“Can Do” and A Little Help Means Independence

In one of Madison’s charming older neighborhoods with modest turn-of-the-century homes lives a determinedly independent woman. She is Arlene Brunsell, retired, twice widowed, with interests ranging from world cultures to the latest Wisconsin grassroots news, as well as Bible study, especially comparing translations in search of the most accurate meaning.

Now in her mid-nineties, as she likes to say, Brunsell also is interested in staying in the home where she’s lived since the 1940s. She cues support like a symphony conductor, asking for more or less as her needs change. House cleaning and home organization assistance are her main requirements, and for these services, Arlene relies on Independent Living, Inc. More specifically, she relies on Venessa.

“I feel so fortunate with Venessa. I couldn’t have stayed at home here these last few years without her. She seems to know my needs before I even express them. It’s like we’re an old married couple!” Arlene jokes.

Venessa has taken care of house cleaning, laundry and “being the right hand” for Arlene for 14 years. “At first, it was just a couple of hours a week,” Venessa says.

“I didn’t need much help then,” Arlene says. “Now I keep asking Venessa for more and more. Getting across the room takes me so long now that there are not enough hours in the day! The work just doesn’t get done, and I depend on Venessa.”

Two days a week, Arlene has Venessa’s help; since 1986, Arlene has used services from Independent Living, Inc. That was when her second husband, Bill Brunsell, became so ill that help with housekeeping and in-home care became necessary.

Having done a lot of caregiving herself, Arlene knew it was important to have backup for herself. “My first husband, Clarence Landsness, was blind and sick for 16 years before he passed on,” Arlene says. Her second husband, Bill, had a stroke a few months after their marriage, which meant Arlene dealt with rehab continued on page 6

Arlene Brunsell manages her independence at home with a little help from family and Independent Living.

Arlene’s husband, Clarence Landsness, was blind and sick for 16 years before he passed on,” Arlene says. Her second husband, Bill, had a stroke a few months after their marriage, which meant Arlene dealt with rehab.

March 2014 newsletter is all about raising awareness and support for Meals on Wheels, including our own Evening Meals on Wheels program. Please see article on page 5.
Our Mission

Our mission is to support adults as they manage their independence by providing a variety of care services, skilled home health care and housing options to maintain health and well being.

Board of Directors 2014

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NOTES FROM RITA

Fighting Hospital ‘Observation Status’ to Prevent Personal Financial Ruin

If you are a Medicare patient and need hospitalization, beware. Your short hospital stay could be classified as “observation status” instead of “admitted” patient. The difference could cost you thousands of dollars out of pocket if you are transferred to a nursing home for rehabilitation.

Medicare won’t pay any charges for post-hospital rehabilitation at a nursing home if you were classified as “observation status” or were in the hospital less than three consecutive midnights. However, if you go directly home from the hospital, a Medicare-certified home health agency like Independent Health Care can provide home-based rehabilitation and nursing services that could be covered by Medicare.

It’s important to know that you have options. You can talk to your doctor about receiving in-home health care and/or rehabilitation services instead of transferring to a nursing home. As soon as the doctor writes orders for home health care, you can have services at home or at your loved one’s home. The expense is generally covered under your Medicare benefit.

The use of “observation status” has increased 69 percent in five years, according to Kaiser Health News. Advocacy groups encourage hospital patients and family members to talk to physicians and administrators regarding whether their hospital stay is considered “observational” or “admitted” and how it affects rehabilitation options post-hospitalization. There also are efforts in Congress to enact legislation requiring Medicare to count all overnight hospital stays as formal admissions.

Meanwhile, seniors can choose Medicare-covered services delivered at home through a Medicare-certified home health agency like Independent Health Care. I’m very proud of our home health care agency. We offer wonderful, caring, professional service in the convenience and privacy of one’s own home. Rather than worry about “observation” vs. “admitted” status, talk to your doctor about home health care and know that you can complete your recovery at home.

Rita Giovannoni, CEO

A Note of Appreciation

Grateful clients or their adult children occasionally write to Independent Living. The manager of our In-Home Services department received this note:

I cannot express how helpful you and all the staff at Independent Living have been over the last years. You made Mom’s home safer and cleaner and gave me great peace of mind. Thank you especially for being willing to step in at the last minute when some of my alternate respite plans fell through. I don’t know what I would have done without you. You, all the staff I have met and the Independent Living organization provide a great service for seniors who need help staying in their homes.

