A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Yes, we all have heroes. While some live among us, others have left remarkable legacies for future generations. I’m not taking about mythical or fictional heroes. George R.R. Martin’s reflects, “My own heroes are the dreamers, those men and women who tried to make the world a better place than when they found it, whether in small ways or great ones. Some succeeded, some failed, most had mixed results ... but it is the effort that’s heroic....”

In an organization like United Methodist Communities, the consistent everyday effort of frontline associates such as CNAs, CMAs, CHHAs, nurses, dining servers, housekeepers, affordable housing staff, and others, equals heroism. Everyday around-the-clock, whether a holiday or a personally-significant day, they diligently and lovingly care for residents in our nine communities or seniors living at home.

My historic heroes include Martin Luther, John Wesley, Alice Paul, Frederick Douglass, Benjamin Franklin, Martin Luther King Jr., Harry Truman, Abraham Lincoln, Mother Teresa, and Nelson Mandela. Their impact on public institutions, politics, law, social structure, civics, philanthropy, education, and religion, touches everyone today.

On the other hand, one personal hero is my late father-in-law, Umberto. He grew up tending sheep in the Italian hillside, fought in the Italian Army during World War II, and became a prisoner-of-war in the United States — ultimately, that led to a better life. His admirable character traits leave a heroic legacy: humble, courageous, hard-working, loving, joyful, and duty-bound to family.

Janet M. Carrato
I consider Colleen McCann a hometown hero. Demonstrating a spirit of unconditional love, care and acceptance, Colleen, the community’s assistant administrator, not only grew up in Ocean City, but also currently lives there. As an associate of three and a half years, Colleen voluntarily enriched the lives of several residents. Two apartments became vacant and the former residents’ families requested much of their furniture be donated. Aided by the families’ generosity, Colleen selected pieces perfectly suited for the three residents. Mrs. Bee* marveled at the dramatic transformation of her previously sparsely furnished home, due to the addition of a beautiful bed, linens and quilt; bedside tables with matching lamps; paintings; upholstered chair; end table; dining table and chairs; and drapes covering the sliding door. To further enhance the apartment, Colleen’s family gave additional items. Colleen then initiated a second makeover. Displaced by Superstorm Sandy, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew* lived in a furnished boardinghouse room and would arrive with nothing more than their clothing. Colleen arranged for a double bed, linens, side table, bureau, mirror, television and stand for the bedroom; dinette table and four chairs; and dishes, pots, pans, utensils, toaster and microwave for the kitchen. Once again, Colleen personally contributed new bed linens including a beautiful duvet cover and pillow shams. For the bathroom, she coordinated a blue shower curtain and a shelving unit. Envisioning the overall apartment décor, Colleen spent hours painting home – sweet – home panels to go over the bed and a flower painting for the bathroom. Upon seeing the result of Colleen’s labor on move-in day, the grateful and overwhelmed couple called it their first real home. Knowing her actions far exceeded associate expectations, I nominated her for a UMC Radical Hospitality Recognition as Colleen:

- Goes above and beyond to make everyone feel welcomed;
- Looks beneath the surface and engages in the essence of goodness that is the heart/base of every person; and
- Takes responsibility and follows up on working toward a solution.

The time and love Colleen gave to make those residents welcome in their homes truly exemplifies the radical hospitality fostered by the mission, vision and values of United Methodist Communities. Deede Bolger is Housing Administrator at United Methodist Communities at Wesley by the Bay.

LOCAL FAITH-BASED HEROES ENHANCE ABUNDANT LIFE

By Deede Bolger

Residents are so thankful for these wonderful, generous heroes, whose dedication enhance abundant life for our seniors.

Deede Bolger is Housing Administrator at United Methodist Communities at Wesley by the Bay.
A conversation with Valerie Grunther, certified yoga instructor.

How were you introduced to yoga?
I started teaching yoga 10 years ago and since April 2017, have done so at the Covenant Place Senior Space held every Wednesday at the Plainfield Public Library.

What drew you to yoga?
Prompted by a friend’s recommendation, I started practicing yoga due to physical issues. I gradually started and developed a great connection. I love and believe it can help people improve their balance, posture, muscle tone and feel more relaxed.

How did you evolve into teaching yoga?
Armed with my passion, I embarked upon teacher training in 2007. While my teaching style has evolved, my main style is flow yoga. I love teaching seniors because of the rewards and positive outcomes.

