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A Journey Rerouted
Social Accountability and Community Benefit

Sing for the Moment

Tackling Tough Conversations

AN ADDED LAYER OF SUPPORT AT HOME

The Upside of Downsizing
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We all encounter difficult circumstances that are beyond our control. They can be discouraging and have the potential to cause anxiety, and yet, Jesus’ advice in Matthew chapter 4 is to “be anxious for nothing.” What a challenge it can be to truly live by those words!

In this issue of Messiah Lifeways Magazine, you’ll read about multiple people who were met with difficult circumstances, but when confronted with the decision of how to respond, they did not submit to despair. Instead, they chose to persevere with grace, reach out for help, and seek fulfillment through meaningful, social activities.

First, you’ll read about one resident whose unique gift of encouragement inspires countless others, both on and off the Messiah Lifeways at Messiah Village campus. Turn to page 6 to learn how members of the Sing for the Moment choir find joy and purpose even while experiencing memory loss, and to page 8 for advice on tackling those tough conversations that may surface while caring for an aging loved one. Later, on page 10, Messiah Lifeways At Home clients share about the impact of asking for help, both for themselves and for a loved one.

Even the day-to-day stressors that escalate around the holiday season can be hard to handle, so we’ve also included tips for downsizing on page 12, and offer a look at how Messiah Lifeways gives back to the community on page 5. Finally, plan ahead for holiday activities featured on page 13.

We hope these stories and tips will help start your holiday season off on the right foot and that Messiah Lifeways can support you along your journey, no matter the circumstances.

Sincerely,

Curt Stutzman, President & CEO

On the cover:
Charles S. Lady
Messiah Village Resident
A Journey Rerouted

Everyone has a story about Charles. When he comes up in conversation, someone will often interject with a simple, yet meaningful anecdote of an encouraging word or thoughtful deed that made their day brighter—those moments just seem to be part of his daily journey.

Charles moved to Messiah Lifeways at Messiah Village about seven years ago to rejoin his family in Pennsylvania. A lifelong musician, it was common to walk by an otherwise empty room on campus to find Charles at the piano, filling the space with music, while keeping his voice in shape. The way he intentionally acknowledged the efforts of team members made a huge impression on many who work here. And his kind words and thoughtful deeds were talked about often.

At the same time, he developed other hobbies that stemmed from a desire to encourage and pray for people. “I began to make decorative doorstops with a variety of inscriptions on them,” Charles explained. “I have notebooks filled with letters of thanks [for these doorstops] from politicians, governors, mayors, ministers – all sorts of people. And these doorstops are all over the world, really. I have doorstops in at least one church in every state of the union!” he noted with amazement.

Charles plays a game of chess with Messiah College student and mentee, Tanner Seeberg.
These simple little doorstops were treated with care and intentionality as Charles prayed over each phrase and destination. “That’s given me incredible satisfaction,” he reflected. “I can pray for the people who kick them around. They’ll never know!”

But six years ago, the tremors that Charles had been experiencing on and off for years became harder to ignore. “It started small,” he recalled. “But I did find out that other people picked up on something.” Charles decided to bring the issue up with his doctor. After seeking multiple opinions, he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease.

Along with the tremors came other setbacks as well. Charles’ mobility suffered, and he began to rely on a cane to get around. Unsteady hands made playing the piano and vocalizing more and more difficult. Woodworking became a safety concern. Charles ended up making the move from his Residential Living cottage to an Enhanced Living (personal care) apartment.

At this point, Charles had a choice. He could accept defeat and passively allow the symptoms of Parkinson’s to dictate his life, or he could approach his situation with positivity and determination. Charles chose the latter.

He didn’t give up; he just rerouted his journey.

Charles continues to take every opportunity to keep music in his life. He recently joined a new volunteer choir with a high, albeit somber, calling called Voices of Grace. This group practices a repertoire of familiar, peaceful hymns to accompany the last moments of a person’s earthly life. This is clearly not an activity for just anyone, but somehow it seems incredibly appropriate for Charles.

