



# Community

## Faith matters

**H**elen Wood wears a Fitbit. She doesn't always reach 10,000 steps a day, she says, but she tries to go over 5,000. Wood, a resident of Lakewood in Richmond's West End, recently attended her 60th college reunion at the University of Richmond. She is a member of Virginia Baptist Women in Ministry and serves on numerous boards, including the Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

"The key to successful attitudes about aging is to find hobbies and interests beyond your work," Wood says. "I have many outside interests, but all are within my faith sphere."

Faith matters to Wood, and for many senior adults like her, the interplay of faith, community, and wellness—LifeSpire's core values—often yields positive results. In fact, a 2010 study on spirituality and aging concludes that faith and religious participation are as important as diet, exercise, and social connectedness to successful aging, leading not only to longevity but also to higher satisfaction and a better quality of life.

Tom Crittenden, a resident of The Chesapeake in Newport News, agrees. "My faith is nourished through my church activities and service on (The Chesapeake's) worship and spiritual life committee," Crittenden says. "We are one big family here. ... By staying busy in church, overall, I have a better life."

### FAITH DOESN'T CHANGE

But faith is nothing new to Crittenden and Wood. Both say faith has been an important part of their lives since they were children.

Crittenden grew up Methodist. His mother died a day after Crittenden was born, and his uncle and aunt, whom he describes as "good Christian folks," adopted him.

"Church was a part of life," Crittenden says. "My mother taught Sunday school, and I was baptized in the Methodist church."

Likewise, Wood's faith has been vital to her throughout her life. "I grew up in faith," Wood says. "I had Christian parents and grandparents. As a pre-teen, I felt that there was something special I should be doing, and God opened doors for me."

After college, seminary and marriage, Wood and her husband, Rudy who died in 2008, served 15 years in Europe as international missionaries through the then-Foreign Mission Board (FMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention (now IMB). Later Wood served on staff at the FMB mobilizing college students for a variety of international mission opportunities. She also worked with the Virginia Woman's Missionary Union.

"My faith hasn't changed over the years," Wood explains. "It's who I am."



**Helen Wood enjoys the fresh air and exercise at Lakewood.**

I try to live my life not out of obligation but out of gratitude."

Julie Walton, who along with Louise Mason serves as chaplain at Lakewood, agrees that faith is life-long. "Faith is important to us for all of our lives," Walton says. "Faith doesn't change. It gives meaning and hope in difficult circumstances."

*Continued on Page 8*

## 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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# Contents

## 1 Faith Matters

The interplay of faith, community, and wellness.

## 4 Resident Spotlight

Chesapeake residents Ted and Baerbel Schaller model life and love worth living.

## 7 “We are Family”

Chesapeake dining room manager George Moore believes in putting others first.

3 From the Editor

3 8 tips for showing hospitality

5 Lakewood supports Longwood University student volunteer book drive.

5 VBH Benefit Golf Classic

6 Ministry of Benevolence

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Faith. It's one of the core values of LifeSpire of Virginia communities. In fact, you might say faith started it all—way back in 1945 when J.T. Edwards realized the need to provide for Virginia Baptists in their retirement years. Since then, our communities have grown to welcome and support people of all backgrounds, but the hospitality that results from a culture deeply rooted in Christian faith lives on. We see it every day in the actions and attitudes of staff like George Moore and Angie Corwin and in residents like Ted and Bell Schaller, Helen Wood, and Tom Crittenden. You'll read their stories in this issue, and we hope you'll be inspired by their examples. At LifeSpire of Virginia, our faith motivates us to respect one another the way we want to be respected—regarding each other as family, because God first loved us.

— Ann Lovell, Editor-in-Chief

## 8 tips on showing hospitality

| Angie Corwin

**1 Greet anyone** who approaches you **immediately**—don't wait for them to speak first. This helps people feel at ease and welcomed. I make it a point to try to greet everyone who enters the building, and SMILE! You never know how your smile may cheer someone up. As the first point of contact for anyone who enters The Glebe, how we greet them (or don't greet them) is their **FIRST** impression of our community. The way I see it, we are "torch bearers"—similar to those who carry the torch into the Olympics. We make people feel welcomed at The Glebe!

**2 Treat EVERYONE** with respect. My father taught me this at a very early age. He reminded me that all humans are made "in the image of God," and thus we should treat them with respect.

**3** This may seem trivial or what some would call "a given," but it seems to be lacking in our society today. **BE POLITE & COURTEOUS!** Don't ever make someone feel like they are

bothering you. Even just a small thing like waving to them when they walk past makes them feel special.

**4** Have a "servant's heart." Think about how you would like to be treated when you have a need and respond in that manner to those who need your help.

