

Journeys

A Newsletter for Residents, Families and Friends.

2019 – Issue 1

Girl Scouts donate robotic pets

You could hear them as soon as they arrived in the parking lot.

As brownie-level Girl Scouts charged into the memory support building at Country Meadows of South Hills (Pittsburgh), the energy *continued on page 9*



Country Meadows resident Charlotte Fagan enjoys interacting with an animatronic cat donated by a local Girl Scout troop.

Memories of love stay strong, despite Alzheimer's

Memories Matter

Joyce Bedner looks forward to daily visits from her husband, Patrick. Despite living with Alzheimer's disease, she remembers her husband and her love for him. "We've been together for so long, and we always do things together," she says.

The Bedners were married nearly 54 years ago, and reside at Country Meadows of South Hills of Pittsburgh. Theirs is a beautiful love story that is standing the test of time, as well as their wedding vows. While the couple does not live in the same apartment on campus due to different individual care needs, they make a point to spend time together nearly every day, and are regularly seen on campus holding hands and enjoying an embrace.

"I remember when we got married the vows were, 'for better or worse until death do you part,' and I take that seriously," says Mr. Bedner. His wife echoes his sentiment and says, "You do."

Mr. Bedner moved into an apartment in the campus' Personal Care building just one week after his wife moved into the Connections Neighborhood for persons requiring memory support

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

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Journeys story ideas, suggestions
and general comments are
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Our Mission

to serve residents with meaning,
offer our co-workers purpose
and lead our company with
innovation.

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 in Harrisburg 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.



Cutting-edge program uses exercise to **treat** Parkinson's disease

A Country Meadows resident uses his cane much less these days, despite Parkinson's disease.

"I was surprised because he had no cane!" exclaims Vi Dao Schultz, fitness director at Country Meadows of Wyomissing. "He didn't need the cane because he walked independently, thanks to improvements from participating in Delay the Disease classes."

The nation's leading Parkinson's disease therapeutic fitness program, OhioHealth's Delay the Disease™ (DTD) is designed to optimize function and restore independence to individuals living with the illness. Research in the area of Parkinson's disease indicates that exercise is key to improve self-confidence and independence, decrease the risk of falls, minimize fatigue, reduce rigidity and improve mobility.

"Delay the Disease offers a very exciting opportunity for people who have difficulty with movement," says Kim Eichinger, executive director of dynamic living. "Anyone can benefit from the classes, and our fitness directors incorporate a lot of the concepts into residents' everyday exercise classes."

Country Meadows Retirement Communities licensed five of its campuses to offer this life-changing fitness, mobility and wellness program. Classes are free of charge, open to everyone and meet twice a week at Country Meadows campuses in Allentown, Wyomissing, Hershey, Mechanicsburg and Bridgeville, Pa.

Joann Curry is not a Country Meadows resident, but lives near the Hershey campus.

She was overjoyed to find the DTD program offered in her area.

"When you have Parkinson's disease, you have to stay physically active—you can't sit around and shrivel up," she says, adding, "I do notice a difference. My goal was for people to say, 'Oh my goodness, she has Parkinson's, really?'"

"It was a proud moment when someone actually said that to Joann because that was her goal," adds Shari Pichini, fitness director

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Fitness Director Shari Pichini, right, helps Joann Curry during a Delay the Disease exercise class at Country Meadows of Hershey.

services. While living in their own home, Mr. Bedner realized that he could no longer provide the care his wife needed. He had his own health issues and, after suffering bruises and injuries from falls, he knew it was time to seek help.

"We looked at a lot of places, but many [senior living] facilities don't have a memory care facility like we have here. Some were too small and we would be separated and unable to see each other," recalls Mr. Bedner. "We knew a few people who had relatives here [at Country Meadows], and they were high on the buildings and service. We heard a lot of good things, and it's turned out very well for both of us."

Despite living in separate buildings, the Bedners spend lots of time together. Mr. Bedner takes the campus shuttle to his wife's building nearly every day, and the couple has lunch together most days. They take turns dining in each other's buildings, and enjoy interacting with other residents. "I appreciate Country Meadows' flexibility, and they adjust transportation to accommodate me," he says. "I love my wife, and seeing her is the light of my life."



