

# *in touch*

SUMMER 2021

*News & Information From  
Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries*

*Safety, Socialization And  
Stability During The Pandemic*

**DISCOVER HOW ALSM  
COMMUNITIES ARE  
THRIVING**



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*On the Cover:*  
*Ann Harpster, Resident At The Oaks at Pleasant Gap*



Like us and follow us today!





Patricia W. Savage,  
President/CEO

***"So, the answer is YES. Moving to a senior community can provide multiple benefits in a very doubtful time."***

# Greetings!

In the midst of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and with the vaccine now available, folks may ask if this is a good time to move to a senior community. The answer is **YES**.

If you are not certain that this is the time, picture what winter looked like for you this past year. The summer and autumn provided safe outdoor opportunities, but likely those times ended as the winter weather settled in. Most of us became socially isolated as a result of COVID-19, with our routine activities canceled, our favorite restaurants temporarily closed, and general uneasiness about being in public. However, senior communities have amenities that will help residents get through these pandemic times.

Some of those amenities include the availability of meals as well as activities that enable virtual or socially distanced visitation. Strict infection control policies are in place. Common areas like lobbies, elevators, hallways and mail areas are being sanitized. All of the staff members are trained to follow best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and are being screened before (and after) each shift for symptoms of the virus. Many of the staff have received vaccinations. They are obligated not to come to work when they are sick. Staff in the care centers are tested on a regular basis according to the PA Department of Health guidelines.

In addition to the issues of safety and socialization, senior communities may offer predictable financial stability and freedom from tasks that have become bothersome. There is no need to worry about taking care of a home or what the value will be when you want to sell. The current real estate market in your area may be strong for sellers, but the future of the market is hard to predict. Imagine how nice (and safe) it would be not to have to shovel or plow snow.

So, the answer is **YES**. Moving to a senior community can provide multiple benefits in a very doubtful time.

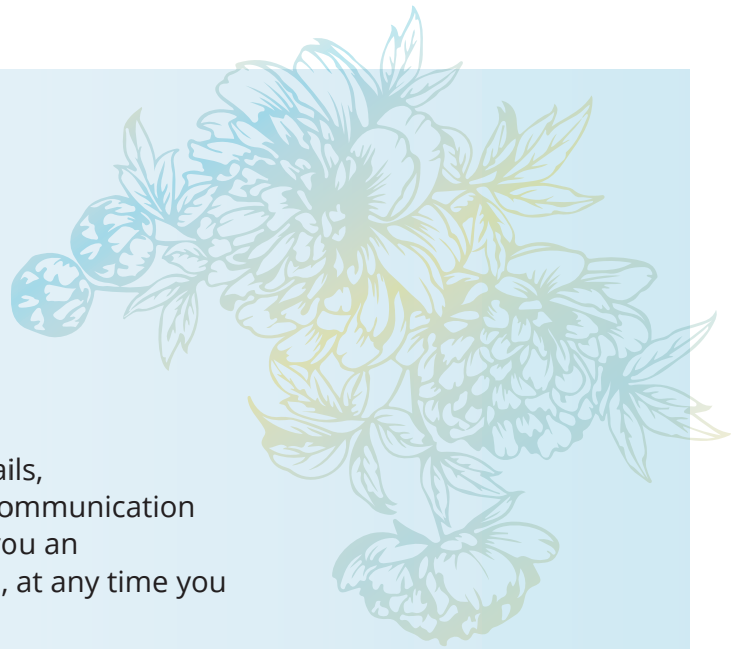
May 2021 be a year of renewed friendships and healthy social environments.

Stay safe.

In service,

Patricia W. Savage  
President/CEO

# Ask The CEO



At Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries (ALSM), we communicate with our staff team, our donors, our board, and persons we serve through a number of newsletters, emails, FACEBOOK, and [alsm.org](http://alsm.org). Yet, as we all know, communication is an ongoing challenge. This column provides you an opportunity to ask specific questions. Of course, at any time you may email me at [patricia.savage@alsm.org](mailto:patricia.savage@alsm.org).

Below are answers to a few questions I've recently heard asked about practices at ALSM.

## **Q: *What can I do to support ALSM?***

**A:** There are many ways in which to support ALSM. Thanks to generous individuals like you, ALSM can provide more than \$2 million in benevolent care each year to people who have outlived their funds. The year 2020 was a difficult one for all of us. It not only created emotional stress for everyone but also financial stress. In addition to the benevolent care need, the cost of personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep our residents, clients, and staff safe far exceeded \$100,000 in unbudgeted funds.

