A Personal Connection Spurs a Project to Support the Troops

Guests and Associates recently gathered at The Laurels of Forest Glenn to put together boxes to send to troops in Afghanistan. These pictures show (at left) a photograph of the grateful troops who received the boxes in Afghanistan, and (below) Guests and Associates joyfully assembling the boxes.

This activity had a little more backstory than most activities, however. The group set to receive the boxes includes a member close to Forest Glenn’s heart. Recently, a young man, Jake, applied and was accepted to do an AIT (Administrator in Training) program with Forest Glenn’s Administrator. A few weeks before beginning the program, however, Jake was deployed.

The Laurels of Forest Glenn is home to many veterans, and they, in particular, knew how it felt when you’re overseas and far away from friends and family. It was decided to put together fifty boxes to send to Jake’s unit in Afghanistan. The boxes included items such as word puzzle books, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shaving cream, razors, packs of gum, snack bars, and many other things they thought the soldiers might need or enjoy. Lists like this are available from the USO and other organizations that make life easier for soldiers and their families.
Often, Laurel Health Care Associates go above and beyond the call of duty, reaching out in the communities they serve and demonstrating The Laurel Way of Caring. Here are a few of the letters of appreciation we have received.

**The Laurels of New London**

Words cannot adequately express our deep appreciation for all you do for us. The compassionate care and understanding you gave to our father for the last month of his life here on Earth are priceless to us. The support and genuine concern you have shown and continue to show us are so amazing. As you continue to offer your loving care to our mom, Sandy, we look at each of you as part of our extended family—and family is important to us! For all you have done and for all that you continue to do, we are greatly thankful! May God bless each one of you!

*Jodi Wilhelm, for the Family of Doug Knudsen*

**The Laurels of Fulton**

Good Bye, Good Bye, It Brings a Tear to My Eye! To all the RNs and LPNs and aides and kitchen staff and housekeeping and administration and especially the O.T. and P.T. who helped me regain my health. Most memorable: Sarah Matzen, O.T. for my waist and shoulder, which she so diligently worked on.

*Jackie Devine*

**The Laurels of University Park**

This [graduation ceremony] was a lovely cap to my time at The Laurels. I was only there five days but had such a positive experience. I was very impressed with the therapy and nursing staff and loved the private room.

I have already told my Human Resources Office at work if anyone is facing rehab and needs a recommendation, send them to me and I'll tell them all about The Laurels.

*Elaine Lidholm*

**The Laurels of DeKalb**

My father moved into The Laurels several months ago after having lived in two other nursing homes. The care he received here was by far the best and tailored to his individual needs. The staff was always in a positive mood and showed great patience with all residents. I would highly recommend The Laurels to anybody needing memory care.

*Mike Bowman*
The Laurels of University Park Draws on Guest’s History to Hold a Mardi Gras Blowout

Fat Tuesday was a little bit fatter this year! Lifelong New Orleans residents Joe and Betty Kulivan worked with the Associates of The Laurels of University Park to create a Mardi Gras party that will not soon be forgotten.

Joe and Betty brought a lot of partying—er, “cultural”—expertise to this event. Joe was in the biggest krewe in New Orleans. Krewes are the groups that organize parades or balls for Mardi Gras. Many krewes in New Orleans are over one hundred years old. Joe’s float, back in the day, was three stories high, and he was in fifteen parades a year. He often rode in his own dune buggy. Joe and Betty were regular fixtures at the famous Carnation Ball every year.

This depth of knowledge and passion, along with Betty’s many hands-on contributions and a fired up Activity staff, resulted in a great party. Betty brought king cakes for all of the guests, and everyone enjoyed listening to Mardi Gras music and sharing stories. Betty also brought Joe a favorite Mardi Gras children’s book to read and a photo of Joe with his granddaughter, Sarah, at three years old.

This event had something for everyone. Drawing on a Guest’s history gave the party greater meaning and let everyone learn a little something with their cake. The passion that came from personal experience was clear and made the entire soirée more special.

A Blast from the Past at The Laurels of Toledo

Dorothy Spiess and her sister Pearl frequented the local American Legion for many years. One of their favorite performers was Bob Wurst—pictured in the photo between the sisters—who would play modern and classic country, oldies, and rock n’ roll songs with his band.

Recently, Bob visited The Laurels of Toledo for a special performance for Dorothy, who is now 92. Dorothy greatly enjoyed the performance, and it brought her back to those early days when she used to dance the night away at the American Legion.

