

Caring for Mother, From Far Away

Allan Konopka had to deal with one of the hardest challenges a son can face. An only child, he needed to make all the decisions about caring for his mother, Emily Konopka, who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease — from 2,000 miles away in eastern Washington. He recently shared their story.



Emily Konopka celebrating her birthday with her granddaughter, Sharon Bradford

"My mom passed away this June, a month short of her 98th birthday. In 2007, I realized she was having some memory problems. The doctors diagnosed her as being in a transitional state of Alzheimer's. But she was adamant that she wanted to live in her house.

"At the time, she lived in Chicago, and I lived about three hours away in Lafayette. But I had taken a job 2,000 miles away in eastern Washington state. The doctors agreed with the idea of a live-in caregiver, so that's what we did.

"The caregiver was great, but slowly over time my mom's condition worsened. She eventually didn't know she was in her own house anymore. My daughter lives in Kalamazoo and knew about Heritage. A few years ago, after I retired, I had more time to think about all this. Other than the caregiver, my mother was socially isolated at home. I saw this

when I'd visit her, and that's when we moved her to Amber Place in September 2014.

"It really worked out well. For a while, I even saw some of my mother's old personality come back because her isolation was reduced.

"I have such appreciation for what the staff did for her. I would come back a few times a year and be around for a week, so I'd see how she and the other residents were treated. The staff helped me to better understand and deal with her disease."

Allan recently gave two donations to the Foundation in appreciation of all Heritage did for his mother while he was far away. One was to the Lowe Education Fund for employee scholarships. The second donation was to the Memory Care Initiatives Fund Campaign (see page 5).

"I appreciate so much what everyone did for my mother," Allan said. "This was the most direct way I could give back."

"I appreciate so much what everyone did for my mother. This was the most direct way I could give back."

Our Mission

We will be the premier senior living provider that celebrates the whole person while embracing families and partnering with the community.

Donors Help Residents Keep Movin'

New exercise equipment provides an opportunity for residents to be proactive in maintaining their strength and mobility. Thanks to two anonymous donors, a treadmill at Wyndham and a Nu-Step Recumbent Cross-Trainer at Directors Hall will be available for residents this fall.

"We are very thankful at Wyndham to have the generosity of donors and their gifts to us through the Elsa Krum Development Fund," said Megan Sliva, wellness manager at Wyndham. "We're very fortunate to receive a treadmill to advance the health and wellness of our Wyndham community.



Mary Manwell, Wyndham Apartment's resident, enjoying her workout on Nu-Step.

"This treadmill will assist the residents in maintaining and improving their joint flexibility, cardiovascular fitness and weight management," she continued. "It will also help reduce the risk of disease. By using this machine for weight-bearing exercise, the people of Wyndham will have the opportunity to strengthen their muscles, bones, ligaments and joints. This treadmill will also be convenient for workouts during those days when the weather won't allow us to go outside. It will be very valuable and will support the residents of Wyndham as they get healthier one day at a time!"

The Nu-Step cross-trainer is made in Ann Arbor. It is designed to enable as many users as possible to have a low-impact, total-body cardiovascular and strengthening workout. This machine is one of several available to residents throughout Heritage.

"This gift at Directors Hall is going to allow us to create a 'wellness corner' that has not been available previously," said Kathy Sparrow-Dinzik, community director at Directors Hall. "With this new machine and parallel bars, we'll be able to designate an area in the physical therapy room for residents to come in under supervision and independently exercise. The more our residents remain active, the more their general health and well-being are positively affected."

"This treadmill ... will be very valuable and will support the residents of Wyndham as they get healthier one day at a time!"

Gifts such as these to the Elsa Krum Development Fund greatly enhance the quality of life for many of our residents. You can help residents gain access to equipment and other programs like these by giving to the Heritage Community of Kalamazoo Foundation.

Staff Continue Their Education, Thanks to Scholarships

More Heritage Community staff are pursuing their education goals, thanks to Lowe Education Fund donors.

Elaine Amaya-Martin, Kalamazoo, and Jacob DeMott, Portage, were named as the 2016 William Carter Lowe, M.D. Education Fund nursing scholarship recipients. Recently, Amanda Young was chosen as the first certified nursing assistant (CNA) recipient of a CNA Nursing Ladder Scholarship.

