

LETTERS FROM HOME

FOR THE FRIENDS OF GIANNA HOMES

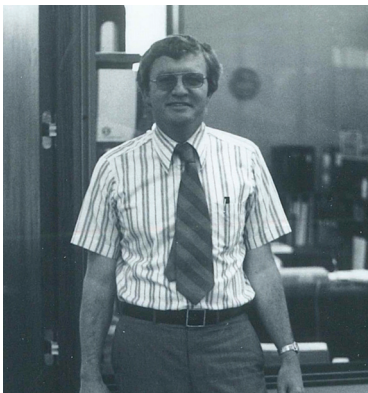
Serving our community since 1999

Resident Feature Story Staying Positive and Being Creative

Raised in Minneapolis as the youngest of four, Jack loves to tell the stories of growing up there. He stayed local, graduating from DeLaSalle and the University of St. Thomas. Jack also served as an MP in the Army. He has always been known for his gentle spirit and positivism. He was the president of the Glen Lake Optimist Club for several years, selling Christmas trees to raise funds for youth sports fields! Jack had hobbies such as golfing, fishing and traveling with his beloved wife. They have two daughters, one grandson and one granddaughter, who Jack adores. Jack talks about his family often, and they are an integral part of his daily joy.

Unfortunately, when the pandemic began affecting long-term care homes across the U.S. it posed some new challenges for families and their loved ones. That was the time to get creative. Families began outside visits and video visits to stay connected when so many older adults are easily isolated and lonely. Jack's family set up weekly video calls and outdoor visits on the Gianna Homes patio. Staff assisted Jack with using the iPad to talk to his daughters and brought him outside in weather-appropriate clothing to see his family. There were sunny days and cold ones as well, but Jack's positive attitude always shined through.

We will continue to connect families in whatever way is possible and take note of optimism from our positivity leaders like Jack. He would give this advice during his years in AA, "Concentrate more on God in your difficulties. You can't expect Him to do everything you ask, but if you let Him do things in His way, it will work out fine."





Dear Friends of Gianna

As I write the 'story' of these past weeks and months here at Gianna Homes it's hard to find words that adequately grasp what our experience has been. Being one thousand percent engaged on every level as a human being takes its unique toll over a period of time. We have been resiliently marching through a war zone of such tragedy that our whole beings have not grasped the full weight of its bearing yet, and perhaps we never will. I speak of the weight of loss for our families and staff who have felt the painful passing of one-half of our residents last spring - all but two of them from the Covid-19 virus. The ferociousness of this virus, once it takes hold in the body of one of our patients, leaves you feeling helpless and with few resources to combat its hasty inflammatory to respiratory distress trajectory. We all can say that it is beyond anything we have ever experienced and as medical professionals have ever seen in our careers.

The foundational principle of our mission here at Gianna Homes is relational, person-centered care, which took a whole new meaning in early March when we restricted all visitors, families, volunteers, and non-essential workers from our homes, what a loss for our residents who need the companionship, relationships, and love of family and others to thrive each day. We initiated weekly family calls to keep healthy communication with our families during this crisis and informed of our COVID-19 emergency preparedness, the supply of Personal Protective Equipment, positive cases of COVID in residents and our staff and allowed them to ask questions and talk about their fears, our policies, or whatever else was on their mind and heart. Our Physician and Nurse Practitioner team were also on these weekly calls so families could get a better understanding of the virus, possible treatments, plan of care and look at advance directive care planning as necessary for their loved one.

It's important to share the stories of this time in our lives because it hasn't been easy, and I believe being authentic and honest builds relationship and understanding because, let's be honest, we are all living in quarantine with different realities. We would love to hear your story

The silver lining running through our story is perhaps more challenging to find than most but what I am grateful for is our extraordinary Executive Director, Cari, who shows passionate leadership in crisis and has navigated some truly challenging times. Our Human Resources director, Renee, who goes above and beyond to get creative in taking care of our staff, scheduling, and hiring to be sure we always run with a fully staffed shift. To our RN case manager team of Leah, Linnea, Melanie, and Maikou - they work endless hours, including nights and weekends, to care for our residents who at times were very ill with the virus - they are our frontline workers, and we are so grateful for their dedicated service. Saving the best for last our Nurses' Aides who were our resilient warriors on the REAL FRONTLINES of this virus - they are our Angels.