All Shook Up at The Laurels of Forest Glenn

Elvis was in the building at The Laurels of Forest Glenn and had everyone bright-eyed and energized! Guests and Associates watched and listened to the Elvis impersonator, and he even shared some Elvis trivia. The favorite songs were “Hound Dog” and “All Shook Up.” To think that so many people thought they missed their last chance to see Elvis perform!
And Many Happy Returns!

A Landmark Birthday at The Laurels of Steubenville

It’s not every day you turn 108 years old, but Elizabeth Lucas handled it with poise. There were a few tears involved, but those were borne of joy and gratitude. Flowers and a beautiful cake set the scene, and Mrs. Lucas had her hair done and corsage pinned. Her son Rob, who lives nearby and visits every day, was at her side.

Mrs. Lucas came to The Laurels of Steubenville about a month before her birthday when she needed a higher level of skilled care. Since joining The Laurels, she has clearly made fast friends with Guests and Associates alike. She was astonished and deeply touched at the outpouring at the party. The local newspaper and television station came out to cover the party and to celebrate Mrs. Lucas.

The Laurels of Mt. Pleasant

Guests and Associates gathered beneath 100 balloons to celebrate the 100th birthday of Mary Martin at The Laurels of Mt. Pleasant. Mrs. Martin was born on March 3, 1917, to Lillian and Frank Kaminski. She was raised in Hazel Park, Michigan, and had five brothers and a sister. Her favorite activities in years’ past include: playing pinochle, bingo, fishing, baking cookies, casino slot machines, gardening, visiting friends at the Mt. Pleasant Kroger over coffee and donuts, listening to music, listening to the Detroit Tigers on her transistor radio, and vacations by car to the northern lower Michigan peninsula with her beloved husband, Ray F. She was also active in her church, attending St. Joseph Church in Beal City.

The Laurels of Willow Creek

Ms. Virginia Smith Swann celebrated her 100th birthday with friends and family on March 18. Fellow Guests and Associates at The Laurels of Willow Creek congratulated her on 100 years of faith and resilience, and for the important lessons she has passed on to younger generations. As an only child, she loved her parents, recalling their hard work, especially her mom’s cooking: “Chicken, sweet potatoes, green beans, fatback...Everything came from the farm.” Admired by those around her, Virginia maintains friendships with Guests like her roommate, Mary Brown, by sharing stories and telling jokes. Her daughter-in-law, Eveline, also visits regularly. When told by a volunteer, “I hope I make it to 100,” Ms. Swann replied, “Just take care of yourself. You will!”

The Laurels of University Park

Mildred Collins looked regal as she donned her tiara and “Birthday Princess” sash to celebrate her 100th birthday. The Activity Department threw the special fête on March 8, 2017. Posing here with the Birthday Princess are Staffing Coordinator Tiffany Edmonds, Medical Supplies Associate Freda Stewart, and Regency Unit Ward Clerk Jennifer Parker.
Celebrating a Special Day at The Laurels of Summit Ridge

It’s not always easy when you’re a Guest in one of our facilities and your girlfriend is having a birthday. That’s the position that Mr. Gerald Silver, a recent Guest at The Laurels of Summit Ridge, found himself in. But in stepped the amazing Director of Marketing Sherrye Perry, who took it upon herself to provide a birthday celebration that was just perfect for Mr. Silver to give to his girlfriend. Prior to the birthday girl’s arrival around 6 pm on April 11, Sherrye went out and picked up a gift, a card, a beautiful cake all covered in roses, a bouquet of red roses and white lilies, and a special fish dinner from the couple’s favorite fish restaurant in nearby Black Mountain. Imagine the birthday girl’s surprise when she walked in, expecting just an evening visit with her boyfriend, only to have a celebration prepared for her! Sherrye exceeded expectations not only for our Guest, but also for his girlfriend. Sherrye even led the singing of “Happy Birthday”! Mr. Silver was completely blown away by the generosity and caring demonstrated by one of Summit Ridge’s finest. Thank you, Sherrye, for all that you did to live The Laurel Way.

A World Class Performance at The Laurels of Willow Creek!

Kearston, age 12, and Kendall, age 10, are the great-granddaughters of Ms. Queen E. Archer (in blue top), a Guest at The Laurels of Willow Creek. Popularly called “Time for 2,” the sisters have been featured artists for public, private, philanthropic, academic, and political events in South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, Texas, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Michigan, California, Hawaii, and Lyon, France. They are currently preparing to travel to Byron Bay, Australia, to perform. On Easter, they brought their talents to The Laurels.