Audrey, Madison
Independent Living, Inc. Announces New Board Members, New Officer

Jeff Bowles, Saul Glazer and Dennis Thompson have joined the Board of Directors at Independent Living, Inc. Current board member Thomas Shorter has been elected to serve as vice president.

Bowles is a financial advisor and portfolio manager with Merrill Lynch Wealth Management in Madison. Prior to joining Merrill Lynch, he owned and operated his own business for 20 years. Bowles is a graduate of University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire with a bachelor’s of business administration in economics.

Glazer is an attorney with Axley Brynelson in Madison. His practice areas focus on construction and employment law, and he is the author, co-author or editor of numerous publications. He also serves on the board for the Construction and Public Contract Law Section of the State Bar. Glazer has bachelor’s, master’s and law degrees from UW-Madison.

Thompson, a licensed CPA, is retired from American Family Insurance where he was responsible for business plans to meet revenue and profit targets for personal and commercial line products in the State of Arizona. Thompson has a bachelor’s degree from UW-Whitewater, and a master’s degree from UW-Madison, both in business administration.

Shorter is an attorney with Godfrey & Kahn in Madison, with practice areas in business, health care and employment law. He has been a board member at Independent Living since 2006, and is serving his first term as vice president of the board.

Our Programs

We help you or someone you know remain independent at home.
Thank you, Dane County community, for trusting your care to us for 40 years.
We look forward to caring for you for years to come.
Call for information today 608-274-7900

Supportive Services
Caregiver Respite
Evening Meals on Wheels
Financial Management and Counseling
Home Care
Home Chore
Home Safety Modification
Home Share
Medication Management
Transportation

Home Health Care
Independent Health Care, Inc. (Medicare-certified home health care agency)

Services from Volunteers
Telephone Reassurance
Friendly Visiting
Kibble on Wheels
Chore Corps
Health Advocate, plus more

Senior Living
The Gardens, Madison
Segoe Gardens, Madison
McKee Park Apartments, Fitchburg
Olympic Village, Sun Prairie

Your local connection to an independent life since 1973

Mary, Mary and Barb show off the handiwork of budding young artists who shared their creativity with our Evening Meals on Wheels program. Donated cards and decorated bags have come from Prairie View and Netherwood Knoll Elementary Schools in Oregon through “Operation Senior Smiles,” James Madison Memorial High School Spartans Youth Service Club, Madison West High School Unity Club, and Girl Scout Troop 2181.
Thank you for being a volunteer with Independent Living, Inc.

With this issue of the newsletter, we recognize 268 volunteers who deliver meals for our Evening Meals on Wheels program. Thank you so much for opening your hearts and your cars to support seniors! We appreciate what you do every day.

Volunteers are unique and important members of our team. You help us meet our mission of serving seniors and adults with disabilities. Your dedication and many hours of service matter to the seniors and adults with disabilities we serve together. Thank you!

