

# Connections

FALL 2011

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Even to your old age and gray hairs, I am He who will sustain you...

Isaiah 46:4

# Leadership

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Dear friend,

As autumn unfolds, we remain grateful for your support through every season. Thanks to your generosity, our oldest friends and loved ones enjoy pastoral care and the other engaging programs that give life meaning, whether you're 75 or 105.



We are heartened by all of the positive feedback from friends who attended our *9th Annual Celebrating Lifelong Living Luncheon*. Many supporters have told us they now better understand the profound importance of our mission, and why Catholic Eldercare is perfectly positioned to meet our community's growing needs.

Why is this so important? We have a biblical call to honor and care for our oldest members. They once lovingly took care of us, during our early vulnerable years. Now, it's our turn to do all we can to care for them once they require help.

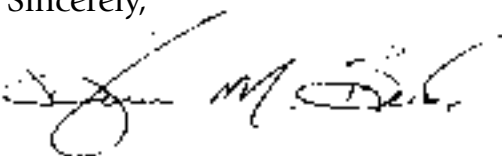
Together - with your support - we ensure seniors are loved and supported with what they need. And there's plenty of fun to be had along the way, too. And when their financial resources are exhausted - after a lifetime of hard work and saving - we're still here for them when they most need help. That's why your support is so vital to our work. Government reimbursements do not cover the full cost of care. This is ours to do.

We love this mission. When seniors come to Catholic Eldercare, it's not the end of the road. In fact, life often gets better once their medical and nutritional needs are addressed, they make friends, and enjoy the many activities available.

You'll read about some of our amazing residents, volunteers, and staff in this issue of *Connections*. Their compassion and creativity are products of faithful love. They too have discovered that when you give love, it blossoms and grows.

Thank you for walking this journey with us. Please think of us as you make your year-end giving decisions.

Sincerely,



Thomas Beck  
Chair, Board of Directors



Dan Johnson  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Search for Catholic Eldercare on FACEBOOK.  
Watch for updates on what's happening!





# Long-time Volunteers Honored

*25 or more years*



Catholic Eldercare volunteers who have faithfully served for 25 or more years were honored with a special luncheon September 27. The honored volunteers, left to right (with starting year of service) are Catie Mack (1983), Donna Stelmaszewski (1983), Olga Witkowski (1985), (Volunteer Director Beth Wizik), Annie Jo Leitschuh-Hansen (1982), and Veronica Commers (1985).

Volunteers, ages nine to ninety donate approximately 15,000 hours annually to make life better for residents.

*For more information on volunteer opportunities, please contact Beth Wizik at 612-379-1370.*

*25+ year volunteers gathered to be recognized for decades of devoted service to seniors.*

**“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

**Ephesians 2:10**



Catholic Eldercare provides the care, housing and services needed by older adults to continue living fully – with dignity – in an intentionally created community.

# Thank you!

## Inspiring 9th Annual Celebrating Lifelong Living Luncheon Supports Mission

**“By honoring our mothers and fathers, our obedience, kindness and care are good in God’s eyes.”**

**Keynote speaker, CEO Dan Johnson**

Nearly \$105,000 in gifts, pledges, and sponsorships were donated by guests who attended the *Ninth Annual Celebrating Lifelong Living Luncheon*, held September 22 at the Earle Brown Heritage Center. The annual fund gifts play an important role in filling the gap between government reimbursement rates and the actual cost of quality programs and care. “We are heartened to see such generous support from our great friends,” said Kristine Smyth, director of development.

### Preserving Dignity

Keynote speaker CEO Dan Johnson said that by supporting the needs of seniors, we find meaning in life as a community. “Our supporters recognize that the pinnacle of our work as a community is to help make this a comfortable and fulfilling time for our oldest members as they close out their lives,” said Johnson. “Preserving their dignity is the most important thing we as children and friends can offer them. After all, most everything we learned – and the values we embrace – we learned from them. And by honoring our mothers and fathers, our obedience, kindness and care are good in God’s eyes,” Johnson added.