We also want to thank the families of Gianna Homes and our Home Care Clients for their support and generosity. Here are a few of the ways they blessed us:

- Made and hung signs saying Heroes and Angels work here at the homes
- Honored the staff with gifts and cards

- Bought lunch and/or dinner on several occasions
- Several made sizeable donations to help us through this time when our census is so low
- Prayer partners who tirelessly keep us in their daily prayers

This is a time in our history that I have never been more grateful for the partnerships we have with so many businesses, individuals and donors that have been nurtured over these 20 some odd years of serving our community. Many have risen to the occasion to support us and rally to our aide as we've needed it.

As I write this, we are clear of the virus, and we have done a deep clean of our buildings and are welcoming new residents. We would be most appreciative of any referrals you might be able to send our way.

My parting thought to you is from scripture: "May the Lord bless you and keep you and may he shine his light down upon you. Amen."

Kindest regards,



Anne Marie Hansen, President & CEO

The Bend in THE ROAD

Sometimes

*we come to life's crossroads
And we view what we think is the end.
But God has a much wider vision
And he knows that it's only a bend—*

*The road will go on and get smoother
And after we've stopped for a rest,
The path that lies hidden beyond us
Is often the path that is best.*

*So rest and relax and grow stronger,
Let go and let God share your load
And have faith in a brighter tomorrow.
You've just come to*

a bend in the road.

~Helen Steiner Rice

A Cure Was Not To Be: Remembrances

We would like to honor the following residents who have passed away this year in our residences and in our Home Care. Please remember them and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

In Memoriam

Elizabeth "Betty"	Marlene
Bill	Kathie
Tom	Sally
Malcolm	James
Jane	Lucile
Carroll	

God saw you getting tired
and a cure was not to be;

So He put his arms around you
and whispered,

"Come with Me".

With tearful eyes we watched you suffer
and saw you fade away.
Although we LOVED YOU DEARLY
we could not make you stay.
A GOLDEN HEART stopped beating
hard working hands at rest.

God broke our hearts to prove us

He only take the best!

How the Pandemic has Changed the Gianna Homes Family

For us, one of the hardest things to navigate this year during the Covid-19 Pandemic has been the change in the Gianna Family culture. Our 'more the merrier' attitude has been the 'Hallmark' of our homes for over 21 years. More when it comes to family visits, outings, ancillary services like musicians, pet therapists, artists, pastoral care, and the over 100 volunteers, brought so much connectedness and new friendships to the residents throughout each day.

Then here comes early March, and this all grinds to an abrupt halt. The pandemic has been one of the hardest things for us in management to manage because we know this daily engagement of all sorts. Our residents' relationships with family and all the different people touching their lives throughout each day are VITAL to our residents' wellbeing. If you've had a loved one in our care before the pandemic, your family knows the bustle that is part of each day. But we are saddened for those residents and their families that are new with us and only experienced the lockdown culture that has become the daily grind in our homes. We want you to know we do NOT like this any more than you, and we believe that family and all sorts of life engaging moments is ESSENTIAL to the health and wellbeing of our residents and our team.

But we hold onto hope and the knowledge that this will end. In the meantime, we continue to get CREATIVE in finding ways to be a sure connection, family relationships, and our staff is filling this gap as best we can with the continued restrictions that Minnesota has to protect the most vulnerable.

In our experience, families choose Gianna Homes for the 'family-style culture' permeating everything we do here. We want to share how we have had to get creative this year to

ensure our residents experience this loving kindness from us. At the same time, we are still not allowed our typical support staff, volunteers, and restricted visiting for essential caregivers only.

Looking at everything through the lens of seeing the whole person, our Nursing Aides, Life Engagement Coordinator, and RN's have found ways to include more time to read with each resident, sing with them (Rontin can be heard singing while she's giving showers and doing the ladies hair), taking walks, outings in the car only for drives for a change of scenery for those who are able, praying with them individually and our daily service led by staff. We purchased a treasure trove of more cognitive games, puzzles, and tools that could be disinfected between resident use more quickly, and the list goes on and on.