Mr. Bedner continues. "There's a story about a man who was rushing to get to another appointment. When asked where he was going, the man said that for five years his wife had Alzheimer's and hasn't known who he is. When further questioned why the man continues to visit his wife if she has no idea who he is, the man replies, 'Because I still know who she is.' That struck a chord with me," he says, choking back tears.

Connections Memory Support Program Manager, Maureen Sirianni, says, "In order to be successful in supporting our residents, we have to be flexible, we have to do creative things not only because it's the right thing to do, but because they need to still feel connected. They need to know they are still married, and they still need to be connected."

And this couple is connected. In addition to spending time together every day, Mr. Bedner calls his wife every night just before bed. "I call her to tell her I love her and will see her tomorrow," he says.

Living in separate accommodations guarantees that Mr. Bedner receives physical therapy in the building in which he resides and his wife receives the care and services she needs to maintain her memory and safety. "When I first came to [Country Meadows], I needed a lot of help, but now I'm much more independent," he says, adding, "My orthopedic doctors tell me that my therapy is the key and to keep doing it because it's working the muscles to build strength."

While he receives the services he needs, Country Meadows' co-workers help Mrs. Bedner by providing opportunities for her to participate in brain fitness activities as well as fun and intellectual stimulation to help her maintain the memories she has.

"We want to build on her strengths, interests and abilities and maintain that familiarity that she's become very comfortable with," says Sirianni. "Aging is a challenge, but marriage is a choice, and to choose to still be together is a journey that we want to be a part of."

While Mr. Bedner misses sharing a home with his wife, he has found camaraderie with other residents whose spouses also reside in different buildings. And he's thrilled that the couple's family members know they are receiving the care each of them needs. "Our children know that we are safe and sound, and that it's important to them. It's a very comfortable feeling," he says, adding, "And Joyce has settled in pretty good." She chimes in, taking his hand, "Oh yes, I love it here!"



Resident left Cuba a lifetime ago

Since a travel ban to Cuba was eased in 2016, many Americans have visited the once forbidden destination.

But for Country Meadows of Forks in Easton resident, Edmundo Cintra, who left Cuba shortly after the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, the communist nation holds mixed memories.

"I left because it was a dictatorship and I had no liberty to express my thoughts or opinions with what they were doing," he says. "You have to do as they tell you, and you have to agree to be a communist and that type of philosophy."

Born and raised in Cuba, Cintra graduated from Havana University engineering school and landed a job with Mobil Oil in Venezuela. He married a Venezuelan woman, and the couple had two daughters, returning to Cuba before the revolution. However, soon after their return, he and his family decided to leave the country.

"We could see the black clouds forming so we decided to raise the girls in the Venezuelan consulate," he recalls. "My wife left and took the girls. I waited eight months and asked permission to leave the country on vacation. I left and never went back."