### A Family’s Gratitude

Luncheon guests listened to the profound story penned by Mary Rose Goetz whose husband, Frederick, a long-time physician and diabetes researcher, is now a Catholic Eldercare resident. The Goetz family selected Catholic Eldercare after a comprehensive search for the best facility for Frederick’s needs.

“We were impressed with the emphasis on excellence of care for all residents, physical, mental and spiritual. We find a joyful attitude and a powerful commitment among the many staff who see their work with older adults as a *calling*, and not just a job. We are so grateful for the support given him by the staff in dealing with his illness. He is loved and deserves the very best. We consider Catholic Eldercare a true blessing in our life.”

Due to a sudden illness, Mrs. Goetz’s comments were presented at the luncheon by Director of Development Kristine Smyth. Board member John Hovanec concluded the event explaining the many ways to financially support the Catholic Eldercare mission.

Guests enjoyed this year’s video presentation which told the story of two residents, accomplished pianist Bev Kremer, a resident of 1101 On Main; and John Kundla, a resident of MainStreet Lodge and former coach of the Minneapolis Lakers professional basketball team. The video is available for viewing at [www.catholiceldercare.org](http://www.catholiceldercare.org) by clicking on *About Us*.

Twenty-three program sponsors, 66 table hosts, and their guests, made the 2011 luncheon a success.

**“We consider Catholic Eldercare a true blessing in our life.”**

**Mary Rose Goetz, RN**

### Mark Your Calendar!

The tenth annual *Celebrating Lifelong Living Luncheon* will be held September 13, 2012.



**Thank  
you!**



Nearly 550 friends attended the fall luncheon to celebrate Catholic Eldercare's mission and support the programs that benefit residents.

## Thank You Luncheon Sponsors!

These sponsors generously funded the 2011 luncheon event, enabling every donor gift to go directly to support the Catholic Eldercare mission.

### GOLD \$5,000

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## Table Hosts

A special thanks to the table hosts for making the 2011 luncheon event a success.

Ken Baltes and Dorothy Elion

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Cindy Wiese

Beth Wizik

John Wlazlo  
and Bill Pilacinski

Patrick Zeman

# Closeup: Pastoral Care

## *The Spiritual Side of Life*

*Old age has its own special joys – time with family and friends, freedom from responsibilities we once had, the joy of savoring the little things. As we learn to trust every day, this season of life can be a time of growing closer to Christ.*

Over a decade ago, Bev Vasseur was in a 20-year career as a nuclear medicine technologist, working in a hospital as part of a healthcare team that enables *physical* healing for people. It was then that she felt a calling to a new mission in life – pastoral care – ministering to a person's *spiritual* needs. "I was set on a different path after the deaths of my father and brother," says Bev, the new supervisor of Pastoral Care. "Doors started opening and I ended up in seminary in mid-life, on another journey which happens in one's life."



*Bev Vasseur: Pastoral Care Supervisor and Artist*

Bev, who has been a chaplain at RiverVillage for five years, was named to the new leadership position earlier this year. She supervises four other chaplains.

"Sitting and listening is a huge part of connecting in pastoral care," Bev says. "Many people have questions or are struggling, and some stories are difficult. The pastoral care role is to ensure their sacramental, prayer and communion needs are met, helping them work through questions at this stage of life and continuing the dialogue which helps them grow in faith," she explains.

Bev and the other chaplains listen, offer guidance, hope and reassurance. "As one ages, questions emerge as one reflects on their life. 'Why did cancer take my husband; where was God in all that? Am I worthy of heaven?'" Our role is to help residents journey through that," she says.

### Feeding the Spirit

Pastoral care is one aspect of senior care where being a comforting presence is the primary goal. Offering a listening ear and holding a sacred space for their story has impact. It is our spirituality, after all, that is at the core of self-identity and our sense of purpose in life. Especially in the later years, the soul needs nourishment and tending for the connection between body, mind and spirit.

