



Winter 2022

# Linkage



PROUD WINNER  
13 YEARS

## Community Connection

“Spring Festival” mural sprang from a creative collaboration of residents, staff, friends, and donors

**ERS**

Episcopal Retirement Services



# Table of Contents

## Making a Difference

Deupree Meals On Wheels .....	3
Center for Memory Support & Inclusion.....	4-5

## Living Well

Marjorie P. Lee Relationships ...	6-7
ECH Clubhouse .....	8-9

## Walking the Walk

Madison Villa Mural.....	10
Gatherings for Good Gala Series .....	12-13
13th Top Workplace Award .....	14
Lauren Brown Empowerment Fund.....	15

## ON THE COVER

*Harriette Shelby Brown, Dr. Jimmy Wilson, The Rev. Melanie W. J. Slane, and Gary Lubin in front of "Spring Festival" the mural at Madison Villa. Photograph by Gary Kessler*

## ERS Communities & Services

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*31 locations in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. For more information on these communities visit [AffordableLivingbyERS.com](http://AffordableLivingbyERS.com).*

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Linkage is a resource to address issues and interests of older adults, providing a link between ERS programs and the community. Since 1951, Episcopal Retirement Services (ERS) has dedicated itself to improving the lives of older adults from all faiths through innovative, quality living environments and in-home and community-based services delivered by experienced and compassionate professionals.



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From the Publishers of

**Cincinnati** MAGAZINE

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# Caring for Older Adults Means Caring for Their Pets, too *By Anna Davenport*



Deupree Meals On Wheels delivers a holistic approach to caring for clients. Josephine receives pet food for her cat and personal care items to support her well-being.

**M**eet Deupree Meals On Wheels (DMOW) client Josephine Dooley. Dooley was born in Detroit and lived and worked in Illinois most of her life. She moved to Cincinnati 13 years ago at 58 years old, and still lives in Cincinnati. Dooley loves cooking. She wanted to be a cook since she was a little girl, and has worked as a cook her whole life. She learned to cook as a girl from her next-door neighbor. After school she would go over and watch everything her neighbor made.

Aside from cooking, she is a self-proclaimed extreme animal lover who is passionate about cats. She owns one, but would have many more animals if she could. She adopted her cat from the SPCA. Dooley is happiest when she's at home spending time with her cat, which is why it's so wonderful DMOW provides her with pet food. When DMOW has dog or cat food

donated to them, they can pass that food along to clients who own pets.

DMOW Director Tsippy Gottlieb created a pantry of items that clients can access with a phone call. "Our clients have limited resources and still they have responsibility for themselves, their home, and their pets," says Gottlieb. "Can you imagine your cat is hungry? You will share your food if you have no cat food. We bring pet food to the clients, and they don't have to share their food with their pets," she says.

Addressing more than the nutritional needs of Cincinnati older adults who want to age in place is a big part of the care ERS delivers through DMOW. Dooley receives her meals every Tuesday from the driver Sammy. Since DMOW sends the same driver every week, they have been able to build a strong friendship. Dooley always looks forward to seeing Sammy. ■

# Dancing to Remember

The free program gives couples a new way to connect, meet new people, and get some exercise *By Mike Rutledge*



“Dancing to Remember” offers the care partner and the person living with dementia the chance to feel joy together. Dance can spark memories and relaxation.

Several couples recently participated in a dance program for people with dementia and savored the lessons with loved ones.

“We did the rumba and the hustle, and we did the waltz,” says one participant, who took the lessons with her beau of 26 years. “I loved it. I loved it.”

The free program, “Dancing to Remember,” returned for six Thursdays from Oct. 27 through Dec. 8 (skipping Thanksgiving). After the final program, the Cincinnati Opera will perform an aria and a dynamic selection of holiday songs for participants.

## Relaxing Fun, Pleasant Reminiscing

“Dancing to Remember” lets people with memory issues and their caregivers enjoy dancing, easing the stress of their everyday lives, explains Shannon

Braun, director of Episcopal Retirement Services’ Center for Memory Support and Inclusion. People with dementia and their care partners can learn together. Lessons are fun and easygoing, and all dancing levels are welcome.

The program is sponsored by ERS in partnership with the Giving Voice Foundation and A-Marika Dance Company in Sharonville.

## Dancing Queens and Kings

The waltz was the favorite dance for one couple because “it’s more romantic,” the woman says, the dancing made their relationship more fun.

“Even though we’ve been dating for 26 years, it did bring us closer,” she adds. “I grew up in the ’60s, so I’ve been dancing my whole life. But he did very





Vivian works with an experienced dance volunteer to learn the steps. “Growing up, I enjoyed dancing. It’s still fun; I love it,” she says.

little of it.”

