautiful sunny afternoon in November, just two days before Thanksgiving, we recognized the opening of Willows Suites III with a ribbon cutting ceremony. The event was an opportunity to celebrate our latest construction project of 36 new residential suites and an expansion of our Town Center with a cost of nearly $19 million dollars. We were fortunate to include many of our partners and other VIPs in the celebration. Offering their reflections on the project were Einar Forsman, President of the Rockford Chamber of Commerce; Joe Scandroli Jr., from Scandroli Construction Company, the builder of the project; Erin Maggio Calkins, Chairman of the Wesley Willows Board of Trustees; and Bill Pratt, President and CEO of Wesley Willows. Most important to the success of this new project were the residents who attended – those who put their trust in Wesley Willows and took a leap of faith to move to the campus, as well as to commit to this new phase of Willows Suites.

In the comments by Mr. Forsman, Mr. Scandroli, Ms. Maggio Calkins, and Mr. Pratt, each shared perspectives on what this new Senior living option means to the Wesley Willows campus, what it has meant, and will continue to mean to the community of Rockford. The 14 month construction project meant jobs to over 200 individuals and the ongoing use of these new Senior residences means additional long-term employment opportunities at Wesley Willows. Most important to Wesley Willows is a project that allows us to continue to expand our mission and serve even more Seniors in the Rockford area and beyond.
It is 2016 and already the first month has given way to February. As I think about all that happens here at Wesley Willows each month, we clearly can point to certain months with activities that repeat themselves with a few changes tossed in for good measure. January is a big month for our employees as we celebrate Employee of the Year on each campus. As you read the stories of 2015 Employees of the Year, you will learn of how each employee makes a difference in the lives of our residents, day in and day out. It is my favorite employee event of the year as these two employees are recognized by their fellow employees for the outstanding work they do.

This newsletter also identifies some of our other employees and their stories. For example, you will learn of two employees who are preparing to join the military for their career path. Each of them made a decision to serve our country and happen to be leaving for their respective duties in the Marines and the Air Force. Interestingly enough, both of their decisions were heavily driven by friends or relatives who made similar choices along life’s road. They will leave in the summer and pursue their particular areas of interest. They both will be the first in their immediate family to enlist. Congratulations to both of them and thank you in advance, gentlemen, for your service to this great country.

On another employee note, Wesley Willows has been busy strengthening its Leadership Team. You will have the opportunity to meet three new leaders: Jennifer O’Brien, Director of Human Resources; Lana Paris, Director of Fund Development; and Mary Hallock, Healthcare Administrator. All have joined the Team in the last five months. Each of them bring specific skills that will enhance our ability to move ahead in the future and in the meantime, make a difference on the campus quickly. Additionally, Debra Adkins has been promoted to Chief Operating Officer after being with Wesley Willows for the past twelve years. The addition of Peterson Meadows in 2014 and the continuing development on the Wesley Willows campus have both helped us realize the need for the strategic quarterbacking duties Debra contributes to the positon. All of these changes are essential to the ongoing plan for development both on and off the two current campuses.

Please don’t miss the article about the amount of time and research one of our new resident couples, Kriss and Terri Knowles, spent to find their “Forever Home” at Wesley Willows. It will make your head spin. But, they are the residents of the future when it comes to consumer expectations and research in making one of Seniors’ important decisions relative to their years after leaving the work force.

We close out this issue of The World with articles about our residents who have reached elite status by attaining 100 years, followed by our desire as an organization to address the ongoing need for continued growth and education for all who work in the Senior Living Industry. Both are great articles that will help you appreciate the caregivers and those who live and share wonderful life stories.

Till next time,

Bill Pratt
President/CEO
A Changeless God

One of life’s certainties is change. Calendars change. Economies change. Technologies change. For example, my three sons have never known a world without computers. I doubt they have ever used a rotary phone. But yet, now I need them to help me use my smart one! For us, change is escapable. Wouldn't you agree?

