40 Years of Serving Seniors

A 40th anniversary is worth commemorating, and all it took was a STEP and a SMILE in 1973 to start an adventure. The result was Independent Living, Inc., now one of Dane County’s foremost providers of senior services.

Back in the late 1960s, STEP (Services to Elderly Persons) and SMILE (Services to Maintain Independent Living for the Elderly) provided transportation, home safety assessments, telephone reassurance and friendly visiting programs, among others. With assistance from community leaders, these programs merged in 1973, and became Independent Living, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Today, Independent Living still offers these same services plus more: Evening Meals on Wheels, housekeeping and yard work, home medical services with nursing and therapy, home sharing with live-in companions, personal care, financial counseling and management, volunteer chore corps and Kibble on Wheels, among others. All of these programs benefit from donations and grants to help keep services affordable for all seniors.

CEO Rita Giovannoni has been with the organization since 1989, and it is during her tenure that Independent Living branched into senior living communities. The first was an assisted living called Chandler Home. Chandler Home was closed and residents relocated when the agency acquired and retrofitted a senior housing complex on the near west side of Madison, and named it The Gardens Independent Apartments and Segoe.

DEMENTIA DOESN’T HAVE TO MEAN DOOM

Researched and Written by Michael Grasmick

Dementia, long thought to be an inevitable process of aging, has been shown to have several different causes, may be reversed and may even be prevented.

Dementia is a loss of mental skills that affects daily life. It can cause problems with your memory and how well you can think and plan. Dementia is not a disease itself but a group of symptoms caused by various diseases or conditions such as vascular disease caused by stroke, Alzheimer’s disease or anxiety and depression. Usually dementia gets worse over time, and the rate varies for each person. Some people stay the same for years. Others lose skills quickly.

Our chances of having dementia increase as we get older. But this does not mean that everyone will get it. People rarely have dementia before age 60. But after age 85, up to half of all adults have it.

Prefer to receive this newsletter by email? Send your email address to marketing@independentlivinginc.org
LETTER FROM RITA

Bloom where you are planted.

Although cliché, how appropriate is this phrase when thinking about our senior population and the challenges they face. The 85-plus population is projected to triple from 5.7 million in 2011 to 14.1 million in 2040. More than half of all 85-year-olds are likely to suffer some dementia.

Ready for more numbers? The population 65 and older increased from 35 million in 2000 to 41.4 million in 2011 (an 18% increase). By 2040, there will be about 79.7 million older persons. These numbers and projections come from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging.

Where are these people going to live? How will they manage their independence? Who will take care of them when they need care?

These are the very questions we want to answer for the community we serve. The shortage of senior housing in the future is facing us now, and we’re answering that need by building a senior living community on Madison’s north side. Not only does the need exist, the options in this area are few for the elders who want to stay where they have built their lives and connections.

Like our other senior living residences, this will be more than a place for a couch and a pillow. This is about thriving where you live, and we plan to take it to a new level on Madison’s north side. For better health, we will create opportunities for seniors to blossom. And in creating those opportunities, we intend to stave off dementia. Through exercise, social programs, and on-site medical services, the seniors who reside with us will have a comfortable lifestyle filled with as much independence as they can manage.

Join us as we make a difference for the seniors in our future. Help us make this building come alive with your support. To learn more, contact Chief Housing Officer Jim Shaver or Fund Development Director Nicole Schultz at 608-274-7900.

Thank you for your support.

Rita Giovannoni, CEO

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On www.GreatNonProfits.org, a client writes:

I have been the main caregiver for my Mother for the last 10 years. She is now 96, and in the last couple of years I have become increasingly burned out. I now have two wonderful women who help my Mother on Saturday, Sunday and Monday so that I can have a break. They are wonderful and so kind and caring, and I am so grateful to them, and to Independent Living, for all they do.
WHAT A DIFFERENCE LAUNDRY CAN MAKE

Doing the laundry can be tedious. Or symbolic.

For Pamela Parkin, it’s a sign of independence. Limited by severe osteoarthritis, she struggled to use the laundry room in her home’s lower level. Most often, she relied on her disabled husband to navigate stairs.

In their bi-level home in Oregon, the laundry room, storage, family room and hobby areas are all on the lower level. It’s been five years since Pamela was able to really manage the stairs.

Now she’s enjoying her home again, including the laundry room. A stair lift, arranged by Independent Living, Inc., means Pam can live in and use her whole house.