Vivian Leavell enjoyed dancing on different days with her twin sons, Pierre Leavell and the Rev. Pierce Leavell. “It was good exercise for me,” she says. “I enjoyed it very much. Growing up, I enjoyed dancing. It’s still fun; I love it.”

When her sons were children, they all would dance while cleaning the house.

“We’ve always enjoyed putting some music on,” Pierre Leavell says.

“And twirlin’ around a little while,” his mom adds.

### Technique, Timing, and Teamwork

Being a care partner for someone living with dementia can be challenging and, at times, overwhelming, says Braun. When caring for others, spending time out and recharging is crucial. Programs like “Dancing to Remember” offer the care partner and the person living with dementia a change of pace and some much-needed stress relief.

If you have a loved one who is struggling, ERS created “A Guide to Better Understand Dementia” that has answers for the most frequently asked questions at [erslife.info/dementiaguide](http://erslife.info/dementiaguide). ■

### Care to dance?

“Dancing to Remember” happens at A-Marika Dance Company, 10831 Sharondale Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio 45241. For information about the next session, contact Shannon Braun at [sbraun@erslife.org](mailto:sbraun@erslife.org) or call 513-979-2302.

# Corner Store and flowers foster friendships at Marjorie P. Lee

Meet Ann Hunter, Joanie Thomas, and Joyce Wine, residents pursuing their passions and purpose *By Mike Rutledge*



Angela Bolan and Joyce Wine bonded while arranging flowers and enjoy sharing the blooms with others at Marjorie P. Lee.

**S**ome things—particularly friendships—are precious to Marjorie P. Lee residents.

Joanie Thomas and Ann Hunter have found new companions by volunteering at the retirement community's treasured Corner Store, which reopened this summer after a hiatus caused by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, Joyce Wine nurtures connections with neighbors through her lifelong affinity for flowers.

## Turning a COVID corner

The Corner Store “is dear to my heart,” says Hunter, who has lived at Marjorie P. Lee for nine years. Through it, “I learned a lot about the residents,” she says.

Thomas, a three-year resident and volunteer of about 10 months, says the best benefit of volunteering there is “meeting people.” Working at the store also helps Thomas meet team members, families of resi-



dents, and other visitors to the retirement community.

The reorganized store is “brighter, it’s simpler, it’s more accessible,” Thomas says. “It’s wonderful.” Residents “are so glad it’s open,” she says.

Even while the store was closed during the earliest part of the pandemic—before people became adept at shopping online—Marjorie P. Lee team members continued taking orders from residents during mornings and delivering items to them in the afternoons.

During the store’s temporary closure, receptionist Grace Elliott completely cleaned the space, and placed shelves within customers’ reach.

While all Corner Store staff are volunteers, Hunter used to work professionally in retail. She worked for hospital gift stores for more than a decade, running one \$2 million-per-year operation. She later was a buyer for The Village Junction in Montgomery.

### Floral expertise helps friendships bloom

Joyce Wine, who was born into a floral family, lives in a room decorated with images of flowers and a painting of Janet Flower Shop, her family’s beloved store in Silverton.

Her parents opened it in 1923, and flowers have been a link for love throughout her life. Wine joyfully helps others create beautiful arrangements. She majored in botany at Duke University and remains so proficient decades after many people retire that she designed the elegant arrangements for ERS’ September gala event, An Evening of Grandeur, at the 1,200-acre Peterloon estate once owned by philanthropist John J. Emery.

Angela Bolan, life enrichment specialist at Marjorie P. Lee, says Wine tirelessly helps others. “One time she was working all afternoon, and I was getting concerned,” Bolan says. “I said, ‘Joyce, you’ve been working at this since lunch. It’s 5:30.’ She looked at me and said, ‘I used to stay up all night if I had to.’ ” Wine, quick with a quip, adds: “Old florists never die. They just make new arrangements.”

Wine celebrated her 72nd anniversary with hus-



Katrina Traylor, Ann Hunter, and Joanie Thomas agree that the best part of reopening the Corner Store is making new friends and reconnecting with old friends.

band Lyman in August. A number of years ago, she helped decorate a float for the Rose Bowl Parade and chatted with Shirley Temple Black, the parade’s grand marshal. Just after President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s funeral in Abilene, Kansas, she and Lyman were passing through Abilene on the way to visit relatives. She had an arrangement of peppermint carnations with her and put flowers on the funeral chapel’s altar. Because many had sent loose flowers, a worker asked her to also arrange those. And she did.