Our direct care staff has taken on a more significant load each day to meet this relational need of our residents, and we know we can never replace the love, care, and connection that family brings. We strive to fill the gap as best we can as we wait for this pandemic to end and life to return to normal, for we know it will.



"Thank you for all you've done for mom. The wonderful care she received was such a blessing to us"

– Sursum Corda Resident's daughter

Resident Activities



We have enjoyed many activities and events, even with the pandemic restrictions. We celebrated holidays such as the 4th of July, Labor Day and Thanksgiving. We had outdoor concerts, massage therapy, and an apple tasting! We had a lot of good laughs on National Tell a Joke Day. We enjoyed activities such as painting and crafting. We imagined traveling to other countries such as Italy, France, and Denmark with Arm Chair Travel. On the days of nice weather, we took many walks outdoors and spent time on the balcony or patio sunbathing.

We are looking forward to many more opportunities/engagement time together and welcome any ideas/suggestions of what your family is doing to keep busy.

Nutrition and Immunity a New Kind of 'Happy Hour'!

With not much at our disposal to increase our residents' immune systems through typical medicine, we have found creative ways through diet and essential oils to improve our resident's intake of vital nutrients that we know will increase their immunity to viruses, etc.

Thus we did a deep dive to find the most robust protein supplement to make nutrient-rich smoothies that are the daily afternoon "Happy Hour" for all residents. We then researched what other ingredients would be essential for residents to receive in higher dosages. Hence, we have created our Gianna Original Smoothie that the residents love, and we have a few residents that like a couple a day. Hey, we're good with that!!!

Gianna's Pandemic Smoothies

In a blender mix the following:

1½ cups Almond Milk

1 cup of Greek Yogurt rich in Probiotics and no sugar

1 cup of fresh or frozen berries: blueberries, raspberries are best for they are rich in antioxidants

½ banana – rich in magnesium

¾ cup of Collagen Protein—Vanilla or Chocolate flavored (*we use an original formula created by TailorMade Nutrition that is high in Zinc, Vit-D, Vit-C, Probiotics and other nutrients easily digestible for our residents*)

Blend on high until all ingredients are fully incorporated. Serve immediately.

Essential oils have been part of our 'toolbox' of care for over 21 years, but we have significantly increased our use of them during the Coronavirus pandemic with impressive results. We use the doTERRA brand, which we have found to be more therapeutic, and their blends make it easy for our Nursing Aides and RN's to have quick access to what they need for a particular resident.

Our daily rituals include the following:

Diffuse in the Residences:

OnGuard — helps to kill virus' and other germs and purifies the air

Breethe — if there are respiratory challenges, this helps open up airways

Citrus — helps increase cognition and is an air purifier

Lavender — helps with anxiety and is relaxing and promotes sleep

Topical with an organic and scent-free lotion or cotton balls:

Put one drop of essential oil on the palm of your hand and mix with lotion. Apply any of the above essential oils this way directly to the skin as needed for individual therapy.

Put one or two drops on a cotton ball and breathe in the appropriate essential oil for what you may be experiencing.

We share just a few of the essential oils here that we thought you might want to try in your own home.

COVID -19 Pandemic Fundraising Needs



Donations have understandably been down the last half of our 2019-2020 Fiscal year and we are reaching out to see if you can help us out as we move to FYE on June 30th. Visit our website at www.giannahomes.org to make a donation which will help us continue the daily fight against COVID-19, protect our patients and staff with personal protective equipment and the many other added expenses we've incurred during this crisis. Thank you!

Resilience in Difficult Times through Prayer

If one is asked for an example of resilience in the spiritual life, we can look to the book of Job. He experienced his personal pandemic; he was stripped of everything. Even his friends turned against him because they blamed his "sins" as for the reason God went against him. He knew well that he had not sinned and that God was still with him just as he was still with God. Job understood life and declared that "I know my vindicator lives". (Job 19:25) Job knew that he needed to accept both the good days and the bad days, and that was just the reality of life. He also knew that "Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I go back again. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away" (Job 1:21). As we learn from the story of Job, we can take comfort in the fact that God is with us in all that happens to us in life.