Violinist Kearston Gonzales began her musical education at the age of three. She made her orchestral debut at the age of nine with the Georgia Philharmonic in Atlanta, Georgia, performing Vivaldi's Concerto in G Minor, first movement. Kearston performed in March 2017 with the York River Symphony Orchestra in Hampton, Virginia, after winning their 2016 concerto competition. In 2011, a YouTube video of Kearston inspired children's author Angela Winegar to write a bedtime story featuring Kearston as the main character. My Magic Violin and Me has since been published and is now available for all children to enjoy, inspiring them to find their own instruments, practice, and learn valuable life lessons along the way.

Cellist Kendall Gonzales is the first-place winner (Primary Division) of the 2013 and 2015 MANC Strings Competition and the second runner-up and youngest competitor in the 2013 AAYO Jr. Division Concerto Competition. Kendall recently made her orchestral debut performing Haydn's Cello Concerto in C Major, first movement, with the Winston-Salem Symphony Orchestra. Like her sister, Kendall is the inspiration for a book entitled The Music Man's Little Cellist.
A CLOSE-UP LOOK AT ACTIVITIES

Reflections

The Laurels of Hillsboro
Love was in the air on Valentine’s Day this year. STNA Shelby Monroe’s beau got down on one knee in the lobby and proposed. The proposal was accepted! So romantic!

The Laurels of University Park
A double graduation was celebrated at The Laurels of University Park, and, to make the event even more special, the graduates were sisters! The sisters lived next door to each other during their stay. During their ceremony, they wore graduation caps and broad smiles. Way to go, sisters!

The Laurels of Forest Glenn
Guests at The Laurels of Forest Glenn had a wonderful time at the Valentine’s Day Social. Associates made sure that everyone felt the love on this starry-eyed holiday. They listened to old love songs, shared sweet treats, and played games while mingling.

Maplewood of Marshall
Two or three times per year, Guests at Arbor North, a semi-assisted living facility in Jackson, come to Maplewood of Marshall for a vocal performance that is enjoyed by all. Recently, Maplewood Guest Dereatha (far left) decided to join in! She sang with Arbor North for the full hour. Her son and daughter-in-law were visiting and got to see the whole show!

The Laurels of Hillsboro
Everyone had the “luck o’ the Irish” at The Laurels of Hillsboro this year! Their Shamrock Social celebrated St. Patrick’s Day with food, fun, and quite a few stories.
The Laurels of Willow Creek
The Heartland Hospice and the Goddard School (Robious) joined forces to make the Easter Egg Hunt at The Laurels of Willow Creek a success. Everyone participated in egg hunting, coloring Easter eggs, the jellybean guessing game, and finding the “Golden Eggs.”

The Laurels of DeKalb
The Laurels of DeKalb, with cooperation from the city of Butler, hosted a community-wide Easter Egg Hunt complete with a helicopter egg drop! The morning started with a free pancake and sausage breakfast and then an egg hunt with 10,000 eggs. More than 450 children participated along with their families.

The Laurels of Hillsboro
Guests at The Laurels of Hillsboro loved their photo shoot with the Easter Bunny!

The Laurels of Sandy Creek
Guests at The Laurels of Sandy Creek tried a new recipe for dying eggs on Easter weekend. These beautiful eggs were dyed with cool whip, food coloring, and vinegar! Many reminisced over the countless times they had done this tradition with their children and families. How gorgeous!

The Laurels of Worthington
Guests at The Laurels of Worthington enjoyed a fun afternoon dying eggs on Good Friday. They colored more than 50 eggs! Not only did they dye the eggs many different colors, but they also painted them and put Easter stickers on them. The eggs were passed out to all of the Guests at the facility.
The Laurel Way

We are a team of professionals dedicated to promoting the highest level of independence and quality of life for our Guests by creating comfortable living environment and providing comprehensive health care services.

To accomplish this, we have a responsibility to:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Conduct ourselves with the highest level of integrity and ethical behavior
- Be uncompromising in our standards of quality of care and service
- Attract, train and retain knowledgeable, caring and compassionate individuals
- Challenge ourselves to grow as people, as professionals and as a company
- Earn a fair and reasonable profit for our stakeholders

We embrace these responsibilities, with commitment and enthusiasm, in our pursuit of The Laurel Way.

The Laurels Mission Statement

Creating a legacy by exceeding the needs and expectations of those we serve, while embracing The Laurel Way.

If you have ideas for stories, features or photos for an issue of The Laurel Spirit, let us hear from you! Please submit your ideas to your Administrator who will pass them on to the editor. Thank you!