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JEN SAMUEL — MEDIATEWS GROUP

Penn Township local Chuck Oertel awaits the arrival of the first-ever volunteer parade for Jenner's Pond. He said, "I just want to thank them."

# Seniors shine, persevere, with community support

The retirement community of Chester County continues to weather the storm of an ongoing pandemic.

**By Jen Samuel**  
 jsamuel@dailylocal.com  
 @jenpoetess on Twitter

**KENNETT SQUARE** » The retirement community of Chester County continues

to weather the storm of an ongoing pandemic, seven months after the president declared a national emergency on March 13 to combat America's "unprecedented" crisis.

"Resilience gets stronger to adversity but resilience can only come about if there is a sense of hope, of possibility," said Sen. Andy Dinniman, D-19th, of West Whiteland, who is retiring this year. He said senior citizens represent a generation of people who have overcome scores of ob-

stacles during their lifetimes from witnessing World War II to withstanding the pandemic in 2020.

"All faith traditions are based on a sense of hope," Dinniman said. "Hope is essential."

"We have come across many instances where Chester County residents of all ages, and the business, non-profit and faith-based communities, have united to support each other during this pandemic; seniors are no exception," said Chester County



COURTESY OF THE FRIENDS HOME IN KENNETT

Bess Parrish and her daughter Kathy Rowan reminisce during an outside visit at the Friends Home in Kennett on Oct. 6.

Commissioner Josh Maxwell.

Maxwell said organizations such as the Coatesville Area Senior Center have provided and continue to provide lunches and virtual programs.

Elsewhere, Maxwell said, residents of "Pocopson Home share their wisdom, humor and positive thoughts on social media. Seniors have rallied to volunteer at local food pantries, organized donation drives and sewed and donated thousands of masks. Seniors are an invaluable

part of our community and have helped set our path through this crisis."

Maxwell lauded essential workers.

"Those on the front lines of the COVID crisis are true heroes in our community," Maxwell said. "The doctors, nurses, first-responders, and especially everyone who works in our long-term care facilities throughout the Chester County, have risen to the challenge and taken the necessary steps to protect and care for seniors. Lives have

been saved because of their sacrifice and commitment."

Christine McDonald, executive director of the Friends Home in Kennett, shared an array of enhanced safety measures enacted at the historic retirement community since March.

In the very beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, more than 220 days ago, the Friends Home on State Street in downtown Kennett Square, stopped all visitors and volun-

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT** » **PAGE 2**



## WE ARE HERE FOR YOU



At Riddle Village, we understand that this is a time of change and adjustment for everyone. Having over 25 years of experience serving and caring for our residents at every level has helped us respond quickly and effectively to the Covid-19 crisis facing every individual in our global economy today.

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## Community Support

FROM PAGE 1

teers from entering the facility unless the matter was an end-of-life circumstance. McDonald said all staff members were required to wear masks, and residents were encouraged to wear masks outside of their rooms.

"We were able to continue with therapy sessions because our vendor agreed to only work at our facility," McDonald said. "We had staff stop all working at multiple facilities."

She noted that Friends Home offered overtime hours to staff members to ensure this new policy was not a financial strain.

Today, community life activities continue but are now limited to five to 10 residents. Activities such as singing and eating are forbidden during the activities.

And although the Friends Home canceled choir, the retirement facility for senior citizens opted to instead purchase hand chimes.

The community now has an official hand chime choir. Also, piano lessons and piano playing continue to be allowed.

Friends Home stopped all destination trips with residents but has continued to offer outings with "country rides" featuring stops at local parks and drive-through visits for ice cream treats.

"We have been able to have outside visits throughout the pandemic with our residents sitting on our porch or patio and family members on the lawn or driveway," McDonald said, adding Friends Home could enjoy al fresco dining on the State Street front porch during the spring and summer months, weather permitting.

She said the Friends Home is still working on a new formal policy for indoor visitation once the weather becomes an issue, with specific policies concerning location, time and procedure.



JEN SAMUEL — MEDIANEWS GROUP

Volunteers proceed along Sycamore during a triumphant parade at Jenner's Pond on April 22 for residents of Jenner's Pond to mark the Volunteer Recognition Week. Residents, standing outside by their doors, cheer and wave salutations of gratitude.

"We have utilized technology for family visits and telehealth visits," McDonald said. "We have transported residents to their medical appointments via our bus, which also works as the 'waiting room' to minimize exposure to others."

With winter swiftly approaching, the Friends Home is balancing safety and quality of life for residents.

This includes staff working on small groups for acting skits to prepare for the home's annual Christmas show, with plans in place for a facility-wide holiday pageant video.

Friends Home also purchased access to the Disney channel, enabling residents to hold small-group movie nights. The facility now features Zoom bingo sessions to engage independent residents who cannot come into the Personal Care building to interact with fellow seniors.

Friends Home continues to offer individualized and small-group Montessori activities to residents.

Looking back at the last seven months, McDonald recalled a few top moments of community unity at the Friends Home.

