

.....  
*Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the  
branch cannot bear Fruit by itself  
unless it abides in the vine, neither can you  
unless you abide in me. - John 15:4*

# The Vine

## CREATING LIFE ENRICHMENT AT MHCO

With many years of service Kristen Niekamp and De Michel provide new direction to MHCO's Life Enrichment programs. Formerly known as "Activities" a name change was made initially at Maple Crest and later at Mennonite Memorial Home (MMH) to reflect the breadth and purpose of meaningful engagement programming for MHCO residents. "We look for programming opportunities that enrich the lives of elders, family members, volunteers, team members and the larger community.

Kristen was named Life Enrichment Director of MMH and Willow Ridge after Barb Gossard retired after a career of faithful service. Previously, Kristen had been serving in similar roles at Hilty Home and Maple Crest since 2004. De rejoined the Maple Crest team as Life Enrichment Coordinator in 2021 having worked previously at Hilty Home, Maple Crest and Willow Ridge since 2008. Both shared how good it feels to be moving toward Spring as routines are getting back to what feels like more reliable programming. Residents no longer need to wear masks and Kristen and De are busy planning events for the year in addition to their meaningful presence via one-on-one conversations with elders. Some ongoing events include hymn sings and listening to music programs with local volunteers and guests. Another favorite includes thematic presentations by volunteers like the one mentioned later in the edition by Fred Steiner



*Kristen Niekamp and De Michel  
lead MHCO's Life Enrichment Programs*

of Bluffton's History. Stretch and bend, exercises, Wii bowling, games and bingo all play an important part of life enrichment along with regular worship services that are coordinated with Lyn Loewen, MHCO's new Chaplain.

Kristen summarizes nicely when asked what keeps you coming back to work every day? "I have greatly benefitted from the relationships that have been created among elders, team members, guests and volunteers. One reason that we have had such successful programming is due to our

volunteers. We would not be able to offer several activities without their time, talent, effort, and devotion to caring for us and giving of themselves. My favorite things about our volunteers is that they are enthusiastic, willing, and ready to take on requests! Our volunteers are so supportive, and I like to see their smiles too. I enjoy our volunteers as much as our residents do. Thank you for all that you do!"

## MHCO Board Members

Elizabeth Kelly, Chair  
Ed Basinger  
Brice Brenneman  
Cliff Harmon  
Ross Kauffman  
Emily Koogler  
Laura Jones  
Myrna McCurdy  
Kevin Nickel  
Greg Ring  
Sherri Winegardner

## MHCO Fund Board Members

Brice Brenneman  
Stan Clemens  
Ross Kauffman

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Jason Cox,  
Interim Executive Director  
Daren Lee, MHCO COO  
Kristen Niekamp –  
Life Enrichment Director

WILLOW RIDGE  
101 Willow Ridge Dr.  
Bluffton, OH 45817  
419-358-1015  
Jason Cox,  
Interim Executive Director  
Kristen Niekamp –  
Life Enrichment Director

MAPLE CREST  
700 Maple Crest Ct.  
Bluffton OH 45817  
419-358-1015  
Kelly Wheeler -  
Executive Director  
De Michel –  
Life Enrichment Coordinator

HILTY PRESCHOOL AND  
CHILD CARE PANDORA  
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Pandora OH 45877  
419-384-3220  
Amanda Dettrow – Director

facebook.com/MHCOOhio  
MHCOLiving.org

# A WORD FROM DAREN

The last 6 months have been significant for MHCO. Most notably, on November 1, 2022, MHCO announced Hilty Home in Pandora would begin the process of closing that location. This was a difficult decision that was the culmination of a lengthy due diligence process. As part of the process, a sale was explored, which included national contacts, but no interested parties responded. Due to ongoing operational difficulties, it was clear that further action was needed, which culminated in closure.

The last elder moved out of Hilty Home on November 29, 2022. We are working with legal counsel and our financial institutions to responsibly work through the ownership transition process. Our hope is the property is repurposed in some way to be beneficial to the Pandora community.