He may not be able to safely use the woodworking equipment without help anymore, but that hasn’t eliminated the impact that the inscribed doorstops continue to have. At the start of the school year, the principal at a local high school wrote to parents:

Continued on next page
“Late this summer I took notice of something that has been in my office for the past few years. It is a doorstop that was handcrafted by a man named Charles S. Lady. He dropped them off at the high school a few years ago as a gift. Engraved in the wood is a message that I had read before, but for whatever reason, I had not paid much attention to it. As I was reflecting on the 2018-2019 school year and thinking about the 2019-2020 school year, the message, ‘May doors at Northern High be a Landmark for Excellence and Grace,’ struck me in a different and profound way. This truly is my hope and prayer for your child’s experience at NHS. My desire is that when students walk through the doors of our school, that both the adults who work with them and the students, themselves, will strive for excellence.” - Principal Lehman, Northern High School

Imagine how many other doorstops are being noticed for the first time today after being stepped over for years!

But really, when it comes down to it, the day-to-day, subtle interactions that lend themselves to “Charles stories” are what continue to be the most impactful decisions he makes. I walked a short distance down the hall with Charles one day last month. We passed a housekeeper, an administrative assistant, and a fellow resident -- he casually greeted each person by name.

After seven years at Messiah Village, Charles refers to the people he interacts with as “family,” and clearly embraces the whole campus as his home. So, in spite of circumstances, Charles is still Charles. He lives each day with humility, optimism, and grace and we are blessed to be part of his family.

Everyone has a story about Charles.

Read, watch, and be inspired by more stories online at MessiahVillage.org/Charles
Social Accountability is a measure of an organization’s commitment to its mission, and its positive impact on those it serves and the greater community.

Since our inception in 1896, Messiah Lifeways has been committed to improving and enhancing the lives, health, and well-being of older adults. And being an engaged partner in the greater community by being socially accountable and offering community benefit is very important to the organization. Benevolent care, volunteerism, community engagement, partnerships, and donations are just some of the ways Messiah Lifeways gives back and lives out our mission and values each day.

While social accountability and community benefit have been an enduring organizational trait of Messiah Lifeways, we recognize that we can improve the measurement, intentionality, and celebration of these efforts. Subsequently, a Social Accountability and Community Benefit Task Force was formed earlier this year to provide more energy and focus to these efforts.

One of the first initiatives conducted by the task force was a Senior Living Community Needs Assessment (SLCNA) to help identify the needs and challenges of older adults in South Central Pennsylvania. A final report providing key community findings, data, and next steps will be released later this year. The SLCNA reinforces Messiah Lifeways’ commitment and vision to serve and benefit older adults as their needs evolve and as new barriers and challenges occur during the journey of aging. Lastly, we need to be more willing to share our pursuit of social accountability, because as author Roy T. Bennett states, “Life becomes easier and more beautiful when we can see the good in other people.”
Sing for the Moment

Sing for the Moment Choir
Joyfully Embraces Life

At the end of each Sing for the Moment choir rehearsal, Jeanne Moorfoot lets out a gleeful and enthusiastic “Yahoooo!” With each song that is sung, Jeanne demonstrates her love for music and her zest for life. But every week, as her daughter, Laura, drives Jeanne to rehearsal, Jeanne insists she doesn’t know how to sing. If you asked her about Sing for the Moment, Jeanne would insist she is not part of any such choir. That’s because Jeanne is living with dementia, which continues to steal her memories more and more as time goes by.

Sponsored by the Alzheimer’s Association® Greater PA Chapter, Sing for the Moment was founded in 2016 to allow participants to celebrate the joy that can be found in a beautiful moment, even in the midst of very challenging days. Gary Scicchitano, founding committee member, explains that

Jeanne Moorfoot & Laura Moorfoot
Eighty-eight year old Jeanne Moorfoot was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. Growing up, Jeanne’s daughter Laura recalls how much her mom loved music. “It is so rewarding participating in Sing for the Moment together, and watching my mother’s transformation each week when the music starts. I get to see a glimpse of a part of my mother that I miss dearly. You should see the way my mother claps her hands, raises her eyebrows, and participates with every cell in her body during our rehearsals and concerts.”

