

# The HEALING SPIRIT

NOTRE DAME HEALTH CARE

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WINTER 2023/2024



It has been an extraordinary year!  
One of celebration, growth, planning and hope.

*We have so much to be*  
**THANKFUL**  
*for*

We marked the 30th Anniversary of our Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center with two community celebrations. Our summer gathering brought together residents, staff, family and friends for a special Mass and beautiful luncheon. Mayor of the City of Worcester **Joseph Petty** attended and presented us with the “Key to the City.” In October, we hosted our Annual Fall Fundraising Event at The College of the Holy Cross as our capstone celebration. The event featured a breakfast gathering and award presentations to honor the anniversary. Awardees included the **Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur**; the late **David W.C. Putnam**, president of the F.L. Putnam Companies and founding board member; and **Father Jonathan Slavinskis**, who was presented with the Sister Jon Julie Sullivan Mission Award.

We have welcomed many new residents at du Lac Assisted Living this year, including Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin

Mary. It is wonderful to witness the constant buzz of activity and the blossoming friendships throughout the community. The recently completed renovations have certainly had a positive impact on our residents and the vibrancy of our assisted living community.

Our At Home Division, which offers adult and pediatric hospice and palliative care services throughout the greater Worcester community, has grown and expanded its service area for palliative care. Our hospice program has achieved recognition by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. And our talented staff members routinely share their expertise with others in the hospice and palliative care industry.



Earlier this year we launched our new Employee Educational Assistance Program (EEAP), expanding our efforts to invest in our employees by providing financial support to ease the burden of student loan repayment, and encouraging their professional growth through tuition assistance. The program also provides guidance and support to employees to help them in their individual skill development, pursuit of U.S. Citizenship, scholarship applications, and more. Our goal is to nurture the professional growth of our employees, which

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## du Lac Assisted Living Happenings

### There's Always Something to do at du Lac!

#### Family Fun Day!

du Lac's Annual Family Fun Day theme was "Country Fest", and the community hosted a spectacular hoe-down! The event welcomes residents' loved ones of all ages to enjoy an afternoon of fun. There were games, crafts, cowboy caricatures, a petting zoo, balloon artist, live country music, a watering hole and more. A delicious country luncheon was prepared by our very own kitchen. The photo booth was a hit with residents and family members dressing the part.

#### Holiday Raffle

du Lac's Annual Holiday Raffle is a wonderful tradition. The activity staff collects donations throughout the year and creates amazing raffle baskets. Monetary donations are also collected for a \$500 money tree, scratch tickets and gift cards. On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, the community is packed with residents, family members and friends as the raffle is drawn. The proceeds go to the Resident Council which uses the funds throughout the year for special projects and programs for the residents.



### Welcome New Harmony Neighborhood Staff!

du Lac's Harmony Neighborhood is pleased to welcome a new Program Director, **Judi Fowler** and new Activity Coordinator, **Marietta Head**. Judi has 34 years of experience working with older adults experiencing cognitive decline. Her approach is empathy and strength based, focusing on the individual and unique needs of each resident. Marietta has 28 years of experience in caring for older adults in many capacities including direct care and meaningful engagement.

With the new team in place, our Harmony residents have been enjoying many outings to local restaurants such as Wayside Inn and the Old Mill. In addition, Judi is hosting a quarterly support group for loved ones of Harmony residents.

Both Judi and Marietta are Certified Dementia Practitioners having completed the national training program.



Judi Fowler and Marietta Head

### Like Us, Follow Us . . .



We love to share all of the wonderful things happening around campus. We invite you to get "social" with us—"like/follow" us on Facebook (@NotreDameHealthCare) on Instagram (@notredamehealthcarema) and on LinkedIn (@Notre Dame Health Care Center Inc.) for regular updates on what we're up to.

## Long Term Care Happenings

### New Director of Maintenance



We are happy to introduce our new Director of Maintenance, **Steven Gonzalez**. Steven is experienced in the long-term care industry, having worked in healthcare since 2013 when he moved to Massachusetts. He is a father of

five and a grandfather of two. When asked “Why Notre Dame?” Steven stated, “It was to help others. It was to contribute to the greater good. Sometimes, when you get caught up in the day-to-day minutia of your job, it can be difficult to remember that you’re working towards something bigger than yourself.” Thank you, Steven, for the words of wisdom and the positive energy you bring to Notre Dame Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center each day.

### WELLNESS TIPS FOR A HEALTHY WINTER

From the desk of Kathy Donaldson, RN

As cold and flu season is upon us, there are several steps we can take to have a healthy winter.