Residents at Marjorie P. Lee can pursue the life that they decide and create. Team members like Katrina and Angela help residents find their own way to embody purposeful living. For some, that’s exploring their long-established passions and interests. Others find new activities and ways to engage and connect. Supporting residents as they live well into the future is the hallmark of our person-centered continuing care communities. ■

### An invitation to volunteer

For now, the Corner Store is open whenever volunteers are available, but operators hope it can return to being open each weekday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Marjorie P. Lee residents or people living in the surrounding community can volunteer by contacting Katrina Traylor at [ktraylor@erslife.org](mailto:ktraylor@erslife.org).

# Community Hotspot

The Clubhouse at Dudley Square in Louisville brings residents together for fun, fitness, and cultural enrichment *By Mike Rutledge*



The Episcopal Church Home Master Plan created the Clubhouse at Dudley Square. Residents enjoy having a dedicated space for their monthly cocktail hour and other gatherings.

**T**he Dudley Square neighborhood of the Episcopal Church Home campus has raised its pulse in the past year, and not just because diminishment of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic allows people to get out much more than before. The new Dudley Square clubhouse has opened, fostering greater bonds and activities for residents.

In fact, two big benefits happened during the autumn of 2021 for residents of the Dudley Square patio homes: The clubhouse opened, and Gry Seymour was hired as the community's life-enrichment coordinator.

Five-year Dudley Square resident Gordon Ragan

calls the clubhouse “the glue that brings a lot of people together,” with events like book clubs and bridge games. There also are film nights, exercise classes, and discussion groups. One chat group attracts mainly men, and has dipped into topics ranging from marriage to politics, to individuals’ careers—even grandchildren and being widowers.

“The weekly social hour and dinner is a marvelous activity,” Ragan says about another big event. He said the food prepared by Chef Tim Knight, director of dining services, is excellent. “We’re fortunate we have a marvelous chef,” Ragan says. The Episcopal Church Home campus is also blessed to have the energetic and loving presence of Gry (pronounced

Photographs by Caroline Puryear



GREE) Seymour, he says. “We’re increasingly grateful to what Gry brings to the table,” he says. “She is providing social and recreational activities at a level that we’ve never experienced before.”

“I love creating relationships,” said Seymour. “I love to support people, and also getting to know people and have relationships.”

One reason Dudley Square is fun, she says, is, “This isn’t a place where old people come to live. This is a place where people who are in their older years are coming to continue living, and do fun things, educational things. Things that matter.” She calls the clubhouse “the beating pulse and heart of Dudley,” where she has her office, and where residents can host dinners, clubs, or parties. They also can just hang out with fellow residents. “It is a point of gathering,

creating community together. And I think that’s very important,” she says.

This spring, “We had, for the first time ever in the Clubhouse, an official Derby party,” Seymour says. “That was really lovely. That was fun. A lot of the ladies brought their beautiful hats, and their fascinators.”

Bryan Reynolds, ERS’ vice president of marketing and public relations, notes that in addition to the gathering areas and Seymour’s office, the clubhouse also has a wellness room with exercise equipment for residents to maintain their health, and a small library area that’s continuously being updated with books of interest. Out back, there’s a nice patio area and fire pit—another area to chat or share meals—Reynolds says. ■



The beautiful spaces inside and outside the Clubhouse create an elegant setting for Dudley Square resident events.

# Spring Festival beautifies the walls of Madison Villa

Flourishing friendships form among those living at, working in, and visiting Madison Villa *By Mike Rutledge*



Donor Gary Lubin with the dedicated team of ArtWorks apprentices. Front row: Abby Kacen (ArtWorks Creative Project Manager), Lexi Spurlock (apprentice), Alyssa Moore (apprentice), Lizzy DuQuette (lead teaching artist) Middle row: Tumaini Kidoge (apprentice), Jayden “JP” Pope (apprentice), Jesse Sprigg (apprentice), donor Gary Lubin. Back row: Makayla Lane (apprentice)

With bursts of color and newly formed friendships, people from Episcopal Church of the Redeemer worked with residents of Madison Villa—an Affordable Living by ERS community—and ArtWorks apprentices to create a beautiful mural, entitled *Spring Festival*, on a campus wall facing Madison Road.

The Rev. Melanie W.J. Slane with the Hyde Park-based church and the nearby Madisonville community for lower-income seniors have been partnering to build friendships. Gary Lubin, a member of the church and deacon there, chose the artwork as a me-

morial to his wife, Janice Lubin. The couple included provisions in their estate plans to establish a fund that will benefit Madison Villa.