The good news is that for God, change is impossible. Psalm 102:25-27 teaches “In the beginning, you laid out the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.”

Hebrews 13:8 adds, “Jesus Christ is the same today, yesterday and forever.” This is not only a statement about his character, but also about his Deity, since only God is unchangeable. Jesus offers the same compassion, forgiveness, power, and guidance to people in our times as he did in Bible times. All that he is now, he will be for eternity.

Something new for me is that after being a pastor for 34 years, it is my joy to be the Chaplain at Wesley Willows. I get to connect with residents and staff on a daily basis, compared to the mainly Sunday interactions of most church settings. Investing more time building relationships with more people is a refreshing change! I look forward to partnering with Chaplain MaryLou and getting to know and serve you and your family. Feel free to contact me at (815) 316-1535. May we all look to the changeless God in our changing lives and world this New Year.

Wesley Willows is privileged to have so many dedicated employees who strive to make a difference.

Wesley Willows hosts many occasions throughout the year to celebrate employee milestones and outstanding achievements including excellent customer service, safety, and longevity. Each year, fifteen separate department celebrations are held to individually thank every employee for extraordinary work.

Within the past year, there were forty-five employees who celebrated their commitment to Wesley Willows with ten or more years of service. Lorie O’Hearn, one of Wesley Willows’ longest serving employees, celebrated thirty-five years of service. Linda Minnick retired in September from Wesley Willows after dedicating 20 years of exceptional work as a housekeeper. Linda had a great rapport with residents and she was very diligent and observant about her housekeeping duties.

Another success we celebrate on a number of occasions is related to Safety Achievements. During the year, five departments achieved six years with no lost-time work injuries. Employees from Housekeeping also celebrated 1,000 days without any lost-time work injuries. Our staff continues to exhibit safe workplace practices and maintain a safe working environment. We look forward to many new milestones during 2016.

Wesley Willows also rewards those that go above and beyond their expected responsibilities with special ceremonies and recognition. Employees of the Month (Wesley Willows Campus) and Employees of the Quarter (Peterson Meadows Campus), are nominated by residents or staff. They display exemplary customer service, and truly exhibit Wesley Willows’ cause of “Inspiring Seniors to Celebrate Life.” Monica Johnson was voted by her co-workers as Peterson Meadows’ 2015 Employee of the Year.

On the Wesley Willows campus, Julia Motton was voted the 2015 Employee of the Year. Her co-workers felt Julia deserved this award due to exceptional teamwork and dedication to detail. Both Employees of the Year were honored with a celebration, a plaque, $250 cash, and a 2015 Employee of the Year parking sign along with a parking space good for one year.

Wesley Willows is privileged to have so many dedicated employees who strive to make a difference. Reward and recognition programs for excellent customer service, safety, and length of service provide for great occasions to step back and say thank you to our employees for their loyalty and devotion. Wesley Willows looks forward to 2016 and the many new opportunities to celebrate our employees.
Many times when we talk about young men and women who have served in the military we are referring to veterans who spent their time in WWII, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War or various other assignments and conflicts – in other words, current or past service. For two of Peterson Meadows’ young employees their service is just about to begin.

Ethan Tentler and Hector Martinez both work in Dining Services at Peterson Meadows and have plans to join the military. They choose to be part of the United States greatest group of volunteers.

Hector Martinez, a senior at Guilford High School, has enlisted in the Marines with a plan to become a Mortar Man as his specialty. Hector was inspired to enlist after visiting a family friend in California who serves in the Marines. After his visit, he further developed his interest in a post high school career in the service, eventually enlisted, and is expected to leave for Camp Pendleton in July 2016. Also joining the Marines is his cousin who will ship out around the same time as Hector. Both young men are the first in their families to become a part of the military.