As we continue to face challenges coming out of the pandemic, we are blessed by bright spots as well, including:

- 82% of our Care Partners from Hilty Home transitioned to a Bluffton campus of MHCO as well as 60% of our elders.

- Improvements in census around our communities. Long term care is at over 90% and assisted living reached 100%. Independent Living apartments are at 82%. We have 1 open Independent Living villa out of 50, with a strong waiting list. These are great improvements compared with the last 3 pandemic years.

- MHCO hosted its first fundraising GALA in October. Over \$36,000 was raised at this new annual event. It was a tremendous outpouring of support from the community and the funds provided during the “special ask” portion of the event are being appreciated by our elders. We look forward to some warmer weather so elders can try the new patio furniture, also provided by the event.

- Maple Crest assisted living was recognized by the Ohio Department of Aging’s annual resident satisfaction survey with a 90% satisfaction rate placing them as 13th in the state of Ohio.

- Hilty Preschool & Child Care, which continues to serve families in the same location, had its annual survey in March and achieved their first deficiency free survey.

- Employee recruitment saw a 19% increase between December and March.

- Increased volunteer hours. While not back to pre-pandemic levels, we are seeing growth in the number of hours contributed to MHCO. Thanks to the more than 150 volunteers who are actively engaged in serving elders in our communities.

These signs of progress following a difficult few years reminds us that God is good. God is our hope and part of His provision comes from the support of people like you.

Perhaps what we’re most thankful for is the resurgence of laughter and stories, both from our elders and our Care Partners. Proverbs 17:22 says that “A cheerful heart is good medicine”. We cannot overlook or forget the past few years that affected our elders and Care Partners, but we are moving forward. It is encouraging to hear conversations, music and singing in the buildings, including many new voices. It is a blessing to have a Chaplain again and seeing the spiritual needs of our elders being met in a more intentional way.

Today, MHCO is home to 224 elders and an employer of 199 Care Partners. Thank you for partnering with all of us to help us live out our commitment to providing excellent care and services to those who have entrusted their resources and provision of care to us. Together, we are MHCO. Thank you and God bless.



Daren Lee  
Chief Operating Officer



# 2022 MHCO VOLUNTEERS

## THANK YOU FOR THE MANY WAYS YOU ENGAGE WITH MHCO RESIDENTS

- **Hilty Home**
- **Mennonite Memorial Home**
- **Maple Crest**
- **Willow Ridge**

Bea Agin  
 Jan Althaus  
 Anonymous  
 Darlene Arnold  
 Trudy Baber  
 Elizabeth Barham  
 Don and Ruby Basinger  
 Ed and Diane Basinger  
 Harlan and Pat Basinger  
 Elaine Bauman  
 Marilyn Bishop  
 Ruth Anna Bixel  
 Bluffton University Students  
 Brice Brenneman  
 Daryl and Peggy Bridenbaugh  
 Gloria and Richard Bucher  
 Deborah Buck  
 Marian Busick  
 Bob and Anne Butcher  
 Claude Campbell  
 Dorothy Cassidy  
 Stan Clemens  
 Don Clinger  
 Everett Collier  
 Columbus Grove  
 Christian Church  
 Greg and Edna Conkling  
 Dorothy Couch  
 Bill Croft  
 Thomas Dearth  
 Larry and Judy Diller  
 Gary Dipnarine  
 Ebenezer Mennonite Church  
 Val Eikenbary  
 Ron Epp  
 Linda Ferguson  
 Bob and Sue Fett  
 Dave and Mary Fett  
 Denise Fett