The CNA scholarships are funded in memory of Clyde and Colette Gillette by Dave and Gloria Badiner, Kirk and Ronda Ralston, and the Gillette family.



From left, Amanda Young, Elaine Amaya-Martin and Jacob DeMott

Family and friends established the William Carter Lowe, M.D. Education Fund as a memorial tribute to Dr. Lowe, who served as chief of internal medicine at Bronson Methodist Hospital and was medical director at Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan. Individual donors continue to support this fund, and since 2005, 20 scholarships have been awarded totaling \$24,000.

Elaine, who was last year's scholarship recipient, has been continuing her nursing program at Kalamazoo Valley Community College while working at Heritage for the past three years as a CNA at the Upjohn Care and Rehabilitation Center (UCRC). She will complete her nursing program in 2017.

While attending Kellogg Community College (KCC) and working third shift in security, Jacob changed his career goals. "I discovered a passion for being there for others when they're feeling the most vulnerable," he said. "I'm able to give them respect and ease their troubles, and that has fueled my desire to become a geriatrics nurse." Jacob began his nursing program at KCC this fall and will complete it in May 2018.

Amanda began serving in the UCRC dining room in January 2016. One of the first residents she brought meals to was Colette. Over time, their personal connection expanded as they got to know one another; they found they shared similarities as working mothers who are compassionate about caring for others. "Spending time with the residents is my favorite part of any day," stated Amanda. "I want to become a CNA so I can spend all my time at work with them." She began the 81-hour course this fall at Comstock Adult Community Education.

"We are pleased to present these scholarships to Amanda, Elaine and Jacob, and we honor their service and compassion," said Jay Prince, president & CEO of Heritage Community of Kalamazoo. "We will continue to raise funds for scholarships like these so that educational opportunities can be offered to even more of our direct care staff."

The Move “Up North” From New Mexico

Many couples head south for a warmer climate when they retire. Howard Barkley, the newest member of the Foundation’s board of directors, and his wife, Delores, left New Mexico to head north. Howard now lives in Wyndham Apartments and Delores lives in Amber Way.

Howard and Delores moved to Heritage Community in August 2015 after a regional search. “We were living in New Mexico,” he explained. “Delores was living with dementia and we weren’t getting good medical care there. We asked two of our children, who live in Sturgis, to check around and see where we should go. They checked northern Indiana and southern Michigan, and they came up with two places. Heritage was both their and my number one choice.”

According to Howard, it was an excellent move. “The community has much better health care here, especially with the Best Friends™ model of care for dementia,” he stated. “Heritage is an outstanding place. You can progress through all the stages and conditions of old age. And we can see our loved ones every day. This is very important. Even though my wife and I are living apart physically, we’re really still together. I see her for several hours every day and we have at least one meal a day together.”

As one of two resident directors on the Foundation’s board, Howard brings a resident’s point of view to his involvement. He has a special place in his heart for the Heritage Legacy Fund.

“This fund is designed to help people who have outlived their investments and, through no fault of their own, cannot afford the full cost of their care,” he said. “We’re all living longer than we used to, so it’s easier to run out of money than it has been in the past. In the old days you worked, you retired and maybe lived for five years, and then you died. Nowadays, you can live a long time, so it’s good to have the confidence that you’re not going to end up out on the street because you turned 90! It’s just one more way that Heritage shows how everyone is family here.”



Howard Barkley, resident of Wyndham Apartments and member of the Heritage Community of Kalamazoo Foundation Board of Directors.

“Nowadays, you can live a long time, so it’s good to have the confidence that you’re not going to end up out on the street ... It’s just one more way that Heritage shows how everyone is family here.”

Board of Directors

Howard Barkley
Jane Brogger, *Secretary*
Mason Coleman, *Chair & Treasurer*
Beth Eckhardt, *Gala Champion*
Jim Escamilla

Heather Isch
Linda Leuth, *Governance Chair*
Barbara Parish
Hamilton Scharff
Greg St. Arnauld, *Vice Chair*

Join the Memory Care Fund Campaign

You can enhance the quality of life for residents in memory care through the *Memory Care Initiatives Fund Campaign*. Two initiatives will be funded for Amber Place and Amber Way through this campaign, and installed before the end of June 2017.

