



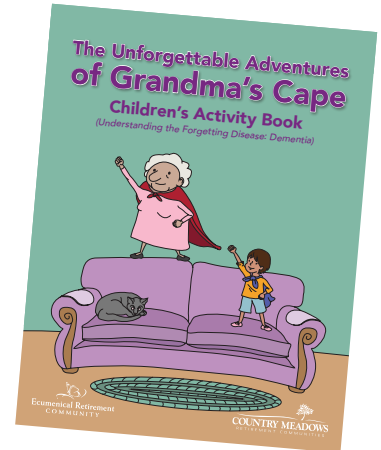
Journeys

A newsletter for residents, families and friends.

Activity book helps children understand dementia

Understanding dementia is difficult, and maintaining relationships with affected loved ones can be challenging for all of us, especially children. To help kids develop stronger relationships with their loved ones who have dementia, Country Meadows Retirement Communities and its affiliate, Ecumenical Retirement Community, partnered with the Pennsylvania College of Art and Design (PCA&D) in Lancaster, to create a cover for a children's story and activity book.

"The Unforgettable Adventures of Grandma's Cape," was written by Country Meadows' Executive Director of Memory Support Joel Kroft. It weaves the story of a child and his/her relationship with Grandma and how that relationship is changing because of her "forgetting disease." Along the way readers have different activities to complete, all focusing on the topic of dementia/forgetfulness.



continued on page 9

Study demonstrates vest's success at reducing fall risk

For 45 minutes just about every day, Anne Grasha, 94, sits at a desk by her window at Country Meadows in Mechanicsburg and colors beautifully detailed cards to share with her friends and family. This is one of the times each day that she puts on her BalanceWear® vest.

"I feel more comfortable wearing it," says Grasha. "I like the way it feels, and it makes me sit up straight."

She began wearing the vest as a participant in the InVested Project—a six-month University of Arkansas and Motion Therapeutics research study conducted at Country Meadows of Hershey, West Shore and Ecumenical Retirement Community campuses last year. Researchers documented BalanceWear's impact on balance and mobility for seniors who have non-neurological balance issues.

BalanceWear Vest inventor and Physical Therapist Cynthia Gibson-Horn and researcher Jennifer Vincenzo, PT, MPH, Ph.D., report positive findings. Residents initially participating in

continued on page 3

Inside:

- 🐞 Seniors and scams
- 🐞 Room with a view
- 🐞 Golden friends reunited



COUNTRY MEADOWS
RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Life gets better.®



Ecumenical Retirement
COMMUNITY

Journeys is published by Country Meadows Retirement Communities and Ecumenical Retirement Community.

Editor, Kelly S. Kuntz,
Executive Director of
Communications

Journeys story ideas,
suggestions and general comments
are welcome and should be
directed to Kelly S. Kuntz, at
kkuntz@countrymeadows.com.

Country Meadows
Retirement Communities
830 Cherry Drive
Hershey, PA 17033
717.533.2474
countrymeadows.com

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,
Forks, 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.*



Close call with scam prompts resident to educate others



Bob Meckley initially fell victim to a scam impersonating his son in an emergency situation. He wants his experience to help others avoid being a victim.

voice who said he was Jason Cooper, an attorney with the public defender's office. He asked Meckley for the case number, and Meckley could hear typing as the "attorney" looked it up on his computer and provided more details about the case. Meckley was shocked to learn his son failed a breathalyzer test and would need to post bail. A third caller, a friendly "bail bondsman" ultimately took Meckley's credit card number and some other personal information.

Scams targeting seniors are on the rise. According to Mary Bach, independent consumer advocate and chair, AARP Pennsylvania Consumer Issues Task Force, scams, fraud, identity theft and financial exploitation cost elderly consumers \$15 billion a year.

"That's real money out of somebody's pocket," says Bach, noting that seniors are targeted because many have retirement funds and good credit, and they are more trusting and polite as well as less technology-savvy. "This generation doesn't understand how easily scammers can find very specific details about where they live, their family members and other facts through the internet and even the trash. The scammers use those details to hook their victims."

The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office warns that older adults should take steps to protect themselves from these crimes. Being wary of any stranger who presents over the telephone, e-mail, mail and even at your door is a good first step. Never give personal information to callers, especially your social security number and credit card information, nor send money to someone you do not know. This includes buying gift cards and providing the number to someone over the telephone.