“And Dick doesn’t have to do the laundry,” Pam adds, with a chuckle.

A retired licensed practical nurse, Pam knew a stair lift would make a difference, but the expense was prohibitive. She and her husband, both veterans and retired, live on a fixed income. Then they read in a local shopper that Independent Living, Inc. had received a county grant to help seniors with home modifications. They called and learned they qualified for funding.

The stair lift that changed their lives is a chair that glides along the stairway. “I can go downstairs and upstairs as I want to or need to,” Pam said. “It gave me my independence back,” Pam says.

Independent Living, Inc. still has grant funds available for qualified applicants who need home modifications.

Call 274-7900 for more information.

WE SALUTE ROUNDY’S!

Roundy’s Foundation awarded our Evening Meals on Wheels program a grant of $4,700. We appreciate this support, especially because our program receives no federal funding. Pictured are CEO Rita Giovannoni with Terry Rock, store director at Copps in Fitchburg, and his team who presented the check on behalf of Roundy’s.

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
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
Honoring Those Who Made A Difference in Our Lives

Remembering, honoring, celebrating: these are wonderful ways to pay tribute to someone who matters to you or a special occasion. In this newsletter—our annual tribute issue—we share a few stories about special people who have been memorialized by others with tribute gifts.

Robert Schmitz

Robert "Bob" Schmitz was born Sept. 26, 1921. One of five children, he grew up in a family business that was started by his grandfather in 1898 called The Hub Men’s Clothing store in downtown Madison. He graduated from high school in 1938, and married the "love of his life," Mary Alice Niederer, in 1941. In 1943, he was inducted into the U.S. Air Force and served in Panama.

When Bob returned, he became president of The Hub, Ed Schmitz & Sons after the war until the company closed in 1991. He served as Board Chair of the Chamber of Commerce in 1973, the year the Central Madison Committee was formed, which would eventually become Downtown Madison Inc (DMI). His daughter, Susan Schmitz, now leads DMI. Bob served in many community roles in civic and business groups, including the chair of the United Way Campaign in 1962.

Bob and Mary Alice raised five children and were married 71 years. Their children described it as a marriage like no other: They adored and loved each other every day of their married life. With 11 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren, Bob accomplished yet another goal, this one related to his longevity. For his 90th birthday, he played nine holes of golf with his six grandsons at Tumbledown. He said it was a dream come true, and his putting was not too bad. On June 27, 2013, Bob passed away from kidney failure at the age of 92.

Fae Renfert

Born in Norwalk, Wis., in 1918, Fae Wepfer was the second of three children, and grew up working in the family drug store. In 1936, she graduated from high school and moved to Madison, where she worked. During WWII, Fae helped in the war effort by working as a cryptographer for The Office of Strategic Services Society, in Washington, D.C.

In 1945, she graduated from the University of Wisconsin and became a social worker. Her varied career included stints as a parole officer, an adoption agent, and a child welfare case worker. In the late 1950s, Fae married Frederic Renfert, and raised three sons. They lived for 35 years in the UW-Arboretum area. Fred passed away in 2000.

A terrific mother, she made each child feel that he was her favorite, says one of the sons. Fae was naturally curious and liked the adventure of driving without a plan. She was an early riser, a hard worker, a political conservative, and a gourmet cook. She had many interests, including current events, bird watching, and health foods.

Fae would always bake a cake for a school function or drive a neighbor kid to school. She was known for handing out homemade doughnuts instead of candy on Halloween. She loved her family, and she loved driving her green Volkswagen Beetle around town, something she did until she was 89. She passed away at Segoe Gardens Assisted Living on Jan. 8, 2013.

Celebrate a milestone, recognize someone special or remember a loved one with an honorary or memorial gift in their name to ILI. Your gift will be appreciated, and if requested, your tribute will be shared with the person you designate (without disclosing the dollar amount). Thank you for choosing Independent Living, Inc.


Lucille Oakey
Lucille McNelly was born April 11, 1921, in Lancaster, Wis. When her father, a school principal, died, the family moved to Madison where she graduated from high school. Later, she attended the University of Wisconsin to study music, until she married Charles Oakey in 1942. She worked to help put him through law school. They had four children, and in 1952, the family moved to Texas; in 1963, the family moved back to Wisconsin, finally settling in Madison.