Gene & Kim Enck
As a care partner for her husband, Gene, Kim found it difficult to find activities that both she and her husband could enjoy. “This is an activity we can do together. And it brings out the best in him,” Kim says. Kim has found a community of people who offer her laughter, friendship, and understanding in the midst of a journey she never would have chosen. At each rehearsal, Kim enjoys watching how music engages Gene and is grateful for the chance to engage with him in this meaningful way.
“participants and their care partners enjoy the social interaction and the benefits of music to improve their lives during this very challenging struggle.” According to the Alzheimer’s Association, Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias impact more than 5.8 million Americans.

In the midst of these harsh realities, interventions that enhance life - even temporarily - are crucial. Dr. Rachel Cornacchio, the volunteer music director and conductor for Sing for the Moment, has seen first hand how the power of music can lift the veil of dementia. Rachel says, “I look into the eyes of the members who are just passively sitting and listening to those who are singing. I’ll look into their eyes and mouth the words, and they’ll start to sing. Inevitably what follows is a sweet smile as if they are recalling something familiar that brings them joy.” Sing for the Moment is made up of 30+ singers, each with a unique journey to navigate. The members offer each other love, support, camaraderie, and understanding. Rehearsals take place on Wednesday afternoons at Messiah Lifeways at Messiah Village, and concerts are held at the end of each fall and spring season.

If you or a loved one is considering joining Sing for the Moment, Justin Myers, co-founder and accompanist, states, “Don’t hesitate! We have a great time and have created a family atmosphere that extends beyond our weekly rehearsals.”

To learn more or to register for the spring season starting in February 2020, please contact the Alzheimer’s Association’s Harrisburg office at 717.651.5020 x1795 or email Barb Bingham at babingham@alz.org.

No singing experience required.

Joanne Houdeshell & Eileen Jeffrey

Joanne and Eileen joined Sing for the Moment in 2019. As newer members of the group, Eileen had received an email from her church explaining the mission of Sing for the Moment. Both she and her daughter Joanne loved to sing and meet new people. In the short time they have been members, they have built lasting friendships with other members of the group and care partners. Each practice is more fun than the last!

Claudia St Onge & Tammy Leister

Tammy and her mother, Claudia, have been members of Sing for the Moment since the first practice in 2016. Tammy related, “The most rewarding part of being a member of Sing for the Moment is the chance to establish so many genuine friendships. It’s also amazing to watch the change that occurs in my mother’s demeanor and outlook during rehearsal as compared to her mood prior to rehearsal. The music washes over her and makes such a difference.”
Tackling Tough Conversations

In the last Messiah Lifeways Preview Guide, we shared an article about how Messiah Lifeways Adult Day Services can help take the stress out of caregiving. But whether it’s attending Adult Day, hiring home care, giving up driving, or considering long-term care placement, talking to a loved about these needs can be quite difficult. We may feel guilty, unsure, or nervous to even broach these subjects with a parent or spouse. Inevitably, these conversations must take place - for their sake and yours.

When should you initiate the talk? If your loved one is facing one or more of these issues with others on the horizon - it’s time. Here are some red flags to key in on:

- Increased isolation/depression
- Rapidly declining mobility
- Poor hygiene
- Increased falls/bruising
- Increased fender benders/getting lost while driving
- Significant cognitive decline/memory loss
- Increased medical needs/hospitalizations
- Increased medication errors
- Inability to manage household/finances
- A medical professional recommends assistance or placement
- You experience caregiver burnout

Prepare for the talk

Prepare yourself and those around you for the conversation. Be practical and proactive and:

