

Journeys

A newsletter for residents, clients, families and friends.

Hands on, wheels on art events bring together residents

Artist Vincent Van Gogh said, "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together." Amie Federico, Connections coordinator at Country Meadows of Bethlehem, uses this theory in her work every week when she leads an art project for residents living with Alzheimer's disease and memory loss. She recently turned this therapeutic activity into social events bringing together residents from the entire community to paint renditions of famous works on huge 6' x 12' canvases.

Self-expression through the choice of a color, or the speed and shape of a brush stroke, can be a soothing and satisfying activity, and it's one that has many benefits for residents with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.

"For people who have Alzheimer's, I see art as a soothing activity that can lessen the behaviors they have. If they are frustrated or upset, they might work faster and have the feeling of being successful," says Federico.

To plan the first large-scale painting, Federico coordinated with the campus fitness team and chose Vincent Van Gogh's "Starry Starry Night."

"We selected this piece because it's a painting with lots of movement," she says. Federico talked with residents about the piece before the project. On the big day, a copy of the painting was on hand for reference, as were eight buckets of paint and brushes. Working in a group, residents selected their colors and stepped from side to side using big arm movements to mimic Van Gogh's strokes on the canvas which was mounted on a wall in an activity room. The opposite side of the room was staged like a café with drinks and cupcakes for spectators and residents to enjoy when they



Residents at Country Meadows of Bethlehem paint together to create art on a huge canvas.

Inside:

- 🌀 New website up and interactive
- 🌀 Beach trip relaxes residents
- 🌀 Campus gets four-legged co-worker


COUNTRY MEADOWS
RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES
Life gets better.®


Ecumenical Retirement
COMMUNITY

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Our Mission

Country Meadows Retirement
Communities helps seniors
lead purposeful lives and enjoy
independence, friendship and
respect.

Country Meadows operates
retirement communities in
Allentown, Bethlehem, Hershey,
Lancaster, Mechanicsburg, South
Hills of Pittsburgh, Wyomissing
as well as two locations in York.
Country Meadows also owns a
community in Frederick, Md.

Ecumenical Retirement
Community is a not-for-profit
retirement community managed
by the George M. Leader Family
Corporation, which also manages
Country Meadows.

Country Meadows and Ecumenical
Retirement Community do not
discriminate in resident admission
on the basis of race, ancestry,
religious creed, age, sex, handicap,
disability or national origin,
provided the resident, in the sole
opinion of Country Meadows
or Ecumenical Retirement
Community, can be cared for
legally and responsibly.



Beach trip provides relaxation, earns national honors



Residents pose at the entrance to their bay-front mansion in Avalon, N.J.

Olive Hawk, 89, hadn't seen the ocean in 50 years. As she grew older, she never expected to go to the beach again. That changed after she moved to Country Meadows of Bethlehem.

Since 2010, Country Meadows and Ecumenical Retirement Community have offered a yearly beach trip for residents. Hawk jumped at the opportunity and recently returned from her third weeklong beach journey, during which she and 12 other residents spent a week living in a bay-front mansion in Avalon, N.J.

"The beach just has this amazing smell and feel. It's nice to get away and be in a different environment with a different routine," says Hawk. "We did things almost at the spur of the moment without worrying about planning ahead. It was very relaxing."

Co-workers accompany residents on the trip to alleviate common concerns such as walking, personal care assistance and safety. A charter bus transports the group to the beach home and

co-workers cook all meals, provide activities, lead fitness sessions, handle local transportation and provide all the comforts residents enjoy every other day of the year. Without the assistance of co-workers, some residents could not make the trip.

Weeklong beach trips are unusual for retirement communities. As such, Country Meadows recently received the 2014 Best of the Best Award—Resident and Family Engagement—from the Assisted Living Federation of America. Award submissions were judged for their uniqueness in the retirement living industry, innovative use of ideas, and impact on residents, their families, staff and operations. Previous years' trips were taken to Outer Banks, N.C.