A chaplain walks the path with residents, offering emotional support and spiritual care. "This is a very precious time," Bev says. "It's always a privilege to sit with people, hear their story and discuss how God has moved in their lives."

### Spiritual Wellness

Since the 1960's, an impressive body of research concerning the relationship between faith and health has been published. It's clear there are benefits to seeing the well-being of seniors from a multi-dimensional perspective; the spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of this season of life. Faith provides a means of coping with the aging process, bringing a sense of meaning and purpose to life and a system of social support.

Faith and spiritual beliefs help seniors cope with the challenges that accompany aging, such as chronic pain, isolation, dependence and disability. Prayer, sacraments, and talking with a chaplain or clergy can have significant psychological, physical, spiritual and emotional benefits.



My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.

2 Corinthians 12:9

## Creativity

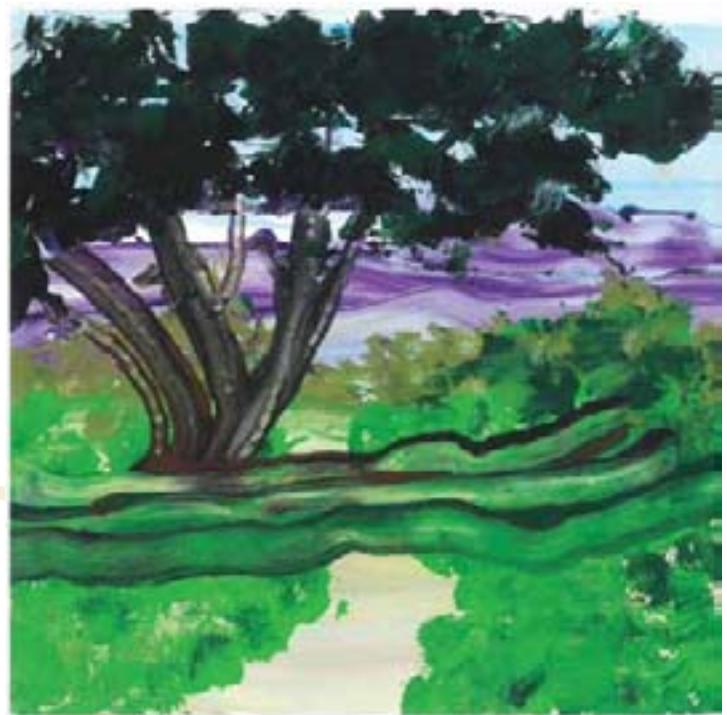
Bev – who is an artist – particularly enjoys the *Creativity and Spirituality Program* at Catholic Eldercare. It's a unique program which enables seniors to express and develop their creative gifts. "It's fun to see residents develop into artists, and often we see huge growth in this area."

Creativity is vital to spiritual growth, Bev explains. The goal of Catholic Eldercare's program is to enrich the resident's spirituality by empowering the creative voice within. This enables hope, joy and lightness of heart to dominate the soul. By the time someone comes to Catholic Eldercare, he or she has dealt with many joys and heartbreaks. From these rich experiences, which are often processed within, comes the power of outward creativity. New life comes from a lifetime of accumulated triumphs, joys and tears. "Thus, in creating, we re-create ourselves and are restored," she adds.

Creative and artistic expression is known to ease isolation, depression and pain while enhancing one's overall sense of well-being. "It's nice to see people soften towards others, to see things with a different perspective and perhaps to see the divineness in others. Often a resident will look at a painting they have worked on and say, 'I didn't do that, you must have, but they did it,'" Bev explains.

Scripture calls us to persevere. We are often more vulnerable and open during those challenging times in life and, therefore, closest to God who is able to work within us. "We can continue to grow despite our pains and problems," Bev says, "If you were running a race would you stop before the finish line?"