"I was caught by surprise. All I could think was something bad was happening to my son," says Meckley, the former civil engineer turned computer salesman who admits skipping over a story about scams in the newspaper that same day.

Meckley knew his son didn't drink and drive, but he never questioned the charge because details like his son's name, case number and an appointment with the judge made the calls seem legitimate.

"Scammers use emergencies and urgent situations to throw you off balance, but by taking a moment to ask questions, you can protect yourself," says Sadie Martin,

Recently Bob Meckley, 89, a resident at Country Meadows of Leader Heights, was in his apartment reading the newspaper when the telephone rang. As he answered, a voice cried out, "Dad, it's Mike!"

And just like that, Meckley was ensnared in a telephone scam.

Confused by the unfamiliar voice, Meckley asked which Mike, referring to his friend or his youngest son.

"It's your son. My nose was broken in an automobile accident, and I'm in jail," the voice replied.

The urgent, muffled voice hurriedly told Meckley to write down a case number saying he couldn't stay on the line, but his attorney would call. Within minutes a call came from a man with a calm, authoritative

continued on page 5



Residents testing the BalanceWear vest enjoy a celebration with co-workers and inventor Cynthia Gibson-Horn (front, center in purple), and researcher Jennifer Vincenzo, (front center, in white.)

the study showed an improvement in scores in some physical tests after just five days. After four months the results were even better with residents improving scores on their physical tests without canes or walkers even though they typically use those devices during regular activities.

At six months, the participants wearing BalanceWear improved five times more than the control group in the Short Physical Performance Battery test which measures walking speed, getting up and down from a chair and balance.

“During the tests, we measured balance during standing, walking activities, performing activities like get out of a chair, walking and turning your head just like you would if you were looking at something on a wall or talking to somebody or going into the grocery store while you’re walking,” notes Vincenzo. “Even something as simple as how fast you walk can predict you getting hospitalized, becoming sick, your mortality and risk for falls. Even if we improve just walking speed, indicates that a person will be at a lower risk for all these factors.”

Country Meadows Executive Director of Fitness Kim Eichinger agrees that balance and worrying about a potential fall affects residents in different ways. “Becoming fearful of a fall can prevent a resident from participating in activities. They’ll say, ‘oh, I don’t want to go,’ because they are beginning to doubt their ability to take part, so it really affects their well-being. Loss of balance quickly becomes a quality of life issue.”

The BalanceWear vest works by providing light strategically placed counter-balancing weights to address

a person’s unique balance losses. A series of simple physical tests determine the precise location for each weight to be attached with Velcro, inside the front and back of the vest. This is important because moving the weight by just an eighth of an inch can change its impact. Though benefits of BalanceWear vary, improvements have been seen in common challenges seniors can experience including balance, climbing stairs, ability to walk, speech and vitality.

Horn compares how the vest works with balance to eyeglasses for vision. “Years ago when we didn’t have glasses, we had to suffer when we couldn’t see things. Then we got glasses and all of a sudden we could see things better,” notes Gibson-Horn. “This is

just a different way of thinking of balance. You don’t necessarily have to use a walker because we can identify your imbalances and you can wear your balance.”

Grasha noticed an improvement just a few days into the study when she walked across a room without her cane and didn’t miss it. She recalls, “One day I realized I had walked across the room and had left my cane!”

In addition to helping validate the effectiveness of BalanceWear, Country Meadows participants helped to improve the vest’s design by providing suggestions on its wearability. Their feedback was used by manufacturer Motion Therapeutics to develop a vest that is easier to put on for older adults who have shoulder issues. Suggestions about the style and color of the vest also were submitted.

“I think participating in the study gave our residents a real sense of purpose. Their experiences and opinions have helped improve the product, and they can feel good that their efforts are helping others as they continue to develop and improve the vests,” says Eichinger.

To meet demand of current BalanceWear users and new residents interested in trying the vest, Genesis Rehabilitation—Country Meadows’ and Ecumenical Retirement Community’s rehabilitation partner—certified additional physical therapists to offer the BalanceWear vest. With a doctor’s referral, a resident can be assessed to determine if a vest might help his/her balance issues.

