

# Community *Matters*



**Community Matters**

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LifeSpire of Virginia operates four continuing care retirement communities throughout Virginia: The Culpeper in Culpeper; The Glebe in Daleville; The Chesapeake in Newport News and Lakewood in Richmond.

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“Community” has become a trendy word these days. As our reliance on digital media grows, social scientists, pastors, and psychologists are stressing the need for authentic community – the kind that involves face-to-face conversations with real, live people. At LifeSpire of Virginia, we have been building authentic community for nearly 70 years. The black-and-white photos that adorn the walls of our home office in Richmond tell a story of men and women who joined a LifeSpire community and discovered a sense of belonging that brought fresh purpose and meaning to their lives. In this issue, you’ll read the stories of twenty-first century seniors who have also discovered community within our campuses: Clara Jensen, Bill Blanks, and Edith Aylor Thomas to name a few. Grab a coffee and take in their stories. We think you’ll enjoy them.

— Ann Lovell, Editor-in-Chief

## LEAVE THEM SMILING!

**S**ally San Soucie has a big job. As LifeSpire’s director of culture enrichment, San Soucie is responsible for instilling a culture of hospitality unprecedented in today’s continuing care retirement communities. This is no easy task given that LifeSpire communities have always been at the forefront of providing quality care in a faith- and family-based environment. San Soucie’s job is to bring energy, focus, and coordination to the hospitality provided across LifeSpire communities.

The most recent result of San Soucie’s work is “Leave Them Smiling!” The hospitality initiative rolled out Jan. 12 at Lakewood with a presentation from the Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center. One hundred team members from all four communities attended the event.

“Leave Them Smiling!” training also began in late January and should be completed for all 1,100 of LifeSpire’s team members by mid-March. After the training is completed, the communities will hold regular “Leave Them Smiling!” training sessions for new team members within 30 days of their hire dates.

San Soucie also plans to share inspirational stories and hospitality “wins” on an on-going basis, and she encourages you to share your story! If a LifeSpire team member made you smile through an outstanding example of hospitality-in-action, please contact San Soucie at [ssansoucie@lifespireliving.org](mailto:ssansoucie@lifespireliving.org) or by phone at 804-420-1940.

She wants to hear from you!

**LEAVE THEM Smiling!**

**Standards of Excellence Pledge**

- **I will** warmly smile and make eye contact with every person within 10 feet, including those seated, and I will verbally greet those within 5 feet, using the person’s name if I know it.
- **I will** bid a fond farewell to anyone leaving the building, including residents, guests, vendors, and team members.
- If I become aware of a service concern, **I will** “own it.” I will use the H.E.A.R. method to reach resolution.
- Whenever possible, **I will** find a way to say “yes.”
- If asked for directions, **I will** escort the person or find someone else who can do so.
- When approached by a resident or guest, **I will** discontinue any non-urgent task or conversation with other team members and focus on the customer in front of me.
- **I will** pick up any trash I see in the building or on the grounds.
- **I will** exhibit gracious, professional behavior and appearance at all times.
- **I will** be enthusiastically engaged and will try to make each encounter special and memorable for others.
- **I will** immediately respond to any call light or call bell I see or hear.
- At the end of conversations, **I will** warmly ask, “Is there anything else I can do for you?”

# The Role Relationships Play in Staying Happy as We Age

By Jerry Nelson

Senior citizens are enjoying a higher level of happiness than their counterparts from a half-decade ago. What is science finding out about relationships and cheerier elderly? Is there something retirement communities can do to facilitate happiness among their residents?

## The Role Relationships Play in Staying Happy as We Age

Getting older is a time to reflect on the type of relationships we want in our lives to support and stimulate us. How do we balance the need for independence with the need for company and companionship?

Progressive thinking organizations are successfully addressing this,

and the results are nothing less than amazing.

### It Begins With the Staff – But The Residents Help

The Glebe is a retirement community near Roanoke, Virginia. Staff and residents share a special connection, which makes it like a family. It's a community where everyone knows everybody, and healthy relationships, independence, and support thrive at its core.