Each morning over breakfast, residents voted on the day's activities. Excursions included a private boat ride to The



A resident captures the image of a beautiful sunset from the mansion's balcony

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Resident raised awareness and funds for ALS long before ice buckets

Though JoAn Zimmerman, a resident at Country Meadows of Hershey, didn't get too close to the water, she enjoyed watching co-workers get drenched. She hopes this summer's nationwide Ice Bucket Challenge raises awareness about Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. The Ice Bucket Challenge was shared via the internet encouraging people to donate to ALS and in support, douse themselves with a bucket of ice and water.

Zimmerman has been an ALS advocate for nearly 15 years. When her late husband Bruce "Zimm" Zimmerman learned that he had ALS in January 2000, the couple knew little about the degenerative condition. Even as they coped with the disease, they, along with their children and grandchildren, raised money to support research and increase awareness with the hope that others would benefit from a treatment and a cure.

"Bruce was always concerned about the younger ALS patients because he was satisfied that he had a full life. He wanted fundraising for research to continue, and it has really been a family effort," says Zimmerman. "We did what we could in the hopes that others wouldn't have to go through it. Bruce even donated tissue to be used for ALS research, and we were pretty proud of that."



President & CEO Michael Leader endures the Ice Bucket Challenge along with the entire Leader family.

As her husband's primary caregiver, Zimmerman learned about ALS "on the job." ALS destroys the motor neurons that control muscle movement and progressively robs its victims of the ability to walk, talk and eventually breathe. Most people diagnosed with ALS live an average of two to five years.

For the Zimmerman family, Bruce's quality of life was a primary concern. They kept up with traveling for his business, dining out, getting outdoors for the grandchildren's

sporting events and even bringing the outdoors in for as long as they could. It was a challenge at times as Zimmerman directed the efforts of the health care and hospice employees who assisted her.

"JoAn was an exquisite caregiver. She was just the epitome of what you would think of when caring for someone at home. It's not an easy journey. But she kept things in perspective and in balance. . . making time for her family, their friends and others. There were dark days, I'm sure, but she was able to manage it," says Jim Pinciotti, executive director-ALS Association Greater Philadelphia Chapter.

The Zimmermans found a great deal of support through the ALS Clinic and Research Center at the Penn State Milton S.

Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, Pa., where Bruce was a patient of Dr. Zachary Simmons.

"Dr. Simmons is an angel here on earth," says Zimmerman. "Continuing support of the Center became an important goal for Bruce and our family."

Shortly before Bruce's death in 2002, the family established the Zimmerman Family Love Fund to provide direct financial support for the ALS Clinic. John Kotsalos, owner of Bruce's favorite restaurant, Dafnos Italian Grille in Hershey, offered to host a pasta dinner which became the first "Pasta for PALS" (People with ALS) fundraiser. The dinner was a huge success, and Zimmerman's family and friends continued it for 10 years, raising more than \$100,000.



Hershey campus co-workers endure the Ice Bucket Challenge to raise funds and awareness for ALS. The team took the challenge in honor of a former resident who lost his battle with ALS this past spring.

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Foundation offers help and hope to co-workers facing financial emergencies

Thanks to residents, clients and family members, a Country Meadows co-worker's belief in miracles was strengthened. That faith was reinforced by the Co-Worker Foundation—a program designed specifically to help co-workers who are experiencing a financial emergency. “I had nowhere to go, nowhere to turn. At that point you have to ask for help, and I am so thankful for the Foundation,” she says.

Life can be hard. A 2013 survey by Bankrate.com found that nearly 75 percent of people live paycheck-to-paycheck. All it takes is one unexpected situation to result in a financial emergency.

“From time to time people have crises in their lives that may be the result of a serious illness, tragic accident, fire or even flood. We started the Co-Worker Foundation to develop an organized way to help these co-workers,” says Country Meadows President & CEO Michael Leader.