"Initially we received hundreds of handmade masks donated from community members," she said. "We reached out via social media to the community for paper flowers to decorate our walls, and we received hundreds of flowers and notes of encouragement."

McDonald said the Friends Home is painting rocks and placing them throughout the Kennett Square community.

She asked for people to look for these painted rocks across the borough and encouraged everyone to reach out with any special artistic discoveries to share with Friends Home residents.

### State action

In Harrisburg, the State Senate approved legislation in October to ensure safe visitation and enhanced care for residents of long-term care facilities, according to State Senator Ryan Aument, R-36th, of Lititz in Lancaster County.

"Many families of residents at long-term care facilities — as well as administrators of the facilities — have contacted me over the past couple of months to express their concern for the deterioration of the residents' mental health during the governor's strict lockdown," Aument said. "These residents felt lonely and isolated from their loved ones, with little-to-no options for in-person visits for an indefinite period of time."

He added that the bill "appropriately balances the need for visitation with safety protocols, and I believe it is an important measure for our elderly and their families who have been separated for far too long."

The measure now moves to the House of Representatives for further consideration.



  
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SPOT OF T

# This year, we hit the reset button

By Terry Alburger

This certainly has been a year for the record books. Our lives as we knew them were suddenly turned upside down and sideways, leaving us in a topsy-turvy existence.

Things we took for granted as part of our everyday lives suddenly became taboo. Trips to the mall, movie theaters, even dinner out with friends, were suddenly taken away. And life from one day to the next changed at the drop of a hat. We were indeed and continue to be in uncharted waters.

For many of us, we celebrated quarantine birthdays, settling for drive-by greetings and virtual celebrations. Hugs have become a thing of the past, for the most part. Handshakes have gone the way

of the dinosaur. Classrooms, for many, have shrunk to the size of a computer screen. Parents have become teachers while trying to effectively perform their jobs virtually. And for many, jobs and businesses are in limbo.

There is no doubt that our lives have changed. Stress levels are high, and now, the holidays are coming around. With cases of the virus on the rise, our normal traditions will be put on hold. It's easy to get disheartened, I know.

Remember, though, this is temporary. I know it feels like an eternity. We have now been fighting this invisible foe for a long eight months. But we can hope that once 2020 is over, and with a safe and effective vaccine available, we will all breathe a collective sigh of relief!

The holidays ... the tra-

ditions we know and love are temporarily on hold. Save them for next year. But what about this year? This year, we hit the reset button.

Take a breather, a break from the responsibilities of the usual gatherings. No cleaning or all-night baking sessions. Give yourself a pass, do what makes you happy. If you like decorating, then decorate. If you want a year off, take a year off. Reset. Breathe. Catch up on things you want, and let the rest go.

Hosting large gatherings is now off the table, so come up with other creative ways to celebrate. Personally, I will host a Christmas Day Zoom Party for the 40 or so people who usually fill my house on that day. I hope everyone who would have come to my home will appear on the screen, and we can all

catch up in that way. Is it as good as being there? Of course not. But we'll save those large gatherings for next year.

So hit the reset button this year. With no large gatherings, it likely eliminates some of your workload and gift buying. The gifts that need to be bought can likely be ordered online, without having to shop in crowded stores.

Make a list — who really needs a gift? Family, close friends ... remember everyone is in the same boat. Go easy on yourself. Remember to reset and regroup.

It seems we are very close to a vaccine to fight this battle. If we all do our part, social distance and wear our masks, we can win the day and contain this wretched virus. Perhaps we will all postpone our large gatherings until



The coronavirus pandemic is forcing us to hit the reset button this holiday season.

next year, when it's safe — why not have Christmas in February or March, if circumstances permit?

You have been given a clean slate as far as the holidays go. No past expectations can be valid this year. So, write a new story. Create new traditions. Next year will be better. We all just have to get through this year.

There are many things we can do, with a little creativity. With the holidays reset, anything goes. Small

family gatherings and technological get-togethers will have to do for now. And stay hopeful. Stay positive. Because if you are healthy, you have a huge gift.

The joy of Christmas is not store bought. It does not come in holiday meals or parties. The joy of Christmas comes from within. Find that joy, hold on to it, and treasure it. And catch your breath because, God willing, next year there will be some wonderful celebrations!



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HEALTH

# Act now: Medicare plan shopping ends Dec. 7

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A Continuing Care Retirement Community | Philadelphia, PA

By Dr. Alla Zilbering  
Cigna

Medicare's Annual Election Period (AEP) is open now and will close on Dec. 7. People who are eligible can shop for a health plan during AEP to potentially improve their coverage, lower their costs or both.

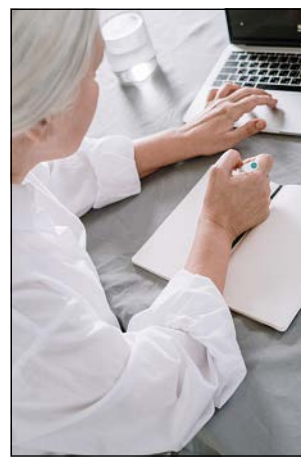
Whether you're new to Medicare or wondering if you should shop for a new plan, there are many options to think about: Original Medicare, Medicare Advantage (MA) plans, Medicare Supplement plans and Prescription Drug Plans.