Lucille was a devoted volunteer. She spent a lot of her time caring for elderly relatives on both sides of the family. She cared for her mother, who lived the last few years of her life at Attic Angels before it was acquired by Independent Living, Inc. She also cared for Charles’s mother, his great aunt, and finally Charles himself. He was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and died in 1991; her daughter Carol passed away in 2011.

For many years, Lucille was a volunteer delivering Meals on Wheels. And she had a notable passion for singing, including singing in the church choir for 40 years.

When living alone in Madison became too much for Lucille, she moved to The Gardens apartments, then Segoe Gardens Assisted Living. There, Lucille became known for her passion for music and talent for playing the piano, often entertaining friends and neighbors.

Living at Segoe Gardens “was a good choice,” son John says. “She thrived here, enjoying the last three years of her life.” At age 91, Lucille passed away on October 25, 2012.

Monica Francois
In 1931, a vivacious red head and voracious reader was born in Vermont, Wis. Her name was Monica Dolohanthy. She graduated from Belleville High School in 1950, and that fall, married Richard Francois. Together they raised eight children, worked to build the Francois Companies, Francois Ford and Francois Oil, and became solid, active members of the Belleville community. Richard passed away in 2006.

Members of the family love to comment that, being full blooded Irish, Monica was extremely proud of her heritage, and she took St. Patrick’s Day celebrations to a new level. She also made Christmas special; Christmas Eve will never be the same, they said. She made the magic of believing come alive. Devoted to her family and husband, Monica adored her husband. They gardened together every day in the summer and canned all of it for winter to feed eight children. Richard was her soulmate, her muse and her card partner, say the children.

Monica loved playing bridge. She also loved the library, and served as president of the library board. A local librarian once commented that Monica probably read every novel in the building. Always generous to those in need, she supported many projects important to her community, including St. Mary of Lourdes Church fund raising dinner, the Belleville Pool and the restoration of Lake Belle View. After Alzheimer’s became prevalent in her life, Monica relied on her family and on Independent Living, Inc., for assistance. She passed away at home on December 20, 2012.

THANK YOU
Independent Living, Inc. is grateful to receive and recognize these special tribute gifts made between March 1 and July 28, 2013.

Remembering
Harold Berghammer
Lydia Berghammer
Gordon Christensen
Donna O’Leary
Selma Johnsen
Christina Getty
Esther Kaplan
Earl & Ellie Munson
Robert Laurion
Marilyn & Robert Laurion
Jackie Rector
Harleen Rector

Fae Renfert
Patricia Baker
Thomas Gloudehans
James & Nancy Lamar
Jeryl & Paul McGinley
Gretchen & Gordon Renfert
Robert Schmitz
Deborah Archer
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Susan & Charles Carlson
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Patricia & Arthur McClure
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Thomas Zimbrick
Michael & Jacquelyn Cassidy
Ted & Cindy Waldbillig
Gwyneth Strasbaugh
Kathleen Strasbaugh

Honoring
Jon Douglas Baller
Alliant Energy Foundation
Pam Lombardino
Carl & Myrtle Boedecker

Monica Francois
DEMENTIA DOESN’T HAVE TO MEAN DOOM (continued from page 1)

Research from the University of Wisconsin has found that anxiety and depression can cause dementia, and these disorders can be effectively treated. Art Walaszek, M.D, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Vice Chair for Education, recounted the story of “Jean,” a 67-year-old retired teacher with memory issues who was feeling stressed and tense.¹ She had become withdrawn, and less interested in book club and volunteering. Because an aunt had Alzheimer’s disease, there was concern that Jean too might have the disease.

After a comprehensive evaluation, a psychiatrist determined that Jean had generalized anxiety disorder, the most common mental illness in older adults. She did not have Alzheimer’s disease. After reviewing risks and benefits of various treatments, Jean elected to exercise 30 minutes every day, take an antidepressant and begin cognitive-behavioral therapy. In less than two months, Jean’s anxiety had dropped, her memory improved, and there was no evidence of dementia.

There are a number of actions to prevent dementia or slow it down. Art Kramer, neuroscientist at the University of Illinois, studied the impact of aerobic exercise (mostly walking) for just 45 minutes, three days a week. Participants had a significant increase in brain volume in just a year. Exercise increases the number of new neurons, the effectiveness of connections across different brain regions and the blood supply to the brain.²

The brain also likes “novelty,” Dr. Kramer says, which can come from intellectual challenges, and socializing. Intellectualizing is learning something new like a musical instrument or a game, learning Sudoku (a puzzle that uses numbers) or reading new novels.² Socializing helps to stimulate the brain. Bryan James, an epidemiologist at the Rush Alzheimer’s Disease Center in Chicago, studied the social lives of about 1100 people age 80 and older. He studied two groups, those with active social lives and those who did not.