Funded from donations made by residents, families, co-workers and the Leader family, the Co-Worker Foundation awards non-taxable grants of up to \$2,000 to co-workers for unexpected emergencies that may include fire, theft, death of a loved one, damage from a natural disaster or other situations. Since it was founded in 2010, the Co-Worker Foundation has awarded more than \$110,000 in grants to co-workers.

Susan (not her real name), found herself in a downward financial spiral following an unexpected health emergency.

“I was at work when I couldn't breathe and was taken to the hospital. They admitted me and through further testing, I was

diagnosed with COPD, a leaking heart valve and severe sleep apnea; I stopped breathing more than 400 times a night. It was just awful,” she says. “Things just kept getting worse and, in turn, I kept missing work and my paychecks.”

As money became scarce, Susan was unable to pay bills. Utility providers, including heating oil, water and electricity, threatened to cut her service. “If they shut off the electric I couldn't use things that I need... I desperately need to use my [breathing machine],” she recalls.

Susan's co-workers reminded her about the Co-Worker Foundation and suggested she apply for assistance, but she felt

too embarrassed to apply. A supportive executive director further encouraged her to seek help and said, “All people in their life, at some point, have to ask for help—that's what the Foundation is here for.”

Tracy Newcomer, vice president of Human Resources, co-chairs the Co-Worker Foundation's board. “There is a definite need for this program. It really humbles you to realize how one unplanned event can spark a spiral that people just can't get out of. Whether it's a death, loss of job or natural disaster, many co-workers aren't equipped with an emergency fund to get them through it and as a result, they fall behind,” she says. “Frequently these are the dedicated co-workers who are there whether it's raining, snowing or sleeting, who give 100 percent to our residents.”

Susan asked her executive director for the application and completed the process. Shortly thereafter, the Foundation gave her a miracle by paying her outstanding debts to her utility providers. “I was ecstatic! I was down and out and I couldn't believe it... miracles do happen! I was completely flabbergasted!” she says. “I am so thankful. When you're at that point where you don't know which way to turn and somebody comes through and helps you out... that's a big thing. And to say 'thank you' is never enough. But at that point there isn't much more you can do other than say 'thank you, I appreciate it!'”

“This is really an important and concrete way that the Leader family shows that they, and the company, care about the people who work here,” says the Rev. Howard West, executive director of Spiritual Life and co-chair of the Co-Worker Foundation board. “The Leader family is unique... they care about co-workers in a personal and compassionate way.”

The Foundation is administered by a board of directors comprised of eight co-workers who oversee confidential grant applications and award approved funds. The initial contribution to establish the Foundation was made by the Leader family.

“I was down and out, and I couldn't believe it... miracles do happen!”



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Foundation offers help *continued from page 4*

The fund is set up as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization which relies on contributions made by Country Meadows, its executives, directors, co-workers, residents and others, so that monies are available for co-workers in need of emergency assistance.

In addition to grants, co-workers also may be referred to the REACH Employee Assistance Program—a free benefit provided to all co-workers—to receive counseling on budgeting and managing finances. According to Newcomer, “The Foundation can give them the money they need, and REACH can provide resources to help them manage so they don’t find themselves back in the same situation.”

Susan is thankful to donors who contribute to the Co-Worker Foundation. “The families comment on the good job that [co-workers] do, and it’s nice to know there’s a fund they can contribute to—it’s a nice thanks,” she says. “Mere words cannot express how grateful I am to know that a caring spirit and compassion for others still exist in our world today.”

To donate to the Country Meadows/Ecumenical Retirement Community Co-Worker Foundation, gifts may be mailed to Co-Worker Foundation, 830 Cherry Drive, Hershey, PA 17033. 🐾

Beach trip *continued from page 2*

Lobster House on the waterfront in Cape May, a dolphin and whale watching trip, wine tasting at a Cape May winery, a visit to Atlantic City, shopping in Stone Harbor and walking on the boardwalk in Ocean City. At the beach house residents enjoyed delicious homemade meals, daily happy hours and gathering on the outdoor deck to talk, knit, read and nap. Many took advantage of the beautiful spa and pool as well.