Below are a few suggestions on how to provide assistance:

- Make a gift to the PPE appeal or a specific community or program of ALSM by mail to 998 Logan Blvd., Altoona, PA 16602.
- Donate online by visiting [www.alsm.org/donate](http://www.alsm.org/donate).
- Plan your gift through annuities, IRA charitable contributions, or bequests.
- Donate a portion of the stimulus monies you received.

We are grateful both for your financial and prayerful support. Thank you for your commitment to our shared ministry.

## **Q: *Does ALSM allow pets in independent living residences?***

**A:** Yes! We know how important your pet is to you. ALSM encourages pets to join the independent living residents. The campus administrator will review ALSM's pet policy with you before your move to campus. We ask current residents to inform the administrator before welcoming a new furry friend.





## SAVE THE DATE

***JULY  
26,  
2021***

24th  
Annual ALSM  
Golf Outing  
  
Scotch Valley  
Country  
Club



ALLEGHENY LUTHERAN  
SOCIAL MINISTRIES

*We Touch Lives*

**Now Available!**

## ALSM AT HOME LAWN CARE SERVICES

In addition to the trusted personal care, meal preparation, cleaning and laundry services we provide in your home, ALSM at Home NOW offers professional lawn care and maintenance service!

*\*Service Limited To Blair County*



ALSM AT HOME

Call Today For More Information & A Free Estimate

**814.696.4570 | [www.alsm.org](http://www.alsm.org)**



# Our Communities Have Gro





# own Even During COVID

Moving into a senior living community can be stressful enough. Combine that major life change with the stressors of a global pandemic, and such a move might seem like an impossible task. But whatever the challenges are, Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries' staff works tirelessly to provide as safe and seamless a move as possible.

Take Ann Harpster for example. After she was hospitalized, it was necessary that Ann move into a personal care community. For Ann, there was no question about where she wanted to go – The Oaks at Pleasant Gap, where she had served on the Auxiliary Board of Directors and as a volunteer. Ann says that her move to The Manor at The Oaks at Pleasant Gap went smoothly and that the “staff here is excellent. My room is lovely, and I was able to bring furniture from my house.”

During the past year, many others have also moved in to ALSM communities. After a fall in his home, Jack and his daughter decided it was necessary for him to move into The Lutheran Home at Johnstown. He has lived in the area his entire life and his daughter lives nearby. “It’s been wonderful. Everybody is so cordial and solicitous. They know you by name,” he says, “and they make sure you have what you need.”

Like Ann and Jack, many residents feel relieved that they no longer have to maintain a house,

plus take care of yard work and snow removal, which for retirees, can feel like a full-time job. And, although social activities have been modified because of the pandemic, residents are still able to engage with others and enjoy time among their peers. Living near and safely socializing with other residents lifts spirits and provides a sense of well-being and peace of mind.



Residents can rest assured that safety has been, and continues to be, a primary concern to ALSM staff team members during the global pandemic. Throughout, they have continued to safely provide the best care for all residents, new and old alike. At

the pandemic's outset, ALSM team members were quick to put in place enhanced cleaning and infection control measures. Personal protective equipment and social distancing are top priorities, and the COVID vaccine was made available early on to all residents and staff alike.

Now more than ever, older adults are choosing to live in communities like The Oaks at Pleasant Gap and The Lutheran Home, where accommodations are available for a variety of lifestyles and needs, from meal plan choices to on-site therapy.

As summer unfolds, ALSM looks forward to offering new residents a safe and healthy place to live and live fully.

# Conversations & Creative Solutions

Because of Covid-19 guidelines, residents of the cottages at The Oaks at Pleasant Gap were unable to access the library in the main building. In addition, the Centre County Book Mobile had broken down and was not able to serve the community.

One day while Mary Addis and Eleanor Myers were sitting in one of their garages chatting, this topic came up. Mary mentioned that her former neighborhood in Bellefonte had established a free library, essentially a free-standing box that held books for anyone to borrow and enjoy.

Eleanor, who had taken over the coordination of The Oaks' library a year earlier, immediately perked up. From that moment, the idea for a library box at The Oaks was put into motion. Cathy Mulberger joined the effort and the duo became a trio.

After an initial conversation with administrator Nichole Walker, they were given the green light, and in the ensuing weeks, they did research and identified the best location for such a box.

A local craftsman was found, and a box was constructed. The funds for the construction came from The Oaks Auxiliary Board.