What outcomes have you observed?
When seniors make it part of their lives, they benefit on all levels: mentally, spiritually and physically.

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Sign up for a digital engage subscription at UMCommunities.org/engage-magazine. Help reduce our carbon footprint.
BLOG TIME!

Check out United Methodist Communities’ blog posts. We feature a new blog every Wednesday.

Related to our theme, Finding Assisted Living Communities for Senior Veterans with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), appeared in June 2017 and can be easily accessed on the blog. Upcoming topics include:

APRIL
Essential Qualities to Look for When Hiring a Senior Home Healthcare Aide

MAY
Private Duty Homemcare Through The Veterans Administration

JUNE
5 Options for Summertime Fun with Seniors

JULY
Director, Soldier, Athlete and Friend

UMCommunities.org/blog

LUNCH BREAK AND JBJ SOUL KITCHEN
RED BANK HEROES

By Dee Carmichael

If by definition a partner is one associated with another, especially in action, then United Methodist Communities at The Wesleyan mightily includes Lunch Break and the JBJ Soul Kitchen as their partners.

Lunch Break freely provides food, clothing, life skills and fellowship to those in need in Monmouth County and beyond. The organization delivers lunch to homebound residents at The Wesleyan. Consistent with charity, many of its residents who are able to contribute food, clothing and other items to Lunch Break, assist not only their neighbors within, but also those beyond.

Through Lunch Break’s Farmers’ Market program, residents of The Wesleyan as well as its Senior Space participants, select from fresh locally grown produce beginning in summer and continuing weekly through November.

Gertrude Kehleay, housing administrator at The Wesleyan, comments, “Everyone feels extremely grateful for Lunch Break’s staff and volunteer service to our community and to Red Bank at large.”

A second partner, the JBJ Soul Kitchen, represents one outreach program of the JBJ Soul Foundation. They have worked with The Wesleyan since opening their doors in Red Bank. In keeping with the cooperative model above, The Wesleyan’s residents and staff volunteer their time and contribute — residents also fall among its many beneficiaries.

Their website tells a story of compassion:

Where there is love, there is plenty. As you will see, our menu has no prices. You select what you like and make the minimum donation. If you can afford to donate more you are helping to feed your neighbor. If you are unable to donate, an hour of volunteering pays for your meal.

Going a step further, the Soul Kitchen has contributed catered meals to The Wesleyan’s events. Based on a longstanding relationship, they feel proud to partner with the Soul Kitchen and its program manager, Marylou Caputo, in fostering the spirit of giving back. Marylou states, “JBJ Soul Kitchen strives to provide a sense of purpose and community, while providing healthy meals served with dignity.”

Linda Masi, community life assistant at The Wesleyan, states, “Our residents and staff thank and congratulate Lunch Break and the JBJ Soul Kitchen for their loyal and tireless service to The Wesleyan and to all in Red Bank.”

Dee Carmichael is Administrative Assistant at United Methodist Communities at The Wesleyan.
When the drain clogs or something needs repair, every resident of United Methodist Communities at Collingswood knows Ian Barnett, building services director, and his department will come to the rescue. Many residents consider him more altruistic superhero than everyday associate.

Deployed during Operation Granby (known as Desert Storm in the US) with the 4th Armored Brigade, Ian completed a six-month stint in the Falkland Islands and numerous tours of Bosnia as part of the Stabilization Force (SFOR). Ian also served in the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

Born in Chorley and educated in Leyland, Lancashire, England, Ian left school after graduation at 16-years-old. He joined the Army Apprentice College and completed one year of basic training as a Junior Leader. At 17, he joined the Regular Army and furthered his education.

His “Don’t give up, just keep at it” approach to life has served him well as a soldier, civilian and athlete. From 1996 to 2010, Ian was part of the British Bobsleigh Team competing on the European Cup circuit. Ian won the Army championships four times and was part of the winning Army team at least seven times.

Perhaps a paradoxical quid pro quo, Ian views the residents as heroes. Ruth, a native of Germany, relishes opportunities to converse with Ian, who voluntarily served full-time in the British Army for almost 24 years. He learned to speak the language while stationed in Germany. Similarly, Art, a World War II veteran, frequently compares notes with Ian about their military experiences in various worldwide locations.

During his Army career, Ian received numerous medals including the NATO Meritorious Service Medal. As the head of transport and logistics for a NATO communications unit, Ian managed soldiers, vehicles, weapons, ammunition, equipment, and buildings, which naturally led to a second career in facilities management.

