

The Bluestem Post



The right care at the right time

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A day in the life at Bluestem PACE

INSPIRATION
Resilient hope

LIFESTYLE
*Creating joy and connection
through song*

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On the cover: A health care resident enjoys time spent over coffee with friends. See page 7 to learn more about the care offered at Bluestem Communities and how to know when it's the right care at the right time. Photo by Gavin Peters Photography.

LIVE WELL WITH BLUESTEM COMMUNITIES

Bluestem Communities is a nonprofit organization in south central Kansas that serves seniors through various living options, care settings and care-centered services. Bluestem Communities locations include Kidron Bethel Village in North Newton, Schowalter Villa in Hesston and Bluestem PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) in McPherson and Hutchinson.

MISSION STATEMENT

Bluestem Communities' mission is to have a positive impact on quality of life by promoting lifelong wellness, purpose, choice, genuine connection and personalized care with Christian compassion.



To learn more about Bluestem Communities' services and locations visit bluestemks.org

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A day in the life at Bluestem PACE

Bruce Reisinger is a staple presence at the Bluestem PACE day center in Hutchinson. For more than a year, Reisinger has spent his days at the day center where he gets medical care, physical therapy, appointment management, meals, assistance with day-to-day tasks and time spent with new friends.

Bluestem PACE, or Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, supports individuals age 55 and better who have complex medical needs to remain living in their own homes by coordinating comprehensive care from one source.

The program operates from a primary location in McPherson, Kansas, and an alternative care site in Hutchinson, Kansas. Both locations provide on-campus access to primary care physicians, therapy services, social services and personal care, as well as a day center. The day center is a place for participants to spend time between on-campus care appointments or while their at-home caregivers tend to other responsibilities during the day. Transportation is a unique feature at Bluestem PACE. Drivers pick up participants at their homes and take them to and from the day center and to specialty appointments as needed.

For Reisinger, who lives on his own and deals with a variety of medical needs, Bluestem PACE was just the kind of thing he needed. Each week, Monday through Friday, Bruce arrives at Bluestem PACE in Hutchinson at 9:00 in the morning and heads back home at 3:00 in the afternoon. Sometimes he drives himself, but much of the time he takes advantage of the bus transportation he is provided through the program.

"I first found PACE because the things I was doing with my primary care physician weren't working," said Reisinger. "I had been having a lot of falls, and when you live alone, that's a difficult thing to manage. I was referred to PACE, and we determined very early on that coming to the PACE center every weekday was in my best interest. They were worried about me being on my own."

When he arrives each morning, he settles in at his favorite table and enjoys a cup of coffee while catching up with staff members and fellow participants.

"We definitely notice when Bruce isn't here," said Chelsea Yerges, a restorative aide. "He brings a lot of fun and laughter with all of his good-natured joking."

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Top: Bruce Reisinger arrives for his day at the Bluestem PACE day center in Hutchinson. Center: Reisinger joins in a game of bingo. Bottom: Reisinger spends time on the NuStep during a physical therapy session with restorative aide Chelsea Yerges. Photos by Tyler Stutzman.

A day in the life of Bluestem PACE continued

Reisinger’s day-to-day at the Bluestem PACE center is determined by appointments he needs to attend either out in the community or if he needs to attend. From eye appointments to heart specialists, his care plan helps coordinate appointments and provides the necessary transportation to get there. He may see the on-site doctor to address a specific concern or to evaluate his progress in certain areas. Most days, Reisinger says, he is encouraged to do physical therapy.

“We’ve really been working on Bruce’s strength and balance to help eliminate

his falls,” said Yerges. “He’s making really good progress, getting stronger, and the frequency of his falls have diminished significantly. That’s what we want to see.”

In between appointments or on days where he has fewer things scheduled, Bruce enjoys socializing and participating in planned activities at the day center. He can often be found playing cards with friends, and he’s known to be lucky at bingo. He’s also grateful to receive lunch at the day center, as preparing food on his own can be a challenge due to his limited mobility.

