



The lasting effect of gratitude

by Marge Coalman, EdD

—Vice President of Wellness & Programs, Touchmark

“To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts.”

—*Thoreau, Walden*

We’ve all experienced it—the unanticipated “thank you,” the smile from a stranger, the compliment from a friend. These seemingly small, thoughtful acts of kindness and acknowledgment leave a positive imprint on our conscious mind and often on our attitude. But there are

larger benefits, and historians as well as researchers have proven the value to both the giver and the recipient.

Such diverse authors as Dorothy Davis, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Gandhi, and St. Paul have written in parables, journals, instructive essays, and sacred texts about the lasting impact of unselfish contributions to individuals, societies, and cultures. Stories of the Underground Railroad during the Civil War, the nationalist efforts of compassionate German citizens during the Holocaust, and more recently the efforts of thousands of volunteers in New Orleans and Mississippi are familiar to most readers.

In less well-read literature, the research community has evaluated the power of expressed gratitude. Individuals with personalities that are largely defined as unselfish, caring, and compassionate have a higher quality of life both physically and psychologically. Well-being is measured in personality indexes and psychological profiles as well as verified with testing that measures the significant systems of the body: cardiovascular, neurological, endocrine, and musculoskeletal. Consistently, considerate individuals fare better and live “well” longer than their contemporaries.

An even greater benefit in the aggregate is the influence on our culture of those who care and share. Without the caregivers, charitable organizations, good neighbors, and citizens we rarely read about in the newspapers, the needs of many would go unnoticed and unmet. In Touchmark’s Life Enrichment/Wellness program, we strive to provide opportunities to residents, their families, and our staff to make a difference. To be involved in the positive opportunities, contact Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Amy Connaway for information on how to participate.

Experience the Touchmark lifestyle

by Kristy Jennings

—Sales Associates



We are entering that time of year in which we customarily give and share more than we usually do, and I have noticed something happening around here recently. One of our residents has the honorable title of ambassador and one can often catch

her in the act of sharing her life experiences and her heart with both the young and the old. She frequently shares her home with people in the middle of a tour, but she’s certainly not the only resident to reach out and share with others in this community.

I also noticed several residents reaching out to a person who was recently staying with us on a weeklong trial basis. They each embraced him as if they’d known him for years and shared their enthusiasm for their new and

enriched lifestyle. Since each of us is the leading role in our own play, it is often easy to go about our day with the purpose of gaining all that we need and not paying much attention to the needs of those around us. Yet it is so refreshing to see others realize the ironic aspect of life that when we give away what we have, we often gain so much more in return.

Touchmark residents embody that lifestyle of giving and caring. Here's a round of applause for the continuance of giving and sharing during every season of the year.

.....

Residents enjoy progressive dinner

by Amy Connaway
—Life Enrichment/Wellness Director

As a welcome to autumn and new neighbors, the residents of the Parkview homes invited everyone from Touchmark to a progressive dinner in October. The evening began at Stan Steele's home, where he served cocktails and refreshments before the next stop at Skip and Liz Coddington's, where they provided appetizers.



From left: Residents Stan Steele, Suzanne Hebert, and John Deal enjoy cocktail hour at Stan's home in the Parkview neighborhood during a progressive dinner.

Entrées were served in the Creekside dining room, where October birthdays were recognized, before heading off to Suzanne Hebert's home for "trou normand." The 25 residents who participated in the event finished their

evenings at Judith and Leaman Harris' home with coffee and dessert.

It truly was a wonderful night. Many thanks to everyone from Parkview who opened their homes and to everyone who participated in this fun event!

.....

Let Your Spirit Soar

Writers, photographers, and poets live and create in Touchmark communities, and Touchmark is featuring some of this talent and creativity in each newsletter. The Let Your Spirit Soar theme for November is a story and photo focusing on Thanksgiving and/or sharing.

Things to be thankful for

by Leaman D Harris
—Resident

When I moved to Parkview from my former home in Edmond, I transplanted some small trees that had originally come in the mail as bare-root plants. They had been in the ground for two or three years and were thriving. The trees include a flowering crabapple, a Bradford pear, a Washington Hawthorne, and a Golden Raintree. I also transplanted eight trumpet vines to cover the fence facing Village Parkway.

The trees were two to three feet high at transplanting time. The trumpet vines were barely six inches. I carefully dug around the plants to preserve their roots and moved them quickly to "predug" holes in my yard at Parkview, watered them, and added a root growth enhancer.

The transplants took place in July, when daytime temperatures began exceeding 100 degrees. Every morning I watered the plants with a hose and watched for signs of change. Would it wilt and descend into brown celluloid or [sprout] fresh buds and lively green leaves?

Three of the trumpet vines soon turned into ugly brown sticks. I replaced them, and hopefully watched the new ones. The other five stayed green and struggled on. Existing leaves all fell from the crabapple and Golden Raintree. I hoped it wasn't the end and kept watching them. Some leaves on the Bradford pear and Washington Hawthorne turned brown on their edges but remained green inside. These plants were obviously enduring extreme stress!

I continued watering the plants every morning and hoped

for signs of recovery. One of the trumpet vines seemed to have taken a hormone shot. It started climbing up the fence and was at least two feet high within a week! The others maintained the status quo.