Norman Fugitt, 87, who also participated in the study, says wearing the vest makes him feel better, and he doesn’t fall when he is wearing the vest.

continued on back page

Keeping his Penn State connections in sight

The view isn't the first thing you notice when visiting Robert Henry, a resident at Country Meadows of Hershey, but the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center is visible from his apartment window. While inside, cherished photos of family members, places and events fill walls and book shelves, the view is a reminder of a time when he helped oversee the construction and, later, maintenance and operations for the Medical Center. It's part of his lifetime connection to Penn State University.

"My great uncle Moses Thompson founded Penn State College as a high school for children of local farmers," Henry recalls, noting Moses' donation of farm land around State College and explaining that the school was renamed Penn State University during Eisenhower's administration.

A farm boy who grew up in nearby Bald Eagle Valley, Henry studied civil engineering at Penn State before enlisting in the U.S. Air Force, serving for nearly three years as a radio operator.

He returned to Penn State to complete his degree in 1948 and met the love of his life, his late wife Louise, outside a restaurant called The Corner Room. A rendering of the restaurant on his wall bears an "X" on the spot where they met and complements a framed black and white photograph of their wedding.

After graduating from Penn State, Henry worked for Goodyear Tire Corporation in Akron, OH, for 18 years including two years overseas to supervise construction of a tire factory in Luxembourg and another in Glasgow, Scotland. By 1966, the Henrys were ready to bring their four sons back to "home base" in State College. Henry contacted Penn State seeking an engineering position and a few months later was offered the opportunity to represent the university in the construction of its new hospital in Hershey.

"I was there to represent Penn State in the construction and assure that the design and plans were proper and carried out cost effectively," he says. When the facility was completed, he stayed on to provide oversight for plant operations and maintenance, continuing to make recommendations to improve procedures and cut costs.

While he downplays the importance of his role at the Medical Center, he views it as an accomplishment. "I'm real proud of overseeing the operations and maintenance," he says. "It took a lot to run it because the operations center received input from all over the



Robert Henry selected his apartment at Country Meadows of Hershey because he has a view of the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center.

Medical Center, I was fortunate because the people who worked for me were great."

When Henry signed on for his Penn State job in Hershey, he never imagined the hospital in Milton Hershey's farm fields would become a major research institution with far-reaching impact. He didn't consider that it would become the birthplace for several of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. And he certainly didn't suspect that one day he would return to oversee the facility from an entirely new vantage point.

But after his wife died, Henry made plans to move closer to his sons. As he considered his options for personal care, it was hard to resist an apartment facing the Medical Center.

"That's one of the reasons that I came to Country Meadows of Hershey, because it was so close to the Medical Center," he says.

Staff learned about Henry's affinity for the location and surprised him with a framed aerial view of the medical center when he moved in.

While Henry spends much of his time visiting with family and friends, and even writing poetry, he also enjoys opportunities to oversee the Medical Center in a new way—looking out his window with his scanner humming by his side and watching the Center's Life Lion emergency helicopter fly in and out several times a day.

"It's nice," he says about being close to his former workplace. "It keeps me in touch with it." 🐉

assistant press secretary for the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office. "It feels like you have to act immediately, but if your loved one really is in jail, he/she is safe. Hospitals give care regardless of ability to pay, so take time to ask for details."

Good questions to ask include:

- Where is he?
- Can I speak to him?
- What's the name of the jail or hospital?
- Who is his doctor?
- What number should I use to call you back?

If you can, involve someone you trust to help you check it out so you can cover more ground quickly. Try calling the individual in question using numbers that you already have. Look up the number of the location and call directly.

You can avoid being targeted in a telephone scam by not answering the telephone if you don't recognize the number that's calling. Bach suggests signing up with your state's and the United States Do Not Call registries, and remember you are under no obligation to be polite to unexpected callers. Hang up at any time you feel the call is not legitimate.

"Any time a person calls you and needs to verify who you are with account numbers, social security numbers or other personal details, is a red flag," says Bach. "Also be wary of any business or charity that contacts you for payment over the telephone. Most organizations, and especially the U.S. Government, use old-fashioned postal delivery to communicate with you."



You and family members can stay apprised of current scams to help you guard against them. One way to avoid the emergency scam is to establish a code word that only family members know.

Other current scams include the "you missed jury duty" or "you owe back taxes" scams which prey on seniors' sense of duty. The Attorney General's office assures that law enforcement and tax agencies will NEVER contact you to demand payment over the telephone, and banks and other financial institutions do not call to verify your account numbers. Another newer scam involves a caller who says he must help you fix an issue or provide a needed update for your computer.

