

A MAGAZINE *from* BRIO LIVING SERVICES

Community

Special Edition: AN AUTUMN UPDATE FROM BRIO LIVING SERVICES AND UMRC-PORTER HILLS FOUNDATION

Creating Community



Rededication of the Chelsea Retirement Community Chapel & Performing Arts Center



Bringing Purpose and Wellness to Life

A letter from Steve Fetyko, President & CEO, Brio Living Services

Maintaining every aspect of our health as we age makes such a difference in how we are able to live out our encore years. At Brio Living Services, we embrace **Balanced Living** at our flagship residential communities. Balanced Living is Brio's signature wellness and lifestyle initiative, launched in 2022 in partnership with the National Institute for Fitness and Sports (NIFS). Guided by the Seven Dimensions of Wellness, Balanced Living is designed to integrate wellness into daily experiences for residents across the full continuum of care.

This program received the LeadingAge Michigan **Mission in Motion Award** at its awards event last May. This award celebrates programs or services within the LeadingAge Michigan membership that bring purpose to life in aging services through meaningful action.

We continue to cultivate ways for our residents to explore all the dimensions of wellness to contribute to their quality of life. In August, the newly renovated and expanded Chelsea Retirement Community Chapel & Performing Arts Center was rededicated, offering a beautiful new space to worship and seek spiritual renewal, as well as a place where the arts and lifelong learning will create a sense of community and joy for residents, team members, families, and guests.



Rededication program with Bishop David Bard.

You may be hearing a lot about brain health these days as well. Brio continues to pursue ways for those we serve to maintain both physical and cognitive health for as long as possible, including such activities as ping-pong, which you'll read more about.

These are just a few of the ways we live out our mission in motion at Brio Living Services! Thank you for the ways you help make that happen for those we serve. ■



In Service,

Steve Fetyko
President & CEO
Brio Living Services

A Letter from Kelli Smith, CFRE President & CEO, UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation

Renowned author, professor, and pastor Henri Nouwen described fundraising as a form of ministry: “It is a way of announcing our vision and inviting other people into our mission. We are declaring, ‘We have a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are inviting you to invest... in this work to which God has called us.’” His words remind us that philanthropy is experiential, providing others the opportunity to participate with us in creating meaningful, lasting change, together.

At Brio Living Services, that vision is clear: A world in which all are empowered to age well. Imagine a world where each of us has what we need to live our lives as fully and vibrantly as possible. This vision has inspired our organization since its founding in 1906 and continues to drive our Foundation’s mission as faithful, philanthropic stewards and steadfast advocates for vibrant aging. More than a mission, it is a calling to serve adults from all walks of life, with dignity, compassion, and excellence.

Your generosity is already turning this vision into reality. You have helped transform the Chelsea Retirement Community Chapel & Performing Arts Center and supported new construction at Porter Hills Village that incorporates the Household Model of person-centered care. You have strengthened team members and their families through Scholarships and Emergency Aid. And through life-affirming programs and activities, you have brought engagement, wellness, and joy to all we serve.

At the heart of this work is our cornerstone: Benevolent Care. Last year, thanks to your



Kelli Smith with young women from the Detroit Youth Choir who sang at the Chapel & Performing Arts Center Blessing event on Sunday, August 23.

gifts, the Foundation provided \$1.2 million in Benevolent Care for Brio residents who had outlived their savings. As the aging population grows, so will the need across our organization.

This is an “amazing and exciting” vision, one that I hope touches your heart and engages you in helping to secure a stronger, more vibrant future for aging adults. ■



Best Regards,

Kelli Smith, CFRE
President & CEO
UMRC-Porter Hills
Foundation

CRC Chapel & Performing Arts Center Rededication:

The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation and Brio Living Services celebrated the rededication of **Chelsea Retirement Community (CRC)**'s newly renovated and expanded Chapel & Performing Arts Center on August 26, 2026. Nearly 150 guests were on hand, including Bishop David A. Bard of the Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church who led the blessing and dedication of the new space. Other speakers included Russ Ives, Chair of the Brio Corporate Board and grandson of Bishop Marshall Reed who presided over the opening dedication of the CRC Chapel in 1952.