**5 Go the extra mile!** Don't just respond with "I don't know." It's OK to tell them you are not sure or you don't know, **BUT** immediately follow that with telling them you will try to find out the answer and get back to them with the information.

**6** Give your **FULL ATTENTION** to the person you are talking with or helping. This lets them know you **REALLY** care about what they are saying.

**7 STAY CALM!** It is normal for someone who has a crisis to get panicky. If you stay calm, you can keep the situation from escalating.



**8 Learn to enjoy people!** Every person is different and unique. You can learn so much from others, and if you allow yourself to enjoy the experience, it's a win-win for everyone.

*Angie Corwin has served as the front desk receptionist at The Glebe in Daleville, Virginia, since 2014. She developed a focus on customer service early in her teen years while assisting her father with his paint-contracting business. Angie and her husband of 38 years reside in Roanoke, and in her spare time, she enjoys reading, baking, and visiting with her two grown children and their families.*

# Chesapeake residents Ted and Baerbel Schaller model life and love worth living

She calls him, “My Ted.” He says he always gets the last word: “Yes, dear.”

Ted and Baerbel Schaller obviously love each other. The couple, both 76, celebrated their 42nd wedding anniversary in June. The couple’s devotion to one another is well-known among residents and staff of The Chesapeake, where they’ve lived since 2010.

“We moved in six years ago at age 70. It was the best time to do it because there is so much to do,” says Baerbel, who goes by her nickname, Bell, she says, because many people can’t pronounce her German name.

The Schallers look for every opportunity to be involved in The Chesapeake’s myriad activities. Ted bikes 20 miles three times a week, and Baerbel claims he is “addicted to exercise.” She serves on the activities committee and the chorus committee, and both serve on the worship and spiritual life committee and as music librarians. From “aqua ease” in the community’s indoor pool to exercise class to creative arts to chorus, the Schallers’ involvement and energy seem boundless.

“The Schallers are true ambassadors for The Chesapeake,” says Jonathan Cook, LifeSpire president and CEO. “They represent all that it means to be part of a LifeSpire community.”

The couple first learned about the community when they attended an AARP refresher driving class hosted at The Chesapeake in 2009.

“We can’t afford this,” Ted and Bell

said to each other at the time, admiring the many amenities of the community. Ted is a retired U.S. Army sergeant who worked for the U.S. Postal Service in Newport News. Bell is a homemaker who manages the couple’s finances.

But working with Liz Gee, The Chesapeake’s marketing director, the couple realized affordable options were available to them. The couple also paid a refundable deposit to add their names to a waiting list. This program, now called The Chesapeake Club, allowed them to use the community’s amenities at no additional charge. They also put their house of 34 years on the market—in the middle of the U.S. housing crash.

“Our house was on the market a year,” Bell says. “We moved in anyway.”

“The Chesapeake had the right feel, but two things sold me on it,” Ted says. “One ... being able to use all the amenities before we moved in. Two: If we run out of funds through no fault of our own, they won’t put us out on the street.”

“This is why we make contributions to the benevolent fund,” Bell says. “We know the benevolent fund helps keep people in their homes.”

The couple also appreciates the faith-based nature of The Chesapeake. Neither Ted nor Bell was “raised in church,” Bell says. Ted’s father immigrated to the U.S. from Austria, and he describes himself as Catholic. Bell grew up in East Germany where worship was forbidden and describes herself as Lutheran. Both say religion plays a part



in their lives now, and both serve as ushers in the nondenominational worship service that meets weekly at The Chesapeake.

“The Schallers are ‘utility players,’” says Nancy Hayes, chaplain at The Chesapeake. “I know I can count on them.”

**The Schallers are true ambassadors for The Chesapeake, they represent all that it means to be part of a LifeSpire community.**

— Jonathan Cook,  
LifeSpire president and CEO

But it isn’t so much “religion” or religious activities that inspire the Schallers as the way that faith-based attitudes play out in their everyday interactions with The Chesapeake’s staff and other residents. “Respect” is one word Ted uses, incidentally the same word he uses to describe the success of their marriage. “Honesty” and “trust” are others.

“People treat each other differently in a faith-based community,” Bell says. “They talk differently to one another. Nobody talks nasty here.”

“Everyone is honest,” Ted says. “It has a calming effect.”

# Lakewood supports Longwood University student volunteer book drive

When Alison Roberts, granddaughter of Bob and Claire Rosenbaum of Lakewood, learned that students in Prince Edward County had very few books of their own, she decided to do something about it. As president of SELF—Support. Empower. Learn. Fun.—a student volunteer group at Longwood University, Roberts mobilized students and organizations to donate cash and books to meet the needs. Lakewood was a significant contributor.