We are all living in the first pandemic of our lifetime. We are losing many things: the freedom to move about, jobs, homes, relationships, friends, and family members. We can call out to God, "Where are you?" We feel that we have been deserted. We have not been deserted! God is with us through it all. Jesus said, "I am with you always, even to end of time." (Math 28:20) There are many ways we are called to have faith, and it can be

a struggle. But after the struggle, we can be restored to the fullness of life.

For many, the pandemic has called us to pray more, while for others, all the confusion has led us to forget to take time to pray. And then we find that the churches are closed or can not take us all in. So this becomes a time when we need to find new ways to pray. That can be refreshing and helpful for us. Many of us work from home. We could use what was the "commute" time as prayer time. The pull to have the TV on has increased, and maybe we can turn it off and have a few moments to reflect in prayer.

More than ever, we are called to prayer.

Resilience in our spiritual life is not just going to happen; we need to make it happen. This pandemic has changed each of our lives in some way or another. We need to be creative in finding ways to maintain and grow our spiritual life.

Deacon Francis Tangney
St Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church, Hopkins

St. Gianna

On April 28, the world celebrates the feast day of St. Gianna Beretta Molla, the namesake of our own Gianna Homes. St. Gianna Beretta Molla was born in Italy in 1922 as the 13th child to Alberto and Maria Beretta. As a youngster, she participated in many Catholic community and charitable groups. She earned a medical degree in surgery and later in pediatrics. She fell in love, married, and soon had children. With the pregnancy of her fourth child in 1962, she developed a painful tumor that threatened her life and the life of her baby. She chose to have a surgery that would save the life of the baby, but after giving birth, she died of septic peritonitis. This child grew up to be a physician like her mother and cared for patients with memory care needs. In 1977, a miracle occurred attributed to this remarkable woman. A nurse in a Brazilian hospital, a religious Sister, asked all the other caretakers to pray to Gianna for the healing of a young woman suffering from infection. The next day, the patient was fully healed and released from the hospital. Gianna was canonized as a saint by Pope John Paul II in May 2004 and has become the patron of mothers, physicians, and unborn children.



"Dr. Gianna's great faith and love for the Lord overflowed from her generous heart and her speech, but so much more from her example which left a mark in the hearts of those who were blessed to know her either as a friend or as a patient. In her work as a physician she aimed above all at charity and an individual approach; she took interest in every intimate and family problem, and if she felt it beneficial she would intervene, either with a word of encouragement, advice, or comfort."

- words of Enrica Parmigiani from Magenta, a colleague of Dr. Gianna

The Benefits of Cultivating Gratitude for Stress Relief

By Elizabeth Scott, MS

Have you ever noticed that some people seem to maintain a relatively positive attitude regardless of what's happening around them? Like everyone, they can appreciate the good times, but they also seem to focus on the positive in the face of some pretty negative events. They see the good in difficult people, they see the opportunity in a challenging situation, and they appreciate what they have, even in the face of loss. Would you like to increase your ability to maintain a positive attitude in your life, even in the face of significant stress?

Fortunately, you can cultivate a positive attitude with a little practice. Although we are born with specific temperamental tendencies, the brain is a muscle, and you can strengthen your mind's natural tendency toward optimism if you work at it. And, fortunately, working on building your "gratitude muscle" can be enjoyable in itself. But the benefits you gain would make it worth the effort even if it was a dull, difficult task.

While several factors go into emotional resilience and optimism, studies show that cultivating a sense of gratitude can help you maintain a more positive mood in daily life and contribute to greater emotional well-being and bring social benefits.

Cultivating gratitude is a simpler route to a greater sense of emotional well-being, higher overall life satisfaction, and a greater understanding of happiness in life. People with a greater level of gratitude tend to have stronger relationships in that they appreciate their loved ones more, and their loved ones, feeling that appreciation, tend to do more to earn it. And because those who are happier, sleep better, and enjoy healthy relationships tend to be healthier, grateful people tend to be healthier people.