Hawk enjoyed reuniting with friends from previous trips and making new ones. A highlight was sharing cake and champagne during an impromptu celebration of one couple’s 65th wedding anniversary.

“Now that I’m back, it’s fun to tell people about all the things we did,” says Hawk. “Everything was just fantastic.”

Brenda Kennedy, executive director of Community Life, planned the trip. “The little slices of life are what make these trips so awesome,” she says. “Our residents don’t take a moment for granted whether it’s enjoying a sunset over the bay or the sound of their feet on the boardwalk. It’s a thrill for them to see and hear those things again.” 🐾

Stop by and visit our new website

More and more, seniors and their families are going to the internet to research choices in retirement living options. To serve as a resource, Country Meadows revamped its website to be a destination for information and advice about retirement living as well as issues facing older adults such as dementia and caregiving.

The new site is designed to be more interactive and user-friendly, as well as easy-to-find.

“To appeal to more visitors, we evolved the website to be more aesthetically pleasing, provide more ways to contact our team at any point, and better reflect how families, prospective residents and prospective co-workers search the internet when seeking senior lifestyle options, questions on senior care and prospective employment,” says Mandi Block, vice president of Advertising and Communications-Country Meadows. “We feel that we have achieved this with our redesigned website and hope our visitors do too.”

Be sure to visit Country Meadows’ new website to read stories about amazing residents and co-workers, and news about the organization. Please visit often! 🐾



www.CountryMeadows.com

Life gets better.® at C



Allentown campus residents enjoyed meeting furry, feathered and scaled creatures during an outing to the Lehigh Valley Zoo

Residents and guests peruse classic cars at an auto show held at Ecumenical Retirement Community.



Lancaster campus resident Jay Rodgers competed in track and field events at the Lancaster Senior Games.



Country Meadows

Elvis was spotted alive and well at Country Meadows of York. Residents were treated to several selections from "The King's" repertoire, spanning his entire career.



Residents and guests gathered at Country Meadows of South Hills near Pittsburgh to commemorate D-Day. Several attendees served in World War II and shared their memories from June 6, 1944.



Country Meadows of Wyomissing celebrated something Irish this summer with a Celtic Fling. One of the event highlights was a sexy legs contest in which male residents modeled kilts.



Country Meadows of Leader Heights residents created activity packets for sick children visiting the Emergency Room at a local hospital. Residents took crayons and pages from coloring books and assembled them in to packets to lessen the stress of an ER visit. This group calls themselves "Friends with a Purpose," and has several other projects including making blankets for an animal rescue and helpful packets for the Lyme Association. Pictured left to right: Glenn Winter, Marjorie Winter, Jenn

Warfel, Frances Lee, Betty Clark, Ellen Boyer, Marcia Feehan (hospital ER director), Fayne Abel, Pearl Flemmens, and Sharon Bohlayer.

finished painting. A total of 40 residents from all levels of care contributed their talents to the huge masterpiece.

"I thought it was interesting that there were some who were doing their own smaller paintings within the canvas, and others were trying to link them together into the larger theme," says Federico about the joint effort.

Toward the end of the two-hour session, a few people painted yellow dots for stars which gave the piece the look of Van Gogh's original.

Federico was especially moved that one resident who typically doesn't participate in activities, and often wears a worried expression, spent about 45 minutes painting. The resident is an artist who owned an art shop. The project visibly struck a chord with her.

"When she picked up the brush, she seemed more relaxed and so proud of what she did, and she stayed and watched the others," says Federico, noting that the resident initially indicated that she didn't want to participate.

Noting the event's success, Federico plans to incorporate a large-scale art project every other month because, as she says, "The shared experience benefits everyone."