A recent survey on healthy aging revealed that "social engagement" is an integral part of successful aging. That isn't news to the staff at The Glebe. One of the most heartbreaking things the staff experiences is when a resident waits until it's too late to enjoy the amenities and community. Often overheard is the lament, "I wish I had made this move years ago."

Residents help shape The Glebe through input and by participating in community decisions.

"The residents run a lot of activities themselves," said one staff member. "Whatever is an interest is developed, and they take off with it."

The residential community is particularly attentive to residents in need of a little help. One resident, we'll call her Florence, has a significant vision impairment.

"For each meal when she comes, someone is near the elevator to guide her to the dining room," a resident says. "If a person requires help with their wheelchair, we assure someone is there to help."

The residents are often looking out for each other and let staff know if something is wrong. "If someone is missing from a meal, we check to see if they are alright," said another resident.

The Glebe family includes animals as well. Residents who desire to bring their pets with them are encouraged and aren't limited to specific floors. "Everyone here loves animals," said one visitor. "There are lots of walking paths, and I haven't found anything else like it in the region."

The feature separating The Glebe the most is the staff. While the staff comes from diverse backgrounds, they share a passion for senior care. "This isn't a job,"

*Continued next page*

## LET'S CONNECT!



@lifespireliving



LifeSpire of Virginia

The Culpeper

Lakewood Retirement Community

The Glebe Retirement Community

The Chesapeake Retirement Community

## STAYING HAPPY

said one staff member. “This is something I’m passionate about.”

### Seniors Stay Healthy Through Social Connections

As people age, they tend to shed family and friends. The resulting loneliness and isolation can harm both mental and physical health. Communities like The Glebe help seniors form a new community for those whose children have moved from home and whose peers have died off.

“The most important thing in a community like (this one) is having people to support and engage,” said one resident. “I’ve found that taking care of each other keeps us alive and healthy.”

Researchers have known of “social capital” and related health benefits. Ties which build trust, connection, and participation are especially significant for seniors as both health and social capital decline as people age. When persons retire from jobs or lose friends and spouses to death or illness, the losses have an impact on physical and mental health.

### Social Capital For Seniors

Yvonne Michael with the Drexel University School of Public Health studies social capital and its effects on seniors. To gauge community

social capital, hundreds of persons living in different neighborhoods are given survey prompts such as, “Are your next-door-neighbors prepared to help each other?” or,



ABOVE: Jackie Werb, a resident at The Glebe, poses with her dogs. Research shows people who own pets are happier and healthier.

“Can you trust your neighbors?” With the answers, Michael measures the links between health, behavior, and social capital.

In one survey Michael reviewed data from a study of more than 14,000 adults in Pennsylvania. After analyzing the levels of mobility, Michael found those living in neighborhoods with higher social capital had higher physical mobility scores.

“These results are not surprising,” says Michael. “Living where there is greater social capital – more trust and more helpful neighbors – a person feels more comfortable moving around and staying mobile.”

In another study, led by Bryan James with Rush Alzheimer’s Disease Center in Chicago, researchers looked at how social

connections affected cognitive decline. More than 1,000 seniors, without dementia, were measured for social activity levels and tested at regular points on cognitive functioning over the next decade. The rate of cognitive decline was 75 percent less in persons with frequent social contact than persons with low social activity.

“When you use your brain the way it was meant – as it evolved – you age better,” says James. “We weren’t intended to be disengaged from each other.”

### Ways Seniors Find Happiness

A holistic approach to health is more than striving for symptom-free living. Being healthy is about living a well-rounded life. Studies repeatedly show seniors who enjoy life are also fitter and better. Unhappy persons are up to twice as apt to suffer heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes. To age well and stay healthy, seniors are pursuing lifestyle choices leading to happiness.

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**GO GREEN**

To receive Community Matters electronically instead of in print, email Ann Lovell, [alovell@lifespireliving.org](mailto:alovell@lifespireliving.org)

# Culpeper centenarian: 'I feel fine'

By Allison Brophy Champion

**A**t 100-years-old, Edith Aylor Thomas declared she has no aches or pains.

"I feel fine," the Culpeper resident said Feb. 21 at the first of several birthday parties being held in her honor.