An anonymous gift to the Foundation has allowed for the transformation and expansion of this space to enhance worship and create an inviting space for cultural activities, including concerts, art displays,



A welcoming sight at the CRC campus.

and lifelong learning. Key components include state-of-the-art technology to support hearing and vision needs, as well as improved accessibility for all. The new space has more than doubled in size—from 3,300 to nearly 8,400 square feet.

“This is far more than a renovation,” said Steve Fetyko of the CRC Chapel that has reflected the faith-based mission of Brio for more than 70 years. “It is a profound investment in the heart and spirit of the CRC community.”

Kelli Smith added, “Our residents care deeply and carry deep wisdom, history, resilience, and stories of their own. This space allows for those stories to be shared, celebrated, and passed on. In that way, this Chapel & Performing Arts Center is not simply a building, but a living expression of a song’s message, a place where community gathers, voices rise, and hope is renewed.” ■



R. Ives, Chair of Brio Living Services Board; K. Collins, Brio Chief Project Development Officer; Bishop D. Bard, MI UMC Conference; S. Fetyko; K. Smith; and Rev. Dr. J. Kilmer, CRC Director of Spiritual Life

Enhancing Worship, Embracing the Arts

The Chapel & Performing Arts Center is a place for worship, the arts, and lifelong learning. It's also a place to support those experiencing grief and life transitions, such as the All Saints service, a tradition at CRC, held on the first Sunday of November. Loved ones gather to remember and honor residents who have passed away in the previous year.

In her prayer during the rededication event, Rev. Dr. Julie Kilmer, Director of Spiritual Life, expressed: "This building gives us greater opportunity to offer grief support groups, memorial services, and sacred gatherings. Who knew our little chapel would grow into a sanctuary where tears are welcomed, memories are honored, and hope is renewed. May those who enter carrying deep loss leave knowing they are held by the love of God and the care of this community."

In his dedication, Bishop Bard said, "There are places and spaces that have been important in our own spiritual journeys. This can be such a place, where we hear one another well and listen deeply for the voice of the Spirit."

"What moves me most is the lasting legacy this space creates," added Steve. "It reflects our faith-based roots, strengthens our sense of belonging, and elevates the quality of life for everyone who calls CRC home. The donor's generosity will touch lives in ways that are both seen and unseen, shaping experiences and memories across generations. *I cannot wait to see all the joyous life and wonderful works that will happen in the decades to come in this amazing space.*" ■



Rev. Dr. Julie Kilmer. In the ceiling, wood trusses were uncovered from the original building and restored.



Thanks to CRC residents who served on the Chapel Advisory Committee.

Ping-Pong Palooza:



Residents come together for Ping-Pong Palooza!

When Linda Dudley moved to **Cook Valley Estates** a year ago, she needed space for her ping-pong table. She's been playing ping-pong since she was a toddler. "My mom was a champion," Linda shares. "Every holiday our family played, had tournaments, and made trophies." Payton Hammond, Fitness Manager at Cook Valley Estates, helped find a space for Linda's ping-pong table.

In 2023, **Porter Hills Village** resident Mary Ann Lentz organized a group to play ping-pong. When she heard about Linda,

she invited her to play and shared tips on rules and starting a group. That formed a friendship that led to an exchange of play between their two Brio communities. "We owe so much to Mary Ann," says Linda.

More and more residents began playing. Others came to watch and socialize. "It's the most fun place to be on a Friday afternoon," says Karen Niemeyer, a resident and fan.

Last March, Mary Ann invited the Cook Valley Cookies to attend an afternoon of ping-pong at Porter Hills Village, and ***Ping-Pong Palooza*** was born. Since then, The Cookies and Porter Hills Villagers have had two tournaments with plans for two per year.

While there is some "healthy competition" at the tournaments, Linda and Mary Ann say it's all in good fun. Many residents have made new friends. "There is such joy of being with all these people, getting to know others at Porter Hills Village, and doing something we all enjoy," says Linda.



Linda Dudley and Mary Ann Lentz

(Continued on Page 7)

Serving Up Physical Benefits and Brain Health, Fun and Friendship

More and more, we are learning the connection of exercise in maintaining brain health. In particular, a recent study published in *Neuroprotection* shows the benefits of exercise for aging adults living with Parkinson's disease. For Porter Hills Village resident Jerry Mayfield, he is already noticing these positive effects from playing ping-pong.