Her next large-canvas event highlighted the works of Jackson Pollock. Residents already created individual pieces based on his work, and titled them with names reflecting memories such as "Blue Jays" or "Traffic on Route 66." Federico thought his abstract style and unique application methods would lend well to including residents with less mobility. True to Pollock's style, the canvas was placed on the floor and, working in groups of three, residents applied paint by tossing it or using anything they liked, including wheels from wheel chairs.

"This is a great opportunity to help people understand Alzheimer's disease. Many people are intimidated at the idea, and this is an opportunity to bring everyone closer through a social activity," she says as she shares an idea to use art to bring together children, caregivers, seniors and persons with Alzheimer's disease and memory loss. Through a partnership she is forming with Artsquest in Bethlehem, residents can attend classes and events. ArtsQuest also displays the completed murals.

"ArtsQuest offers an open studio for cancer patients and their caregivers, and we're talking about creating a class for older adults with Alzheimer's and their caregivers as well," says Federico. "I think it would be a nice connection to make if we could have more intergenerational classes that include children, adults and seniors. There's a real opportunity to build awareness of Alzheimer's disease and dementia in the community and the activities we can do." 🧡

This little piggy came home

A new co-worker is stealing hearts at Country Meadows of Leader Heights in South York.

Hamlet the baby micropig has been "hired" as a new campus pet.

"Dogs and cats are traditional animals we have on campus. Pigs are definitely social, affectionate, intelligent and hypo-allergenic, which meets all our needs," says Jim Bryan, executive director.

Angie Nowicki, Community Life coordinator, is fostering Hamlet until he's old enough to move in to Country Meadows permanently. In the meantime, he comes to work with Nowicki.

Hamlet already has made positive impacts on residents' lives.

"Hamlet came in for a visit and the residents, two in particular, transformed their moods," says Bryan. "It was remarkable to witness."

The campus held a contest to name their newest pet. Suggestions included Kevin Bacon, Bacon Bits, and Sammy Hammy. The list was whittled down to either Wilbur or Hamlet.

Hamlet is litter-box trained and eats a special blend of food made for pigs. He even does tricks for treats—raisins are his favorite.

Resident Charlie Clark says, "He's a good pet." 🧡



Meet Hamlet. When he is full-grown, Hamlet is expected to be around 30 pounds—the size of a beagle dog.



Resident Charlie Clark cuddles Hamlet while spending time on a campus patio.

Journeys in... PURPOSEFUL SERVICE

Journeys in Purposeful Service is a regular feature. Each edition highlights a resident who regularly engages in service both to the retirement community in which he/she resides as well as the community-at-large. If you would like to nominate a resident for recognition in this feature, please contact Kelly Kuntz, editor, at kkuntz@countrymeadows.com.

Making dresses for poor, orphaned girls gives meaning to resident's life

Betty Naylor has been using a sewing machine since her mother showed her how at age seven. In addition to working in a clothing factory in her hometown of Ridgely, Md., the self-taught seamstress made clothes for herself, her children and her grandchildren, including some very elaborate prom gowns. But her favorite sewing project to date is the one she's working on now. Using a simple pattern that her daughter, Mary, found on the Internet, she is sewing dresses for Africa.

Naylor moved to Country Meadows in Frederick, Md., last fall. Quiet by nature, Naylor's four children hoped to find an activity to help her feel comfortable in her new residence. Little Dresses for Africa, a program initiated by a Michigan woman to provide dresses for children in need, matched her love for sewing and charitable work—a spark ignited.

Like hundreds of other volunteers, Naylor makes bright sundresses meant to tell their recipients—poor or orphaned girls—that they are “worthy.” The simple pattern can be made using a pillow case, but Naylor adapted it to use fabric scraps and added a buttoned pocket to fill with school supplies that she and her daughter purchase. The dresses are typically the girls' only piece of clothing, shipped or carried to Africa by missionaries who distribute them at churches, orphanages and schools.