It was during Meckley's third call, after he provided his credit card number, that he became suspicious. He told the "bondsman" to call him back in ten minutes. When he hung up, Meckley tried calling his son's cell phone and learned he was safe at work. Meckley was embarrassed, but he told his son right away, and they were able to cancel the credit card before it was used by the scammers.

If you've been scammed, tell someone you trust immediately. You also can report it to the local police and contact your state's Attorney General's office. Money that you've wired and spent on gift cards is impossible to retrieve, but you can minimize damage to your credit and help others. Meckley told co-workers at Country Meadows about the incident because he didn't want anyone else to get scammed. When letters were sent to residents, they learned that others had received similar calls.

So far Meckley hasn't had additional trouble resulting from the scam. His daughter helped him complete paper work with the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office and took steps to monitor his credit.

Even if you haven't been scammed, Bach suggests proactively monitoring your credit by requesting a free copy of your credit report from one of the three credit monitoring bureaus each quarter. Each bureau must provide one free copy each year, and may be easily attained by visiting AnnualCreditReport.com.

While Meckley was victimized over the telephone, be aware that all mail and e-mail should be given careful scrutiny, too. Question any unexpected or unsolicited request for payment, donations, or personal information. 🌀

For more information on what to look out for and a list of resources, visit our website for more information CountryMeadows.com/Scams.

Life gets better.® at Country Meadows and Ecumenical Retirement Community



Country Meadows of Frederick, Md., residents enjoy an outing and walk to Cunningham Falls State Park.



Country Meadows of York resident Barbara Coxen took three, yes THREE, gold medals in the York County Senior Olympics. She won the 50-meter, 100-meter and 400-meter runs.

Sarah, a resident at our South Hills campus near Pittsburgh, walks her African gray parrot "Otis" in his transport cage. Otis and Sarah have been together for 10 years and live in her Country Meadows apartment. If Otis doesn't recognize a visitor, he will yelp. Once he gets

comfortable with visitors, which could take several hours, he just might have a conversation!



Residents and visitors enjoyed checking out old and new rides at Ecumenical Retirement Community's annual car show.

Country Meadows of Bethlehem residents squared off against another local retirement community in the first Lehigh Valley Senior Bocce Ball League created by a co-worker. The Country Meadows team won the first game, and the competition continues through the fall.



Practice Kindness!

Country Meadows and Ecumenical Retirement Community designate April as Practice Random Acts of Kindness Month to honor the memory of late co-founder Mary Jane Leader. Mrs. Leader and her husband, the late Gov. George M. Leader, founded our organizations upon treating people with kindness. This page includes just a few of the many acts of kindness our residents practiced this April.



Residents made grilled cheese sandwiches and served them to clients at the Bell Socialization Homeless Shelter. This is not an act of kindness reserved only for April—the residents do this once every month.



Ecumenical Retirement Community residents made a tie blanket that was donated to a local shelter. Residents also visited hospital patients, distributed candy roses to hospital staff members and made goodie bags for teachers at the daycare center next door.



Throughout the school year, local Emerging Health high school students from Lehigh Career & Technical Institute visit with Allentown campus residents to do volunteer and fun activities, such as helping plant the campus gardens. (Pictured) To show their appreciation, residents made “Sunshine Boxes” packed with fun items and visited the students at school to distribute the boxes to the smiling youths.

See video of the trip online at www.YouTube.com/CountryMeadowsCares.



Hershey campus residents were busy. Pictured, Kathy Cox-regional director of marketing (left), rode the local senior citizen’s council bus and gave each rider a free hot lunch. Residents also collected personal items and donated them to the Ronald McDonald House and a women’s shelter, passed out pink flowers to passers-by in Hershey and distributed adult coloring books at the VA Hospital.

Growing the family

Country Meadows opens new campus in Easton

The newest member of the Country Meadows and Ecumenical family, Country Meadows of Forks in Easton, is complete and opened its doors mid-July to welcome the first residents.

As Independent Living residents began moving in, they were greeted with champagne, hot lavender-infused towels and other surprises.

"I've been wanting to do this for years," says new resident Dorothy Eck, as she smiles at her husband enjoying a mimosa cocktail.

Residents are taking time to meet new neighbors, take in the beautiful common areas and the community's design, while they learn their way around campus. Another new resident gushes, "Whoever designed this place gets an A plus!"