But keep in mind that health care is the most important investment you can make, especially now as we're facing the COVID-19 pandemic. That's why taking the time to review all of your options before it's too late is so important right now.

Speaking of COVID-19, you can shop online from the comfort of your home using a computer, smart device or phone. Visit plan websites like [www.cigna.com/medicare](http://www.cigna.com/medicare) or Medicare's Plan Finder at [Medicare.gov](http://Medicare.gov). You can also look into attending a virtual educational session. If you prefer phone, call individual plans or independent brokers who represent the health plan you're considering.

If you want to meet face-to-face, take extra care to follow the COVID-19 safety precautions as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Many local and state agencies provide free, objective Medicare plan guidance, including the State Health Insurance Assistance Program. And, it's always helpful to ask friends and family about their experiences with different plans



COURTESY OF COTTONBRO/PEXELS  
You can shop online for a Medicare plan.

and companies.

Even with these resources, understanding your choices can still be confusing. Here are some tips to navigate this important shopping season:

**Understand any plan changes:** Plans can change every year. Don't assume your plan will remain the same as last year. Instead, make sure you investigate and understand any changes coming for 2021 and how they impact you.

**Consider extras:** There are extra benefits not available with Original Medicare that may be available in an MA plan at no additional cost. Such benefits include dental, vision, transportation or even an allowance for purchasing certain over-the-counter items. You might be especially interested in benefits that help you stay healthy without leaving home, such as telehealth, prescription medication delivery and in-home fitness programs.

**Get the facts about costs:** To get a handle on total plan costs, first determine what the premium or monthly cost would be. Next, check for out-of-pocket costs such as any co-pays and deduct-

ibles that will be required for doctor and hospital visits and prescription drugs. Finally, check to see how much you'll need to pay to see a specialist. For example, some plans require you to pay more for choosing specialists who are outside your network.

**Know your network:** Cost is not the only consideration. You may have favorite facilities and doctors, so check to be sure they are in the plan's network. If not, there may be an extra cost to seek care outside of the network. Only you know how important these kinds of considerations are to you. Let your own personal goals and preferences be your guide.

**Stay focused on prevention:** Many MA plans cover preventive health screenings in addition to those covered by Original Medicare. Always consult with your doctor about the screenings that are important for you given your age and health condition, such as a seasonal flu shot. You can keep up with your preventive care even in the time of COVID-19, so discuss what safety protocols your doctor has in place.

Remember, you have until Dec. 7 to research and finalize your health plan choice for next year. Think about your personal health situation to be sure your plan is right for you - and don't hesitate to ask questions to get the answers you need.

Dr. Alla Zilbering is a board-certified internal medicine physician in Philadelphia. She graduated from SUNY Buffalo School of Medicine and completed her Internal Medicine training at Temple University Hospital. She currently serves as the market medical executive for Cigna's Pennsylvania region.

MEDICARE » PAGE 5

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**ENVIRONMENT**

# White Horse Village recycles 419 pounds of plastic into campus benches

MediaNews Group

The environmentally conscious residents of White Horse Village, an active senior living community in Edgmont Township, Delaware County, collected 419.3 pounds of plastic bags used for meal delivery during the quarantine.

The bags were transported to Eco Plastic Products of Delaware, a nonprofit organization that converts discarded plastic into useful and sustainable products.

“Our community is committed to sustainability and recycling,” said Robert Higgins, vice president of property and facilities. “We are pleased to find a new local partner to recycle the plastic bags into three 6-foot park benches for our campus.”

White Horse Village has discontinued plastic bags for meal delivery and now uses recyclable brown paper bistro bags. Residents diligently recycle the bistro bags in the community’s weekly recycling pick up.

About White Horse Village: Situated on 96 acres in southeastern Pennsyl-



COURTESY OF WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

Team members Ryan Fortune and Frank Higgins transported the plastic bags to Eco Plastic Products of Delaware.

vania, White Horse Village is an active senior living community offering a full range of living options and healthcare services. The community intentionally creates opportunities for extraordinary living in a vibrant, diverse community through personal growth, connectedness and relationships. As a nonprofit organization, White Horse Village reinvests earnings back into the organization to further the mission and vision. For more information, visit [www.whitehorsevillage.com](http://www.whitehorsevillage.com).



COURTESY OF WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

A new campus bench at White Horse Village made from recycled plastic bags.