Perfectly suited to the hot climate and durable enough to be washed in the river, the dresses are cherished and worn for years thanks to ties at the shoulder that can be adjusted as the wearer grows. Some missionaries report that girls wearing these dresses are less likely to be victimized because they are perceived to be under good care.

With every garment, Naylor thinks about the girl who will

receive the dress, and hopes she will enjoy and be happy with it.

“Each day I just want to get up to make these dresses because I love to sew and feel like I'm doing something worthwhile,” she says. “It makes me feel wonderful to know that I'm doing something so simple and it means so much.”

Before starting the project, Naylor hadn't sewn for several years, but her skills came right back to her. Using her own electric sewing machine, a much-improved version of the pedal machines she worked with long ago, she sits just inside her apartment door. A bonus of the project is her interaction with curious staff members and residents who stop to check on her progress or admire the closet full of completed dresses. One little visitor was so enamored with the dresses that



Betty Naylor, seated, and her daughter, Mary, show some of the dresses they've sewn for girls in Africa.



Two girls in Africa wearing dresses crafted by Naylor.

Naylor gave her one.

Naylor has created more than 30 dresses in just a few months, and her daughter hopes Naylor will make 91, one for each year of her life.

“I've had a lot of enjoyment seeing these dresses made and knowing they're going to make someone very happy,” says Naylor. “Making the dresses makes my time more enjoyable. I like to see that my life means something.” ☺

Residents Celebrate Independence

Resident attendance records were shattered this July for Country Meadows and Ecumenical Retirement Community's Celebrating Independence Conference. Nearly 250 residents traveled to Lancaster for a day of learning, socialization and fun.

The conference featured sessions including a cooking demonstration, insects from around the world, cake decorating, and exercise classes including Silver Sneakers® and Tai Chi for Arthritis. Special guests included Political professor and pollster G. Terry Madonna, Ph.D.; photographer Len Bernstein discussing the images in his new book; Special Olympics Gold Medalist

Loretta Claiborne talking about overcoming adversity; and a piano concert by one of the most celebrated pianists in the world-Vitalij Kuprij, who also is a member of the Trans Siberian Orchestra.

AARP Consumer Advocate Mary Bach spoke about scams and seniors.

Planning has already begun for the 2015 conference. If you have an idea for a session, please email KKuntz@CountryMeadows.com. 🐞



Following The Bug Man's presentation, brave residents held a tarantula spider and a scorpion.



Auntie Annie's Pretzels taught attendees how to roll a pretzel.



Students in the cake decorating sessions enjoyed making their own beach-themed cake.



Celebrated pianist Vitalij Kuprij performs a concert at church next to the conference location.

Conference session provides practical advice on getting what you pay for

By Pat Ryder, Resident at Country Meadows of Allentown

Buses from Country Meadows campuses across the Commonwealth and beyond converged on the city of Lancaster July 23. The third annual Celebrating Independence Conference, described as a day of learning and living, gave participants opportunities to select from a wide variety of topics, ranging from cake decorating to politics, conservation of water fowl to wine tasting and cooking to yoga and reiki. Presenters included a world-class pianist, a multiple Gold Medalist in the Special Olympics World Games, and a representative of Auntie Anne's—a company that developed from a stand in a small Pennsylvania farmers' market to a company with locations in over 30 countries.

Some lessons were extremely practical. AARP Consumer Advocate Mary Bach offered two presentations directed straight at the wallets of her audience. The first, "Are You Getting What You Pay For," shared the shrinking the value of the dollars we spend in the market place.

The complexity of Pennsylvania tax law and the way it is applied, is confusing. Not only does the taxable amount differ in various parts of the Commonwealth, some items which should not be taxed are, in fact, taxed simply because of how a retailer classifies the item. For example, most clothing is not taxed but, as with many things, the devil is in the details.