Robert Allard
Jacqueline Anderson
Austin Anderson*
Susan Anderson*
Helene Androski
Jean-Michel Ane
Sigurd Angenent
Victoria Angenent Mari
Benjamin August
Joleen August
Jean Bae
Michael Bae
James Bakken
Helen Baldwin
Judy Balistreri
Jack Barker
Laura Becker
Kyle Beckman
Joyce Behrend
Steve Bell
William Bender
Kathleen Benson
Colleen Berg
Sue Bezzi
Nicole Biessman
Robert Billig
Lynn Bodi
James Bren
Brooks Brenneis
Virginia Brenneis
Kay Bryan
Cindy Ann Byczek
David Carlson
Rick Chappell
Jon Chilsen
Eric Christensen
Craig Clemons
Ralph Cohen
Howard Crook
Linda Crumbaugh*
Mary Cullen
Heather Davison
Jerry Denu
Alfonso Del Rio
Alfonso Del Rio
Rosanne Delfosse
David Dexter
Tami DiPlazza
Danna Dold
Elizabeth Dressel
Suzanne Droste
Kathleen Drury Buysk
Diana Duplissis*
Tammy Earl
Cynthia English
Emily Engstrom
Larry Epstein
Dorothy Ewing
Susan Ezalarab
Erin Fallon-Mosleth
Kelly Ferrett
Erica Fleming
Dennis Frey
John Galewski
Sherry Gammeter
Cheryl Gandolph*
Ahmet Gashi
Venera Gashi
Elizabeth Geiger
Patricia Geiger
Susan Geiger
Rita Giovannoni
Jeffrey Goldsby
Vicky Goplen
Amy Goathard
Larry Gray
Jill Greve
Lea Groff
Wayne Groff
Veronica Gusi
Victoria Hahn*
Kathy Harberg Liebowen
Bruce Harville
Bonnie Havey
Bryan Helt
James Helt
Steve Henningfield
Barbara Hennings
Ronald Hennings
Sonja Henrikson
Courtney Henry
Gail Henslin
Richard Henslin
Jon Herremen*
Kyle Herzog
Paul Hexum
William Holman
Gary Hughes
Michael Hull
Carol Hulland
Alain Hung
Amy Jacobsen
Paige Janquart*
Autumn Jesberger
Hunter Jesberger
Jacilyn Joanis
James Johnson
Joshua Johnson
Leslie Johnson
Elaine Jouard
Michael Kafka
Jill Kaiser
Stephen Kaiser
Robert Kapinos
John Keating*
Leroy Kemnitz
Stephanie Kirker
Gregg Kissel
Lyndsey Klump
Samuel Koebe
Jeanette Koenig
Mark Kolan
Therese Kolan
Jennifer Kolb
Nadine Konrath
Marianne Korol*
Jill Koskelin
Michael Krapflfe
Steve Krogman
Jeffrey Kubby
William Kubsh
Arthur Kurtz
Robin Kurtz
Linda Lane
Rich Lane
Mark Langworthy
Alexandra Larsen
John Larson
Craig Lehnher
Joanne Lehnher
Judy Levine
Lillie Lewis
Susan Little
Darlene Lobenstein
Jack Longert
Janos Lonyay
Amy Lord
Amy Lowe*
Diane Luebke
Peter Luther
Marie Madigan
Thomas Marmet
Sue Mauz
Connie McDonnell
Eryn McDonald
Chris McGuire
Jack McGuire
Jim McMillan
Donald Mickelson
Maria Montello*
Shannon Montgomery
Len Mormino
Darrin Most
Lottie Most
Doris Mueller*
Carmela Mulroe
Dakota Murphy
Trina Nelson
Denise Nettesheim
Rhonda Nichols
Elizabeth Nitschke
Robyn Noble
Edward Nowicki
Dave Olig
David Olson
Angela Owens
Bruce Peach
Heide Peikert
Nick Pelzer
Marie Peller
Nathan Phillips
Joseph Pichler
Deb Pienkowski
John Pinger
Dawn Pollard
Timothy Porter
Ilba Pregu
Betty Proise
Amanda Purington*
Christine Quall
Mike Quall
Tim Radelet
Jim Raskob
Janet Rasmussen
Zach Rawson
Marlynn Rebmam
Dale Redmond
Nancy Reimer
Robin Reisford*
Wendi Reuter
Kerrin Rhinesmith
Sid Richards
Pat Ring
Lenke Robos
Cathy Rotter
Ron Rotter
Joan Russell
Kathleen Ryan
Patrick Ryan
Kathryn Sales
Trisha Samuelson
Loretta Sanchez
Chad Schaal
Isaac Schaefer
Benjamin Schmidt
Brianina Schmidt*
Kristine Schmitt
Mandi Schoville
Mimi Schneider
Laura Schultz
Nicole Schultz
Kristy Schuster
Joseph Schwartz
Chad Schwen
Troy Schwenn
Aimee Schwicheten
Barbara Seth*
Tom Siers
Tammy Sinden
James Siriani
Beth Ann Smith
Emily Smith
Tim Sondrey
Frank Stanisci
Kathy Stanton
Noel Stanton
Briata Statz
Joseph Statz
Rebecca Sterud
William Sterud
Stephen Stone
Greg Stravskis*
Jenny Strugn
Xenia Sundell
Johnna Swenson
Brett Tauber
Julie Tauber
Theodore Tittibis
Angela Troia*
Melissa Tumble
Lesa Turco
Shelley Udell
Kimberly Upton
Nellie Vallarta-Ast
Sandra Vega-Semoreil
Michael Vraniak
Tara Vraniak
Michael Walker
Timothy Ward
Holly Wegner
Rachel Wezeman
Nancy Winter
Diane Wirks
Heather Wolowik
Tom Wolowik
Levi Wood
Jennifer Zahn
Jennifer Zuk

Adopt-A-Routes
ACI Wireless
Beacon Technologies
GE Healthcare (2 routes)
Horizon Rotary
Madison Breakfast Rotary
Mom’s Club
Ryan Brothers Ambulance Service
St. Mary’s Care Center
TASC Corp.
Token Creek Lion’s Club
Youth with a Mission
Zimbrick Buick
Zimbrick Honda

* also volunteers in other areas at ILI
Evening Meals on Wheels Works to End Senior Hunger at Home

The number of seniors age 60 and older facing the threat of hunger is devastatingly high. Nearly one in six seniors in America – a total of 8.8 million – may not know when they will have their next meal or where it will come from. Since the onset of the recession from 2007 to 2011, the number of seniors experiencing the threat of hunger increased by 42 percent.