Jerry was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease more than six years ago. A former sailmaker in Holland, Michigan, he and his wife, Judy met when she needed a sail for her boat. Jerry learned to sail on Lake Superior as a kid and has dozens of sailing races under his belt, including Chicago to Mackinac. "Think of the mental work to win races," says Judy. "The wind and the direction of where the other boat is going—it's a mental game, similar to ping-pong in that way."

Jerry played ping-pong in his younger days with a friend who had a table but says he hadn't played in sixty years. That changed about six months ago when he began playing

again at Porter Hills Village. Now he plays Tuesday through Sunday—every day the table is available.

"Jerry's movements come out of nowhere!" says Tyler Forbes, Fitness Manager at Porter Hills Village. "He can volley with some of our best players. I'm in awe of his reaction time and movements."

So is Jerry's physician who has seen video of Jerry playing. "His doctor is amazed that Jerry is doing this," says Judy. "Now he'll ask, 'how's ping-pong going?' They are impressed that this is available at Porter Hills Village, which brings a whole new respect for our community."

Payton Hammond, Tyler's counterpart at Cook Valley Estates, is certified in exercise for Parkinson's and shares, "Ping-pong improves hand-eye coordination, develops mental acuity, improves reflexes, balance, and grip strength. It also refines fine muscle movements and helps develop fast-twitch muscle fibers to make sudden, powerful movements. It's even been shown to delay Alzheimer's. There are so many reasons to go grab a paddle and play!"

(Continued on Page 7)



Cook Valley Estates resident Bill Ford focuses on his volley.



Jerry Mayfield sees health improvements from ping-pong.

Foundation Launches Signature Luncheon Series

The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation introduced its Signature Luncheon Series with *Living Well: A Conversation on Health & Aging* on September 24, hosted at the Cascade Hills Country Club.

Dr. Bill Baer, President & Chief Medical Officer of Exponential Health in Grand Rapids, shared his insights surrounding preventive health, personalized care, and practical ways to optimize our health—for ourselves and our loved ones—as we age.

This event was made possible thanks to generous sponsors, including *Presenting Sponsor, Huntington Bank*.

“We recognize the value of healthy aging and how important it is to all of us,” says Kelli Smith, the Foundation’s President & CEO. “We are grateful to Huntington Bank and to all our Sponsors for helping us to bring



Dr. Bill Baer, with Kelli Smith, kicks off Foundation Luncheon Series.

experts like Dr. Baer to lead us in engaging conversations that inspire healthier living and meaningful connections. My hope is that our guests took away a fresh perspective and a new commitment to their health.” ■

Palooza... (Continued from Page 5)

Mary Ann agrees. “It’s nice to interact with Cook Valley as a sister community.”

Both teams welcome people of all skill levels to play. “Just come and watch if you want, then we cajole you into playing!” Linda says with a twinkle in her eye. “People say they don’t know if they can play, but then they try it and realize they can. It’s fun to see people get better and better.” ■

Brain Health... (Continued from Page 6)

The social aspects of the activity are important as well. “Some residents who don’t participate in any other activities will come to play or socialize,” says Tyler. “I’m so excited about the camaraderie that has grown as a result.”

Judy sees a marked improvement in her husband. “Parkinson’s can be isolating, so this gives Jerry an opportunity to interact with others. People see him differently now.” ■

EXHALE Grant Offers Critical Respite for Caregivers

Caregiving can take its toll, especially for families in need of respite. Now in its second year, an **Exhale – Family Caregiver Initiative** grant to the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation for **Huron Valley PACE** in Ypsilanti is giving some local caregivers the chance to take a breath.

Ellen G. says she started making some “observations” about her husband, Gary’s cognitive decline when she retired from teaching in 2016. For Cathie M., her husband’s dementia occurred literally over night following a brain bleed. “He woke up and didn’t know where he was,” says Cathie. She has been Alan’s primary caregiver for the last seven years.

Although each of them has family in the area, the main caregiving responsibility falls to Cathie and Ellen for their spouses. Time to themselves is scarce.



Gary and Ellen G.