Peterson Meadows’ Ethan Tentler will be joining the Air Force in early August at the Lackland Airbase in San Antonio, Texas. He will go through four months of training before going into a specialty in Mechanics. Ethan’s grandfather served in the Navy in WWII and a cousin is currently in the Special Forces in Washington. After Ethan visited his cousin who was living on an Air Force Base, he decided a military lifestyle would suit him well and chose to enlist.

Ethan had a special relationship with Peterson Meadows resident Fred Ohr, who passed away in October 2015, but shared many stories of his time as a World War II Ace Fighter Pilot. Peterson Meadows and Wesley Willows are proud to support all of our staff who choose to serve our country by their choice to join the various branches of military service. Likewise, we are so grateful to those who have served over the years – employees, residents and others – to ensure we continue to enjoy the freedoms we have today and into the future. Perhaps next time you see a person in a military uniform you’ll remember to say thanks.
We are an organization that takes learning seriously. We provide educational events for residents and members of the community; we support our staff in their efforts to expand their education, as well as getting continuing education; and we offer our facilities for educational purposes to the community. For the last two years, in partnership with Mercy Rockford, we have offered the Activing Aging series for our residents, as well as members of the Rockford community. During October and December, we also offered training opportunities for our staff and other Rockford area Senior Living Professionals – and invited interested residents as well.

On October 15th we hosted a Caregiver Symposium, sponsored by the Continuing Education Institute of Illinois. Professionals could earn seven Continuing Education Credits and were expected to walk away from the symposium with a better understanding of the following subjects: Compassionate Care; Elder Abuse and Self Neglect; Physical Activity and the Older Adult; Brain Health and Aging; Empowered Patient Care; Managing Challenging Behaviors; and Best Self Care Approaches.

Professionals from a variety of disciplines presented at the symposium modeling interactive approaches; answering questions; and overall offering support of caregivers. Over 100 people attended and when asked the question at the start of the day “Which of you are caregivers,” everyone in attendance raised their hands. It was an interesting day of collaboration between and among caregivers of many types.

On December 6th, Wesley Willows hosted the “Miss Lily” program comprised of a role-play approach to working with individuals with dementia. The program focused on the how-to of working with individuals with dementia – how to successfully identify and redirect behavior and how to address those behavior manifestations that are uncomfortable for the caregiver – a really practical approach. About 75 staff and caregivers attended this day-long program and all walked away with new tools to use in their roles.

Wesley Willows is currently working with the Continuing Education Institute of Illinois for its next local event and with “Miss Lily” for the return engagement of this valuable program. Perhaps you’ll be available to join us next time!
IN THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

We Deeply Appreciate All Your Generous Gifts Given To Wesley Willows.

August 1, 2015 - December 31, 2015

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Armbrust F. Ahlbrand Trust
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Elaine J. Green Estate
Albert R. Labskus Estate
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Raymond & Ann Sytek
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Wesley Willows Resident Community Garden

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Debra Adkins
Aldersgate UMW
Barber-Colman Alumni Grp.
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June Neuman
Northern Illinois Conference of the UMC
Charles & Madeline Osadjan
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Raymond & Ann Sytek
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Glenda Turner
United Methodist Foundation
Thomas & Eyll Walker
Ronald & Margaret Watkins
Alvin & Marilyn Westman
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MargeAnn Ahnquist
Doug & Renie Adams
Mr. & Mrs. William A. Wolf
Joyce Wollin
R. Ray & Nola Wood
Donald & Betty Zimmerman

WALLM Associates
Gerald Webber & Patricia Davis-Weber
Mary Lou Weckert
Edna Wesson
Bernice “Bea” Whittgrove
Evelyn Wiemer
Donald Weiser
Phil “Jerry” Wolff