“It really is nice to have this kind of assistance,” said Reisinger. “Because I have PACE, I am able to do many things I couldn’t do if I was just getting by on my own.” **TBP**



SQUEALS AND FROTH

Enjoy an evening of cold drinks, live music and brats for a cause!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2024 | 5 to 9 P.M.
Three Rings Brewery | 536 Old U.S. 81 | McPherson, KS

\$1 of every beer sold on Saturday, September 14 will benefit the Bluestem PACE Good Neighbor Fund to help Bluestem PACE participants within the community live well at home.



BLUESTEM
COMMUNITIES

BLUESTEM PACE
bluestempace.org

the
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BLUESTEM
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Dawn Yoder Harms
Chaplain, Kidron Bethel Village

Resilient hope

I often find myself drawn to images of resilience, especially in nature. I’m amazed by plant life – even trees – that grow out of sheer rock. In my own backyard, I marvel at the wild sunflowers that somehow seem to tolerate heat and drought and, in the midst of it all, effortlessly provide a feast for goldfinches and chickadees. And I confess, I grumble at the dandelions as I work to mitigate their proliferation: How is it that they can survive almost anything?

These are questions about resilience, about surviving and growing in and through harsh conditions, through long seasons of challenge and change.

Traveling through such seasons both *requires* and *cultivates* resilience. The word resilience literally means “to jump or leap back.” In this sense, it is the ability to spring back like a stretched rubber band into our original shape after we have been stretched or stressed. (Patrick Fleming, “Springing Back,” Weavings, 2013)

And it’s more than that. Resilience is not always about returning to how things were. It is often about adapting to difficult circumstances even as we remain firmly grounded in who we are. It is about more than survival. It’s about growing through challenge and change. It is about being transformed through pain into something more. It is about listening amid the struggle for a more vibrant expression of our soul to emerge.

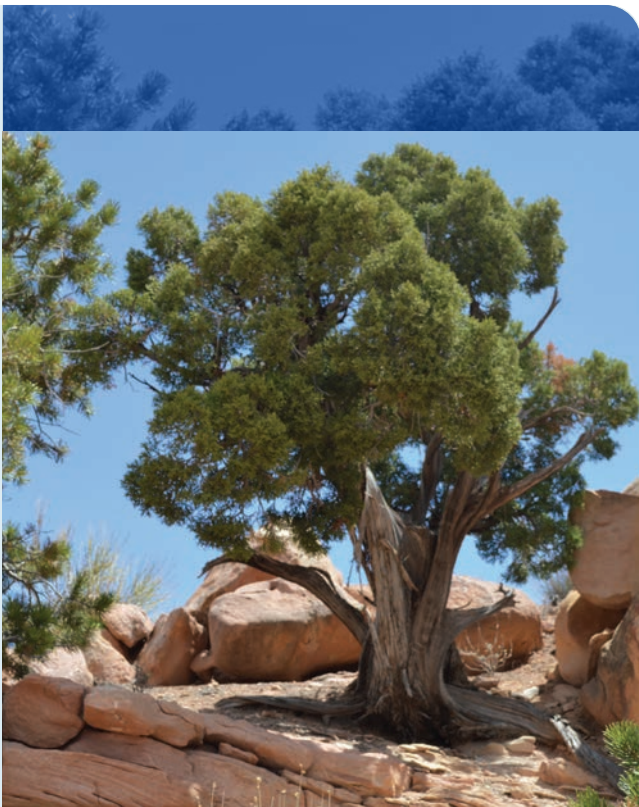
Patrick Fleming notes: While resilience seems to come more naturally to some of us, “it is a basic human, spiritual capacity in all of us” that can be learned and cultivated.

How do we cultivate resilience? The prophet Jeremiah offers words of counsel to the people of Judah.

He says: Plant yourselves next to streams of living water. Let your roots go deep and draw sustenance from it. That way, when the heat comes, your leaves will stay green. You *can* grow through it.