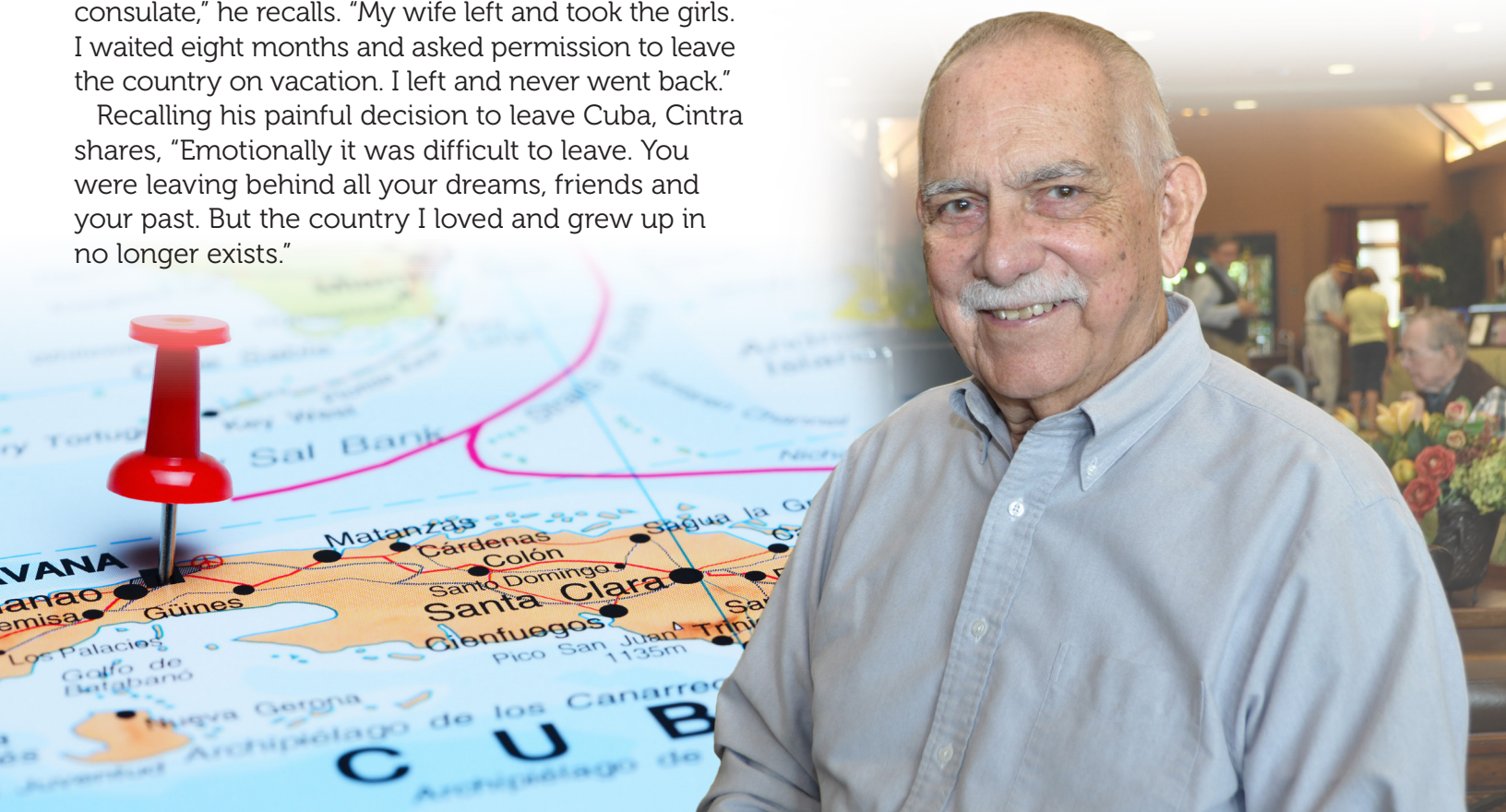
Recalling his painful decision to leave Cuba, Cintra shares, "Emotionally it was difficult to leave. You were leaving behind all your dreams, friends and your past. But the country I loved and grew up in no longer exists."

During his career with Mobil, Cintra worked in exploration and producing—looking for oil, putting it to work and into production. His career took he and his family to Bolivia, Nigeria, Indonesia, Holland and eventually Dallas, Texas, where they stayed, adding a son to their family.

After losing his wife, Cintra's daughters, both of whom reside in New Jersey, asked him to move to the northeast so they could live near each other. He enjoys living in Pennsylvania except for one thing. "I don't like winter. It's nice to look outside, but I don't go outside—it's gray, cold and miserable!"

As for moving to Country Meadows, he says, "I like it here! I don't have to worry about cooking anything or cleaning. If I do need help, it is here."

Recently he saw photos from a friend who visited Cuba. He says, "Cuba has nothing to show from the revolution on. Everything is in ruins, all the cars are old. It is hard to see Cuba like that, but this is the life I know and love."



Forks in Easton resident, Edmundo Cintra, grew up in Cuba but left at the young age of 25. He says that he loved the Cuba he knew as a child, but left when the country became a dictatorship.