MEMORIAL GIFTS
Anonymous
Paul & Betty Appel
Robert & Sharon Ash
Patricia A. Ashford
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Baer
Richard & Sally Baker
Rashelle Baskerville
Olive & Edgared Bausher
Dorothy Beck
The Ben Harding Family Foundation
Charles & Barbara Betz
Sue Beyer
Pamela Black
Joanne Blewett
Darrell & Donna Brenner
Richard & Sally Bromley
Betty Brown
Lorraine L. Bruns
Thomas J. Buchmann
Robert G. Cadwell
Gladys Campbell
Jane S. Carlson
Mary Caskey
Frank & Lucy Cassioppi
Gene Cassioppi
Jean A. Castle
Kathleen Champon
Gary & Joanne Cogswell
Diane Conklin
Mary Beth Croteau
Kay Cull
Louis & Betty D’Agno
Joan L. Duda
Michael & Mary Davis
Lori Davison
Vaughn & Erica De Guzman
Chad & Julia DiBiler
Mary English
Barbara W. Erickson
Ellen B. Erkert
Endu Ena
Joyce Fisher
Greg & Laurel Franchini
Howard & Karen Friedenberg
Ken & Carol Frye
Selme & Leona Fry
Georges & Georgie Willard
Sheryl Gilbert
Philip & Minna Ciesnusz
William & Patricia Gower
Jan & Nancy Gramzow
Portia Noble
Jack Pearson
Lorraine Peters
Marguerite Peterson
Vaughn Pratt
Dwight & Lillian Parker
Ray & Joyce Schoenfield
Marjorie Schultz
Marguerite Wagner