- Seek advice or a recommendation from their doctor or a social worker
- Research care options, costs, and if financial assistance is available
- Talk with other family members to build consensus for a united front
- Build a plan or circle of care around that person
- Gather concrete examples of the concerns you have (keep a journal)

Next, we have to get over our fears and concerns of guilt. Making a suggestion to hire home care or move to a personal care home is not a personal attack or punishment. Despite what they may think, we are doing it out of love and concern.
Time for the talk

The discussion should be scheduled in a comfortable distraction-free environment. Include your loved one in the dialogue. Quite often, loved ones are being talked about, rather than being talked to. Both parties’ full attention, privacy, and openness is essential. Share your concerns, hopes, and wishes with them.

Be persistent, a good listener, and do not argue. Have others who share your concerns present. You don’t want them to feel like they’re being ganged up on, but it’s helpful to have additional voices in the room to back you up. Stay positive, reframe the conversation, and be specific. Base the discussion on facts, not just opinions. Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of saying...</th>
<th>Say this...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dad, you are a horrible driver!</td>
<td>Dad, I am concerned about your safety while driving, especially at night or when it rains, and I’ve noticed more dents on your car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom, you’re not eating enough!</td>
<td>Mom, I’m concerned about your 15-pound weight loss in the last four months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can’t take care of yourself – it’s time to move to a facility!</td>
<td>Have you ever considered moving to a retirement community? Let’s go visit or have lunch there.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lastly, being proactive and communicating is much easier when they are in better health and in a better state of mind, and when they can have more decision-making power and control over their future. Get their buy in and write down next steps and goals. It may not be the easiest conversation, but at least you are having it and moving forward.

If you would like more information or guidance, please contact Messiah Lifeways Coaching at 717.591.7225 or Coach@MessiahLifeways.org.
An Added Layer of Support - At Home

Mary & Bob’s At Home Story

About a year ago Mary found herself needing some extra help managing her husband, Bob’s, Parkinson’s and Dementia diagnoses. Bob regularly attended Messiah Lifeways Adult Day for socialization and support but when that was no longer an option, Mary decided to call Messiah Lifeways At Home for additional support in their home. “It was really important to me that I cared for Bob in our home. This was his forever home, and At Home made that possible for us.” Mary needed “another layer of support” since she was also the primary caregiver for her parents. “The At Home caregivers were so patient and so focused on Bob’s needs, and they were able to read his nonverbal cues. He was always happy and relaxed when I told him our friends from Messiah Lifeways were coming over.”

Having that added layer of support from At Home was critical for Mary especially on the days that were really challenging. She found it comforting to know that Bob’s needs were taken care of, and she felt supported as a caregiver. “The willingness of At Home to work with us to send the same caregivers was amazing. It meant the world to us because we got to know each other so well, and the caregivers worked so hard to learn what Bob liked and were respectful of Bob’s dignity.”

Finding time to take care of herself was not easy but it was important that she still maintained her social network with friends. “It is very important to me as a caregiver to go out and recharge. It made me a better wife, sister, mother, daughter. I was able to keep my life at a better balance with the help I received from At Home.” She was able to fully relax while she ran errands or spent time with her friends because she knew that the caregivers that were with Bob were well-trained and that he was in the best of hands.

“I will be forever grateful for the care and support we received from the At Home caregivers. They have touched our lives and our hearts in beautiful ways. They enriched Bob’s life and mine beyond measure.”
When Peg Petschel found out she was going to need surgery, she was worried about how she would get her day-to-day tasks done by herself. She knew she would need additional help, so her daughter suggested she call At Home.

“Smiling faces came to my door, and they were willing to help me with anything I needed from emptying my dishwasher to helping me take my first shower after surgery. They even took the time to chat with me about my life and theirs.” This meant a lot to Peg since she had just recently moved to an apartment at Messiah Village from Michigan, and was missing the life and locale she knew so well including her friends and her late husband.