First National Bank  
 Jennifer Fish  
 Ralph and Melba Gerber  
 Harold Gerten  
 Paul Gesler  
 David Glick  
 Gerald Glick  
 Kenneth and Ruth Graber  
 Grace Mennonite Church  
 Del Gratz  
 George Greenway  
 Arman and Sue Habegger  
 Cliff Harmon  
 Rick Hart  
 Rhody Hartman  
 Susan Hawk  
 Marsha Hector  
 David Heffner  
 Ruth Hefner  
 Tom Heimann  
 Jessica Hermiller  
 Bill Herr  
 JoAnn Hilty  
 Jon Hilty  
 Maureen Hoagstrom  
 Brigitte Hoff  
 Kelly Honse  
 Joyce D. Hostetler  
 Joanne Hoyt  
 Diane Huber  
 Jane Inniger & Hannah Davis  
 Jason, Kim, Adam, & Max  
 Fritsch  
 Ross Kauffman  
 Elizabeth Kelly & Ray Person  
 Jim King  
 Ed Kohli  
 Emily Koogler  
 Don Leader  
 Jill Lemley  
 Gary and Donna Lora  
 Ron and Alice Lora  
 Lorrinda Smith  
 Brendon Matthews  
 Louise Matthews  
 Denny and Carolyn Maurer  
 Barb and David McClurg  
 Sara McCune  
 Myrna and Robert McCurdy



*Villa residents Jim and Jane Smith enjoy helping set tables at Maple Crest. "Don't hesitate to volunteer it is quite a bit of fun."*



*Maureen Hoagstrom Villa resident volunteers playing piano at MMH. Here she reviews some hymnals used for MMH Hymn sings. She shares, "There is JOY in serving others."*

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN SUSTAINING THE MISSION OF MHCO!

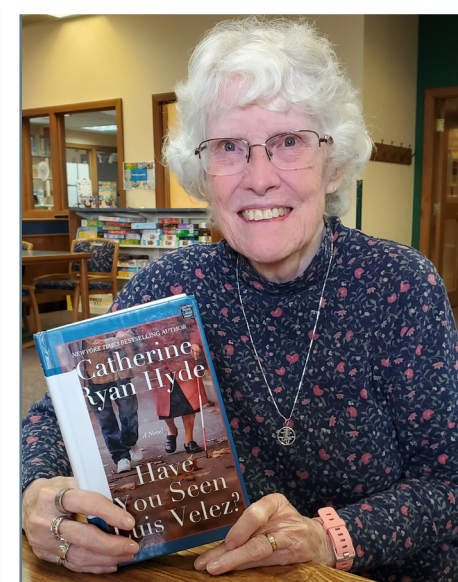
Dane Mettert  
Abbie Meyers  
Dave Miller  
Rita Montgomery  
Dorothy Moser  
Kristen Mullins  
Ruth Naylor  
Nancy Neff  
Linda Nelson  
Kevin Nickel  
Joanne Niswander\*  
Chuck Niswander  
Kristen Parkins  
Andrea Peralta  
Jenny Pilarowski  
Barbara Plaughter  
Pleasant View UMC  
Dick Potter  
Gregg and Peggy Powell  
Mary Ramseyer  
Diane Reichenbach  
Steve Reichenbach  
M. Jean Reichenbach  
Mona Reichenbach  
Marilyn Reigle  
John and Carolyn Rich  
Kelly Ridge  
Linda Rike  
Greg and Mary Ann Ring  
Hazel Rodabaugh  
Teresa Romick  
Ruby Sandy  
Teri Sato  
Terry and Beth Schey  
Canda Schmutz  
Phyllis Scott  
Jane Seibert  
Earlene Sellers  
Service Group  
Diane Sharrock  
Dennis Sheidler  
Jan Shields  
Jim and Jane Smith  
Susie Smith  
Jim and Becky Sprunger

Bob and Marci Stahl  
Grace Stechschulte  
Marsha Stechschulte  
Betsy Steiner  
Mel and Barb Stettler  
Barbara Stratton  
Emma Tuttle  
Jen Vastano  
Gerald Wehri  
Kristen Welch  
Annette Werling  
Betsi and Savannah Werling  
Jan and Gloria Wiechart  
Nancy Williamson  
Sherri Winegardner  
Bill Worthington  
Kerris Wright  
Ed and Nancy Yeager  
Jennifer Yost  
Jeremy and Sunny Zank