BARBRA Baskerville
Olive & Edgared Bausher
Dorothy Beck
The Ben Harding Family Foundation
Charles & Barbara Betz
Sue Beyer
Pamela Black
Joanne Blewett
Darrell & Donna Brenner
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Thomas J. Buchmann
Robert G. Cadwell
Gladys Campbell
Jane S. Carlson
Mary Caskey
Frank & Lucy Cassioppi
Gene Cassioppi
Jean A. Castle
Kathleen Champon
Gary & Joanne Cogswell
Diane Conklin
Mary Beth Croteau
Kay Cull
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William & Patricia Gower
Jan & Nancy Gramzow
Portia Noble
Jack Pearson
Lorraine Peters
Marguerite Peterson
Vaughn Pratt
Dwight & Lillian Parker
Ray & Joyce Schoenfield
Marjorie Schultz
Marguerite Wagner
really favors females, but the oldest two
will celebrate their 100th birthday in
and two are male. And of those that
in 2016, three more
individuals boast over 1,110 years on
Georgalee George
Margery A. Furgason
Adel Freeman
Irving & Lois Floress
Joyce Fisher
Douglas & Betty Fisher
Theodore & Rosemary Faber
Betty Brown
Duncan Brown
Lorraine L. Bruns
Carmelo & Patricia Calabrese
Glady's Campbell
Milo F. Case
Gene E. Cassioppi
Jean A. Castle
Marilyn Church
Jimmie Clark
Ruth Collin-Rahner
LeRoy & Susan Comins
Sandra Connor
Virginia Cooper
Alfred & Susan Cowan
Kenneth & Esther Crandall
Kay Curl
Richard & Margaret Cyrier
Barbara Dargene
Henrietta L. Day
John Day
Beatrice Dickelman
Bill & Shirley Dickson
Carroll F. Dietz
Rodney & Phyllis Dillingier
Dean & Doris Dian
Shirley Dammers
Lois Donaldson
Daniel & Kirby Doyle
Dorothy Durr
Richard & Mary Esley
Robert & Georgia Eiss
Barbara W. Erickson
Ellen B. Erkert
Darothy & Erwin
Mary Lou Eubanks
Bruce & Carol Evald
Theodore & Rosemary Faber
Douglas & Betty Fisher
Joyce Fisher
Irving & Lois Flores
Donald & Mary Freedlund
Adel Freeman
Phillip & Carolyn Fulkerson
Margery A. Furgason
Jacquelyn Gambrell
Marjorie Gang
Theodore & Virginia Gepinski
Georgiate George
Norma Gesell
James & Helen Gibbons
Judith Goldman
Jon & Nancy Gramzow
Eileen Grigalauski
Daug Hajek
Marias J. Helvolson
Edmund & Kathryn Hansen
Gerald & Suzanne Hansen
Lois A. Harding
Thomas & Carol Harman
Joyce Hart
Helen A. Haub
Phyllis Haynes
James & Jo Hellmich
Diane Helseth
Margaret Henning
Elene Herbert
Jacquelyn Hess
Fenimore & Doris Hicks
Betty L. Hlavka
Terry & Pam Hodges
Barbara J. Homewood
Richard Horst
Janette Howard
Barbara Huffman
Dennis & Judith Hybarger
Claude & Karen Ingrassia
Joanne K. Johnson
Stuart & Evelyn Johnson
Vernon L. Johnson
Vivian Jordan
Marie Karnens
Peter & Melinda Kaminsky
Jack Kasper
Mary L. Kasper
Ruth A. Kearney
Lorna K. Kefer
Claire & Margot Kelley
Dana & Joanne Kelly
Margaret Kersten
William & Eleanor Killker
Robert King
Ruth L. Kinsman
John E. Koepell
Ken Kortemeier
Dolores R. Kruse
Wilma R. Kuhlmeier
Mary Lou Lafleur
Ethel Landis
Jean L. Larsen
Judith M. Larson
Norma B. Larson
Roger A. Larson
Elizabeth R. Lawton
Dennis & Valerie LeFevre
Richard T. Leighton
Elizanthe Lewis
Sarah Lewis
Scott Lichtenfeld
Olyva A. Liddell
Betty Lockett
Janet Maclean
Donald & Marjorie Maclean
Arturo Manas
Lois Meehan
Ellen McHugh
James & Jeanne McIlwain
Morgan & Laura McIlwain
Sally C. Medernach
Dora May Meredith
Trudy Metzger
Philip & Janet Meyers
Cynthia Milstead
Elizabeth Minorremeyer
Robert Mink
Martha Mitchell
Timothy Mittenford
Eleanor M. Moe
James N. Moore
James & Carol Masby
Michael & Lynda Moser
David & Jean Mayer
David Mueller
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Gerald & Diana Ogen
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Charles & Madeline Osladjan
Dwight & Lillian Parker
Robert & Arlene Persinger
Jesse B. Peters
Marlene M. Peterson
William E. Peterson
Bethany Petersen
Sharon Rovenzano
Irma M. Rahjiten
Betty Ralston
Karolyne Randazzo
Ann Reisdahl
E. Joyce Reid
Norman & Alice Rice
Denise Rillott
Rock River Valley Civil War Round Table
Elmer C. Rudy
Barbara Kunstad
Patricia Sample
Viola J. Scaddan
John & Barbara Schmaling
John & Dorothy Schooano
Mary Ann Schou
Elizabeth R. Schraper
Janet Schultz
Marjorie Schultz
Richard & Judy Schultz
David Scott
Thomas V. Severson
Eileen Shultz
Robert W. Sieker
Dale Sigvedsen
Gloria Silberman
Gregory B. Sims
Marjory A. Sims
Mary E. Sherkske
Eugene & Carolyn Skoglund
Annette Snee
Jesse B. Petersen
Mary Taber
Evelyn Sword
Tom & Mary Supel
Tom & Betsy Studley
Vivian Jordan
Vernon L. Johnson
Vivian Jordan
Aging, but we can certainly consider
necessarily draw any conclusions about
of history.
never happen again. It truly is the stuff
imagined and of a magnitude that may
take to heart. Know that you are the
perfect age. Each year is special and
precious, you can only live it once.
Do not regret growing older, it’s a
privilege denied to many!”