Asked the secret of her long life, she had no idea.

"I guess God did it," Thomas said.

Thomas' daughter, local Realtor Janet Holden, was quick to answer. "She ate healthy and she lived healthy," she said.

In recent years, Thomas has developed a hankering for BBQ ribs, on the menu at the Feb. 21 party in Holden's Main Street office. The centenarian also consumes vitamins every day and a dose of cod liver oil.

She's known for life-long fashion sense. "I'd like to have some new clothes," Thomas said, recalling downtown dress shops of yore. "I like to shop anywhere," and she prefers Prada shoes.

A native of the area, Thomas has lived in Culpeper, Brandy Station, Bealeton and Madison and currently resides at The Culpeper with her husband, who

she married five years ago. Before that, she was a wife and homemaker, raising two children, including a son, Buddy.

"Her house was always perfectly clean," said Holden. "She cooked fabulous meals, always fresh vegetables, and she just made us know we could do anything we wanted."

A second big party was held Feb. 24 to mark the momentous occasion of "nana's" 100th birthday, and for it her family compiled "Words of Wisdom" — 25 truths that Thomas has lived by for the past century. The words are enlightened, humorous and good-natured, like the woman herself.

Among nana's wisest words: "Live each day fully; don't wait for a special day or guests to pull out the good china. Every day is a special day." And this: "Eat real food; the kind you get from a granddaddy's garden."

Also, "Laugh from the belly. Laugh often. In fact, laugh so hard you cry." Another one: "Always cook more food than you think you will need. And, always add more butter than you need. Fill everyone's plates until they roll away from the table. No need to ask if they want



**ABOVE:** Edith Aylor Thomas turned 100-years-old Feb. 21. She has many words of wisdom. (Photo by Allison Brophy Champion, *The Culpeper Star-Exponent*. Used with permission.)

more; just fill their plates. They are hungry; they may not know this — but they are."

Finally: "At all times, your clothes must be pristine. But especially important: wear clean underwear, you never know when you might get in a car wreck."

The 2010 U.S. Census counted 53,364 centenarians, compared to 32,194 in 1980. In Virginia, there were 1,190 people aged 100 or older in 2010, according to the U.S. Census. Today, 22 people aged 100 or older live in LifeSpire communities.

As for Nana Thomas, "She is an amazing woman," Holden said.

*Allison Brophy Champion is a reporter and writer with The Culpeper Star-Exponent. This article first appeared in The Culpeper Star-Exponent in February 2018. Used with permission.*

# Creative contributions from The Glebe's residents support VBH Foundation's mission

**G**lebe residents harnessed their creative powers and raised \$3,634 for the The Glebe's benevolent fund in 2017, reported Pat Morris, vice president and head of LifeSpire's VBH Foundation. An additional \$1,465 was raised through a 2018 calendar sale to support construction of The Glebe's memory support neighborhood.

"Larry and Wanda Fishbach compiled images from The Glebe's artists to create the calendar," Morris said. "Anne daCosta and Charlotte Yeatts spearheaded the annual bazaar to raise funds for The Glebe Benevolent Fund."

Other residents from The Glebe donated hand-made items to support the annual bazaar, Morris said.

The annual bazaar began nine or ten years ago – "We're not counting," daCosta said – when the knitting group made so many items they decided to sell a few.

Then crafters like Pat Saunders, Bonnie Lucas, and Eleanor Gruber contributed other types of items. Dee Nichols grew Christmas cactus seedlings. Residents and staff also regularly donate supplies, including fabric, yarn, and sewing equipment to support crafters' needs.

When Romona Williams learned how to turn wood on the lathe,



**ABOVE:** Romona Williams sells the wooden pens she made in The Glebe's woodshop. Proceeds benefitted the The Glebe's benevolent fund.

she began making and selling wooden pens and donating the proceeds to the Foundation. Woodworkers Marvin Jacobs and Darryl Dellis also began making popular wood items for the sale.