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## Medicare

FROM PAGE 4

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Dr. Alla Zilbering

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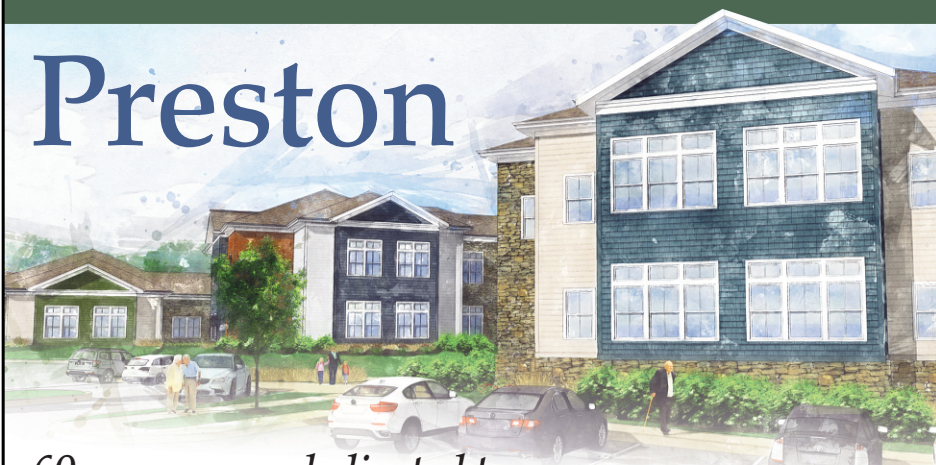
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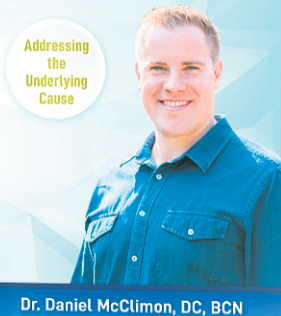


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RETIREMENT LIVING

# Retirees consider earlier moves to senior living in hot sellers' market

SageLife

While 2020 has certainly presented its share of challenges, the residential real estate community is enjoying a hot sellers' market. In addition to being a bright spot in the economy, it's good news for seniors who own their homes and are considering a move.

**Low inventory, high demand**

According to economic data analyst Nicolas Bedo at Realtor.com, the fall market — often a buyer's market — has been flipped on its head by the coronavirus pandemic. Traditionally, as children go back to school, the market slows down. This year, however, inventory is incredibly low as many potential sellers opted to stay put and hunker down.

At the same time, demand grew as shelter-in-place orders created a backlog of buyers whose home search was delayed. Once the lockdown loosened, historically low mortgage rates drew home buyers to the market and kept them there.

In short, more buyers than usual are competing for fewer homes than usual, and that's good news for home sellers, who could be poised to sell quickly and at favorable prices.

**Seniors stand to gain more**

In Philadelphia's western suburbs and on the Main Line — considered one of the hottest markets in the country — senior homeowners are in a particularly ad-



COURTESY OF SAGELIFE

One of the dining areas at Echo Lake, SageLife's senior living community in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County.

vantageous position. Typically, seniors are the sellers who have the most equity in their homes. They owe the bank less and so they are able to receive more money at closing. That extra money improves their options as they plan for future housing and care.

And while COVID-19 is causing many Philadelphians to consider a move to the suburbs, further driving up demand, seniors who weren't thinking about making the move to retirement living yet are starting to speed up their timeline. The possibility of increased profit from a home sale is one driver, but certainly not the only reason retirees are looking at senior living communities.

"The quarantine restrictions have been a big influence for many, many seniors," said Kathy Ardekani, executive director of Echo Lake, SageLife's senior living community in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County. "The pause gave them more time to think about what they truly want for themselves. Simultaneously, if they lived in single-family homes, they have found themselves bored and isolated, cut off from

friends and family.

"We're seeing people who are suddenly much more interested in Echo Lake because they realize they want to live in a place where there's plenty to do. They want more freedom to socialize while, at the same time, staying safe."

Echo Lake isn't the only SageLife community that's seeing a change in the level of interest.

"Some of our new residents at Plush Mills decided that they were just done with the hassles that come with owning a home — all of which got tougher and more inconvenient during the lockdown," says Paul Rosen, general manager of Plush Mills in Nether Providence Township, Delaware County. "Meals, housekeeping, transportation, lawn care, snow removal and other handyman-type chores — that's all taken care of in your monthly rent."

"When people start to look at all the included services we offer and consider what they might be able to sell their homes for right now, making the move to retirement living becomes more and more attractive."



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## HEALTH

# Integrated health and wellness system is important

MediaNews Group

In light of heightened awareness regarding senior health and the importance of healthy aging, along with the flu season upon us and the coronavirus pandemic continuing, it is an important time to consider the distinct benefits of an integrated health and wellness system that helps keep seniors safe and healthy: Erickson Health Medical Group (EHMG).

In a recent interview, Dr. Matthew Narrett, chief medical officer at Erickson Living, manager of Ann's Choice and Maris Grove in Pennsylvania, shared his perspective on the benefits of living in a community that offers a comprehensive approach to well-being.

**Q:** Why is an Erickson Living-managed community a top choice for retirement health care?

**A:** What sets us apart in the senior housing industry is our comprehensive approach to well-being. You have to create an environment for seniors — and staff — to flourish, and this requires addressing all dimensions of health and wellness, from the social to the emotional to the physical and more. Because of our size and the scope of our services, we are able to address all these important aspects offering health care services, including EHMG and our very own insurance plan (Erickson Advantage), plus a wide range of opportunities and activities for residents to realize their personal wellness goals.