ERS and Redeemer teamed up to help Gary identify a place on the campus to create a memorial to Janice, who died in September of 2020. Nature was the general theme and they considered a birdbath, bird feeders, or other outdoor installation. With input from residents, adding artwork to the community became part of the plan. Rather than a painting in a hallway, Lubin went big.

“That’s what launched this amazing and crazy idea



of bringing in ArtWorks to do a full mural on the wall out front,” Slane says.

“I think it’s beautiful,” says Harriette Shelby Brown, a resident since 2011. “I like the whole thing, but the first thing I noticed was how the birds stood out.” She often feeds birds, especially in the winter.

During a July gathering, she and other Madison Villa residents joined Redeemer members and ArtWorks apprentices to paint. Shelby Brown chose purple, and painted flowers. “I was surprised I could do the painting without spilling, and dropping it all on everybody,” she says. “I think I did pretty good.” She says she will be proud to tell others she helped create the mural, which can be enjoyed by people passing on the street—and by residents inside their building, through large hallway windows.

“I think it’s a lovely community thing,” Lubin says. “It engages young people; it engages Madison Villa.” He chose two birds for the mural: a brown thrasher,

state bird of Janice’s native Georgia; and a Baltimore Oriole, official bird of Maryland, his native state. He also wanted a dogwood tree because after arriving in Cincinnati, “one of the first things we did when we moved here—when she was homesick—I bought six dogwood trees and planted them in the front yard. And they’re still there.”

The mural features a monarch butterfly, and other plants and animals, which all can be found in this area, says artist Ann Geise, who designed the artwork.

“It’s an honor to have a mural,” Geise says. “I’ve seen a lot of the murals around town that ArtWorks has done, and they’re all beautiful.”

Budding friendships have bloomed as people from diverse backgrounds have come together with a common purpose: to improve the quality of life for those living, working and visiting Madison Villa and the neighborhood of Madisonville. ■



Top left, Cincinnati nature artist Ann Geise, shown painting part of ‘Spring Festival,’ created the illustration from the list of flora and fauna suggested by donor Gary Lubin. Madison Villa residents, ERS team members, and Church of the Redeemer congregants all added brush strokes to the wall, guided by ArtWorks apprentices. Lights will soon be added to enhance viewing the mural after dark.

# Powerful Moments

## Gatherings for Good Gala Series Wrapped up in November



Timeless Traditions guests Amy and Ralph Boss, Jon and Jeanne Boss, Tammie and Jon Boss II. Evening of Grandeur guests Robin Smith, Laura and Jeff Lamb, Janice Brown and Tom Cooper.

The Gatherings for Good Gala Series was a new concept for ERS in 2022. The unique and intimate events were designed for guests to interact with one another at a personal level, and each event had a distinctive venue, theme, and guest list. In total, more than 400 guests attended the five events.

To launch the series, ERS hosted business partners at a Hyde Park Country Club luncheon. In May, the corporate and church partners were celebrated at Sponsor Appreciation Night at the Ballpark and in August the focus shifted to Timeless Traditions. In September guests enjoyed An Evening of Grandeur at Peterloon, which was owned by the family of John J. Emery, principal developer of downtown Cincinnati and one of the city's greatest philanthropists. Finally, for Jazzin' at The Manse in November, the historic space's ballroom transformed into a one-night jazz club.

The annual gala is a significant source of funds for the Good Samaritan Mission (GSM), ERS' annual fund. The gala "raises nearly a third of all dollars and allows us to continue to provide the best quality care

for our residents," Executive Director of Philanthropy Joy Blang says. The GSM Fund provides money for the programs, services, and ministries that aren't financed by rents, fees, and subsidies. Among the uses for the fund are resident financial aid, affordable living programs; Deupree Meals On Wheels; the ERS Center for Memory Support and Inclusion; staff emergency assistance; and chaplaincy on ERS campuses.

"Those are programs that rely on philanthropic support in order for us to be able to provide them," Blang says. To date, ERS has raised more than \$275,000 for the GSM Fund.