The Bazaar then added homemade food and jellies, so creative cooks added their love and money to the cause. Those who made items for the bake sale were: Peggy Johnson, Gerry Wilson, Jenny Waldron, Ann Miller, Nealey Wooldridge, Carole Edwards, Kay Schmeding, Carolyn Coffman, Massie Maphis, Libby Carswell, Nancy Wingfield, Mary Ann Benjamin, Gret Kidd, Peggy Jeans, Anne daCosta, and a few others.

Those who worked the bazaar were: Sandra Mundt, Pat

Saunders, Helene DeVries, Nathalie Givens, Al daCosta, Ken Benjamin, Peggy Overstreet, and Charlotte Yeatts. These are in addition to those who donated the many craft items that were sold.

"We can't say 'thank you' enough to those who put their creativity to work to support our benevolent mission," Morris said. "Their generosity makes a difference to so many!"



**ABOVE, L-R:** Anne daCosta, Pat Saunders, and Charlotte Yeatts.

# Clara Schannep Jensen: Still Singing at 105

Clara Schannep Jensen has been singing since she was 4 years old. At 105 The Chesapeake resident is still singing.

“You’ll find her there tapping her feet and swaying her shoulders to the beat of any music that happens to be playing,” her son, Leslie Jensen, said. He and his wife, Juanita, recently compiled a short biography of Jensen’s life to celebrate her 105<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Born Dec. 6, 1912, in Versailles, Missouri, Jensen sang publicly for the first time at a church event in her then-home of Pilot Rock, Oregon, when she was just 4 years old. She continued to sing and dance through The Great Depression, attending the Perry Mansfield School for the Performing Arts in the early 1930s. Later, she toured the U.S. with a dance group before settling in Greenwich Village in New York City with hopes of establishing her performing career. She returned home to Oregon before resettling in Tallahassee, Florida. In each location she found opportunities to sing and dance.

Then, World War II arrived, and Jensen redirected her passion for performing to serving her country. At the end of 1944, Jensen signed up to work for the American Red Cross.

“Some of her most

rewarding experiences took place during her time as an American Red Cross Donut Dollie in World War II,” wrote Peter Macias, director of communications for service to the Armed Forces and spokesman for the American Red Cross. “Donut Dollie” was a nickname given to women who served coffee and donuts to soldiers.

Macias and Koby Langley, senior vice president of the American Red Cross, were on hand for Jensen’s birthday party at The Chesapeake, Dec. 1, 2017. Langley presented Jensen with the *Red Cross Legacy Continues Award*. The award recognizes Red Crossers deployed into combat theaters — about 2,000 people since World War II, Langley said.

Macias wrote, “While working with the Red Cross, Clara had a



ABOVE: Clara Schannep Jensen (far right) with the American Red Cross in England.



ABOVE: Clara Schannep Jensen, 105, celebrated her birthday with a party at The Chesapeake, her home since 2002.

front row seat for significant world events such as the celebration of Norway’s liberation from Nazi Germany. She physically sat in the gallery during the Nuremberg Trials.”

In a letter to her brother dated July 1946, Jensen described the Nuremberg trials.

“Twas a thrilling experience – it so happened that we got there on the very day that Justice Robert H. Jackson of the U.S. gave his 25,000 word speech – summing up the trials and asking for punishment,” Jensen wrote. “It was a marvelous speech. We saw Goering, Raeder, Von Papan – all of them except Hess who was too ill to attend. ... Somehow it seemed just like a stage play or the movies. Goering has lost about 100 lbs – but he has composure and even arrogance, I would say. The court room is small – so that

*Continued next page*



## STILL SINGING

*you could see the prisoners very well. ... It was without a doubt one of the most thrilling experiences I have had overseas."*

"These women were not just fearless in their service, they were the trendsetters of their day. We owe them a debt of gratitude," Langley said at Jensen's celebration.

After the war, Clara married Alfred Jensen, a soldier she met while in Europe. The two eventually settled in Williamsburg while Alfred was stationed at Fort Eustis. In Williamsburg, Clara resumed performing in a way that also allowed her to honor U.S. history. She became a costumed hostess for Colonial Williamsburg and received a number of commendations for her skill in working with VIP and foreign visitors.

