



Altenheim
SENIOR LIVING
A Not-For-Profit Life Plan Community

18627 Shurmer Road • Strongsville, Ohio 44136
www.altenheim.com

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Flourish

FALL 2020

"We've Always Stood for Family"



These have been extraordinary times. Altenheim salutes the compassionate, steadfast staff who unfailingly provide quality care during these most challenging times. Here are a few of their stories.

Preventing Loneliness Upstairs and Down

Linda Begley, Director of Activities at Shurmer Place Memory Assisted Living, is concerned for her residents. The required coronavirus precautions have led to drastic changes in routines that residents counted on. "When COVID-19 precautions began in March this year, CDC guidance required us to isolate every resident in their rooms and cancel all visitors and group activities," she said. "There are no beauticians, no volunteers, no musicians and no church services coming in." Not surprisingly, confusion and loneliness set in. "They don't understand why they can't see family, and they have trouble understanding what their masked caregivers are saying because they don't have the visual cues that help them with comprehension. Moreover, the lack of interaction is impacting each resident's memory and confidence."



Fortunately, Linda has found many resourceful ways to help residents understand and cope. "Many of our residents remember the 1950s polio epidemic, so that's how I explain this new virus so they can understand its seriousness. And since we staff members have become the only family that visits them, we try to spend additional one-on-one time with them each day and make them smile with jokes and positive interactions. Our staff members have also teamed up to provide individual weekly manicures and hair styling. Now that CDC allows small groups, we arrange socially distanced viewing parties on both floors at which we show funny YouTube videos to encourage laughter and cheer. We also provide technology and help them visit with their family members via Skype or FaceTime."

"Linda has done a tremendous job restructuring the activities program to help keep the residents engaged while maintaining CDC guidelines," Beth Seese, Director of Memory Assisted Living, commented. "She even arranged for volunteers to stand in as visitors for some residents who otherwise would not have been able to participate in our outdoor visitations! We are so blessed that she is part of our team." A family member of a resident also offered her thanks; "I really appreciate Linda making an extra effort to ensure that I was able to FaceTime with Dad." As for Linda, she is grateful for all her co-workers. "Everyone has pulled together to keep our little bubble safe and has done it with kindness and love."

Nutrition Hero

The dining room at Shurmer Place is empty at mealtimes for now. The pandemic has made it necessary for residents to eat alone in their rooms to reduce infection risk. For Elizabeth Robinson, dietary aide at Shurmer Place, this is hard. "I miss seeing and chatting with the residents," she said. "I love making them happy. As hard as it is for them, not being able to see them affects me, too."

Elizabeth takes pride in catering to each resident as much as possible to encourage healthy eating. She will go to great lengths to do whatever will help them enjoy a meal, while also meeting any dietary restrictions. These days the dietary team covers or wraps meals to transport them to the rooms safely. "Meals take a little longer right now, but we work as a team to make it as efficient as possible." And if Elizabeth wants to send a little something special to a resident, whoever delivers it will let that person know that it was from her. "Elizabeth does a fantastic job," said Kim Schulz, Director of Shurmer Place. "Residents look forward to seeing her every day." The Resident Council agrees; "Elizabeth is very popular with the residents. She has been voted employee of the month by Resident Council twice."



Home life has also changed for Elizabeth, but not just for her own safety. "Work, home, supermarket – that's it," she stated. "I care about the residents and want to keep them safe, so I stay home as much as possible." She looks forward to the day when residents and dietary staff can come together in the dining room again. "This has been a life-changing time, but it can't last forever."

Did you know...



- The largest pumpkin pie ever made, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, came from New Berlin, Ohio and weighed 3, 699 pounds
- Monarch butterflies migrate over 2,500 miles to Mexico in the fall and are the only insect that does so
- Americans purchase over 300,000 billion pounds of candy for Halloween
- There are over 2,500 varieties of apples in America

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Message from Paul Psota, CEO

What an extraordinary year 2020 is!

Altenheim has faced many significant challenges since the onset of COVID-19. Providing a safe atmosphere for residents to thrive is our top priority.

The activities staff has been very creative in finding new ways to engage residents. As an alternative to group activities, residents are now being treated to beverage carts, snacks and individual activities throughout the day. With the help of the IT Department and Activities, residents are now able to have family visits using FaceTime, Skype, and phone calls. Residents and families are thrilled to connect. Special social distancing celebrations, including Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Labor Day, were held to the delight of the residents. Each staff member, in every department has shown grace under fire, professionalism when faced with these challenges and an amazing amount of good humor. Never before have I seen our mission so enthusiastically carried out!

An overwhelming amount of support has come from community volunteers, with drive-thru parades, and walks around campus with signs, balloons and pets and were enjoyed by residents from windows or balconies. Community organizations have donated face masks and other PPE, flowers, and cash gifts to staff members experiencing financial hardship. The Strongsville pre-schools arranged an "Adopt-a-Grandparent" card exchange. This support has enhanced the quality of life for the residents. We are tremendously grateful for this outpouring from the community.

There are still so many ways you can help. Participate in the Annual Appeal and become a member of the Giving Society. Did you know that you can make a charitable gift of up to \$300 that can be claimed as a tax deduction even if you take the standard deduction on your 2020 taxes? Your gift will help us be proactive in securing PPE to keep the staff and residents safe. Think about making a planned gift. It is a wonderful way for you to provide for your loved ones and help insure Altenheim's financial strength far into the future. Purchase a brick to pay tribute to a loved one, staff member or just because. Participate in the Holiday Staff fund. Gifts to the Fund will be pooled together and distributed to all employees.

