

SunsetNews

October 2024 - February 2025



Sunset residents enjoyed a scary good time at our first haunted house!

At Lutheran Sunset Ministries, everything we do is geared towards the goal of helping our residents achieve optimal health—physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Our activities team, who plan and execute all of our events and help keep our residents happy, is a major factor in reaching these goals.

Lead by director Mildred Martinez, they are always looking for ways to improve upon longstanding favorite traditions. This year, that meant upgrading our annual Halloween celebration. For many years, Sunset Home has opened its doors to the community for trick-or-treating on Halloween. Residents line up to pass out candy to kids decked out in their costumes. But this year, our activities team decided to try something new, and thus, the Sunset Home Haunted House was born.

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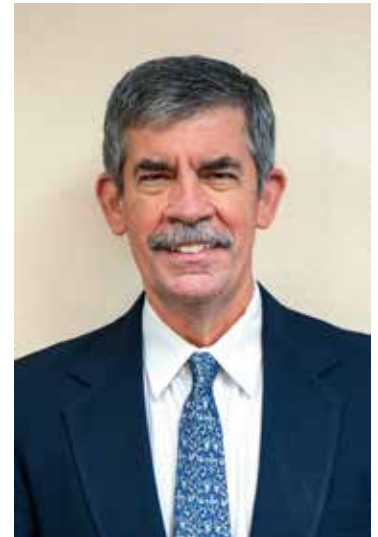


Sunset Home
College Hill Assisted Living
Rainbow Retirement Community
Hospice Sunset
Sunset Companion Services

Message from the President

Since the beginning, people have gathered at their elders feet to learn, to hear stories and to spend time together. Today, we still take part in these rituals even if they may look different!

Through our partnership with Dash Media, residents share stories of growing up, meeting their spouse, funny stories of dating or how they deal with difficult times. One of the coolest parts of this partnership is that these stories now not only live in the memories of those they were told to, but they can reach those in our community and beyond!



It makes me think back on all of the residents I have worked with in my 25-plus years at LSM. We've had all kinds of folks come through our doors (one thing I have learned is that aging doesn't discriminate — no matter what your occupation, you may need any one or more of the services we offer as you grow older). We have served teachers, pilots, homemakers, doctors, farmers, oil executives and CEOs, just to name a few — all with their own unique stories.

Off the top of my head, two residents come to mind who I wish everyone could have gotten to know. They both had immense physical challenges but faced them with grace. Everyone reacts differently to the challenges that life throws at them: some people are grateful that they can receive the services they need, while others are unhappy and never really accept what is happening with their minds or bodies. In my experience, those who are most accepting (like these two residents who made an impact on me) have an incredible faith. If I find myself in the same position, I hope I can follow their example.

The first person was completely bed bound but had all her mental faculties. During the years she lived in Sunset Home, I never heard her complain once even though everything had to be done for her. Over time, we got to know each other during our visits. Every time I stopped to see her, she would ask how I was doing and ask about my wife and daughters. She was interested in my life. I was and still am in awe of her resilience in spite of her physical condition. It was not about her but about others, and I don't think I was the only person she interacted with in that way.

The second person was a World War II veteran who was a medic in the European theater. He survived the war although many men whom he attended did not. He had lengthy career after the war, but had a severe stroke that impacted one side of his body. He would remain mostly paralyzed on that side the rest of his life. He was able to go home after that but had to adjust to his changed abilities. So, he learned to build bird houses with one hand. He made hundreds of them. I got to know him and his wife when they moved into assisted living and ultimately the nursing home. He had zest for life even with his disability, and lived his life to the fullest.

One day it snowed and he asked me if he could go outside in his electric wheelchair and drive around in it. I said of course and he looked like a kid again driving and sliding around in his motorized chair. Again, I never heard him complain about his situation — he made the best of it. It reminded me of the movie “Saving Private Ryan”. I believe he knew how lucky he was to have been able to survive a war and live out his life when many thousands of young men did not. He was grateful to be alive and looked for ways to make an impact on others.

These are only stories of two residents I have had the honor to have known during my years here at Lutheran Sunset Ministries, and there are countless more. We have so many lessons to learn from them — that’s what makes working in our ministry so rewarding!

Rodney Rueter, CEO/President

Straight Out of the Movies



Grant and Dana met when they worked at the same bank.



Wanda met her husband when her sister set them up.

Senior living communities are full of people with rich histories and of course, lots of wisdom. We’ve learned so much through these interviews with our residents, but one topic comes up again and again: how they met their spouse.

In the movies, a “meet-cute” is the moment when the two characters meet for the first time, and we can’t get enough of the tales of real-life magic!



Polly and her husband met when she was working at the VA hospital where he was a resident.



Carol and Herbert met when they were attending the same church.

Grant and Dana, Wanda, Polly and Carol all shared about that special moment that they met their spouse (and some sage marriage advice).

Catch all of these stories and more by following us @lutheransunsetministries on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. We love getting to show off our incredible residents and their interviews on our social media so that their wisdom can be shared with younger generations!

Sunset Spotlight

Celebrating Staff Work Anniversaries

We are proud to have so many long-serving team members. Here are the LSM staff who celebrated milestone anniversaries in 2024.

20 years



Joyce Davis



Alma Thiele

Not pictured: Marie Crouch

10 years



Lance Allen



Martha Ponce



Sarah Sellers

25 Years



Suzi Bottlinger

15 Years



Jessie Kubiak



Lea Ann Matthews



Rhonda Sadler

5 years

Amanda Allyn
Jericho Berato
Dorothy Harmon

Jose Rodriguez
Sandra Sanchez
Dr. Justin Squyres

Mark Sedberry-Garcia
Stormy Lane
Betty Perez

Amanda Toten
Cecilia Wilkins



Hundreds of kids and adults braved the spookiness, making their way through the halls filled with decorations and residents eager to provide some fun frights!

“It’s important not to fall into a rut of doing the same old things,” said Mildred. “We want to keep things exciting and fresh for our residents and give them things to look forward to.”



Throughout the holiday season, our activities team looked for opportunities to make those days special, which included things like a visit from Santa, the Veteran’s Day program and group exercise to get hearts pumping on Valentine’s Day!

Whether it’s through crafts, cooking classes, parades or parties, our activities team is always looking for ways to stimulate our residents’ minds and bodies, as well as finding meaningful connection with our community.

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All gifts help LSM in its work and mission. Thank you to our generous donors!

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All memorials, whether directed or not, go to the care and services provided. The residents served going forward are blessed by your thoughtfulness.

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**THE OVERLOOK THERAPY
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By: Leslie & B.C. Bennett, Clifton

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