“The many helpers brought me help and hope and even some hilarity.” When Heidi Curry, At Home Manager, found out about Peg’s many trips to the Emergency Room for various medical issues, she decided to drop off some bubble wrap to Peg’s apartment with a sign to put on her scooter that read “Warning - Student Driver.” Peg and her friends found this hilarious and thankfully, she hasn’t been to the hospital since. It may have even worked as a good luck charm!

Peg’s At Home Story

Messiah Lifeways At Home offers non-medical home care services to help you or your loved one. With services ranging from grocery shopping to companionship and caregiver respite, we’re here for you. For more information about At Home, call 717.790.8209 or visit MessiahLifeways.org/HomeCare.
As daunting as the thought of downsizing may be, a simpler life can really mean a life with minimal stress and maximal productivity. Less “stuff” is less to clean, less to organize, less to store, and, in general, less mess.

So, whether you are considering a move to a more maintenance-free lifestyle, or you just want to simplify your life, it helps to start with a gameplan. LifeStorage.com recommends this 3-step system:

1. **Declutter:** This can be as simple as getting rid of those things you are not using or have no sentimental attachment to. Try filling one garbage bag a day for 30 days to gradually decrease clutter.

2. **Donate** or re-home items that you feel have some value, but can now be passed on to others. There are many great options for donating, and some of these organizations even pick up!

3. **Document** what you like and dislike about your current space in order to help ease the fear of change. Take notes or pictures of items to allow you to recreate a space that feels special and similar. This also helps you keep track of treasured memorabilia as well as important documents.

Finally, you don’t have to face downsizing alone. Don’t be afraid to enlist the help of family, friends, and downsizing professionals. (You may be surprised how a pizza party or spaghetti dinner can help rally the troops!) And when you are enjoying the benefits of a more organized, less cluttered home, you can sit back, relax, and say: WOW!

For a guide on downsizing, a list of donation centers, or for downsizing professional services, please contact the Welcome Center at 717.306.9588.
Sounds of the Season
Sunday, December 8 | 2:00 pm | Chapel, Messiah Village
It’s beginning to sound a lot like Christmas! Join the Singing Men as they get into the holiday spirit with joyful songs of the season. This program is free.

No RSVP is required for these holiday events. If you have questions, please call the Messiah Lifeways Events Manager at 717.790.8237.

Discover the Surrounding Community
The Capital Region is filled with plenty to do, from dining experiences and educational outings to fun, family friendly activities. Check out some of the highlights and seasonal attractions.

Mechanicsburg Annual Tree Lighting
Friday, November 29 | 5:15 pm - 7:00 pm
Corner of Market and Main Street
Each year the local Chamber of Commerce hosts an annual tree lighting complete with caroling, hot cocoa, and cookies. This is always a great seasonal activity to jump into the holiday season.

Oakes Museum of Natural History
Located on the campus of Messiah College, the Oakes Museum is sure to be a fun and educational indoor activity this winter. The museum features a collection of Smithsonian quality African and North American mammals, birds, fish, seashells, insects, and fossils.

Whitaker Center
The Whitaker Center (located in Harrisburg) has a variety of shows and educational experiences for children and adults alike. Some upcoming seasonal shows include, A Motown Christmas on November 26 and The Nutcracker, performed by the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet on December 14 and 15.

Char’s at Tracy Mansion
This 1913 riverfront mansion provides a delightful indoor and outdoor dining experience overlooking the Susquehanna River. The American Style cuisine is sure to satisfy any guests’ palate.
Messiah Lifeways offers an enriching, uplifting experience outside of the home for loved ones unable to safely stay alone during the day. Open Monday through Friday, 7:00am to 5:00pm.

"Adult Day has helped us tremendously. I can depend on having someone there to watch over my mother and keep her safe. I’d recommend anyone considering Adult Day to give it a try!" - Erin Orndorf

MessiahLifeways.org/ADS

Adult Day | Carlisle
1155 Walnut Bottom Road | 717.243.0447

Adult Day | Mechanicsburg
100 Mt. Allen Drive | 717.276.0184