*For more information on becoming a sustaining supporter of Catholic Eldercare, please contact Director of Development Kristine Smyth at [ksmyth@catholiceldercare.org](mailto:ksmyth@catholiceldercare.org).*



*Artwork created by Catholic Eldercare residents.*



# MainStreet Lodge Residents Making a Difference

As we age, our challenge is to avoid growing more inward, dwelling only on our immediate needs and various aches and pains. But a group of MainStreet Lodge residents – and a few helpful daughters – are fighting against that. They have a vital, shared vision that’s rooted in their hearts and reaches to impoverished girls across the hemisphere.

The women are creating beautiful sundresses from donated pillow cases and bed sheets. “We can get eight dresses out of a sheet,” Irene Perish says proudly. “These dresses will eventually be worn by needy little girls in Haiti or Central America.”

This adventure started after Irene moved to MainStreet Lodge last fall, after spending decades operating a farm with her late husband and family near Ward Springs, Minn. “I thought, I still have two good hands that work, and I have all these fabric scraps so maybe something



good can come of it,” she explains. “When we were on the farm, we always worked together to help each other, so why not now?”

With the aid of her daughters, Dianne Otte and Judy Yarwood, Irene organized a group of women – all lifelong seamstresses – who really know their way around waistbands and hems.

The participating MainStreet Lodge residents who periodically occupy the downstairs Community Room are Pearl Bathel, Louise Lezarz, Deedee Sydloski, Eileen Olsen, Irene Perish, Evelyn Mikolai, Doris Moore, Rosemary McHugh, and Mary Jane Kiner.



Mary Jane Kiner operates the sewing machine. “I’ve worked with fabric all my life and I love every minute of it,” she says with a gentle smile.

“Some of our volunteers have arthritis, others have vision issues, but they can all do *something* when we come together, and we feel good about it,” says Dianne, Irene’s daughter. “They feel very useful and it’s great to have them because they were busy seamstresses in their day.”

Irene Perish (center) with daughters Dianne (left) and Judy display some of the sun-dresses made from donated pillow cases.

"We love doing this," says Eileen Olsen as she fingers a colorful pillowcase. "Oh, look at these hearts. Just imagine the smile on a mother's face when her little girl wears this colorful dress."

To date, the women have created more than 100 beautiful dresses which will be personally delivered to a charitable organization. Ten dresses went to Lois Fredeen who does mission work in Haiti, Africa, Belize and Honduras through Wayzata Evangelical Free Church. Another ten bound for Guatemala went to Fr. Mark Innocenti of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church of Little Falls. The remaining dresses will go to earthquake-ravaged Haiti via Epiphany Catholic Church of Coon Rapids.

The MainStreet Lodge women also make baby quilts, blankets and bibs that are donated to Birthright.

Quietly, without a lot of fuss, a lifetime of honed sewing skills are being tapped to help others. It is the gospel lived out, with residents and a few helpers extending charitable love to those in need.



**"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights..."**

**James 1:17**

# New Faces at Adult Day



Nikki Stenger (left) is the new Adult Day Program's Director. Joyce Saidu is the new Licensed Practical Nurse for the program, assuming Nikki's former position.

Nikki leads a seven-person staff that provides adult day clients with care support which enables them to live independently. "I love working at Catholic Eldercare. People genuinely do care and have the best interest of the clients and residents in mind. It makes you proud to be here."



Another surprised 'Jenga' player at the Adult Day Program.

Nikki Senger, the new Adult Day Program Director, fell in love with geriatric care while in nursing school. "I became interested in senior care when my grandpa was ill. I was a teenager, but that experience brought out my caregiving passion, which grew during my college training."

Nikki has gained abundant experience in recent years. During college, she worked as a Health Aide at Catholic Eldercare, and later spent 18 months as the Adult Day Program's Licensed Practical Nurse before being named director. "It's nice that I already had an established relationship with the clients," Nikki says. "The transition has been easy, and they've been able to celebrate with me."