Share your talents

Show off your gifts!

Do you love to paint, draw or take photos? If so, please consider sharing your artistic talents by entering the Country Meadows/Ecumenical Retirement Community Holiday Card Art Contest.

Entries are due by Sept. 16th and should be based on the winter holidays, beauty of winter and/or love and friendship

The winning artist will have his/her artwork used in the design for the organizations' annual holiday greeting card and receive a prize package which includes a financial gift to the winner's charity of choice, premium dinner party for 12 in the private dining room and professional framing of the winning piece of art. In addition to one overall winner, each campus will have a local winner whose work will be featured in a packet of holiday cards shared with our residents.

All entries must be received by Sept. 16, 2019.

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 emailed to KKuntz@CountryMeadows.com. This contest is open ONLY to current residents of Country Meadows Retirement Communities and Ecumenical Retirement Community.

See your Community Life Director for an entry form and complete contest rules.

Good luck!



A York campus resident works on her holiday card contest entry at a campus Christmas in July event.

**New
this year!**

Art must have
been created
within the last
five years.



Life gets better.® at Country Meadows and

Residents and co-workers pay it forward with kindness

If you can only be one thing, be kind.

Every April, Country Meadows and Ecumenical Retirement Community honor co-founder, Mary Jane Leader, by making extra efforts to practice random acts of kindness. Mrs. Leader and her husband, the late Gov. George M. Leader, founded Country Meadows and Ecumenical upon treating people with kindness. Below are just a few of the kind gestures our residents and co-workers shared with community members.

Hershey campus residents teamed up with Market Square Friends Ministry to collect hygiene items and gently used purses. Residents filled the purses with the donated items which the Ministry gives to individuals who are homeless and living under the bridges of Harrisburg.



Forks in Easton residents and co-workers built a produce stand for Project Food Pantry which serves homeless individuals in the Easton area. They cleaned, built and stocked the food pantry like new, which will help the organization with its mission to feed 400 needy people every week.

Country Meadows of York-South (Leader Heights) residents and co-workers handed out flowers and inspirational cards to random shoppers at a local mall. This kind act brightened many days!

Country Meadows residents in the South Hills of Pittsburgh used their exceptional baking talents to show kindness. They baked cakes which were donated to a local church's fish fry fundraising event.



and Ecumenical Retirement Community



Wyomissing residents packed "Grandma's Goodie" bags for Penn State Berks students who regularly hold events at Country Meadows. The bags, which went like hotcakes, were filled with granola bars, pens, pencils, candy, lip balm, tissues and other items to help students get through finals.

Residents at Country Meadows of Frederick handed out kindness to random passersby. "We literally were handing them to people in cars we pulled beside (safely), people walking their dogs, joggers, etc. So many smiles we helped create with just the joy of giving," says Community Life Director, Melanie Long.



Country Meadows of York extended help, kindness and companionship to the clients at Mr. Sandy's Homeless Veteran's Shelter in York City. Through the month, co-workers collected toiletries and nonperishables while residents packaged them into individual care kits. But rather than drop off the kits and call it a day, our Country Meadows co-workers delivered the kits with a bus load of veterans from the campus. The dining team made a delicious meal, and all the veterans sat together, enjoyed the meal and swapped stories.



To watch a video from the day, visit CountryMeadows.com/HomelessVets.



To see more photos of kind acts, visit CountryMeadows.com/kindness2019.

Photo Album



Residents and co-workers at our Allentown location celebrated winter with a "Snow Ball" formal dance. Everyone had a great time!



Bethlehem residents celebrated May as world travel month. To explore Japan, residents went to lunch at local restaurant Kome.



Members of the Meadowlarks choir comprised of residents from Country Meadows of Frederick, performed the national anthem before a Frederick Keys minor league baseball game.

Check out a video of their performance at CountryMeadows.com/choir.

Play ball!



Lancaster campus residents enjoyed a nature walk at the Garden of Five Senses in a local park. As its name implies, the Garden stimulates all five senses as visitors enjoy bright colors, floral scents and the sounds of singing birds and water fountains while reading signs explaining how humans and animals use senses to survive.