- 1. Limit the spread of germs** ~ Remember to cover your nose when you cough or sneeze. If you do not have a tissue, cough, or sneeze into your elbow. Remember to wash your hands for the length of time it takes to sing Happy Birthday! If you cannot wash your hands, use alcohol-based sanitizer.
- 2. Stay hydrated** ~ Drinking enough water helps boost your immune system and fight viruses.
- 3. Up your Vitamin D and Vitamin C intake** ~ Low Vitamin D can make you susceptible to illness and negatively affect your mood. Boost your levels by getting in the sunshine and eating foods high in Vitamin D, like mushrooms and salmon and orange juice to increase your Vitamin C.
- 4. Manage dry skin** ~ The chilly air and low humidity cause us to have dry skin. Wear lip balm and protect your skin limiting your time in a hot shower or bath. Applying lotion after a bath or a shower immediately after drying off, will help to keep your skin from dryness and itchiness in the winter months

### It's Never Too Late-New Technology in Action

The Activity Department at our Long Term Care Center (LTC) has implemented our new IN2L (It's Never Too Late) technology into the daily program schedule for our residents.

The system allows for programming to be brought to the neighborhoods to either engage residents in group programs, such as exercise, or one to one with a personalized activity. “It is a terrific addition to the already engaging programs available at LTC. I love that it can be brought to the resident’s room and that it can be personalized for that person,” said **Marie Lewis**, one of our certified nurse assistants.

“I am so excited to have this technology to develop and broaden the quality of our programming for both our Harmony Memory Care and Traditional neighborhoods,” stated Activity Director, **Shannon Bateman**.

Residents also have access to their own email addresses and can communicate with family members through this system. Families can upload stories and pictures through the “All About Me” section. Each month new material is added to the system so that the IN2L is current with current trends and technologies. We are so grateful for the generous support of our resident community who helped make the purchase of this special technology possible.



- 5. Stay rested** ~ A consistent sleep schedule of 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night helps your body to recover and protect you from illness.
- 6. See the doctor if you are sick** ~ If you have any COVID 19 or flu symptoms call your health care provider to get tested or expert advice to help you recover quickly.
- 7. Stay home if you are sick** ~ It is recommended you stay home if you are sick. Do not visit nursing homes, elderly friends, and family members.
- 8. Stay up to date with your vaccines** ~ Most importantly stay current with your Vaccines. Be sure to get your Flu vaccine. Keep up-to date with your COVID vaccine and discuss with your physician getting the RSV and Shingles vaccine.

Be well! – Kathy



## At Home — Hospice & Palliative Care — Happenings

### Improving End-of-Life Care, An Interprofessional Approach

Congratulations to our colleague **Dr. Steven Burokas** DNP, MS, NP-C, AGPCNP, one of our talented Nurse Practitioners for Notre Dame At Home Division's Adult Palliative Care Program. Steven recently earned his doctoral degree and was published in the *Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing*. Assisting Dr. Burokas in his research and the authoring of this paper was **Cherie Sirard**, RN, BSN, Director of Regulatory Compliance and Staff Development, Notre Dame At Home.



The paper, entitled "Improving End-of-Life Care for Nursing Home Residents Using an Interprofessional Approach" explores how education combined with interprofessional communication can improve end-of-life care to enhance quality of life and dignity at end of life. Dr. Burokas focused on ways to increase nursing home caregiver knowledge and enhance communication with hospice care professionals.

### Notre Dame Hospice Achieves National Recognition through "Quality Connections" Program

Our Adult and Pediatric Hospice Program has achieved recognition by earning four rings in the 2023 Quality Connections program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

The program is structured around four fundamental pillars which are represented by four rings: Education, Application, Measurement, and Innovation. Achievement in the program is measured by completing activities within each of the four foundational areas, culminating in the closure of up to four rings.

"Patients and their families deserve the highest quality of care possible as they navigate through their end-of-life journey. I am proud to work for an organization that is committed to ensuring we have the resources that we need to accomplish this," said **Susan Keefe**, RN, BSN, CHPN, CHPCA, CNPE, Executive Director of Notre Dame At Home (hospice and palliative care). "Having national recognition through the Quality Connections program is a great honor and shows how dedicated our staff are to ensuring patient and family needs and goals are met."

Learn more about Notre Dame Adult and Pediatric Hospice at [www.notredamehealthcare.org/our-services/adult-pediatric-hospice-care/](http://www.notredamehealthcare.org/our-services/adult-pediatric-hospice-care/).



### Thank you to St. Vincent Community Health Care Fund



St. Vincent Community Health Care Fund recently provided a grant to support enhanced services for our palliative care patients. Palliative care is an approach to care that provides support and improves quality of life for both patients who are facing a serious illness, and their families, by preventing and relieving suffering, identifying and treating physical pain, and addressing their psychosocial and spiritual needs.

While Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance companies will cover the costs for physician and nurse practitioner palliative care services, there are currently no reimbursement options to support social work and spiritual care interventions. Because of this, it is difficult to provide these services on an on-going basis, despite research showing that the interdisciplinary approach to providing palliative care has the best outcomes.

We are grateful for this special grant and invite and welcome gifts from others to support these important enhancements to services

for our palliative care patients. This work is part of what makes Notre Dame Health Care different, and special.

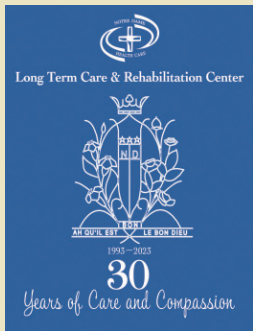
With the practical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual support offered through professional spiritual care or skilled social work, patients and families are able to experience an enhanced quality of life. Such supportive interventions in collaboration with, and alongside physical care, is the person-focused approach that is too often overlooked in helping to manage symptoms and promote healing of the whole patient.