Deep roots are where resilience and potential for

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*Blessed are those
who trust in the Lord,
whose trust is in the Lord.
They shall be like
a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots
by the stream.
It shall not fear
when heat comes,
and its leaves shall
stay green.
In the year of drought
it is not anxious,
and it does not cease
to bear fruit.*

- Jeremiah 17:7-8

Achieving wellness

Jason Jones
Director of Bluestem Wellness

Rachel McMaster
Director of Communications

To truly be at your best, many factors come into play. Complete wellness is more than a physical sense; it also encompasses mental and social wellness as well as general contentment in life.

Margaret Herron exemplifies several aspects of wellness. Herron has lived in one of Schowalter Villa’s independent living neighborhoods for about 10 years, and has embraced the many opportunities Bluestem Communities offers to live well.

“I moved to Schowalter Villa independent living from Texas a couple of years after my husband died,” Herron said. “My sister and her husband, who were Schowalter Villa residents, encouraged me to do this. My parents and numerous other family members had also lived at Schowalter Villa over the years, and they had all enjoyed the community.”

Herron took the brave step to move to a new state and community to live the kind of life she was looking for after a major life change, and she has never regretted the decision.

“I love the design of my home here and its location near the Wellness Center in the Lakeside Commons building,” said Herron.

Having round the clock access and close proximity to Bluestem Wellness Centers has been an encouragement

for Herron to maintain an active lifestyle.

“I had been having foot and back problems that caused me to not be able to walk as much as I used to,” said Herron. “Now, thanks to the use of the wellness center fitness room, yoga classes, Silver Sneakers classes and physical therapy that is also located on the Schowalter Villa campus, I am physically stronger. I take advantage of the wide variety of group exercise classes the Wellness Center offers by attending Silver Sneakers on Monday and Friday mornings and Adaptive Yoga on Wednesday mornings. Prior to those classes, I go to the fitness room and warm up on the seated elliptical machine. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I use the seated elliptical machine for a cardio workout and then do a strength workout on the weight machines.”

In addition to a dedicated fitness routine, Herron is also committed to serving the community through volunteer opportunities.

“I have volunteered through various opportunities at Schowalter Villa, including the gift shop, garage sales and as a part of the Villa Partners, which is a group of volunteers that coordinates events to help raise funds for the Schowalter Villa Good Samaritan Caring Fund.”

“My mental and physical health have improved because of all of these activities,” said Herron. “I hope to age as gracefully as possible in good health.” **TBP**



Photo by Tyler Stutzman.

The right care at the right time

Navigating senior living and care may sometimes feel like wading through a stream of options and information. How do you decipher the difference between levels of care, and how do you know when one might be more suited for your needs and desires than another? Understanding the spectrum of senior living and care options is essential to finding the best fit for your lifestyle now and can help you prepare for the future as needs change. Dive into this stream to gain a clearer understanding of the all the options available to you at Bluestem Communities.

Bluestem Communities has two life plan communities - Kidron Bethel Village and Schowalter Villa. It also offers a senior care program, Bluestem PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly), that helps seniors who have complex medical needs remain living in their own homes by coordinating comprehensive care and services.

Life plan communities, also known as continuing care retirement communities (CCRC), are senior living communities that offer options from independent living to assisted living to health care, memory care or skilled nursing care. When someone moves to a life plan community, the living setting may be a personal choice to a certain point, but in some cases, medical needs and physical abilities may also determine a person's level of care. Often, accepting help in some areas as needs change helps prolong independence in other areas because you are not putting unnecessary stress on your body and mind by trying to do everything on your own.

One wonderful benefit of life plan communities is the ease in which a person can move from one setting to another as health needs and personal desires change.

INDEPENDENT LIVING

For people who would like freedom from the demands of homeownership and maintenance, and are managing their own health needs, independent living is an excellent option. You can remove mowing, shoveling snow and changing HVAC filters from your to-do list. Use the extra time to pursue your interests and better enjoy the retirement you've earned.



Signs that it's time for you to move to independent living.

- You keep thinking about downsizing – both your things and your life.
- You're ready to relinquish basic home up-keep responsibilities.
- You're thinking more about your care as you age.

Independent living residents enjoy a game of billiards. Photo by Gavin Peters Photography.