More than 30 years ago, York campus resident Rodney G., sold his 1957 Chevrolet to friends. They restored the classic car and recently brought it to our campus to show Rodney and give him a ride. Check out his smile!



level rose substantially as giggles and enthusiasm echoed inside the lobby.

The girls, ages eight and nine, were excited because they were bringing two very special gifts for Country Meadows residents living with dementia—robotic pets.

Members of Troop 36713 Bethel Park used proceeds from their annual cookie sale to purchase two animatronic pets which appear very realistic and respond to voice and touch.

"We decided we wanted to give something back to the community," says troop leader, Brooke Studeny.

Residents took to the pets quickly, taking turns holding, petting and cooing to a cat and a dog. Resident Charlotte Fagan stroked the cat, saying over and over, "You're a pretty kitty, yes you are."

Robotic pets are shown to soothe the anxiety and loneliness experienced by individuals with dementia and provide opportunities for the person to become a nurturer. While residents enjoy visits from live therapy animals, the robotic pets replicate the pet experience for people who are unable to care for a real pet 24/7.

Reenie O'Donnell, resident, reads to the scouts from Country Meadows' children's story and activity book about dementia titled "The Unforgettable Adventures of Grandma's Cape."



In addition to the pet donation, residents and their young visitors enjoyed spending time together and read from Country Meadows' story and activity book for children titled "The Unforgettable Adventures of Grandma's Cape." They also played with the resident bunny, Hank, and sang songs of friendship.

Connections Memory Support Program Manager, Maureen Sirianni, says, "It's nice to be able to recognize there are challenges and yet still find a way to, at the end of the day, have love."



Video of story available online at CountryMeadows.com/Scouts



Residents and brownie-level Girl Scouts sing and dance a friendship circle.



From the desk of...

G. Michael Leader, President & CEO

Proud to launch hospice services



The Leader family has been offering services to seniors for more than 50 years, and I am honored to be part of this tradition.

We continually reflect on the services we offer to identify ways we can add even more value and improve life experience.

Last year we identified a new way we could add value for our residents, as my father liked to say, "piled up and overflowing," to our residents. With that in mind, we decided to extend our continuum of care by adding a hospice program called Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care. Our hope is that Lifesong will meet the needs of our residents and families who are coping with end-of-life challenges.

We have our hospice staff in place and are completing the steps necessary to earn our license, which we expect later this year. Lifesong will ONLY be available to residents living at Leader family-owned companies including Country Meadows Retirement Communities, Providence Place Senior Living and Ecumenical Retirement

Community. Initially, services will be available at just a few locations with the plan to eventually offer hospice services at every campus.

Our decision was made out of a desire to offer something special to our residents by providing continuation in the philosophy and culture they have come to know, appreciate and rely upon through this final stage in their life. We respect that families appreciate having options. Therefore we will never pressure residents to only consider Lifesong services. If we are consulted, we will discuss all aspects related to hospice providers with families, including experience and quality scores, so they can make an educated decision that's right for their needs.

We all know the landscape of healthcare is ever-changing and evolving rapidly. We are doing our best to meet the needs and wishes of our residents and their families with high quality services delivered in the comfort and familiarity of their own home, whenever possible.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me directly at our Home Office.

Visit us online!

Do you like reading stories about our residents, like the ones in this newsletter? Are you or is someone you know looking for tips and information about senior care concerns?

Check out the Country Meadows and Ecumenical Retirement Community websites to visit our advice libraries, read helpful articles on our blogs and learn more about our amazing residents in our story bank.

CountryMeadows.com and **EcumenicalRetirement.org**

Also visit us on Social media at:



Facebook.com

CountryMeadowsSeniorCare



Twitter

@CountryMeadows



Youtube

@CountryMeadowsCares

Are you or someone you know interested in working for Country Meadows or Ecumenical Retirement Community.

If so, please visit our social media platforms especially for job seekers.