We often say our work at Wesley
Willows and Peterson Meadows is about
“Inspiring Seniors to Celebrate Life.”
At this particular moment, however,
we are the ones who are inspired – by
these eleven individuals who have each
celebrated special and precious years
more than 100 times. We celebrate
them and their lives and we are so
grateful they have chosen Wesley
Willows or Peterson Meadows as their
home.

Elite Centenarians “Club”

individuals that have recently lived at
Wesley Willows and Peterson Meadows
were both male, living to be 110 and
107. Our current oldest resident, a
female, is 103.

From those few statistics, we can’t
dismiss any conclusions about
aging, but we can certainly consider
this…these 11 individuals have seen
and experienced changes in their
lifetime that they could never have
imagined and of a magnitude that may
ever happen again. It truly is the stuff
of history.

In a Facebook post, someone shared
actor Richard Gere saying this:

“I am old but I am forever young

at heart. We are always the same
age inside. Know that you are the
perfect age. Each year is special and
precious, you can only live it once.
Do not regret growing older, it’s a
privilege denied to many!”

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home.

In KIND GIFTS
Bill Danor Company
William Boehmen
Janet A. Clark
Mary Day
H. Kelly Douglas
Robert & Georgia Eiss
Linda Gerlach
Phyllis Haynes
James & Jo Hellmich
Jack Kasper
Dennis Kuchenmeister
Mary J. Kuchenmeister
Jack Lewis
Martha Mitchell
Robert C. Newell
Don & Beverly O’Hare
Anne L. Remington
St. Edward Catholic Church
Donald & Cloe Sturmer
Patricia C. Waters

DEEPENING OUR ROOTS...
GOOD SAMARITAN
ENDOWMENT GIFTS
Debra Adkins
Betty Brown
Kay Cull
Bill & Fran Pratt
Paul & Sheryl Thogerson
Mark & Carla Ticknor

BUILDING A PROMISE...
TOWN CENTER GIFTS
Jean A. Castle
Nancy J. Kemp
Susan & Donnate Naisler

betty brown
The Knowles Experience

The Knowles began looking at all options for retirement: town houses; condos; 55+ communities; lake Communities; and Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) - 50 different communities in total. During this time they also encountered many difficult situations related to their aging parents’ changing needs. Starting with their parents resisting to move out of a home they could no longer care for, progressing to being unable to care for themselves - one parent developing Alzheimer's disease. Kriss and Terri were convinced moving to a CCRC was the best option after managing a number of moves for their parents to various facilities with different levels of care. The Knowles decided they would never put their own children through the struggle and strain and focused their retirement search on Continuing Care Retirement Communities only.

The Knowles found Wesley Willows through an Internet search and spent hours visiting and talking with residents prior to scheduling an appointment to meet with our Senior Living Counselors.

After several meetings with staff and residents, and discussion with each other, Kriss and Terri decided that Wesley Willows would provide them with the best value of all the communities they considered. Being able to pay as you go; life enrichment programs; fitness centers and classes; meals as needed; transportation; and support systems all contributed to their choice to make Wesley Willows their “Forever Home.” As a bonus, they were able to build a new independent living Willow Ridge Home customized to meet their exact wants and needs. Kriss and Terri’s move to Wesley Willows is a great example of how Seniors today are making proactive decisions relative to how and where they want to spend their retirement. For the Knowles making this move for themselves, being in a community that offers them the flexibility to travel without the concern of taking care of their home, and having programs and services in place for their future are all reasons they chose Wesley Willows.

Wesley Willows recently held an educational event, “Who moves to Senior Living Communities?” that dealt with five questions:

1. What are the benefits of living in a retirement community?
2. What to look for in a community.
3. When is the right time to move?
4. How much does it cost?
5. Who should help with this decision?

The Knowles’ story is one in which they took the steps to determine not only whether they had enough money for their retirement, but HOW they wanted to live in retirement. They are, however, in the vast minority. Of individuals over 65, only 7% have considered retirement living and only 3% have made the move. For those of you who are Seniors, are you in the 10%? If not, our phone number is 815-316-1500!