Whatever way you decide to support Altenheim, know that we are grateful for your support and honored and humbled that you choose Altenheim to take care of your loved one.



Our New Healthcare Hero

Life has come full circle for Dr. Burke, the new Altenheim Medical Co-director Dr. Burke has been a hospitalist for her entire career but has always wanted to follow her patients beyond their hospital stays and through their entire healthcare journey.

"I had intended to be a primary care physician with a geriatrics focus when in medical school, but was attracted to the hours of a hospitalist, which allowed me to travel and start a family. It's a great career, but now I'm excited about the opportunity to build ongoing relationships with residents."

When the position of medical co-director became available at Altenheim, Dr. Burke jumped at the chance. "In my experience, the difference between the Altenheim community and other facilities is like night and day," she commented. "The therapy, social services and home health staffs are outstanding and provide great continuity of care. The wound care team does a wonderful job. All staff members are fully committed to the best care, and this makes them stand out."

When asked about her goals as the new co-director, Dr. Burke offered, "I hope to contribute to the high quality of care that already exists and to help prevent hospital readmissions. I look forward to building connections with residents, families and staff. I will also offer my hospital-based experience with COVID-19 when it is helpful. From a personal point of view, I will get great satisfaction from participating in each patient's progress from hospital, through rehabilitation, to home."

"We are pleased to have Dr. Burke on our team as Medical Co-Director, serving the residents with compassionate care in a safe environment," said Paul Psota, Altenheim CEO. "Welcome, Dr. Burke!"

Want to honor an Altenheim Healthcare Hero? Go to: <https://altenheim.com/healthcare-heroes/> Send a note of appreciation or make a gift.

A special thanks to the following for their support during the pandemic:

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|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Benchmark Industrial | Alan Long |
| Dan Cricks | Pins and Needles Sewing Shop |
| Wendy Damato | Jenny Rosenberg |
| Divinity Lutheran Church | Rotary Club of Strongsville |
| David Ferencz | St. John Neumann |
| Grace Church | Strongsville City Schools |
| Glenn G. Hutchison | Strongsville VFW 3345 |
| Jeep Babes of Ohio | Strongsville Women's League |
| Ladies of Corvette Cleveland | Mark Szeltner |

Laughter Through a Mask

Has COVID-19 changed Durell Asongwed's work and life? The answer is, yes – and no. "I'm still the first person my residents see when they wake up and the last person they see before sleep," the nurse assistant commented. "I still help them with their activities of daily living, help our nurses, and take all necessary precautions to keep residents and co-workers safe. And I still do all I can to make them laugh or smile." But Durell admits there have been changes to everyone's routine. "Social distancing has changed how we do things. Residents eat alone, so we feed each resident separately. They have no visits from loved ones, so we are their only visitors. Our protective equipment has changed the way we communicate. And now I take extra precautions in my personal life to protect our vulnerable residents and my co-workers."



Despite the changes, Durell enjoys his work. He was referred to Altenheim by a friend who spoke highly of the diversity of its staff and the opportunity for STNA training. "Everything my friend said was true," Durell affirmed. "Race, culture and religion don't separate us. After taking the training, I wanted to work here because everyone was so welcoming, and I felt like a member of the family. I work with amazing people who make hard days easier." He feels the same about the residents. "You think you're there for them, but they also do something for you," he commented. "I make them smile, but they make me smile too."

"Durell is always very respectful of the residents he cares for," said Barb Capadona, Human Resources Director. "If I were a resident here, I'd want Durell to care for me." There is a resident who feels the same way; if she knows that Durell is in the building she doesn't want anyone else to care for her.



Keeping Everyone Safely Connected

They worked quietly, unnoticed by most residents and staff, until the pandemic made them COVID tech heroes. Larry Zwegas, Director of Information Technology, Andy Kives, IT Security Specialist, and Stephen Ramsey, IT Helpdesk Specialist, were asked to help solve pandemic communication challenges. Larry explained, "Since many employees are working remotely now, we researched software then built a system that allowed staff to log in for virtual meetings and to work securely from home. We've also improved internet access so that residents and staff can stream media more easily. And we were able to speed up the purchase of tablets to enable more Skype and Zoom virtual visits for our residents. We also offer tutorials to anyone who needs to learn how to use these devices."

Although they seldom interact with staff and residents, the IT team follows all appropriate guidelines to keep everyone safe. They have their temperatures taken daily, and when Stephen visits staff members or residents to help with their hardware and software issues, he masks up, washes his hands before touching their equipment, and maintains social distancing.

The IT team works onsite every workday so they can respond quickly to any need, and all three enjoy the friendly and positive work environment at Altenheim. "We get things done fast because we're a small efficient team," Larry said. "Residents are grateful when we can solve a problem quickly for them without the need for an outside service provider," added Stephen.

Donna Casey, Director of Marketing, greatly appreciates this team's contributions. "The IT team has enabled us to apply the latest digital tools to reach our residents and families during these difficult times, through channels such as e-newsletters, website updates, virtual tours and programing, e-blasts, social media posts and digital campaigns. They are open to innovative approaches that help us reach the community and our families through the media channels they prefer. I also want to thank the team for their dedication to cybersecurity. Their daily monitoring of our systems keeps our information secure."



In Memorium
Blair LaCour, Board of Directors
our colleague and friend
1947-2020

He gave generously of his time and talent to make a positive difference

Corrections

To the 2019 Report to the Community:

Ann Sliva's name was misspelled in the story "Woven into the Community"

Mr. Ronald E. Greinert's name was misspelled
We apologize for these errors.

Postponed



Postponed until 2021

For update go to: <https://altenheim.com/flourish>

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." – Coretta Scott King



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