## Across Campus Happenings

### Thank You! 30th Anniversary of our Long Term Care & Rehabilitation Center

Our Annual Fall Fundraising Event on October 13 was the capstone celebration this year and a great success in raising funds to support our mission related programming.

Our 30th Anniversary Event Presenting Co-Sponsors were F.L. Putnam Investment Management Company and F.L. Putnam Securities Company;



our Visionary Sponsor was Timberline Construction; and our Partner in Care Sponsors were J.J. Bafaro Mechanical Contractors, M&T Bank, and the

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, East-West Province. We are grateful for their extraordinary leadership support. Please visit:

[www.notredamehealthcare.org/annual-event/2023/sponsors/](http://www.notredamehealthcare.org/annual-event/2023/sponsors/) for a full listing of all of our sponsors and program book participants.

Thank you to everyone who participated to make this day of celebration so meaningful.

## THANKFUL

(continued from page 1)

translates into excellent care to those we serve. We were recently honored by **LeadingAge Massachusetts** with their Workforce Excellence Award in acknowledgment of this important work.

*More 30th Anniversary Honorees: Fr. Jonathan Slavinskas (upper right) and Gretchen Putnam (below, flanked by John Mannila & Karen Laganelli)*



renovation project. The work will be phased as we do our best to minimize disruption for our residents.

My heart is full of gratitude for our supporters, residents, patients, families, and our staff for being a part of the Notre Dame Health Care family. We look to 2024 with hope, optimism, and faith that we will meet any challenges that come our way and that we will always remain true to our mission to approach our work with care and compassion.



*Notre Dame team attending the LeadingAge Award ceremony.*

—Karen Laganelli,  
President & CEO



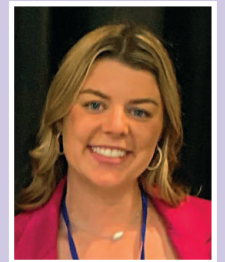
## At Home — Hospice & Palliative Care — Happenings (continued)

### Sharing our Expertise

Our team at Notre Dame's Health Care's Pedi Pals program was asked to present at this year's Hospice and Palliative Care Federation of Massachusetts Annual Education Conference.

Their presentation, "An Interdisciplinary Approach to Perinatal Palliative

Care and Bereavement," shared insights on how perinatal palliative care supports an expectant mom and her family throughout her pregnancy, the decision-making processes before and after birth, and the grieving process when there is a fetal diagnosis of a life-threatening condition.



*June Ganley, MSW and Jessica Connolly*



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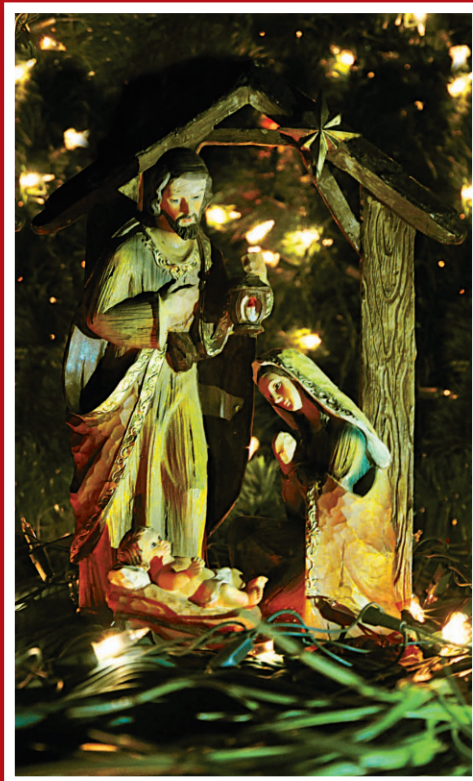
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## TRIBUTE GIVING

Remember and honor a loved one with an inscribed leaf on one of our *Trees of Life* which are located in the vestibule of the Notre Dame du Lac Chapel and the lobby of our Long Term Care and Rehabilitation Center. By request, and with your gift of \$250 or more, we will inscribe a "bronze leaf" in memory or honor of someone special in your life and will have it placed on one of our "trees." For details, please contact [pthayer@notredamehealthcare.org](mailto:pthayer@notredamehealthcare.org).



*May God's  
Blessings  
be upon you  
during this  
holiday  
season.*

Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year  
from your friends at

NOTRE DAME  
HEALTH CARE

*We are grateful for the privilege to serve and fulfill our mission to provide our residents, patients, and families with quality and compassionate care. And we are grateful to all who support our work with gifts of time and treasure throughout the year.*

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We invite you to visit with us, take a tour and learn more about how we can help you or your loved one benefit from Notre Dame Health Care programs and services.

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*The Healing Spirit* is published as a service to the community.

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For additional stories and information, please visit our website [notredamehealthcare.org](http://notredamehealthcare.org)