ASSISTED LIVING

When more assistance is needed, such as housekeeping, medication management, three provided meals per day or a little help getting around, assisted living offers additional services to support individuals' autonomy. In assisted living, staff members are available around the clock, and residents participate in a variety of activities and outings that also connect them with other community members.



Signs that it's time for a move to assisted living:

- Parts of your daily routine have become increasingly challenging.
- You don't have the time or energy to socialize or do the activities you'd like to do.
- You feel like you've been slowed by one hurdle after another and just can't get back to where you once were.

Assisted living residents gather for social time and coffee. Photo by Gavin Peters Photography.

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The right care at the right time continued

HEALTH CARE

Compassionate team members in health care offer around-the-clock care to people with complex conditions, which may include support with transferring, mobility or memory challenges. We meet you where you are by honoring your autonomy and providing the care required to foster your best health. As part of our commitment to your holistic wellbeing, we offer engaging activities and plenty of opportunities for socialization.



Signs that it’s time for a move to health care:

- Living alone or being independently mobile has become a safety concern.
- There has been a decline in physical abilities or difficulty with thinking, memory or safe decision-making.

Health care residents enjoy a spirited game of balloon ball. Photo by Gavin Peters Photography.

BLUESTEM PACE

Bluestem PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) offers support to individuals to continue living in their own homes by coordinating care and services. The program addresses complex health conditions through the coordination of primary care, specialists, therapy services, social services and personal care. Transportation to a day center is provided to make it even easier to receive the proactive, comprehensive care you need.



Signs that you should consider Bluestem PACE :

- You or an in-home caregiver could benefit from care and appointment management.
- You desire social interactions in addition to managing your health.

A Bluestem PACE participant arrives at the day center. Photo by Rachel McMaster.

Learn more

While it’s invaluable to be optimistic about our future health, it’s equally important to have the right services available when you need them. No matter what the future may bring, Bluestem Communities will be there to provide the care you deserve to live well.

Learn more and find the care you’ll love by contacting the Senior Living Advisor Team at 888-388-7445. [TBP](#)

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The Local Table increases offerings

It's been just a little more than a year since The Local Table restaurant opened at Kidron Bethel Village in North Newton. In that short time, management and staff have made great strides in learning how best to serve both resident and public customers in the setting of a life plan community.

The Local Table is a daytime eatery that features breakfast and lunch favorites including salads, sandwiches, soups and more. It derives the "local" portion of its name by partnering with local companies on certain menu items including breads, coffee, eggs and syrup.

One significant addition to The Local Table has been the addition of Jacob Masters, who joined the team as general manager in the spring. Since his arrival, Masters has been dreaming up and executing exciting offerings for customers.

One of his first tasks was to create a seasonal menu to reflect fresh flavors. In addition to a permanent menu, several seasonal dishes will be changed out three times per year to offer variety to customers.

After a couple of months, Masters introduced Sunday lunch specials that have been well-received among the clientele. The Sunday specials are reminiscent of home-cooked traditional favorites, such as pot roast and salmon.

Most recently, Grab-n-Go lunch items have been added to The Local Table's daily offerings. The Grab-n-Go items

feature pre-made and packaged sandwiches, salads and wraps for purchase for a quick and simple meal option. The items are in a cooler near the front of the restaurant so customers can pick a favorite and be on their way without needing to wait.

Now is great time to visit The Local Table to try some of the new things being offered. The Local Table is open Wednesday through Saturday, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The restaurant is located in the main Kidron Bethel Village building at 3001 Ivy Dr., North Newton, Kansas, and is open to both residents and the public. **TBP**



Patrons of The Local Table enjoy the atmosphere, food and company. Photo by Gavin Peters Photography.

Welcome home to Bluestem Communities.



See available independent living home options here:
bluestemks.org/availablehomes



**KIDRON BETHEL VILLAGE
SCHOWALTER VILLA**
888-388-7445 | bluestemks.org

Creating joy and connection through song

Music is an integral part of the fabric of Bluestem Communities. Whether it’s musicians from the wider community performing their music as a special treat at one of the campuses’ venues, residents participating in a sing-a-long, Bluestem PACE participants singing along to favorites of decades past at the day center, or hymn sings during midweek worship, music can often be heard emanating from each campus.