EHMG's dedicated providers are right on campus and include doctors, nurse practitioners, social workers, mental health providers and podiatrists. The medical center is literally down the hall from where residents live, and our providers also visit assisted living, memory care and our skilled nursing facilities so continuing care residents are seen in the comfort

of their home.

Some of the specific ways residents' wellness goals and needs have been met this past year include providing 30-minute follow-up medical appointments; conducting 44,000 same-day medical appointments in the medical centers alone; and making medical providers available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, either in person, via telehealth visits or by phone.

**Q:** What is the scope of services provided by EHMG?

**A:** Our full-service on-site medical centers offer primary care services, such as physical exams, and on-site lab testing and preventive care, like immunizations. We also offer podiatric services as foot care is essential to good geriatric health. Furthermore, with mental health and emotional well-being also important health factors, we have social workers and mental health providers as part of our medical practice. We also bring many specialists right on campus so residents have the benefit and convenience of dental services, ophthalmology, orthopedics and much more without having to travel.

Beyond the medical practice, Erickson Living offers a host of ancillary health care services, including full-service rehabilitation facilities, fully staffed fitness centers and at most locations, certified home health and home support staff who offer a range of senior care options. This is in addition to on-site assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing facilities that work closely each and every day with the medical center. Most sites also have full-service pharmacies that deliver, so residents don't have to venture out for their medications.

This full complement of medical and health care professionals is highly integrated and applies a team-based approach facilitated by technol-



COURTESY OF ERICKSON LIVING

Most Erickson Living communities include a fitness center.

ogies, like our proprietary patient portal with convenient access to residents' electronic medical records. We also offer telehealth options which have been particularly helpful while we manage through the pandemic. This year alone, thus far, we have performed well over 30,000 telehealth visits.

**Q:** How is EHMG preparing for this year's flu season?

**A:** The flu shot is a remarkably safe way to protect yourself; this is particularly true for seniors. At Erickson Living, we administer the high-dose vaccine, which has been specifically developed for seniors, because studies have demonstrated that this vaccine results in a stronger immune response and better protection than the standard dose.

This year it is particularly important to get vaccinated for influenza because of COVID-19. The symptoms of COVID-19 are often very similar to flu symptoms. Body aches, fever, chills, cough are common to both illnesses, so differentiating between the two will be challenging. We typically immunize well over 90%

of the residents against flu as compared to the national average of about 65%, and we offer flu shots free of charge to staff as an additional preventive measure. To facilitate our vaccination efforts this year, our teams have been going door-to-door to offer residents flu shots in the comfort of their apartment homes. By going above and beyond in service, we are able to help residents continue to live their healthiest lives.

**Q:** How does EHMG help residents achieve their wellness goals?

**A:** One of the things I enjoy most is seeing residents taking advantage of the wide range of wellness services and activities available on campus that nurture their minds, bodies and souls. These activities share the common thread of supporting holistic health and align with our Embrace Wellness program that emphasizes healthy living habits within seven dimensions of wellness: intellectual, social, physical, occupational, emotional, spiritual and environmental.

Some of the many healthy living options that are woven

into every aspect of life at our communities include having a state-of-the-art fitness center and heated indoor pool; paved outdoor walkways for strolling or biking outdoors; virtual special events and shows, including guest speakers and lectures; a worship center for personal reflection; a diversity of clubs and activities, including a wood shop and art classes; many volunteer opportunities; healthy menu options; and much more.

**Q:** Can you briefly describe Erickson Living's own health insurance plan?

**A:** Erickson Advantage is a Medicare Advantage health plan offered through a partnership between Erickson Living and United Healthcare Insurance Co. Its benefits are designed to specifically meet the needs of residents of Erickson Living-managed communities. There are more than 5,000 Erickson Advantage members in 18 Erickson Living-managed communities in 11 states.

The plan emphasizes a holistic approach across the continuum of care and aligns

health benefits with surrounding supportive services and health and wellness resources in an effort to help improve quality while reducing costs for Erickson Living residents and their beneficiaries.

This month, Erickson Advantage received a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services 2021 Medicare Advantage overall health plan rating of 5 stars. This recognition is a symbol of the high quality and top-rated customer service those who become Erickson Advantage members can expect. Erickson Advantage is one of only 21 Medicare Advantage health plans out of 400 health plans across the country to receive a combined 5-star rating from CMS for Part C and Part D benefits.

To learn more about Erickson Living, visit [EricksonLiving.com](http://EricksonLiving.com).