Bach illustrated this point with a brief story about house slippers. The cashier at a local Walmart rang up a pair of ballerina-style house slippers, tagged at \$9, for \$9.54, clearly indicating that 6% sales tax was charged. Bach pleaded her case with the store manager who said the purchase did not appear in inventory as slippers but rather as "dancing shoes," which are taxable. She researched the matter further by shopping for the slippers in other Walmart stores and ultimately sued the chain in district court where the damages awarded are either the amount in dispute or \$100, whichever is greater. She then displayed enlarged photocopies of six checks, each in the amount of \$100, awarded by the magistrates in settlement for improper charge of sales tax on those slippers.

Another trend creeping into consumers' purses involves downsizing. Bach showed the audience a coffee can which used to hold 16 ounces but now, for the same price, delivers just 10.5 ounces. Another example is a major brand of ice cream.



AARP Consumer Advocate Mary Bach shares tips for seniors to get what they pay for.

Take a closer look at packaging and in place of the words "ice cream," the package now reads "frozen dairy treat." In this case, the current recipe no longer includes sufficient milkfat to qualify as ice cream. The new so-called "space saver" package informs the buyer that it contains not the half-gallon, rather a quart and a half, yielding 25 percent less product.

Bach urged caution in two other areas of the consumer arena: the gas station and the pharmacy.

Gas stations are required to have annual inspections and to display the date of the most recent one. She urged that you check that date.

When it comes to your medications, Bach strongly advises consumers count their pills. She recounted an experience when six pills of an antibiotic were prescribed and she received just four.

Bach advises, "Be your own best advocate. Keep your eyes open and get what you pay for!" 🐘



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a story to share?***

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For information about a career with Country Meadows, visit **www.facebook.com/CountryMeadowsCareers**.

We look forward to interacting with you online.

Inside:

- 🌀 This little piggy finds a home
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- 🌀 Get what you pay for

ALS *continued from page 3*

"Through the tragedy of Bruce's illness, I had the opportunity to meet not only him, but also JoAn and their children and grandchildren. They are a wonderful family," says Dr. Simmons. "The Zimmerman Family Love Fund has been key to a number of clinical and basic science research initiatives at the Center that are highly dependent on donations."

The Zimmerman family also helped The ALS Association of Greater Philadelphia Chapter coordinate the first Walk to Defeat ALS® in Harrisburg.

"JoAn and Zimm wanted to know what they could do to raise awareness," explains Pinciotti. "We were just beginning the Walks, our signature program, and they said, 'let's do it in Harrisburg.' They were a catalyst for bringing it there in 2001, and it continues today. It is just phenomenal—the Walk raises awareness and funds and is also a cathartic event that brings families who share a common bond together year after year."

In addition to Pasta for PALS, which kept her in touch with many families living with ALS, Zimmerman reached out to families through the ALS Clinic where she frequently was invited to talk with other patients and their families about her experiences with ALS, the Walk and the Clinic.

"JoAn's drive and leadership have resulted in longstanding and important support to our ALS Center," says Dr. Simmons. "On a personal level, I am grateful to have met JoAn. She is a delightful individual whose energy, drive and commitment to helping those with ALS has been inspirational."

When Zimmerman moved to Country Meadows just over a year ago, she learned about a resident who had ALS and made herself available to support his family. She also mentored Samantha Jones, Pathways Community Life coordinator, in fundraising, and was recognized by the Rev. Howard West for being a support to Country Meadows co-workers. She was pleased that Country Meadows of Hershey co-workers participated in the 2014 Hershey Walk to Defeat ALS and the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, in a resident's memory. She knows that although awareness is increasing, few people truly understand the disease's impact on its victims and families.

"Bruce was certainly a brave warrior. And through the Center and my help, I know his quality of life was the best it could be for what he was dealing with," says Zimmerman. "He faced it head on and always said, 'If this is my last day on Earth, I've lived life to the fullest.' At the end of his journey with ALS, he told his family, 'I have loved, and I have been loved.'" 🌀