On Wednesday afternoons at Schowalter Villa, the music you hear could be the Schowalter Singers, a mixed vocal ensemble of resident and community life-long singers enjoying a life-giving activity.

“There are so many people who live here who have been singing most of their lives, so to continue to have that outlet even in retirement is really special,” said Leland Flickinger, director of the Schowalter Singers.

Flickinger, who is also a Schowalter Villa independent living resident, was instrumental in starting the Schowalter Singers in mid-2022. Having conducted high school, college and church choirs across the country, and even overseas in Germany, for the entirety of his professional career, he was well-versed in launching and leading a choir. He’s delighted to be leading his peers in this venture as well.

“For years, Schowalter Villa had a Men’s Chorus and a Women’s Chorus, but – as far as my memory goes – never a mixed choir like this,” Flickinger said. “As with other

things, COVID-19 took its toll, and when we were ready to reconvene our choirs, neither group had the number of singers it needed, so we decided to combine. It’s been a wonderful experience.”

“I love being part of the Schowalter Singers,” said Sharon Schrag, an independent living resident who has been part of choirs and other musical endeavors for much of her life. “It’s kind of my jam. I appreciate that Leland finds new music that allows us to perform a variety.”

The group rehearses weekly, performs occasionally in local communities, and has larger concerts showcasing their repertoire three times a year. This fall, they are preparing for a concert that will incorporate familiar hymn arrangements, spirituals and choral pieces that explore “Our Journey to Heaven.”

“This senior choir is surprising,” Flickinger said. “Our average age is more than 80 years old. You don’t expect this kind of sound out of 80-year-olds. I am also surprised that they learn their music as quickly as they do. I suppose it’s what comes out of working with people with so much singing experience. It’s wonderful.”

Catch the Schowalter Singers fall concert on Sunday, September 8, at 7 p.m., at Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston, or Wednesday, September 11, at 3 p.m., at the Schowalter Villa Chapel. [TBP](#)



The Schowalter Singers is a 38-voice choir made up of Schowalter Villa residents and members of the local community directed by resident Leland Flickinger. Photo from 2023 by Roth Images.

growth through challenge and change begin. To grow such roots, we plant ourselves next to streams of living water and we drink deeply from it.

We access this water through:

- Silence.
- Song.
- Prayer.
- Conversation.
- Journaling or poetry.
- Quieting ourselves and listening to the Spirit of God.
- Engaging with holy texts.
- Nature.
- Studying scripture.
- Worshipping together.
- Singing together our lament and praise.

And...

- As we love and care for God’s creation.
- As we are fully present to each other.
- As we reach out beyond ourselves in care.
- As we open ourselves to learning from each other.
- Even, and most especially, when that learning is difficult.

Paul cared so deeply about this that he offered the fervent prayer in Ephesians 3, a prayer for a faith community to whom he was writing, and a prayer for all of us who seek to follow Jesus and embody his ways on this earth.

*May Christ dwell in our hearts through faith,
so that we, being rooted and grounded in love,
will be able to grasp fully
the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ’s love
and, with all God’s holy ones,
experience this love that surpasses all understanding,
so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

May this blessing live and grow in us as we, like trees, plant ourselves next to streams of living water. TBP

UPCOMING EVENTS 2024

SQUEALS & FROTH

Saturday, September 14
McPherson, Kansas

COUNTRY BREAKFAST

Saturday, October 5
Kidron Bethel Village

HOLIDAY MARKET

Saturday, December 7
Kidron Bethel Village

HOME SWEET HESSTON

October 2 - 5
Hesston, Kansas

BLUESTEM GALA

Thursday, November 7
Newton, Kansas



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watersedgehesston.com | 620-327-4099





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The Bluestem Post is published to share information, fellowship and fun with participants, residents, staff and friends of Bluestem Communities.

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316-836-4837 or rachelm@bluestemks.org.

CONNECT with US   or VISIT US ONLINE: bluestemks.org

Thursday, November 7, 2024
Annual Bluestem Communities

Gala