As residents enter their apartments, they are surprised with flowers and welcome baskets filled with celebratory items.

Residents are moving in on a staggered basis so co-workers can give plenty of support to each new neighbor. Independent Living residents are in place, and Assisted Living residents are moving in now.



Bright windows highlight beautiful common areas on the newly constructed Country Meadows campus in Forks Township in Easton, Pa.

"The remaining rooms are going fast. We're thrilled to be able to give tours on-site now so our prospective residents can see the rooms and just fall in love with this beautiful facility," says Patti Ann Rohrbach, executive director. "The lobby has a hotel feel with lots of natural light, ceiling to floor windows and open beams, giving the comfort of a lodge."

Rohrbach says the secure courtyard for memory support

residents turned out beautifully and will provide a safe area where residents can walk and enjoy the outdoors.

A grand opening celebration will be held in September during National Assisted Living Week. In the meantime, Community Life and Fitness Director Brenda Kennedy is meeting with new residents to get to know them and gather their activity ideas.

"It's so inspiring to be part of this new campus and help our residents have the lifestyle they envision for themselves. I think this is a generation that expects a lot more, and there's really no limit to what we can do," she says.

To view more photos and read stories from Country Meadows of Forks, visit CountryMeadows.com/Forks. 🐾

Calling all artists!

It's time for a holiday tradition at Country Meadows and Ecumenical Retirement Community. To honor and celebrate our residents artistic talents, all are invited to enter our annual Holiday Card Art Contest.

The only requirement is that artists must be a resident. The winning artist will have his/her artwork used in the design for the organizations' annual holiday greeting card and will enjoy a prize package that includes a financial gift to the charity of the winner's choice, a private dinner party for 12 guests and professional framing of the winning piece of art.

Entries should be based on the winter holidays, beauty of winter and/or love and friendship. Acceptable mediums include photography, oil, acrylic, watercolor, pencil, collage and mixed media. Unacceptable formats include pastel and charcoal. Please be sure to spray the completed product with a protecting solution.

Artwork can be from any time in the resident's lifetime however; artwork must be original. Please do not submit artwork entered in previous years' Holiday Card Art Contests.

All entries must be received by **Sept. 10, 2016**.

Original artwork should be sent to:

Kelly Kuntz, Executive Director of Communications
Country Meadows Home Office
830 Cherry Drive, Hershey, PA 17033

In lieu of the original, a high-resolution image of the piece of art can be mailed to KKuntz@CountryMeadows.com.

See a member of your campus' Community Life team for an entry form and complete contest rules. Good luck! 🐾



Joel Kroft, left, wrote the story for "The Unforgettable Adventures of Grandma's Cape." Gabby Hoffman, right, provided illustrations for the children's activity book about dementia.

As father to three young children, Kroft thought a story would help children connect to the information. He drew from his own experience with a grandmother who had Alzheimer's disease, as well as hundreds of other grandparents and families he has worked with at Country Meadows during the last 15 years.

"In some ways children are more accepting when their grandparent experiences dementia. But it can be confusing, in a child's eyes, when an adult who they typically look to for stability and guidance, isn't providing that anymore," explains Kroft. "They need help to make sense of that and to recognize that the person they love is still there."

The story features a fearless cape-wearing grandma who makes great chocolate chip cookies and has a zest for adventure. Kroft says the cape is a nod to the superhero quality of grandparents and their contributions to this world. Told from the grandchild's point of view, the story reveals a sense of awe for grandma as well as what happens when she begins forgetting things. In addition to understanding the progression of the illness, the grandchild learns to use his/her own superhero powers to connect with grandma and continue showing her love.

Kroft tested the story with his children and received a positive response. Like many children's stories, the narrative connects on multiple levels encouraging adults to think differently about making connections with their loved one with dementia, too.

"This is information people need to have. We can't deny the sadness of what we do. I have seen families struggle and even stop visiting as the disease progresses because it can be uncomfortable and even scary. There's a misconception that because the person with dementia doesn't remember or recognize family members, he/she won't miss the visits, but this is when it's important to stay connected," says Kroft. "People with dementia need loving, caring people in their lives to make the world make a little more sense, and this story shows family members how to make that happen. It would be amazing if we can help even a couple of families with this book."