“Three groups went above and beyond to help our project,” said Roberts, an elementary education major and member of the Cormier Honors College. “Lakewood collected more than 500 books; Ed Winfree of Integrity Data Solutions raised money and

bought more than 2,400 books; and Lise LeLisio and Kate Gabriel collected more than 300 books from the Richmond Academy of Medicine Alliance.”

Through the initiative, the group bought 2,000 books and collected donations of several thousand more, most of which they distributed to students at Prince Edward County Elementary School’s field day in April. They also donated about 600 young adult novels to the Prince Edward County High School library.

“Each student took home four books,” Roberts continued. “It was really fulfilling to see the smiles on their faces as they picked out books they liked and to know that we did something to really make a difference in their lives.”



The VBH Foundation’s Spring Tidewater Classic was a great success, thanks to the many volunteers and participants. We broke the record of recent years and raised a net \$35,000 for benevolence. Thanks for your support!



**NEXT TEE OFF SEPTEMBER 12** at Spring Creek Golf Club in Zion Crossroads for the Piedmont Golf Classic. Learn more at <http://lifespireliving.org/foundation/golf/>

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# Ministry of Benevolence

A ministry of benevolence has been a hallmark of LifeSpire of Virginia communities throughout our history. During the early years of Virginia Baptist Homes, one hundred percent of residents received financial subsidies made possible by contributions from individuals and churches across Virginia. Lakewood acquired The Richmond Baptist Trust—created by the Richmond Baptist Home for Ladies (RBHL)—when RBHL dissolved and the residents (all female) moved to Lakewood. This perpetual trust provides assistance for female residents who are members of Richmond-area Baptist churches.

Today, the VBH Foundation (VBHF) provides benevolence for residents of all faiths at all four LifeSpire communities. Every incoming resident is financially

qualified during the admissions process, but sometimes residents outlive their financial resources. When this occurs for reasons unrelated to willful or unreasonable dissipation of assets, residents may request benevolent support from VBHF. Decisions are based on a review of an updated Confidential Financial Statement and approval by the community’s executive director, LifeSpire’s chief financial officer, and LifeSpire’s CEO.

The LifeSpire ministry of benevolence also extends beyond financial assistance. As life changes and limitations occur, residents and caring staff members are ready to lend a helping hand or listening ear. Familiarity makes it easier for those going through transition to accept assistance without loss of dignity, even if they previously

were more comfortable giving than receiving. Such acts of benevolent kindness help LifeSpire residents face challenges, recognize new opportunities, and maintain self-esteem through all stages of life and care.



To learn how you can support LifeSpire’s benevolent mission, contact Patricia Morris, vice president and head of the VBH Foundation.

## Who receives benevolence?

Category	Sub-Category	Number	% of Total
Gender	Male	8	15%
	Female	44	85%
Religious Affiliation	Baptist	39	75%
# of years at LifeSpire	1-9	26	50%
	10-14	17	33%
	15-19	6	12%
	20+	3	1%
Current Age	70-79	6	12%
	80-89	17	33%
	90+	29	55%

\*Note: The majority on benevolence are females age 90 and older

## What gift enriches both donor and recipient?

### A charitable gift annuity

A charitable gift annuity with VBH Foundation provides income through your lifetime as well as a residual gift to support benevolence.



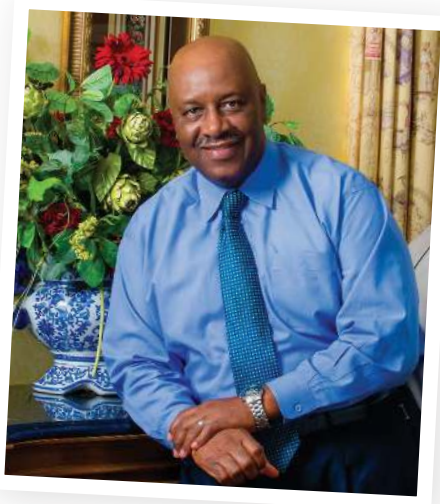
# ‘We are family,’ says The Chesapeake’s dining room manager

George Moore believes in putting others first. As the dining room manager at The Chesapeake, Moore understands that the quality of the food and the attitude of the dining room staff give seasoned, new, and prospective residents a sense of The Chesapeake’s unique hospitality.

“From the time they walk in the door, I want them to feel they can be happy and safe here,” says Moore, who has worked at The Chesapeake for 15 years. “I especially want new and prospective residents to see our community as a place where they want to spend the rest of their lives.”

Moore has a long history of experience in food service, including several well-known Fortune 500 restaurants. Prior to joining the staff of The Chesapeake, Moore was the dining room manager at Lakewood, a LifeSpire community in Richmond. He enjoys serving delicious, nutritious meals that promote overall wellness, and he believes The Chesapeake’s dining room staff is central to the community’s success.

“We have great, dedicated employees,” Moore says. “Our first priority is service, and our goal is to do the job the right way.”