In 2002, Al and Clara moved to The Chesapeake, progressing through independent, assisted living, and healthcare. Al died in 2014.

"Clara remains the life of the party in the healthcare unit," her son wrote. She participates in low-impact aerobic exercise classes, social events, and arts and crafts classes.

And she is "still making a joyful noise and being a blessing to those around her," he said.



# Friendship thrives through the ages

*Editor's Note: Cliff Francis, a long-time resident of The Chesapeake, proposed the idea for this story. He called it, "Highway to Heaven." Interviews were conducted in Sept. 2017, and Mr. Francis died in Dec. We trust this story is a fitting tribute to his influence and legacy.*

**M**ost LifeSpire residents understand the importance of community, and nothing helps develop a sense of community like a connection to a good friend. For Bill Blanks, Cliff Francis, and nine other residents of The Chesapeake, community began decades ago in a Sunday School class at Central United Methodist Church in Hampton, Virginia.

"We were part of an all boys class to begin with," explained Blanks, who was part of the Sunday School class from its beginnings. "Mr. Brittingham, the original teacher, would go to the drug store and gather the guys up and bring them to Sunday School."

"The phone number of the pharmacy was 1-2," Blanks laughed.

The Sunday School class continued through the boys'



**ABOVE:** 11 members of the Progressive Class of Central United Methodist Church proudly call The Chesapeake home. Back row, L-R: Charles Taylor, Bill Blanks, Todd Clark, William Charles, Cliff Francis. Front row, L-R: Joyce Tysinger, Barbara Blanks, Jean Smith, Betsy Tignor.

elementary, middle and high school years. Then the war came. "After World War II, most of us got married, and it became a co-ed class," Blanks said.

Cliff Francis joined the class in 1955, and although other class members came and went, 11 remained, sharing life through the decades that followed.

Then, in the early 2000s, the group reached retirement age. "It all began in October 2003 when my wife and I moved to The Chesapeake," said Francis, whose wife, Barbara, is now deceased. "Next came Dr. Todd and Aulene Clark in January 2013." Mrs. Clark is also deceased.

"Jean Smith, a former member of

*Continued next page*

# Legacy planning: Helping future generations

**D**onors who pass away without memorializing their legacy wishes miss an important opportunity to share their philanthropic dreams with their heirs.

When your family is grieving, how will they know what you want them to do with your financial and material assets? Do they know what you care about the most? Are they prepared to make decisions to honor your legacy?

You can make it easier for them by creating a location for important documents to guide them in making these tough decisions, and by talking directly to them about

your plans. While it may be a difficult conversation, your family will be grateful.

On the next page we've provided a perforated sheet with an easy checklist to assist you in compiling this information. Store this checklist with your important documents in a safety deposit box or fireproof lockbox that your family knows how to access.

Many of these items also provide easy ways to leave a legacy gift to a charity – without expensive legal fees. Contact Pat Morris, 804-521-9229, at the VBH Foundation to discuss how you can create a legacy of benevolence.

## Make a plan to amplify your impact

Take the time to learn more about enhancing your own financial plans, as well as benefiting seniors in need with your generosity. You can help by including us in your will or estate plans. Visit our website, [vbh.planmylegacy.org](http://vbh.planmylegacy.org), for more information.



## FRIENDSHIP THRIVES

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the class, came in February 2014. Joyce Tysinger arrived in October 2014, followed by Charles Taylor in February 2015,” Francis continued. “Betsy Tignor moved into Assisted Living in June 2016. Bill and Barbara Blanks joined us in June 2017 followed by William Charles in August 2017.”

With Charles’ arrival in August 2017, all 11 members of the class now live at The Chesapeake, Francis said, noting several of them dine together and most are active on various committees.

“We’ve used all three styles of living (independent living, assisted living, and health care),” Francis

said. “My wife used every stage.”

People who have been friends this long also have good-natured stories to tell on one another.

“Joyce used to be a Baptist,” Francis said, his eyes twinkling. “So she prays a Baptist prayer.”