“The shifting sands of Gary’s decline means I have to be ‘on’ all the time,” says Ellen. “I have to be attentive because I don’t know what’s next.”

Cathie learned about the Exhale program at Huron Valley PACE from her neighbor whose father was participating. Alan began the program in May, attending two mornings a week. Gary also attends the program twice a week and has attended a Saturday Respite time. “Gary is safe, respected, and known there—that’s a beautiful thing,” says Ellen.

“It gives me time to go to the grocery store, run errands, or meet a friend for lunch without having to bother my family,” Cathie shares.

Ellen agrees. “The respite is absolutely critical. It keeps me in [caregiving] for the long game in a place of peace, instead of stress and resentment,” she says. “I can decompress and play pickleball. I’m just ‘Ellen,’ separate from all my other roles.” ■



Alan and Cathie M.

Making Connections, Advancing Mission



Corey Turner



Sheri Hardcastle

We are pleased to celebrate two exciting leadership transitions within the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation team. Corey Turner has been promoted to Donor and Government Relations Officer, and Sheri Hardcastle is stepping into the new role of Annual Fund and Events Officer. Together, they will help expand donor engagement, strengthen key relationships, and advance the Foundation's mission.

"One thing we have learned in the past year is the importance of a diverse revenue stream to help us reach our fundraising goals," says Kelli Smith, CFRE, President & CEO of the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation. "I am delighted

that Sheri is taking on the vital role of Annual Fund and Events Officer to ensure a strong pipeline of donors connected to our mission. In addition, Corey will work to establish and strengthen our relationships with government officials—local, state, and federal—in her new position as Donor and Government Relations Officer. As the population of aging adults continues to grow, it is essential for elected officials to understand the realities of aging in our state and to see up close how Brio Living Services is making a difference through our variety of communities, PACE Centers, and service lines. I am excited for Corey and Sheri to apply their skills and talents in these new roles." ■

Make Your Impact with a Donor Advised Fund Gift!

Did you know you can make a powerful difference for the causes you care about most—like the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation—by recommending a grant from your **Donor Advised Fund (DAF)**? As we approach the end of the year, your generosity can help us reach our goals and inspire hope through the **Live Life with Brio** campaign.

DAFs are a convenient way to offer support, while also providing tax advantages and amplifying your impact. **By making a gift from your DAF before December 31**, you help sustain our mission and make a transformative difference in our communities.

Questions? Our Foundation team is here to help! Contact the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation at 734.433.1000 ext. 7502 or 616.577.2297. ■

The name you trust just keeps getting better!

Brio Daily News

BREAKING NEWS! Now Accepting Priority Deposits!



You may have heard... The word is out!

In addition to the beautiful, newly opened **Chapel and Performing Arts Center**, Chelsea Retirement Community is **EXPANDING!** Announcing **The Preserves**, a 71-unit independent living apartment building! Construction will begin soon.



THE PRESERVES



Chelsea
Retirement
Community

To schedule a tour, call 734.562.0117
or visit ChelseaRetirement.org



Chelsea Retirement Community | 805 West Middle Street | Chelsea, MI 48118





Tom and Barb Jackoboice: Ensuring Legacy of Care

Live *Life with Brio* Campaign Co-Chairs Tom and Barb Jackoboice have been long-time supporters of the work of Brio Living Services and the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation. Tom served on both the Porter Hills Governing and Foundation Boards, eventually chairing both. Tom's mother lived at Porter Hills Village and ultimately experienced the entire continuum of care.

"Serving Porter Hills became an important part of our lives," Tom and Barb share. "We remain grateful for the wonderful



Barb and Tom Jackoboice

care she received. Supporting the Foundation and the work of Brio Living Services in our estate plan as **Legacy Society** members gives us confidence that quality care in all our communities will continue for generations to come. *We hope you will join us!*" ■

Learn how you can make a significant impact on the older adults of tomorrow by planning today! Visit Foundation.MyBrio.org/legacy-society/

Brio Living Services – East Corporate Office
734.433.1000 | 805 West Middle Street | Chelsea, MI 48118

Brio Living Services – West Corporate Office
616.949.4975 | 3600 East Fulton Street | Grand Rapids, MI 49546



MyBrio.org