The gala events have been occasions to mingle after years of waiting. Guests felt comfortable to engage with others who are passionate about the ERS mission and care for the older adults we serve. "We call it fun-draising, we call it friend-raising, we call it fun-raising," Blang says. "Those things are vital to the success of the gala series. We created these memorable moments. We came together, had a great time for something significant that we all needed," Blang says. ■

—Kristin Davenport





From top left, On the field at Night at the Ball Park: Mr. Red and Bona Kim. Timeless Traditions guests Peggy and Chuck Landes with granddaughter Palmer Goodman. Evening of Grandeur guests Andrea Fuller and Gerron McKnight. ERS Residents at An Evening of Grandeur (back row) Annie Kleene, Alan Gast, Pat Donaldson, (middle row) Tanya Walton, Vivian Kline, (seated) Joyce Wine, Paul Hicks. Jazzin' at The Manse performer Mandy Gaines. Night at the Ball Park guests (back row) Gary Lubin, Vincent Smith, Mike Krug, The Rt. Rev. Wayne Smith, Bishop Provisional, Diocese of Southern Ohio, Phillip Cone, John Krug, Lynne Zajac, Jimmy Wilson, (front row) Veverly Green, Elizabeth Lilly, Anne Lilly Cone, Kathy Krug, The Rev. Melanie Slane, The Rev. Chris Slane, Kathleen Jenks.



Proud winner 13 years in a row.

# A Back-to-Back-to-Back-to-Back-to-Back-to-Back-to-Back-to-Back-to-Back Win!

ERS is one of only three to win “13 of 13” Top Work Place Honors in Cincinnati



Part of the Living Well Senior Solutions Team: Peggy Slade-Sowders, Susan Miller, Betsy Babb, and Pam Ward.

For a record 13th year, ERS achieved Top Workplace in Cincinnati status, and this one holds even more meaning.

The past two years haven't been the luckiest time, with the COVID-19 pandemic creating difficulties for everyone, especially those working in healthcare careers. Yet that didn't dampen team members' pride.

“Think about what our team has been through this last year. The world has moved on from COVID, but we can't,” ERS President and CEO Laura Lamb says.

She was particularly moved by one ERS employee's comment, quoted in *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, which was, “I feel that even in difficult times management has continued to support our well-being as employees and has been increasingly flexible despite all of the

bumps in the road of the last few years.”

Lamb says about that, “For those of us who are committed to serving older adults, even in the difficult times, we stay together, we stay stronger. That's amazing to me.

“Our team members show up each and every day with a willing heart to care for the most vulnerable in our society,” she adds. “And I love being a part of this team.

“It's been a difficult two years, and I acknowledge that we've asked people to do more with sometimes less,” Lamb says. “And the fact that they still affirm our culture, and our work is just beyond words.”

Another employee was quoted in the newspaper: “I feel like I am doing God's work here and it makes me proud and useful.” —Mike Rutledge ■



# “Charlene” receives first-ever Lauren Brown Empowerment Award



ERS President & CEO Laura Lamb recently had two significant announcements about the Lauren Brown Empowerment Award: A first-ever recipient has been chosen, and, more than \$148,000 has been pledged toward the goal of raising a \$500,000 Lauren Brown Endowment Fund, which will finance the award for many years.

Lauren Brown was a lifelong learner and single Black mother who joined ERS while in high school, working in dining services at Marjorie P. Lee. She later worked in life enrichment and administration services at ERS and aspired to become an Affordable Living manager. She hoped to go through a rigorous process to become a licensed nursing home administrator, but the beloved team member died unexpectedly in April 2021, at age 33.

Creation of the award was an offshoot of the ERS We Can Do Better initiative, which aims to improve the lives of people of color.

The first awardee is “Charlene,” a pseudonym to protect her privacy because the program was created to help Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC) team members overcome barriers—financial

and otherwise—that make it more difficult for people of color to advance their careers.

Charlene is an African American woman who has worked for ERS for some time and is working toward her nursing degree. She is a recipient of tuition assistance from ERS. But the Lauren Brown award funds needs that are beyond what traditional scholarships give help with, such as transportation to school, or help overcoming other barriers.

Charlene also has had some challenges that have made continuing in school very, very difficult. During COVID, she had several family emergencies, some of which were health-related as well as the loss of someone in her life, which also caused hardships. She had to make a big decision about paying some bills or continuing school.

“That is the exactly the type of person that we hope to continue to help,” Lamb says. The award helped pay bills and provide reliable transportation so she could get to school. “If it weren’t for the Lauren Brown Empowerment Fund, she would have a lapse in her schooling,” Lamb adds, noting it often is difficult to resume schooling after such a gap. ■

## The Endowment:

ERS created the Lauren Brown Endowment Fund to be a forever program through which only a percentage of interest is spent, not the principal. ERS will continue the award program for generations to come. More than \$148,000 has been committed by private donors, including by ERS staff members.

To make a donation visit [erslife.info/donate](https://erslife.info/donate) or call Executive Director of Philanthropy Joy Blang at (513) 979-2313.



Episcopal Retirement Services

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