“That’s right,” Blanks chimed in. “Cliff usually starts the class with a devotional – a real good devotional – and then he asks Joyce to pray. She prays longer than the devotional!”

The group roared with laughter.

Blanks recalled another story. “I was teaching Sunday School not too long ago. Cliff was there, and Todd was there, and Joyce was

there. And I was just teaching along, and I did so well that they all went to sleep,” Blanks said. “I picked up the books, and I put them all away, and I finally woke them up. That’s a true story.”

Turning serious, Blanks said, “We came here because of the levels that they have here. We never knew we would be taking advantage of it so quickly. But bless her heart, Barbara (Blanks’ wife) had pneumonia, and one day she was dancing in the hall and the next day she was in the hospital. ... She would not have gotten the care anywhere else that she got here.”

“We are one big, loving family here,” Francis agreed. “That’s the way life ought to be shared.”

**The Essentials**

- Letter of instruction to your executor
- Will (to handle those assets not covered through direct transfer or beneficiary designations)
- Trust documents

**Life Insurance and Retirement Accounts**

- Life-insurance policies
- 
- 
- 

- IRA and 401(k) accounts
- 
- 
- 

- Pension documents
- 
- 
- 

- Annuity contracts
- 
- 
- 

**Bank Accounts**

- List of bank accounts, with specific automatic debits and deposits
- 
- 
- 

- List of safe-deposit boxes and location of keys
- 
- 
- 

**Proof of Ownership**

- Housing, land and cemetery deeds
  - Escrow mortgage accounts
- 
-

## LEGACY PLANNING CHECKLIST

Proof of loans made and debts owed

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Vehicle titles

Stock certificates, savings bonds and brokerage accounts

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Partnership and corporate operating agreements

Tax returns

### Marriage and Divorce

Marriage license

Divorce papers

### Household Accounts

List of utilities, phone, cable accounts

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List of all usernames and passwords to online accounts

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List of credit accounts/cards

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List of automatic debit expenses and gifts to charities

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Store this checklist with your important documents in a safety deposit box or fireproof lockbox that your family knows how to access.



Faithfully supporting LifeSpire's benevolent mission

(804) 521-9229

[www.lifespireliving.org/foundation](http://www.lifespireliving.org/foundation)

## Welcome Ellen D'Ardenne

LifeSpire of Virginia is pleased to announce the selection of Ellen D'Ardenne as executive director of The Glebe, a LifeSpire continuing care retirement community in Daleville.

Most recently, D'Ardenne served as administrator of health services at The Glebe. She joined The Glebe in 2005 as the director of dining services. After 25 years of food service management in the hotel, restaurant, and senior living industries, D'Ardenne was looking for a new challenge. In May 2006, she began a health care administration degree program, which led her to become a licensed nursing

home administrator in June 2010. With experience in assisted living administration and skilled nursing management, she further expanded her role in April 2011 by assuming leadership of The Glebe's health and wellness programs.

"We are pleased to promote Ms. D'Ardenne to lead The Glebe," said Jonathan Cook, LifeSpire president and CEO. "She has been a part of The Glebe from its beginnings and has played a major role in The Glebe's success. We have every confidence she will lead The Glebe with excellence and a focus on resident-centered care."



D'Ardenne and her husband, Dwayne, have three children. She enjoys cooking, kayaking, cycling, and running.



## Welcome Ray Fisher

office in Richmond, in Nov. 2017.

"We believe Ray will be a great addition to our team of managers and as an officer of the company," said Scott Cave, a LifeSpire trustee who participated in the search and interview process. "We are pleased to welcome him."

LifeSpire of Virginia is pleased to welcome Ray Fisher as Chief Operating Officer. In this role, Fisher is responsible for directing overall operations in LifeSpire's four continuing care retirement communities through leadership, management, and vision. Fisher started his job, based at the home

Fisher has more than 25 years' experience at the executive level within the context of large for-profit firms and senior living organizations. He has been involved in senior living since 2001 during which time he has held positions as CFO, CEO, and advisor. He has been part

of many senior living expansion projects, the most recent involving the creation of a nationally recognized short-term recovery and rehab center. As CEO, he led the turnaround of a mid-size CCRC and the successful creation and operation of a nationally recognized 48-bed rehab and wellness center.

