



United Methodist
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It All Started with *a Wave*

Back in 2020, elementary schooler Ava realized that she and her mom often passed an older gentleman walking in his veteran’s hat on her ride to school. Ava and the man exchanged waves and smiles, and as the weeks went by, the brief interaction became something they looked forward to each morning.

Ava’s mom, Mora, is a member of the United Methodist Communities at Bristol Glen team. Once the pandemic began, COVID testing of residents became a routine part of her job. When Mora knocked on Jack McGeehan’s door to do his test, she recognized him as the gentleman in the veteran’s hat. “I introduced myself as the lady with the crazy kid who liked to hang out the window saying ‘hi’,” Mora smiled. She asked Jack if Ava could write him a letter to keep in touch, and a beautiful pen pal friendship was born.

Three years later, Ava is now in fourth grade, and she and Jack continue to exchange letters twice a month. Ava keeps Jack updated on her friends, sports, and activities, like writing for her school newspaper. “I enjoy the letters so much,” Jack shared. “When I respond, I always use some big words to contribute to Ava’s vocabulary.”

The pair highly recommend finding an intergenerational pen pal. “Many residents don’t have loved ones living close by. I have three great-grandchildren, but I don’t get to visit them as often as I’d like. If you have what I like to call surrogate loved ones, even in the form of a pen pal, it helps,” said Jack. “And when you write letters like I write to Jack, you get to talk about things you might not always have a chance to share,” Ava chimed in. Her friendship with Jack has inspired her to write a book. “It’s going to be called ***It All Started with A Wave***, and it’s about how we met and how much I love writing letters to him.”

In addition to sparking his friendship with Ava, Jack’s habit of waving to those he passes extends to his neighbors and fellow UMC residents. “**Waving is such a simple gesture, but you get such a big return,**” he explained. Living at United Methodist Communities affords him the opportunity to



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socialize and stay active. “If you could sit in the dining room to feel the chemistry and hear the conversation...you can see the change in new residents when they take advantage of what’s available to us. When they get to know their neighbors and start to socialize, they blossom and thrive.”

Jack is partial to reading, attending Friday communion services and Father Sutton’s masses, and chatting with his fellow service members at the monthly veterans’ meeting. He also finds meaning in helping his friends and fellow residents. “I’m very fortunate that I can still drive and walk one mile each day. Some of my neighbors have physical challenges, so I like to help wherever I can.”

Jack looks forward to Bristol Glen hosting more activities and visitors this spring, resuming his daily outdoor walks, and—of course—waving to Ava and now her little brother Eamon on their way to school. “Ava and Eamon’s smiles light up my day. They’re a reminder that all is right with the world, and there’s **hope for the future.**”

The friendship between Jack and Ava is just one example of the special bonds formed between UMC residents, family members, and teammates in every location, every day. As the cost of providing top-quality care and services for seniors continues to increase and government support stagnates, **the success and future of UMC’s ministry depend on generous partners like you.**

As always, gifts of all sizes make a difference in our residents and clients’ lives. We are inspired by those who have joined us to bolster the core of our mission and develop new and innovative ways to assist and engage the seniors we serve.

This spring, please consider increasing your annual contribution or becoming a sustaining monthly donor.

To update your contact information, change your communication preferences, or opt out of communications, please call us at 732-731-2129 or email foundation@umcommunities.org. Thank you!

YOU make abundant life possible for our residents and clients!

Abundant life is, despite your age, enjoying life as much as you can. If I can wave to people and enjoy my day, I’m living an abundant life.


– Jack

Even if you’re not having a good day, you focus on the positive and enjoy what you do have. That’s abundant life!

– Ava

For me, it’s about finding meaning and motivation in what you do and making a positive change.

– Mora



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