*MHCO volunteer Jenny Pilarowski holds one of 9 books used for the current year's selection in the Maple Crest Book Discussion. Jenny has enjoyed leading the discussion group for the past 10 years which serves mainly MHCO community members. Annually members send in two suggestions for recommended books to read over 9 months. Jenny appreciates the fellowship and dialogue of the book's content. Maple Crest villa resident Phyllis Bixler provides a supporting role in preparing group discussion questions while the books/CD's are facilitated by the Bluffton Public library. Thanks to Jenny Pilarowski, Phyllis Bixler and the Bluffton Public Library for your meaningful participation in this book discussion group.*



*Fred Steiner, volunteers at Maple Crest and enjoys providing historic updates on Bluffton as well as learning from residents.*



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT MHCO, STAY TUNED TO OUR WEBSITE AND BLUFFTON ICON FOR A LISTING OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES.**

## THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS!

We endeavor to provide accurate names that include all volunteers that served during 2022 at any of the MHCO campuses. We also appreciate additional individuals who volunteered on behalf of their church or community organization who may not be named in this list.

*Please contact Chris Moser at 419-358-1015 ext. 263 for any corrections, oversights or if you prefer not to have your name listed in the future.*

**Want to volunteer at MHCO? Our MHCO Life Enrichment Team would enjoy you joining us. For more details please contact Chris Moser at 419-358-1015 ext. 263**

# MHCO WELCOMES CHAPLAIN LYN LOEWEN

Lyn and his wife Lori live have lived in Findlay since 2006 and have always been close to the Bluffton community given his family ties to many good people in the area. Lyn enjoys his two step children, four grandkids an active chihuahua and parakeet.

Lyn graduated from Fort Wayne Bible College in 1985 with a degree in Christian Education and minored in Camping. After graduation he worked a few years at Allen Acres Children’s Home in Lima, Ohio. Then moved on to Youth for Christ with the goal of creating the Campus Life M (middle school) program in Findlay Ohio and later Angola and Northeast Indiana.



Eventually returning to the Findlay, Ohio to serve as a Campus Life and Campus Life M Director. At 53, a

good friend and mentor suggested he go back to school earning his Masters of Organizational Leadership with a certificate in Executive Leadership Coaching at Huntington University.

Lyn is looking forward to using his many work experiences which will assist him as he serves MHCO residents, families and team members as chaplain. He looks forward to working with area pastors, lay leaders and others volunteers as part of this program. Lyn shared, “It is an honor to be able to be part of this excellent team at MHCO. Feel free to contact me as I would enjoy sitting down and listening to your story.”

## CHARITABLE GIVING UPDATE AND GOALS FOR 2023

Thank you for your generous support of MHCO in 2022! Total giving exceeded \$252,000. Our goals for 2023 reflects a growing demand placed on the organization due to planned renovations on the first floor of MMH as well as increased costs for ongoing care of older adults who use Medicaid as a payer source. Please join our many supporters in reaching our 2023 goals.

### MHCO BRIGHTER LIVES CHARITABLE GIVING

### 2023 GOALS

Renovations at MMH focus: .....	\$100,000
Benevolent Care: .....	\$85,000
MHCO Fund/ COVID Response: .....	\$50,000
Endowment Fund: .....	\$45,000
Other Child Care and Landscaping: .....	\$20,000
<b>Total:</b> .....	<b>\$300,000</b>



*Volunteers take MMH residents out for weekly morning shopping. Larry Diller is pictured here with Sandy Newsome.*



Mennonite  
Home Communities  
of Ohio

410 W. Elm Street  
Bluffton, OH 45817

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THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SUPPORT!

– *Save The Date* –

# MHCO's Annual Gala

October 12 at 6:00pm  
at the Ebenezer Mennonite Church Gym.

The theme  
will be **“Hats Off to  
MHCO Elders”**

*so bring along your favorite hat or one that is memorable.*

Enjoy an evening of good food and fun while supporting the mission and work of MHCO. Tickets, auction and raffle items will be shared on MHCO's website in August.

If you would like to sponsor a table please contact  
MHCO at 419-358-1015 ext. 263.