In early November, the library box was installed on the cul-de-sac at the end of Colby Circle. This location is easily accessible for anyone walking the path or from their car.

Eleanor reports that there are nearly forty books currently in the box. All of them have come from Eleanor's extensive collection, and she is happy to share them. There is a range of books from novels to mysteries.

For anyone who would like to donate books to The Oaks' Library Box, please feel free to place in the collection box on Eleanor's porch at 144 Colby Circle.









# Givin



*Mondon Smith with  
The Rev. Dr. Luke  
Rhoads Lutheran of  
the Year Award.*



# g WHILE YOU CAN

Mondon Smith, as a locomotive engineer, knows his home state of Pennsylvania very well. According to his calculations, “I bet I ran at least a million miles back and forth between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh,” he says. For nearly forty years, Mondon was in charge of trains carrying all types of materials and goods for the people of the Commonwealth.

Now retired, Mondon, who resides on his family farm in Altoona, has decided to make some important life decisions while he is still healthy. As he humorously put it, “I have a 19-year-old mind in a 74-year-old body.” One of these decisions has been to leave a legacy gift for ALSM.

Years ago, when his father, Earle, fell and needed assistance for rehabilitation and nursing care, The Lutheran Home was there. Mondon says, “I was really impressed with how they took care of my father.” He knows ALSM cares for those in need and he “supports the fundamentals” of ALSM.

“I wanted to make choices about giving while I still have the opportunity.” He is aware of how quickly time flies, stating, “Your life is like a flicker between two eternities.”

Mondon is using his time and his resources to support ALSM in the care that is provided for those in his beloved hometown. He is an active member at Trinity Lutheran Church in Altoona, having served several terms on the Congregational Council where he used his expertise to chair and serve on the Property Committee. In addition to his planned gift, Mondon has supported the work of Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries in recent years with a donation to ALSM’s Inspiring Lives campaign. In 2018, his contributions to his community and ALSM were recognized, and he was presented with The Rev. Dr. Luke Rhoads Lutheran of the Year award at ALSM’s annual dinner.

To learn more about making a planned gift to benefit Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries, please contact us at 814.696.4500.



# Considering A Move?

**If you are considering downsizing, now is the perfect time!**

**The campuses of The Lutheran Homes at Hollidaysburg & Johnstown and The Oaks at Pleasant Gap currently have apartment homes available.**

## **TIPS FOR DOWNSIZING**

Although minimalism seems to be trendy these days, downsizing and minimalism are age-old practices. Here are some tips to start downsizing and tidying your home:

### ***Less is more.***

Walking into your home with everything a mess can be overwhelming. A perfect example is your closet. How many clothes and shoes do you own? How often do you do laundry? Does the burden of keeping up with your laundry feel like impending doom? If any of these questions struck a chord, you might have too large of a wardrobe! Having fewer clothes and shoes means less laundry and less storage space for your seasonal items. If you have duplicate items, keep the highest quality item only. Remove clutter by purging items that no longer serve a purpose.

### ***A place for everything and everything in its place.***

When an item in your home has a place, your home becomes a stress-free and clutter-free environment. Photographs are one example. Gather all the photos you have in one spot, go through each one, keep only the ones that bring you joy, and then put them in a photo album that you love. Now you have a home for your photos and a great keepsake.

### ***Ask a professional.***

Letting go of items you have had for years, even decades, can be difficult. Asking a professional for guidance in what to let go of and how to let go of it can be exceedingly helpful. The services of a downsizing professional will make the process easier and faster. They can offer advice on what items will best accommodate the space in your new residence.



# THE LUTHERAN HOME AT HOLLIDAYSBURG



To learn more or to schedule a tour, call Kristen at  
The Lutheran Home of Hollidaysburg at 814.696.4527.

# THE LUTHERAN HOME AT JOHNSTOWN



To learn more or to schedule a tour, call Carol at  
The Lutheran Home of Johnstown at 814.225.6844.