Fortunately, you can cultivate gratitude, and you can accomplish it in several ways. For the next few weeks, try some of the following exercises. You should notice a significant increase in your feelings of gratitude. You will likely find yourself seeing more positive things in your life, dwelling less on negative or stressful events and feelings of 'lack,' and having a greater sense of appreciation for the people and things in your life.

Make Gentle Reminders

When you notice yourself grumbling about a negative event or stressor in your life, try to think of 4 or 5 related things for which you are grateful. For example, when feeling stressed at work, try to think about several things you like about your job. You can do the same with relationship stress, financial stress, or other daily hassles.

The more you gently remind yourself of the positives, the more quickly a shift toward gratitude can occur. People and things in your life.

Be Careful With Comparisons

Many people cause themselves unnecessary stress by making comparisons. More specifically, they cause themselves stress by making the wrong comparisons. They compare themselves only to those who have more, do more, or are in some way closer to their ideals, and allow themselves to feel inferior instead of inspired. In cultivating gratitude, you have one of two options if you find yourself making such comparisons. You can either choose to compare yourself to people who have less than you (reminding you how truly rich and lucky you are), or you can feel gratitude for having people in your life who can inspire you. Either road can lead away from stress and envy and closer to feelings of gratitude. Here are some more strategies for minimizing the stress of social comparison on social media.

Keep a Gratitude Journal

One of the best ways to cultivate gratitude is to keep a gratitude journal. Not only are you combining the benefits of journaling with the active adoption of a more positive mindset, but you are also left with a nice catalog of happy memories and a long list of things in your life for which you are grateful. (This can be wonderful to read during times when it's more difficult to remember what these things are.)

Because habits are usually formed within two or three weeks, you will have to actively focus on maintaining gratitude less and less as you go. The practice of a more positive (and less stress-inducing) attitude will be more automatic. And greater feelings of emotional well-being can be yours.



"I was so very desperate to find good care for my husband when I came to Gianna Homes. He was in the geriatric behavioral unit again and I was at my wits end. I will always be grateful that you agreed to take him in. It took a few months, but I was finally able to sleep at night and return to my career. The compassion that was shown to my husband was immeasurable."

– Wife of Gianna Homes Resident



Our Mission: Providing memory care with a loving kindness that respects the dignity of each resident. Welcome Home!

Greetings

Since March, who would have thought we would have heard these phrases repeated over and over again? *"These are such unprecedented times."* And, *"Who would have imagined we would be in the middle of a pandemic?"* I can tell you I never thought I would. These are unprecedented times, and there is so much uncertainty but I can say to you Gianna Homes has done magnificently in managing and living through a very different time. Our theme lately has turned to Resiliency. When I consider the definition of Resiliency, "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness," my mind immediately goes to our residents and staff. From early March, when the world was shutting down, and we were all rushing to find PPE to keep our residents and staff safe until today, I think of how they are the resilient ones. The team put their outside lives on hold to care for the residents. The residents had to adjust to staff caring for them in masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves. What a difference a few days, weeks, and months can have on all of us.

Gianna Homes has been resilient in numerous ways as we have faced this pandemic head-on with faith and courage. I believe we are recovering from difficulties, and the staff and residents have endured. None of us can predict when there

will be an end to COVID, but we can look to the future. We can choose to move forward, look ahead, and live. We are living our days safely and cautiously but enjoying today! We are embracing the simple times together by sharing stories of the "good old days"!

Hearing from our friends and families over the past year has helped us get through these last few months. Recovering from difficult times cannot be done alone; we need each other. We would love to hear more from you. How has Gianna Homes impacted your lives or the life of someone you know? What stories can you share to reminisce or remember the "good old days"? We love to share them with the staff and residents; personal stories and experiences are what it is all about. Feel free to send our residents a card or note; we love this! You can also email me stories, notes of encouragement, reminiscing, or a simple "Hello," and I will forward them to the team. We also love to hear from past families and friends, and to hear how you are resilient during these unprecedented times.

Blessings,
Cari Doucette, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

With Letters from Home, we hope to share with you, our friends and family, a little bit of what life is like here at Gianna Homes.

Each stage of life brings its own changes. At Gianna Homes, we create a place where our residents can feel at home and where they will find care, companionship, and dignity.

—Anne Marie Hansen, Founder & President



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