*A furry friend – an Irish Wolfhound – pays a visit to the Adult Day Program. The animal-human connection is profound; it lifts spirits, eases pain, and makes everyone feel better. Thanks to Catholic Eldercare's Pet Therapy volunteers who do so much throughout the year.*



# Favorite Popular Music

## Topic of Series Forum



University of St. Thomas music professor Susan Anderson-Benson spoke on the popular music of the Twin Cities – and favorite performers of the ages – September 29 as part of an ongoing series of lectures at RiverVillage.

The program series is a collaboration between Catholic Eldercare and the university's Selim Center for Learning in Later Years. "This relationship reflects our philosophy of living fully and welcoming the wider community to be a part of daily life here among the residents and neighbors," said Catholic Eldercare CEO Dan Johnson.

For more information on upcoming series presentations, please visit [www.catholiceldercare.org-about-us](http://www.catholiceldercare.org-about-us).



University of St. Thomas music professor Susan Anderson-Benson.



### **NEW! Honor A Loved One or Special Friend**

Pay tribute or honor a special person's birth date, anniversary, or other special occasion, with a Memorial or Honorarium gift to Catholic Eldercare. The names of the donor and the person honored, and the reason for the gift, will be published in the newsletter.

Visit [www.catholiceldercare.org](http://www.catholiceldercare.org) and click on Giving, then Give A Gift Online, to make your secure, online gift.



# Thank You!

The quality care and services Catholic Eldercare provides seniors and their families are possible thanks to the generosity of many supporters. We acknowledge their friendship, support, and ongoing commitment. The following gifts and pledges are for the time period April 1, 2011 through September 30, 2011.

Every effort is made to ensure accuracy. If you see an error or omission, please contact the development office at 612-362-2430.

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*For more information on giving options, please contact Director of Development Kris Smyth at 612-379-1370*

[www.catholiceldercare.org](http://www.catholiceldercare.org)



**"...we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"**

**James 1:17**



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# New Board Members

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**James Murzyn**



James Murzyn retired as a Control Center Trouble Foreman in 2009 after 36 years with Northern States Power (NSP). He graduated from Edison High School and attended Minneapolis Junior College and the Dunwoody Institute. He is an active member of Saint Hedwig Church and serves as a board member for the *Angie Guminga Scholarship Fund*.

**Suzanne Snyder**



Suzanne Snyder is the Program Director for the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation, managing a staff of sixteen housing professionals at five community-based Housing Resource Centers. Suzanne's developed working partnerships with the goal of positioning GMHC to become the preferred partner for resolving housing issues. She served as Program Officer for the U.S. Catholic Conference (1981-84) and a Peace Corps Volunteer in Liberia. She has a B.S. degree in Human Development and a Masters Degree in Social Work from Wayne State University.

Richard Brustad is Vice President of the *Community Housing Development Corporation*, leading the development and operation of affordable multifamily rental projects. As a partner in Brighton Development Corporation, he coordinated the development of multi-family housing projects with over 6,300 units of housing completed. Mr. Brustad has a B.A. in Political Science and Economics from the University of Minnesota.

**Richard Brustad**

Join us on **FACEBOOK**

## Upcoming Events

### DECEMBER:

December 1, 2011

#### **University of St. Thomas Collaborative Series: Music of the Holidays**

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.,  
RiverVillage Community Room

This session will feature music of the holidays.

Registration deadline is one week prior to event.

Make \$15 check payable to "University of St. Thomas" and send to:  
Center for Senior Citizens Education, Mail LOR 309,  
University of St. Thomas, 2115 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105.

Sunday, December 4

#### **Resident/Family Open House**

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
Catholic Eldercare on Main

Friday, December 9

#### **Knight's of Columbus Choir Performance**

1:30 p.m.  
Catholic Eldercare On Main dining room*For the latest upcoming events, please visit [www.catholiceldercare.org](http://www.catholiceldercare.org).*

## Credits

### Writer/Editor:

John Wingate

### Graphic Design:

Steve Mears

### Photography:

John Wingate • Bob Cunningham • Bob Benson

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