About Ann's Choice: It is one of 20 continuing care retirement communities developed and managed by Erickson Living, is situated on a scenic 103-acre campus in Warminster Township, Bucks County. The not-for-profit community of more than 1,900 residents and 1,000 employees is governed by its own board of directors, affiliated with National Senior Campuses Inc., who provide independent financial and operational oversight of the community. Additional information about Ann's Choice can be found at [AnnsChoiceCommunity.com](http://AnnsChoiceCommunity.com)

About Maris Grove: Maris Grove, one of 20 continuing care retirement communities developed and managed by Erickson Living, is situated on a scenic 87-acre campus in Concord Township, Delaware County. The not-for-profit community of more than 1,900 residents and 750 employees is governed by its own board of directors, affiliated with National Senior Campuses Inc., who provide independent financial and operational oversight of the community. Additional information about Maris Grove can be found at [MarisGroveCommunity.com](http://MarisGroveCommunity.com).

## No need to dread winter doldrums— Ivy Creek has the answer

By Peg DeGrassa

CONCORD>> With winter approaching, many of our thoughts turn to the dread of shoveling snow, deicing driveways and being housebound with few things to do to stimulate us or occupy our time. Ivy Creek, a retirement community in Glen Mills, can turn all of those negative thoughts into positive ones, making winter as enjoyable as the other seasons. It's just one of the many reasons why the gracious retirement community is filling up quickly.

With a total of 142 units, Ivy Creek offers studio, one and two-bedroom suites and 50 floor plan varieties, providing an option for everyone.

The only option not offered is boredom. At Ivy Creek, residents can enjoy a movie theatre, a fully equipped exercise and resistant training room, a beauty/barber shop, a fully stocked library with a sitting area and cozy fireplace, an activity room, a large screen TV room, a billiards and game room, chapel, bakery, and business center. Activities are almost non-stop, with exercise classes to crafts, planned social events, live entertainment, and exciting group outings, like trips to shopping malls, concerts and museums or the beach.

In addition to all the recreation and activities, residents can benefit from three delicious chef-prepared meals each day, caring live-in managers available 24/7, scheduled local transportation, weekly housekeeping and linen service and emergency pull cords in each suite.

By not having to clean, cook, or do yard work, residents' days are filled with nothing but quality time to enjoy family, friends, and hobbies. Family and friends are always welcome at Ivy Creek. A private dining room is available to entertain, host parties, receptions, birthdays, or holidays.

One of the many advantages of choosing Ivy Creek over other retirement communities



*Ivy Creek retirement community  
in Glen Mills*

is not only its premium, convenient location, but that their modern studio, one, and two-bedroom suites ensure residents will have no buy-in fees or hidden costs. Meals and all utilities except telephone are included in the monthly rent, and pets are welcome too. Residents can feel confident knowing what they see is what they get in cost, without facing hidden fees down the line. Many older adults live on a fixed income and appreciate that Ivy Creek operates on a month-to-month rental basis, with everything included in one price.

A growing number of retirees prefer the active lifestyle of an independent retirement community like Ivy Creek and quickly adapt and feel at home without the burden of home upkeep and daily maintenance.

"Ivy Creek is a very cohesive community," states Russell Rush, a communications administrator for Ivy Creek. "The residents here are really enjoying life!"

Ivy Creek is located at 300 Franklin Drive, Glen Mills. To say good-bye to winter doldrums forever and learn more about a quality retirement lifestyle, or to arrange a tour, call Ivy Creek at 610-839-8816.



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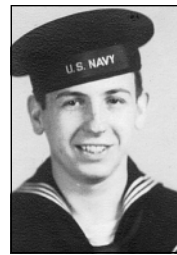


## VETERANS DAY

# A place in history

Photo display honors veterans at Lutheran Home

By Ron Devlin  
rdevlin@readingeagle.com  
@rondevlinre on Twitter



Siekmann,

It was during the Battle of Okinawa in spring 1945 that 20-year-old Navy corpsman Frank Siekmann discovered what war was really like. Given an order to attack, a young Marine Corps lieutenant charged, yelling and waving his firearm, only to

be cut down by Japanese fire.

“So, this is war,” Siekmann recalls thinking to himself. “I remember it very vividly.”

Siekmann, who’s 95, is one of 27 veterans whose photos hang on the Wall of Honor in the Lutheran Home at Topton.

Traditionally, the retirement home goes all out in observing Veterans Day.

State Sen. Judy Schwank often serves as the keynote speaker at a program that includes a military honor guard and Brandywine Heights schoolchildren singing patriotic songs in Henry Auditorium on campus.

Given restrictions on social gatherings amid the COVID-19 crisis, administrators decided against having a large in-person gathering for Veterans Day. Instead, veterans living at the facility will be recognized on the Wall of Honor last Wednesday.

The Rev. Colleen Kristula, chaplain, said sequestered residents can view a slideshow on the wall and sing along with patriotic music on the home’s closed-circuit television system. Their families can view it on YouTube.

In a recorded message, Schwank said she is filled with gratitude every time

HISTORY » PAGE 3

## VETERANS DAY

# Vets greet ‘window visits’

By Ron Devlin  
rdevlin@readingeagle.com  
@rondevlinre on Twitter

Veterans residing at Genesis HealthCare’s Mifflin Center in Cumru Township were honored at a Veterans Day program.