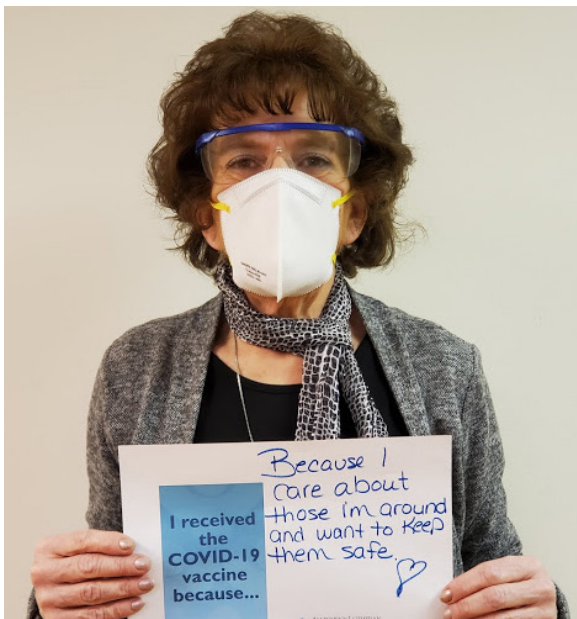


## THE OAKS AT PLEASANT GAP

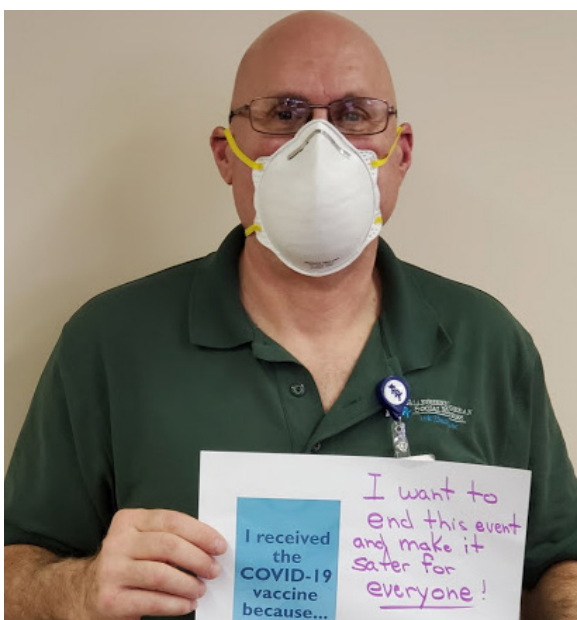
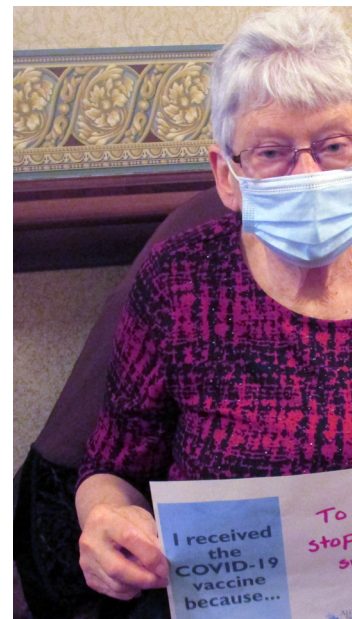


To learn more or to schedule a tour, call Nichole at The Oaks At Pleasant Gap at 814.359.2782.





# Doing Our Part

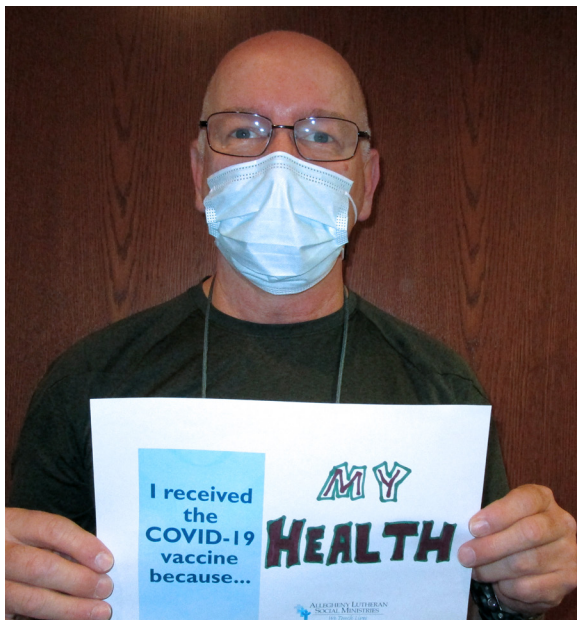


We began a new chapter this year in our fight against COVID-19 with vaccination clinics for staff team members and residents.

After their first round of the Covid-19 vaccine, their personal messages say it all.