Addressing hunger

Nationwide, more than 5,000 Meals on Wheels programs are dedicated to serving seniors. The need for Meals on Wheels varies. For some, injury or illness makes meal preparation exhausting. A few are no longer confident in cooking with a hot stove. Others are making a heart-wrenching financial decision between medication and groceries or heat. Many are too proud to let others know they’re hungry.

“It’s a pretty inexpensive investment for staying independent at home,” Michelle Christenson says. Christenson is the manager of the Evening Meals on Wheels program, the only evening program in Dane County. “Unfortunately, for some of our elders, even $7.50 is a challenge. That’s why we dearly appreciate every donor, every corporation, every foundation who contributes to this program so that no senior goes hungry.”

What Makes Evening Meals on Wheels Special

Independent Living’s Evening Meals on Wheels program is the only Wisconsin program to have the highest level of accreditation offered by the Meals on Wheels Association of America. The evening program relies on fundraising to help support the program, keep meals affordable and provide subsidies for low-income elders.

Meals from the Independent Living program are hot and nutritious, and accommodate a variety of dietary restrictions such as diabetic, low-sodium, vegetarian and gluten-free. They are made fresh daily by chefs in the company’s commercial kitchen on Segoe Road in Madison. The meal is then delivered to the client’s home between 4:30 and 6 p.m. by a dedicated corps of volunteers.

“Volunteers are more than delivery drivers,” Linda Lane points out quickly. Lane is the chief operating officer at Independent Living. “For a few minutes every day, they are welcome visitors for a homebound person who may have no one else talking with them. Volunteers are also trained to do a safety check, to recognize when something is wrong and make that important call for help.”

About 250 volunteers deliver more than 38,000 evening meals to homebound individuals in a year’s time, Lane adds.
“Can Do” and A Little Help Means Independence  (continued from page 1)

and care for eight years. She also cared for her mother and mother-in-law, and helped her quadriplegic sister for years.

Arlene is very matter of fact in describing her life experiences, and she’s had more than a few. Her mother was a Wisconsin native who moved to North Dakota for a teaching job. Her father, from the State of Oregon, moved to North Dakota “to make his fortune in wheat,” Arlene guesses. Her parents met during the 1918 Spanish Influenza epidemic, when her mother nursed area residents including her father.

Theirs was a brief marriage. Arlene was barely three, with a younger sister and brother, when her father died from appendicitis. Arlene recounts that a doctor summoned from 30 miles away arrived inebriated and that a second doctor from 40 miles away hastily operated right there on the kitchen table. Unfortunately, the appendix had ruptured. Her father died a week later.

Arlene’s mother kept the isolated farm going as best as she could. Then, when Arlene was nine, the house burned to the ground, ending life on the plains. Her mother moved her family to Wisconsin.

During the Great Depression, Arlene enrolled at Whitewater State Teachers College. In her senior year, her mother became ill and unable to work. Arlene left college to help.

Living in Madison, Arlene met a fellow North Dakota native: Clarence. They married in 1940 and had 35 years together. A skilled cabinetmaker, Clarence had his own business with Arlene as his partner. They grew their business and their family, with two sons and a daughter. All three children, plus mates, plus all five grandchildren and mates, have college degrees, a source of pride for Arlene.

In 1975, Clarence passed away. In 1979, Arlene married Bill, a widower who also had been a family friend. They had nine years together before he passed away.

These days life seems a bit quieter but still active. In the house are many assistive devices, mostly items Arlene has repurposed. Furnishings in the house are arranged within reach, and two canes, a walker and “lots of liniment” help Arlene navigate. Always close at hand is her iPad, for keeping in touch and “because there is so much to learn.”

Reverting to gentle humor yet again, Arlene jokes that she lives “in the triangle, meaning my bedroom, the bathroom and the kitchen!” She pauses, then adds, “I have a full life.”

THANK YOU!
Independent Living, Inc. is grateful to receive and recognize these special tribute gifts between December 14, 2013, and February 24, 2014.