One morning I noticed a very small new green leaf on the crabapple. It was alive! Over the next few days other leaves appeared, and I knew the crabapple was going to survive. Then, a new spring of growth appeared right out of the top of the Golden Raintree. Within a few days there was a tender new shoot about three inches long with new leaves appearing on three sides. This tree is in a windy spot so I am concerned that a strong gust may whip off the new shoot. So far it is withstanding the pressure.

The brown edges of the Bradford pear and Washington Hawthorne leaves remain, but the interiors are still green. It is touch and go. I check them every day and talk to them as some say you should. I will try about anything to wind up with healthy plants! The “hormone” trumpet vine is now near the top of the fence—about five feet. The others are showing some growth but must have missed the extra help.

I am grateful for the new life displayed by the flowering crabapple, Golden Raintree, and vigorous trumpet vine. Hope remains for the other plants. I am always grateful for hope.

Perhaps my garden mirrors my new life at Touchmark. Moving here was stressful, but participation in the community has created new friendships and opened new opportunities. As my plants grow and flower, I hope to do the same.

For December, please submit a poem and/or photo that “celebrates life.” Deadline for this issue is November 6.

For a list of the guidelines, monthly themes, and deadlines, please contact Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Amy Connaway.

.....

Congratulations Mary Jo Kessler

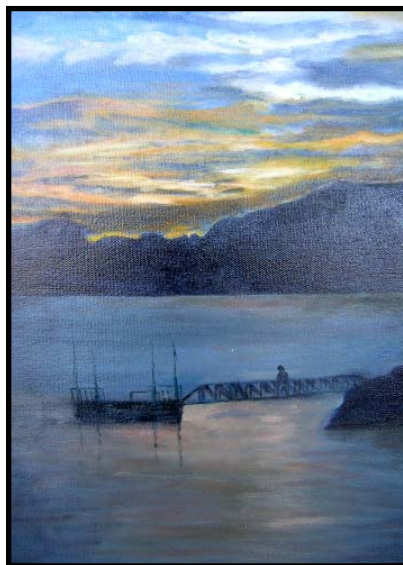
Resident Mary Jo Kessler’s painting, entitled *Dusk in the Evening and Mountain Lake*, was chosen to be in the Touchmark Foundation’s note card collection. The oil painting will be reproduced and put on the front of the note cards. By year’s end, the cards will be placed in

a collection and sold, with all proceeds benefiting the Touchmark Foundation.

The Touchmark Foundation, a not-for-profit public charity providing programs that enhance the lives of seniors, was created by Touchmark in 2002. A major focus of the foundation is addressing the shortage of nurses by offering scholarships to deserving individuals. The foundation also works to give grants to nonprofit organizations focused on improving the physical, social, spiritual, and intellectual lives of older adults.



Resident Mary Jo Kessler stands with her painting, *Dusk in the Evening and Mountain Lake*, which was chosen to be in the Touchmark Foundation note card collection.



Mary Jo’s oil painting, *Dusk in the Evening and Mountain Lake*.

Painting the pumpkins!



From left: Residents Martha Roach, Liz Codding, Judith Harris, Jennie Stinson, Dorothy Barber, and Marty Rose share a laugh while painting pumpkins. Martha taught a pumpkin painting class in October.



Resident Dorothy Barber sketches the picture that she wants to paint on her pumpkin, while her dog, Sadie, waits patiently.

What others are saying

“At this Thanksgiving time, I would like to thank my daughter, Vicky, who has always been a big help to me and especially now since the tragic death of her father and my husband of 61 years in July. I would also like to thank all the personnel and residents here at Touchmark for making my stay enjoyable.”

Charlotte Buchan
—Resident

.....

Flu shot clinic at Touchmark Monday, November 13

by **Judith Harris, ARNP**
—Health Committee Chair



The flu is a contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus. It can cause minor illness or even lead to death. Each year, five to 20 percent of the population gets the flu, and many are hospitalized. There are about 36,000 deaths from flu annually.

The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated. The flu virus changes each year, so it is necessary to get the flu vaccine each fall. It takes about two weeks for the flu vaccination to create immunity to the disease, which is why it is recommended to get the shot in October or November before the flu season really gets started.

If you have a severe allergy to chicken eggs, have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccine in the past, or if you have a history of a rare disease called Guillain-Barre syndrome, you should not get the flu vaccine. You should not get the vaccine when you have a severe illness or a fever. If you are in doubt, your primary health care provider can tell you whether or not you should get the flu shot.

There will be a flu clinic at Touchmark’s Grandview Monday, November 13 from 2 to 4 pm. So sign up to protect yourself and those around you from the flu.

Upcoming events

Thursday, November 2, 6:30 pm—Touchmark Fall Fashion Show, sponsored by Destinations Fashions. Family and friends are invited to this fun event where Touchmark residents will be models. Creekside Dining Room.

Saturday, November 11, 1 to 2 pm—A Veteran's Day tribute at Touchmark. Staff and residents will honor residents who have served in the military. Refreshments provided.

Monday, November 13, 2 to 4 pm—The Visiting Nurses Association will be holding a Flu Shot Clinic at Touchmark. If you are interested in receiving a flu shot, please RSVP at the front desk or call 405-340-1975 to put your name on the list.

Saturday, November 18, 10 am to 4 pm—Touchmark Holiday Bazaar. Vendors will be on site for gift-giving ideas and to spread some holiday cheer! Open to the public. No admission charge. The Grand Hall.

Thursday, November 23, 11:30 am to 3 pm—Thanksgiving brunch.