To breathe life into the book's characters, the Country Meadows team worked with Bob Hochgertel, Chairman and Associate Professor, Illustration and Design Department, PCA&D, to establish a contest for senior illustration students. Country Meadows memory care experts presented the workbook concept to the students during class to help them better understand the expectations. Weeks later, the group returned and selected the winning illustration from 23 entries.

"Working with outside parameters gives our students a good feel for meeting real deadlines and balancing the needs of a client with their own artistic vision. It was fantastic to see the lightbulbs go off as they heard about dementia and the story idea.

A traveling exhibit featuring the artwork from PCA&D students is visiting our campuses. You can view the artwork at:

- **August:** Country Meadows of York, 1900 Trolley Road
- **September:** Country Meadows of Frederick, 5955 Quinn Orchard Road
- **October:** Country Meadows of Allentown, 410 N. Krocks Road
- **November:** Country Meadows of South Hills, 3560 Washington Pike, Bridgeville
- **December:** Country Meadows of Wyomissing, 1800 Tulpehocken Road

The exhibit will visit other campuses beginning spring, 2017.

The illustrations they presented were all very different in style and content from fun, almost 'Dr. Seussian,' to very realistic oil paintings," says Hochgertel. "I saw students rise to the challenge and stretch themselves to meet the client's needs, and it was really a win-win for everyone involved, providing Country Meadows with a variety of solutions to choose from and bringing recognition to our school as well."

The winning student illustrator is Gabby Hoffman.

continued on page 12

Resident inspires co-worker, awakens talents, shares messages of hope

Publish a book at age 93? Anything is possible when you have Fran Lesher's positive outlook. A resident at Country Meadows in Mechanicsburg, Lesher has a gift for inspiring others which has led to many positive changes and accomplishments for herself, as well as the people she meets.

Co-worker Bonnie West met Lesher shortly after joining Country Meadows as a community life associate, or "director of fun," as she likes to call it, in the Connections Neighborhood for residents with memory loss. Lesher changed West's life with a simple invitation to join her at church.

"Fran is a dear, precious lady, who has such a good nature and wants to be there for everyone," explains West. "She'll see someone in need and pray for that person. It's a certain intuition she has, where she always sees the good in people."

After Lesher's repeated invitations, West finally accompanied her to worship. Not only did West find a small, welcoming church where she could grow in her faith, she also found an outlet for her musical talents. She joined the choir, began doing special performances at other venues, and is now the Sunday morning vocalist. As a result, she uses music for ministry in the community and to connect with residents at work, including a weekly music session with the Connections Club for residents with early-stage memory loss.

"Working with residents who have dementia, often they can't carry on a conversation, but when you play a tune they know, they can sing every word. It just blows your heart up," says West. "There's no language barriers with music."

As their friendship grew, West discovered that Lesher overcame many challenges in her life to become the positive force she is today.

Facing life's challenges led Lesher to write the divinely inspired "dream messages," which came to her while sleeping. These messages, and her poetry, scattered in notebooks and scraps of paper among her



Fran Lesher, front, enjoys time with co-worker Bonnie West, left, and her daughter, Fran.

belongings, were compiled in a book called "Pearls of Wisdom." The inspirational words show a strong, positive woman emerging, learning to accept herself and embracing her new relationship with God.

"My whole goal in life has been to overcome negative thinking, which is so prevalent. These words of inspiration came to me in dreams just as they were needed," explains Lesher. "I wanted to preserve these writings; it's too much to let go. It's like my sacred duty to pass this along because there's only one place they could have come from, and that is God."

As her writings were collected for the book, Lesher had an idea that pushed West in new directions. She asked West to put some poems to music. West can't

read music, but when she reviewed the manuscript, the poem "Beauty" inspired a tune that she quickly recorded and shared with her church accompanist. Since then she has put another one of Lesher's poems to music and created a CD to go with the book.

"What a beautiful job she did," says Lesher.

West refers to these accomplishments, and the friendship that has grown between them as a "God job." Her awakening to the power of music through Lesher even inspired West to write a song to connect with a resident who has dementia and speaks about seeing his father.

"I think of Fran as my angel because she encouraged me to go to church, and I have grown so much through that," says West. "In growing closer to Fran, I have learned what she has overcome, and she's such an inspiration. With her physical challenges, she focuses on what she can do, and I think that draws very caring friends around her and is why she is still accomplishing amazing things like publishing her first book at age 93." 🌸

Editor's Note: Fran Lesher passed away since this article was written. May she rest in peace.