Remembering
Cora Bailey
   Karen Gunderson
Beverly Bontrager
   Nancy Abraham
   Jeanine Bontrager & Michael Murphy
   Eldon & Velma Peterson
Virginia Davenport
   Kendra & Jerry Tutsch
Houghton Drives
   Susanne Perina Steinmetz
Dorothy Fisher
   Darlene & Ross Willis
Maxine Golbach
   Frances Anderson
   Rita Giovannoni & Kevin Bartrom
   Sara Golbach
   Kelly Mahoney
   Mary McCanna
   Marjorie & William Pope
Dorothy Harma
   Donna O’Leary
   Melvin Huset
   Marilyn Huset
   Lucy Kraft
   Daniel Kraft
Mary Alice Schmitz
   Jean McCormick
   Colleen Nelson
   Kathleen O’Brien
   Michael & Debra Jo Palm
   Mary Vangrunsven

Honoring
Ted Waldbillig
   William Waldbillig & Joan Collins
Teddy & Joe Waldbillig
   William Waldbillig & Joan Collins
What Makes a Community Special?

Whether an apartment community is filled with college freshmen, young families or retired octogenarians, some have that special atmosphere, that sense of belonging that is so inviting. We asked two residents at Independent Living’s The Gardens what they thought of the place they call home.

Ione Peschl

Six years ago, Ione Peschl walked into The Gardens and thought she walked into a hotel when she saw the grand two-story lobby and lovely living room. “But we don’t call it a hotel lobby,” she says. “It’s friendlier than that. This is home.”

A Wisconsin native, Ione lived in Las Vegas for 30 years where she and her husband frequently hosted backyard parties. After she was widowed, she moved to Madison to live near—but not with—an adult son. The hustle and bustle of Vegas moved right along with Ione. Her energy, combined with new friends at The Gardens, resulted in fresh community events like skits, birthday club, singalongs, additional Bible studies, and even weekly dinners with bring-your-own bottle of wine.

An open-minded staff, and a community of people who share similar values—not necessarily similar opinions—make The Gardens appealing to an outgoing personality like Ione.

“Oh, I just love it!” Ione says, with a charming smile. “It’s the people who keep me here. I’m 85 and I’m the youngest one of the four of us who play Euchre every night. The other gals are 93, 93 and 95.” Thinking for a moment about all the activities she either leads or participates in, Ione then adds, “But I think I’ve done about enough now. I need to make time for my beau. He has a car, and well, you know, we just like to go!”

Rich Reining

“I feel engaged here,” Rich Reining says. “It’s not like you are just paying rent to live out your life in a space.”

It’s quite a statement from a man significantly younger than most residents at The Gardens. Reining, a friendly single man with a warm sense of humor, had to give up living alone after suffering a head injury. The injury also ended his ability to drive, and his brother was adamant that Rich move to an apartment community that offered services.

Supplemental personal care services, and proximity to walkable places like movies and groceries, satisfied Reining’s brother that The Gardens was the best choice for Rich. Now, some four years later, Rich no longer needs the extra services but chooses to stay. Location matters, he says, but it’s more than that.

“It’s the community, and it’s all the communal spaces. When you walk in and see the grand living room, sure, it looks nice but it truly is a living room where people meet and talk and share.

“This is a good place with good people, both residents and staff. And it’s jam-packed with amenities . . .” which leads Rich to launch into a list that includes concerts, lectures, in-house activity leagues, rotating art exhibits and even morning coffee klatch. It matters that administrators are willing to listen and take suggestions, as well as ask residents for input. It also matters that this is a place that strives to live a philosophy of keeping residents engaged, Reining adds.
New Senior Living Community Goes Through Permitting Process

Independent Living, Inc. is going through the latest round of the local permitting process to develop a senior living community on Tennyson Lane in Madison. With an overall goal of accommodating 300 residents, the first phase will build 70 independent apartments, 24 assisted living units, 36 memory care apartments and community spaces including living room, dining area, bakery-cafe, and health and wellness center.

The new facility will enable residents to enjoy full lives, shaped by their interests and supported by professionals as needed. It's a campus that will benefit from the nonprofit's 40 years of experience combined with best-in-class practices in Wisconsin.

Making this campus real requires financial investment, and the capital campaign “Building Independent Futures” is ongoing. To learn more about how contributions matter, contact Nicole Schultz, fund development director, at 608-274-7900 or nschultz@independentlivinginc.org.

Suzie the Basset Hound makes friends easily with residents at The Gardens and Segoe Gardens. Shown here with Alice, Suzie (aka Runaround Sue) is more than happy to give and receive attention. Her human is the Evening Meals on Wheels Manager Michelle Christenson, who regularly brings Suzie to do important pet therapy work at Independent Living, Inc.