GALLERY GREATS

Beautiful works by two Madison painters are on exhibit now at The Gardens Gallery through the end of August. The art exhibit features Chuck Bauer, known for his plein air paintings, and Odvar Klovrud, known for his serene landscapes. More than a dozen works by the artists have sold since the show opened in July.

Plein air is an art form of painting outdoors on site. Bauer works in oil, acrylic, and watercolor. He also is known for The Soap Opera, a business he co-owns with his life partner, Chuck Beckwith. The Soap Opera is one of the oldest businesses on Madison’s State Street.

Klovrud picked up a paint brush for the first time in retirement. In 2000, when he and his partner sold Tellus Mater, a State Street gift store, Klovrud looked for something to do. He learned guitar and accordion; then, in 2005, he began to paint, concentrating on oil on canvas.

The Gardens Gallery is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and is located on the first floor at The Gardens Independent Retirement Community, 602 N. Segoe Rd., Madison.

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Thank You to Our Volunteers

With this issue of our newsletter, we recognize 144 volunteers who open their hearts and their time to help seniors. Our spring newsletter listed Meals on Wheels volunteers; in this issue, we honor volunteers who donate hours of service in so many other areas. You make a difference to the seniors and adults with disabilities we all serve. We appreciate all that you do. Thank you!

Those with active social lives left the house to go to restaurants or sporting events, play bingo, make day trips and do unpaid community and volunteer work. After 12 years, folks with active social lives were half as likely to have dementia, compared to those who weren’t socially active.

Some evidence suggests that “brain food” such as the omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants found in vegetables and red wine may help nourish the brain. With tongue in cheek, Dr. Kramer suggests, “The walking book group with good red wine: You walk; you talk about something stimulating – a book that you’ve read – with good friends. How can you beat it? It’s got all four.”

1. Art Walazek, MD, presentation at UW Mini Med School, June 20, 2013, Your Resilient Brain: Coping with Stress.
2. Patti Neighmond, National Public Radio, April 15, 2013, How Exercise And Other Activities Beat Back Dementia

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Miscellaneous/Office
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Robert Genson
Joseph Giordano
Michael Grasmick
Amy Heit
Stephen Kaiser
Stephanie Loger
Katherine Mathes
Mary Kay McCanna
Doris Mueller
Jeffrey Ritacca
Ann Scheele
Judy Vock
Connie Wall

Kibble on Wheels
Judy Ballweg
Pamela Barsness
Patricia Bewick
Sam Blum
Mary Blum
Dianne Brakarsh
Patricia Carney
David Drenk
Emily Ebert
Cindi Erickson
Jay Esser
Cheryl Gandolph
Ann Gonzagowski

Kitchen Helper
Lindsey Blazel
Mary Buchner
Geraldine Clark
Ditra Comer
Ruth Edson
Caroline Horn
Barbara McNabb
Dories Neis
Chloe Wilkerson
Ava Wilkerson

Telephone Reassurance
Sandra Fleck
Steven Fox
Michael Goetz
Melissa Harrison
Kay Hayes
Michael Helland
Peter Leege
Abigail Musselman
Barbara Seth
Britt Verstegen
Luke Waggoner
40 Years of Serving Seniors (continued from page 1)

Gardens Assisted Living. At the urging of the City of Fitchburg, the agency also constructed the area’s first apartment building dedicated to low-income seniors, McKee Park Apartments. Not to be left out, Sun Prairie became the site of the next senior living community to be built. Olympic Village has 69 condominium homes surrounding two ponds and a clubhouse, in a residential area near convenient shopping.

Today, the nonprofit agency is taking on a new senior living community project, an apt gift to commemorate 40 years of senior services. The Northside Prairie Senior Living Community will be located on Tennyson Lane, near Lake View School. The property is being designed by Engberg Anderson with construction management from CG Schmidt. Fundraising is underway with anticipated ground breaking in 2014.

On a lighter note, a colony of 40 pink plastic flamingos is roosting periodically at several Independent Living locations this summer, including the CEO’s home. Several birds were fancifully decorated by employees. The fun flock calls attention to ILI’s anniversary. To see more photos, visit facebook.com/IndLivingInc.