Initiative # 1: Wiring Multipurpose Rooms for Better Hearing — \$20,000

Hearing Loop Systems are similar to telephone wires that are placed around a room, either under floor coverings or up in the ceiling. Anyone who has a hearing aid with a T-coil built in their earpiece will hear more clearly because background noises and sound distortion are gone.

Initiative # 2: Sensory Room — \$15,000

“Sensory room” is a term used to describe various therapeutic spaces specifically designed to engage the senses (i.e., sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, movement). Research has shown that people with dementia find these spaces enjoyable and relaxing. They show positive changes in mood and behavior, increased attention to their surroundings, decreased agitation and restlessness, and improved sleep.

If you would like to learn more and to contribute this campaign, please contact Kim Loftus at 269.276.4046 (kloftus@heritagecommunity.com).

Commitments to Caring

Rooted in a tradition of caring — and thanks to generous donors — we have four funds devoted to serving the needs of Heritage residents, employees and the Kalamazoo community.

- **Elsa Krum Development Fund:** Supports structural renovations and program enhancements
- **Heritage Legacy Fund:** Ensures residents receive care and services while they live at Heritage
- **William Carter Lowe, M.D. Education Fund:** Provides scholarships to employees enrolled in nursing education
- **Memory Care Initiative Fund:** Supports the implementation of cutting-edge research in our practices and facilities

When you think of making your gifts, please consider helping Heritage Community continue its good work by donating to one of these funds.

The Purple Poppy Legacy Society

The Purple Poppy Legacy Society was established to recognize individuals and couples who have made provisions in their estate plans to provide a gift to Heritage Community Foundation. These gifts can take the form of bequests by naming Heritage Community Foundation in a will or trust, in a charitable remainder trust, via Heritage Community refundable membership fees, or through gifts of life insurance or any other type of charitable planned gift.

“If you have already made arrangements in your will, trust or other deferred mechanism to make a gift to Heritage Community Foundation, you’re eligible for membership in the Purple Poppy Legacy Society,” said Kim Loftus, executive director, Heritage Community Foundation. “Please contact me. We’d love to have you join us!”

What will your legacy be?



In Memory Of:

Ms. Janet Aernie

Ms. Zoan Allen
Ms. Ella Blade
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Gabos
Mr. Kevin Gallagher
Mr. Tom Powell
Ms. Clarice Vickery
Ms. Melinda Wegner
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond
Wendorf

Mrs. Mildred Connors

Ms. Margaret K. Eiszner

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Dahlberg

Ms. Sandra Hanson

Ms. Daisy De Kruyter

Ms. Susan Annen

Mrs. and Mr. Christal A. Delger

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hackman

Mr. Robert Fitzsimmons

Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Huizenga

Mr. William P. Fletcher

Mrs. Roxie Fletcher

Mrs. Colette Gillette

Ms. Barb Mastin
Mr. and Mrs. Kim B. Peterson

Mrs. Emily M. Konopka

Mr. and Mrs. Allan Konopka
Ms. Marcia Korber

Mr. Mark D. Lindsley

Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Kucharczyk

Mrs. Marjorie Neubert

Mrs. Jean V. Scott
Ms. Elaine V. TenBrink

Mr. David Shinn

Mr. and Mrs. Phillip H. Bosma

Maxine and Robert Taylor

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kirschner

Please note: Memorials and Honorees listed here were received July 1 through September 30, 2016. To correct any errors, please contact Kim Loftus at 269.276.4046 or kloftus@heritagecommunity.com.



“Our family had recently walked the long path of dementia with my mother when the opportunity to join the board came my way. I was deeply grateful that I now had the opportunity to make a difference, as others had for my mother. It is a pleasure to serve with a team of outstanding individuals with the common goal of providing a premier senior living community in Kalamazoo. Through giving, we can help make the resources available to make our mission a reality.”

Mason Coleman, Chair, Heritage Community Foundation



Heritage Community Christmas Bazaar

Thursday, December 8 • 10 am – 3:30 pm • Amber Way Auditorium

Many items are handmade by residents
Proceeds support resident activities throughout the year

An annual event since 1969



For information about the Heritage Community of Kalamazoo Foundation, contact **Kim Loftus**, Executive Director, at 269.276.4046 (kloftus@heritagecommunity.com)

2400 Portage Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49001 • HeritageCommunityFoundation.com

Be the first to know — follow us on Facebook and Twitter