State Rep. Mark M. Gillen made “window visits” to 14 or so veterans living at the retirement village Wednesday afternoon.

Carrying a lighted patriotic wreath, Gillen offered each veteran a note of thanks for their service by phone. He planted an American flag on the lawn outside each of the veterans’ rooms.

“Despite COVID-19 restrictions, each veteran was honored for their service and sacrifice,” Gillen said. “Our Veterans Day remembrances must adapt so that we don’t have lonely and forgotten veterans missing the appreciation due them.”

Anji Heinly, marketing and communications direc-



COURTESY OF MIFFLIN CENTER

Ruth Schatz, 93, an Army veteran, waves an American flag presented during a Veterans Day program at Genesis HealthCare’s Mifflin Center in Cumru Township.

tor, said the center’s veterans are honored monthly as part of the We Honor Veterans program.

The center has a photo wall honoring veterans, she said, and each veteran is recognized with a plaque outside their room.

“It’s important to show them recognition on Veterans Day and throughout the year,” Heinly said.

Alexis Fick, recreation director, coordinated the Veterans Day program.

Liz and Doug Graybill, founders of Veterans Making A Difference in Reading, provided lunch and blankets for the veterans.

State Sen. Judy Schwank thanked veterans for their service in a video watched by residents in their rooms.

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# History

FROM PAGE 2

she sees a member of the armed forces.

“Our veterans dedicated their whole selves, body and spirit to defending that which we hold most dear in this country: our freedoms,” she said. “Our freedom to say what we want, to worship how we want and to gather together the way we want.”

Saying it was a privilege to visit the home’s veterans, even if only virtually, Schwank looked forward to the day when they could meet in person.

“I hope I speak for countless others,” she said, “when I say we value the service and sacrifice of our veterans every day of the year.”

## Okinawa + 75

Navy corpsman Siekmann, a medic, was attached to a Marine Corps unit on Okinawa.

Indeed, in combat he wore a Marine uniform, not Navy blues.

There was no resistance

when Siekmann’s unit hit the beaches, but that didn’t last long.

The first fatality, Siekmann recalls, was a young Marine ferrying ammunition.

In another instance, Siekmann rushed to a wounded Marine.

“He had a hole right through him,” he recalls. “I saw his eyes twirling. He was gone.”

Siekmann, too, would end up on the casualty list after an artillery shell exploded nearby. The seriousness of his condition merited a Purple Heart.

Admittedly, Siekmann confided, he and others breathed a sigh of relief when the Japanese surrendered after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

Almost assuredly, his unit would have been involved in the attack on Tokyo had the war not ended. Projected casualties were enormous.

“A haberdasher saved me,” said Siekmann, a tinge of emotion in his voice.

President Harry Truman,

who gave the order to drop the bombs, had been a haberdasher, or clothing store operator, in Missouri before getting involved in politics.

Following the war, Siekmann used the GI Bill to its fullest. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at New York University, and a doctorate in music.

He retired in 1990 as head of the music department at Kutztown University.

Frank and Doris Siekmann recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary.

## The cusp of history

James A. LeGates was 23 when he was witness to history in postwar Germany in 1961.

The beginnings of what would become known as the Berlin Wall were taking shape on the line between East and West Berlin in a city divided after World War II.

Soviet Union-backed East Germany occupied the east sector. The U.S., Great Britain and France occu-

pled the west.

East German soldiers, backed by Soviet tanks, stood guard along a barbed-wire partition that would

eventually become the infamous concrete wall. Tanks on opposing sides were virtually muzzle to muzzle.

“The Berlin Wall would

become a symbol of the Cold War,” recalls LeGates, 82, a retired corporate finance officer. “The times were a little strained.”



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– Jill R. and Rod S.,  
family members of resident