Facebook: Facebook.com/CountryMeadowsCareers

Twitter: @CM_Careers



LinkedIn: Country Meadows Retirement Communities

Instagram: @countrymeadowscareers

at Country Meadows of Hershey, who leads the campus DTD classes.

In many areas, Country Meadows is the only location offering DTD classes. Participants have experienced improved mobility, posture, balance, handwriting, speech volume and a reduction in daily functional challenges. The classes are all about fun and joy!

"This is a very inclusive program which offers exercises for focal development, gait and strength building as well as brain work exercises to improve fine motor skills, flexibility, voice volume and strength training," says Pichini, adding that participants share their goals which are incorporated into the class.

While DTD is designed for persons with Parkinson's, the program offers benefits for everyone, and modifications are made for all ability levels. "One of the exciting things we've found is that the exercises are something our care team can use for other residents, too, to aid with their mobility," says Eichinger.

At the end of each class, time is provided for participants to interact with each other to ask questions, compare symptoms and glean advice. Curry appreciates interacting with others who understand the challenges of Parkinson's disease first-hand. "It's nice because you can ask, 'Do you ever feel this way?' I learned that everyone has different symptoms, nobody is the same."

Country Meadows and Ecumenical Retirement Community are looking into plans to license additional campuses to offer DTD classes

For information about classes near you or to express your interest in having DTD classes available on your nearest campus, please see your location's fitness director.



OHIOHEALTH

DELAY THE DISEASE™

THE #1 PARKINSON'S EXERCISE PROGRAM

Have you noticed this updated photo of the Leader-Janeczek family adorning the walls of our campuses? We are proud the legacy of our founders, the late George M. and Mary Jane Leader, continues with family members of the third generation joining the family-owned and involved business of Country Meadows Retirement Communities, Ecumenical Retirement Community and sister company, Providence Place Senior Living.

Please feel free to say "hello" the next time you meet one of the Leader-Janeczek family members on campus!



Members of the Leader family involved in running organizations under the George M. Leader Family Corporation umbrella gather for a photograph: Seated, left to right: Jane Leader-Janeczek, Special Projects Coordinator; Kristen Leader-Ramirez, Director of Residential Services-Country Meadows of Hershey; Josean (JR) Ramirez, Talent Development Coordinator-Ecumenical Retirement Community; Meredith (Janeczek) Mills, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer-Country Meadows and Ecumenical; David Leader, CEO-Providence Place Senior Living. Standing, left to right: Ted Janeczek, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer-Country Meadows and Ecumenical; G. Michael Leader, President and CEO-Country Meadows and Ecumenical; Alex Janeczek-Senior Project Coordinator, Country Meadows and Ecumenical; Dan Mills, Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer-Country Meadows and Ecumenical.



Inside this issue:

- 🕒 Resident veterans break bread with homeless vets
- 🕒 Resident recalls life in Cuba
- 🕒 Scouts deliver pets & companionship

Country Meadows **Certified** as a Great Place to Work®

Country Meadows Retirement Communities and its non-profit sister, Ecumenical Retirement Community, have been certified as Great Places to Work by the national Great Place to Work Institute.

"This honor is very special to us because it was awarded based on how our team feels about working at our organization," says President and CEO Michael Leader. "We recognize that it's the efforts of every one of our co-workers that make all the difference in serving our residents with meaning. We've done a lot of work to offer co-workers purpose and lead our company with innovation."

The Great Place to Work certification process considered surveys completed by all co-workers at Country Meadows' 11 campuses and Ecumenical Retirement Community and evaluated more than 60 elements of co-workers' experiences on the job. These included employee pride in the

organizations' community impact, belief that their work makes a difference and feeling their work has special meaning. Rankings are based on co-workers' experiences, no matter who they are or what they do. Using this feedback, the Great Place to Work Trust Index Survey® assesses organizations on five principles—credibility, fairness, respect, camaraderie and pride—that define the overall concept of what an employee views as a great workplace.

"We have a rich culture all our own, and we're proud to be designated a Great Place to Work," says Leader. "Our founders' vision, our co-workers' hard work and commitment to quality care, and our family atmosphere, help make us who we are."