# YOUR GIFT MAKES AN IMPACT

Thank you to those who have generously given to support Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries' COVID relief efforts and in support of our appeal for Personal Protective Equipment funds. If you've not had the opportunity and would like to support ALSM, you might be interested to know that many people nationwide contribute to non-profit organizations from stimulus funds they received but didn't really need.

Gifts may be made online by visiting [alasm.org/donate](https://alasm.org/donate) or by mail with a check made payable to ALSM, 998 Logan Blvd., Altoona, PA 16602. Your gifts supports our residents, program participants and staff team members.

Thank you for touching lives!





# Celeb

OUR CEN



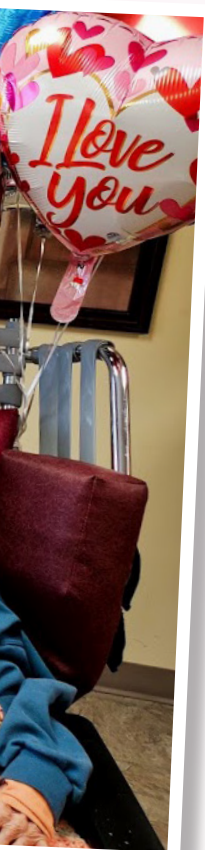


# Celebrating Centenarians

## ALL OF US AT ALLEGHENY LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES CONGRATULATE MARY AND MARGE ON THEIR MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS!

Mary (top left) joined the centenarian club at The Oaks at Pleasant Gap in January. She celebrated the day with gifts, a card shower and chocolate cake. Family and friends joined her at her window and visited through Zoom video calls.

Marge (bottom left) surpassed the centenarian milestone when she turned 105 years old at The Lutheran Home at Johnstown. She is known for the way her eyes light up when she smiles and her love for coffee. Marge celebrated her birthday in March.







# Thank you for your support!

Over the past year, the support of local businesses and community groups for Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries' communities and programs has been overwhelming! Their generous donations brought smiles to our faces and lifted the spirits of our residents and team members.

1. Thompson Pharmacy shares the Yuletide spirit by donating gifts for all of the clients of ALSM at Home.
2. Girl Scouts from the Westmont-Johnstown troop make many "snow friends" for the residents of The Lutheran Home at Johnstown.
3. Sheetz sends MTO sandwiches to help support our hard-working team members at The Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg.
4. Lots of love from Forever Media poured into The Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg on Valentine's Day!











*Top Left - Basketsful of cheer fill the air as residents of The Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg enjoy fresh flowers during the Thanksgiving Holiday.*

*Top Right - No one is too old to enjoy a visit from Santa Claus!*

*Bottom - Santa's helpers at The Oaks at Pleasant Gap are hard at work delivering holiday cheer!*

# ALSM CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS





*Top - Steve Lenten, a team member at The Oaks, shares his musical talents and lifts everyone's spirits.*

*Center Left - Dao and Zoey, two of Santa's pet therapy dogs, walked from window to window to spread their canine cheer at The Lutheran Home at Johnstown.*

*Center Right and Bottom - All bunnies are on deck for decorating for Easter at The Oaks!*



**ES**  
**DAYS**



# GIFTS RECEIVED 6/1/2020 – 4/30/2021

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To Serve People Through A Ministry Of Love, Compassion,  
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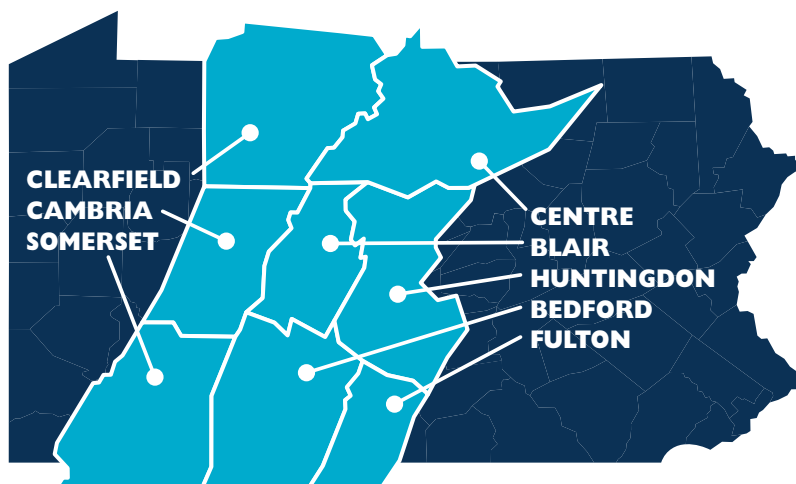
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