"We are excited to welcome Ray to the LifeSpire team," said Jonathan Cook, president and CEO. "We are building a great culture and a great team at LifeSpire, and one thing that excites us most about Ray is the depth of his background and experience."

# Local artist comes home to Lakewood

Hope Pianello has come home to Lakewood – but not as a resident or team member. Pianello, a local artist, is a volunteer.

As a high school student, Pianello interned at Lakewood from 2003 through 2006 through a Program called “Partnership for the Future,” explained Eileen Kwak,

Lakewood’s Resident Services Director, who mentored Pianello. “Partnership for the Future gives local high school students the opportunity to develop skills that help them transition easily from high school to college to the workplace,” Kwak said. “Hope spent three years interning with Lakewood through PFF, until she graduated from high school.”

Pianello graduated from Open High School in Richmond in 2006 and attended Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia. She graduated with a degree in Studio Art in 2011.

Since then Pianello has begun her own mobile art instruction business, Paint Something, LLC. She teaches individual



ABOVE: A Lakewood resident participates in one of Pianello’s art classes.

and group art lessons throughout Virginia.

Hope recently taught a class at Lakewood and will return in April and May for a group art project.

“We are really excited to have Hope back on campus,” Kwak said.

Pianello is also excited to return. “I feel like I just came home,” Pianello said. “It feels like I grew up here.”



ABOVE: Hope Pianello first interned at Lakewood as a high school student. Now a successful local artist, Pianello is teaching art classes at Lakewood as a volunteer.

# Lakewood design wins award

Congrats to Lakewood, who recently brought home the “Best 55+ Life Plan Community, On the Boards” award from the National Association of Home Builders. The NAHB’s 2018 Best of 55+ Housing Awards honor excellence and innovation in the design, development, lifestyle and marketing of communities

and homes that appeal to the mature market. The awards were announced during the 2018 NAHB International Builders’ Show in Orlando, Florida, in January, and recognized Developer, Greenbrier; Builder, W.M. Jordan; and Architect, THW design.



## STAYING HAPPY

*Continued from Page 5*

### Pets

Research shows people who own pets tend to be happier and healthier. The emotional gain of having a pet are straightforward. Pet owners are apt to be more physically fit and less lonely than people who do not own pets. The Australian National Heart Foundation found pet owners have lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels than non-owners. The American Heart Association published a report sounding the correlation between pet ownership and lower risks for heart disease.

Often, seniors living in assisted living facilities struggle with loneliness and depression. Pets help confront the emotional issues by providing companionship. Pets also help seniors be more social as common areas are turned from boring hangouts to social hubs when a dog is added to the mix.

### Massage

For seniors, the health benefits of massage reach past a nice feeling. One variation beneficial to seniors from therapeutic touch is foot massage. Foot massage has been practiced globally for thousands of years and has proven to have health benefits. Another massage option for seniors is hand massage. Receiving a hand massage helps improve hand, wrist and finger mobility as it relieves

pain from tendons. Circulation, leading to relaxation, has benefits, and the immediate pain relief of a hand massage is another collateral benefit. The psychological effects of therapeutic touch help alleviate the feeling of being disconnected and lonely. Therapeutic touch decreases stress and helps overall relaxation in addition to emotional support.

### Children

American businessman Mike May says, "The fun thing about getting older is finding younger people to mentor." Spending time with children and teenagers improves the elderly's health. Whether a scheduled event or casual visit, spending time with younger persons makes any elder feel good emotionally.

### Acceptance

Possibly the ideal way to stay happy as a person ages is to maintain an attitude of acceptance. If someone is always battling against getting older, they will still be unhappy. It's going to happen anyhow.



*Jerry Nelson is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in some of the world's most respected media outlets. This article first appeared in*

*The Huffington Post and is used with permission. Nelson's mother, Lorena Nelson, is a resident at The Glebe.*



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