Honorably discharged in 2011 with exemplary military conduct, he enjoyed some down time. He began his second career in Sodexo’s Healthcare Division and for the last five years, in the Senior Living Division. Although Ian came to Collingswood on a temporary assignment, he liked it so much he decided to apply, got the job and stayed. He comments, “Collingswood residents are absolutely fantastic characters. It has great management and everyone is so friendly.”

Janet M. Carrato is Communications and Public Relations Director.
PRIVATE DUTY HOME CARE THROUGH VETASSIST
By Deborah Walsh

What is the Aid and Attendance Benefit?
This benefit, available through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and developed after World War II, helped soldiers get the proper care and support to cope with injuries and disabilities sustained in battle. Through the years it expanded to now cover veterans of all ages, whether they were injured or disabled in active service or not. The Aid and Attendance benefit can be used for private duty home care, incontinence supplies, medical alert bracelets and other services that allow a senior to live safely at home.

Wartime veterans must prove home care is necessary.
In order to qualify, a physician must confirm the veteran’s need for custodial care at home. In other words, the veteran or their surviving spouse needs assistance with activities of daily living such as: preparing meals, bathing, dressing, walking, or moving about, grooming and using the bathroom. Surviving spouses of wartime veterans are also eligible. Women or men who never served in the military are eligible for this pension if they were married to a wartime veteran at the time of his death and haven’t remarried.

The application process can take a long time.
The backlog at the VA means it could take several months, even up to a year, for qualifying veterans to have their applications for the Aid and Attendance Benefit approved. It’s essential that any veteran who believes he or she would qualify for this pension and has a need for home care support, begins the application as soon as possible.

But help is available right away!
Through our partnership with Veterans Home Care, VetAssist Program, United Methodist Communities HomeWorks Home Care can provide home care services before an application is approved. This program will help in the following ways:
• Determine if you qualify;
• Identify and obtain the documents needed;
• Assist in completing the application;
• Furnish an interest-free loan to obtain home care services right away while you are waiting for your application to be approved; and
• Monitor the application’s progress and aid with responding to VA requests for additional information until your pension is approved.

Have you considered private-duty home care for your elderly family member? Maybe they are experiencing difficulty with mobility, strength and balance, or other health issues. Family caregivers often feel overwhelmed and wonder about the available choices.

Perhaps the idea and cost of hiring a home care aide has simply not been an option. If, however, your elderly veteran parent or grandparent is considered a wartime veteran or served during a time of active combat, they may qualify for the Aid and Attendance Benefit.

To find out more about all HomeWorks’ services, visit UMCHomeWorks.org.

Deborah Walsh is Executive Director of HomeWorks.

RESPITE FOR SPRING AND SUMMER
Whether you’re planning a vacation, investigating senior living options or seeking a break, United Methodist Communities can help with respite. Visit us on the web or call to discuss the ways we can assist.
One way we celebrate abundance in life is by honoring our heroes, who come in all shapes and sizes. Jesus defined our faith heroes when he said, “There is no greater sacrifice than to give one’s life for another” (John 15:13, paraphrased), and in his stories of “the Good Samaritan” and the widow who gave everything she had.

John Wesley was a faith hero for inspiring early Methodists to visit people in prisons and create the forerunners of modern health clinics and savings and loans, which taught physical and financial stewardship to help people improve their lives while deepening their faith. Likewise, he also created homes for destitute widows and inspired our own ministry in senior health and retirement living today.

I have been privileged to know many heroes within our communities. I recall one veteran who was present at the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima and another, who witnessed the horrors of human evil at Dachau, the German Death Camp outside of Munich during World War II, and was inspired to dedicate his life to “doing good for all.” Both were beloved husbands and fathers and outstanding citizens. The latter also worked to make the United Methodist Church in New Jersey racially and ethnically inclusive and labored to expand our ministry. I also remember many other heroes and imagine that you do as well.

Our residents and associates are also certainly heroes for their generous response last year to our hurricane relief effort. I am proud that we created and delivered 603 Hygiene Kits and collected over $4,000 in additional donations for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Incredible! And I would be remiss, if I did not acknowledge that I feel inspired by and proud of how our associates go above and beyond each day with generous acts of compassionate service.

Our heroes for sure!

Rev. John Callanan is Corporate Director of Mission and Pastoral Care.
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**PineRidge of Montclair**
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**The Wesleyan**
Red Bank, NJ  |  732-936-0760
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