From the desk of...

G. Michael Leader, *President & CEO*



Country Meadows and Ecumenical Retirement Community are about to embark on a new method of supporting the health and wellness of our residents; assessing their health and planning how our team supports them in all facets of care.

The new program, called CareMerge, is computer software

that will bring together as many health records of each resident as possible. This consolidated secure record will permit our staff to see, in one place, residents' current medical diagnoses, prescription medications and treatments, preferences and any recent concerns such as a high blood pressure reading or loss of weight. In Personal Care we use this information to update residents' individual support and daily care plans.

Country Meadows care teams have always developed support plans, but it has largely been a manual process. Our goal is to increase efficiency, so our caregivers can spend less time on paperwork and more time with residents. One co-worker stated that the new software "will take us from the age of rotary dial phones to iPhones in one giant leap."

Our CareMerge team is nearing the end of weekly telephone conferences with the technology company's software developers. We expect to begin trials of the new program at one campus this month and roll it out to all campuses by early 2017. Our goal: put our organization on the cutting edge of care-planning technology.

If you would like to know more about CareMerge and how it will benefit residents, I encourage you to attend support planning conferences for yourself or your loved one. Our staff will be happy to explain how CareMerge contributes to better support for our residents. 🐾

Golden friends reunited



Anne Grasha (left) and Sophie Papandrea (right) dressed for Easter in 1955 and again in 2016 at Country Meadows of West Shore. The ladies were Harrisburg neighbors. Years later they discovered they are neighbors again at Country Meadows.

In 1954, Anne Grasha, then age 34, and her young family, moved to Harrisburg's Berry Hill Street where she quickly made friends with Sophie Papandrea, a young mom who lived right across the street. For years they shared a special friendship as neighbors, both of Croatian descent, who attended the same church and sent their children, who also were friends, to the same schools. Years later, both families moved to different neighborhoods. As the women got busy with their own lives and families, their paths didn't cross as often, but they remained in touch through their children.

It was their daughters who discovered that their mothers are neighbors again at Country Meadows in Mechanicsburg. When the long-time friends were reunited this year, at the age of 94, their friendship blossomed.

"They just hugged and kissed each other—it was very sweet and very touching. It just takes them right back. If you saw them together, you would think they are sisters," says Grasha's daughter, Dottie. "Though they live in different buildings, they try to see each other at least once a week and enjoy speaking Croatian with each other. They are thrilled if they run into each other at Bingo, too." 🐾



Connect with us online

Visit Country Meadows on Facebook for information, care tips, ideas and more at **[www.Facebook.com/CountryMeadowsSeniorCare](https://www.facebook.com/CountryMeadowsSeniorCare)**.

For information about a career with Country Meadows, visit **[www.Facebook.com/CountryMeadowsCareers](https://www.facebook.com/CountryMeadowsCareers)**.

We look forward to interacting with you online.

Inside:

- 🌀 Helping kids understand dementia
- 🌀 An author at 93
- 🌀 Protect yourself from scams

Study demonstrates *continued from page 3*

“When I stopped wearing the vest, I got so I couldn’t get out of a chair. Now that I’m wearing it again, that’s no problem. I have more stability, and I’m more confident wearing the vest,” he says.

To view a video from Country Meadows and Ecumenical Retirement Community about the BalanceWear vest and read significant study findings, visit CountryMeadows.com/vest-study-findings. 🌀



Are you a resident interested in learning more about the BalanceWear Vest and how it might help with your balance?

Information sessions are being held at every campus to demonstrate how this vest has helped improve mobility and provide peace of mind to others. If you missed your local session, stop in to your campus’ Genesis Rehab office to inquire.

Activity book *continued from page 9*

The “Grandma’s Cape” concept resonated with Hoffman who regards her grandparents as heroes and has memories of a family member who had dementia. Her illustration, with grandma perched on the back of the couch as her grandchild looks on with awe, was selected from the submissions for the book’s cover.

For Hoffman, the opportunity has given her confidence that she’s chosen the right career goal as a children’s book illustrator. In addition to the cover, her work also appears throughout the book and on activity pages. She is pleased that her school offers opportunities for real world experiences, and that this work is in her portfolio as she begins her job search.

“I’m really proud that I could be part of this project,” she says. “I just hope that it is helpful and useful to show people how to reconnect with and treat someone with dementia with love and not let him or her slip away.” 🌀