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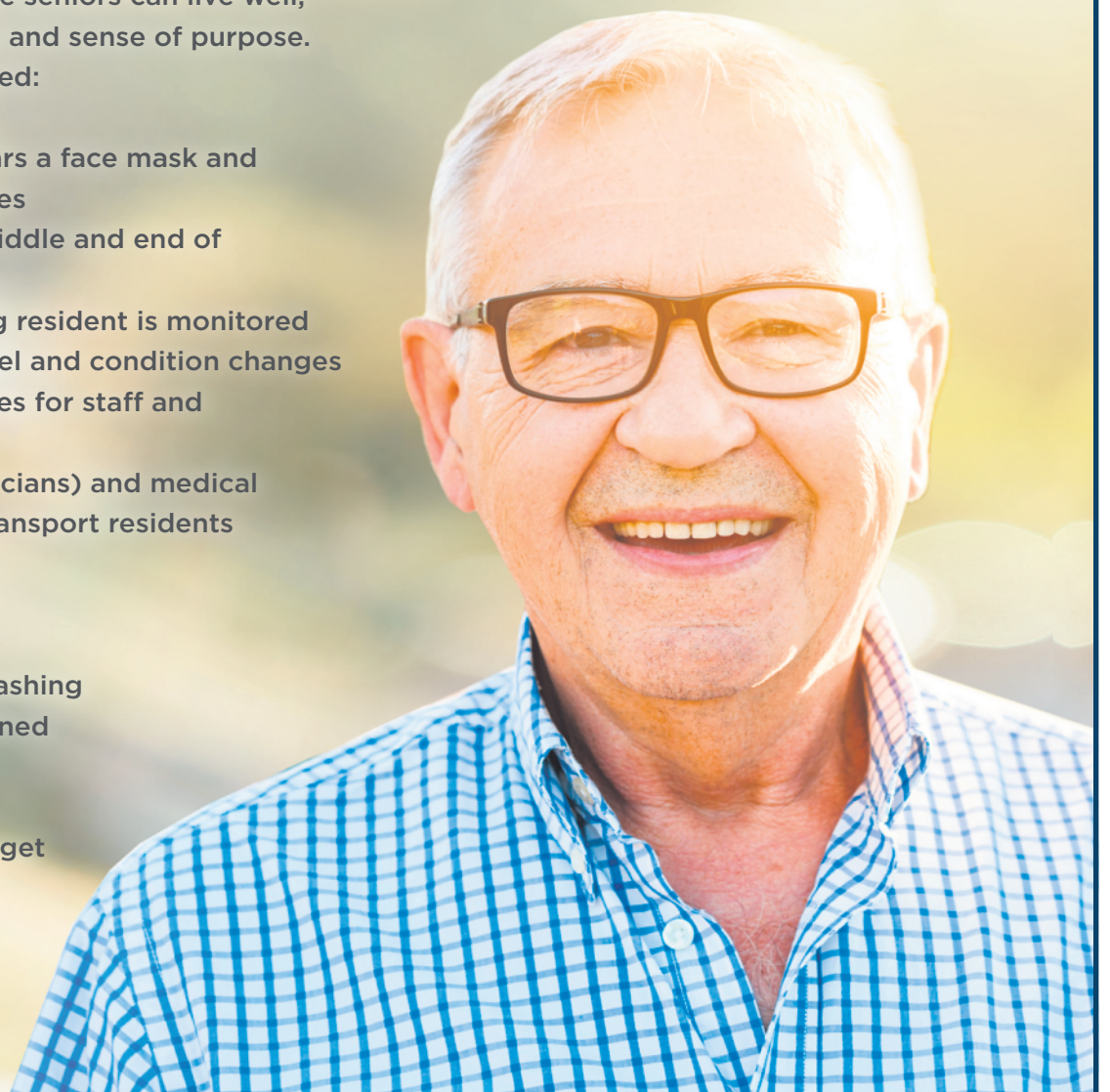
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**HALLOWEEN**

# Chestnut Knoll upholds Halloween tradition

MediaNews Group

Chestnut Knoll Personal Care and Memory Care in Boyertown held a Halloween parade for its residents inside the senior community on Oct. 30.

Staff dressed up for the occasion and took to the halls as residents waited in their doorways to catch a glimpse of three blind mice, a hippie, Disney's Stitch, a witch riding on a ghost and other festive ensembles.

"It is important for us to keep holding our annual events, like the Halloween parade," said Shawn Barndt, executive director at Chestnut Knoll. "Though we have to make them a little different this year, they are part of our tradition and the residents look forward to these events year after year.

"It is such a joy to watch the residents having so much fun with our staff. We are one big fun family!"

Chestnut Knoll is an



COURTESY OF CHESTNUT KNOLL

Chestnut Knoll employees, from left, Kristin Springman, Kylee Landis and Sophia Sampayoh dressed as the famous nursery rhyme trio, Three Blind Mice, for the senior community's annual Halloween parade.

award-winning senior community offering Personal Care and Memory Care residences at an affordable month-to-month lease with no buy-in fees. Services include 24-hour personal care assistance with medical support, meals, housekeeping, social events and transportation. All residents have access to FOX Optimal Living, an evidence-based continuum of wellness and rehab services. Chestnut Knoll also

offers At Home Services, available to seniors where they live. This service includes assistance with medication monitoring, personal care, companion care, light housekeeping and laundry, and transportation. For more information on personal care, memory care and home-care services, call Jodie Daniels, assistant executive director, at 610-473-8066 or visit [www.chestnutknoll.com](http://www.chestnutknoll.com).



**VETERANS DAY**

# Heritage of Green Hills observes Veterans Day

MediaNews Group

The Veterans Association at The Heritage of Green Hills, a healthy life plan community in Cumru Township, Berks County, held a ceremony to observe Veterans Day and to honor members Lou Cinfici and Curtis Bixler, who have been awarded the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal.

This commemorative medal is an expression of appreciation from the Korean government to United States service members who served in the Korean War.

After the event, all of the community's veterans and widowed spouses of veterans were invited to attend a luncheon honoring their service.

They received poppies and special face masks to commemorate the day.



COURTESY OF THE HERITAGE OF GREEN HILLS

Lou Cinfici, left, and Curtis Bixler of the Heritage of Green Hills, both of whom served in the Korean War, were awarded the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal.

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