Moore’s customer service is exemplary, says Tammy Slowikowski, The Chesapeake’s director of dining and hospitality services.

“George and his staff touch each resident every day with food and hospitality,” Slowikowski says. “Here, they don’t come and go” like they would in a traditional restaurant. “This is their home. George understands that.”

The feeling of family is important to Moore, and he trains his staff to see the residents as family as well.

“I tell our younger employees that our residents are like their grandmothers and grandfathers,” Moore says. “We will treat them with the utmost respect because they are part of our family.”

**LifeSpire**  
of Virginia  
Faith. Wellness. Community.

  
**VBH Foundation**  
Faithfully supporting LifeSpire’s benevolent mission

The funds we raise help eligible residents who outlive financial resources needed to cover the cost of their care. During 2015, we provided \$1,089,614 to 60 residents in our four communities.

## Let Us Hear From You

For more information about VBH Foundation, visit [LifeSpireLiving.org/foundation](http://LifeSpireLiving.org/foundation) or call (804) 521-9229. Our communities may be contacted at the numbers below:

THE CULPEPER

Culpeper  
(800) 894-2411

The Chesapeake  
Changing the way we live. At retirement living.

Newport News  
(800) 345-0474

LAKWOOD  
Live the life you envision.

Richmond  
(866) 521-9100

The Glebe  
Blue Ridge Living

Daleville  
(877) 994-5353



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“Faith takes over when there are no more answers,” says Gerald Carter, chaplain at The Glebe in Daleville. “It’s a belief that the triune God is active in our lives every day.”

“Faith equips us to deal with life’s difficulties such as loss, fear and illness,” says Nancy Hayes, chaplain at The Chesapeake. “Some of the things happening to (our residents) are a slippery slope. Walking through these issues together helps us support, comfort, and encourage one another.”

### **GOD’S LOVE LIVED OUT**

From its beginnings, LifeSpire of Virginia (formerly Virginia Baptist Homes) has been an organization rooted in the Christian faith and centered in Jesus Christ. “Love God and love people,” Jesus told his disciples. “These are the greatest commandments” (Matthew 22:36-40, paraphrased). LifeSpire seeks to promote an organizational culture where God’s love is lived out among residents, families, and staff.

This faith-based distinction is a difference you can feel, says Mason. “The atmosphere here is genuine. People live it,” Mason says. “Nobody here needs to be reminded, and the staff embodies it as much as the residents.”

Carter agrees, “God lives in this place in a special way.”

For Hayes, the faith-based distinction also means welcoming those from a variety of different backgrounds. “We work hard to accept people who have different faith perspectives,” Hayes says. “We focus on what binds us together, rather than what separates us.”

Hayes, who encourages residents to stay active in their local churches, also offers an ecumenical worship service Sunday afternoons. Crittenden, for example, attends his Methodist church Sunday mornings, where he has served as a trustee and is active in the Methodist men’s group. Then, on Sunday afternoons, he helps set up the sound system for the 3 p.m. ecumenical service at The Chesapeake.

“Some of our residents can’t get out Sundays, so they meet with us at 3 p.m.,” Crittenden explains. “We usually have between 65 and 100 people for Sunday afternoon worship.”

### **WHEN MEMORY FAILS**

While participation in faith-based activities helps provide active seniors with a sense of purpose and well-being, faith is also important to seniors suffering from dementia or Alzheimer’s disease, Mason explains. She recalls an instance when she worked in a psychiatric ward early in her career.

“One of the patients had written his own gospel hymns,” Mason says.

“He had difficulty communicating, but he sat down at a piano in a commons area and began to play and sing those old hymns. People came out of their rooms to listen. It was a holy moment.”

While dementia and Alzheimer’s disease rob a person of short-term memory, a deeply rooted faith can continue to thrive even as memories fade, Mason says.

“Memory care residents who may not know what day it is can recall a particular church experience from their childhood,” Mason says.

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**“Faith takes over when there are no more answers.”**

— Gerald Carter

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Walton agrees, “Faith taps into a really deep part of you. It transcends day-to-day living.”

Faith also removes anxiety about the future, says Wood, who believes in an afterlife.

“I couldn’t begin to list all the miracles in my life, but they are proof to me that God cares about us individually,” Wood says.

“Today is a gift, and there’s no promise for tomorrow,” she continues. “I’m in God’s hands, and I feel very confident about that.”



**E**veryone loves a good story. LifeSpire residents, their families, and staff especially enjoy hearing each other’s family stories: the traditions and events, life lessons and humor that shaped our lives.

Record YOUR family story and photo, to be saved and treasured for all time. Visit <http://lifespireliving.org/foundation/story-bank/>, click on the “Story Bank Logo” and follow the prompts.

**GO GREEN**

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