

The Bluestem Post



The quiet reset of a Kansas summer

page 5

IN THIS ISSUE:

FEATURE
Not slowing down

INSPIRATION
Making peace with reality

PROFESSIONAL
Living and Aging Well: Understanding the changes that come with age

CONTENTS

FEATURE	3
Not slowing down	
WELLNESS	5
The quiet reset of a Kansas summer	
INSPIRATION	6
Making peace a reality	
PROFESSIONAL	7
Living and Aging Well: Understanding the changes that come with age	
NEWS	8
Bluestem PACE marks 10 years of service	
Bluestem Communities celebrates milestones with open house events	
CONNECTIONS	11
Quiet lives of inspiration	

On the cover:
Bluestem Communities residents find many ways to stay active with amenities in their community.
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 The Cedars in McPherson, 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 [bluestem.org](https://www.bluestem.org)

Editor: Rachel McMaster
Design: Mackenzie Unruh
Printing: Baker Bros. Printing
V.P. of Marketing & Sales:
Ariana Kauffman
Contributors:
Articles by Rachel McMaster,
Bluestem Communities Director of
Communications, unless otherwise noted.

Bluestem Communities:
James Krehbiel, President/CEO
Bluestem PACE:
Emilie Rains, Executive Director
The Cedars:
Amy Bennett, Executive Director
Kidron Bethel Village:
Jennifer Traglia, Executive Director
Schowalter Villa:
Jeff Ritcha, Executive Director

Board of Directors:
Sondra Leatherman, Chair
Jen Person, Vice Chair
Ron Flaming, Secretary
Mark Landes, Treasurer
Marlys Best
Mike Cullinane
Verda Deckert
Greg Gaeddert
Lisa Harms
Sandie Kueker
Marty Ward

Not slowing down

It's a common misconception, and perhaps understandably so, that living at one of Bluestem Communities life plan campuses means that you are retired. But for a handful of residents at The Cedars, Kidron Bethel Village and Schowalter Villa, full retirement is still somewhere down the road.

This is not just a phenomenon at Bluestem Communities. Across the country, a growing number of professionals are moving into retirement or life plan communities – senior living that offers a continuum of care from independent living to assisted living and long-term health care – years before they plan to retire, blurring the widely held perceptions of senior living.

Individuals qualify to live at Bluestem Communities at the age of 62, which is well before retirement for some people. The allure of maintenance-free living, premium amenities and getting a headstart on building social connections are often what prompt them to make the move once they qualify by age.

Three residents who continue to hold professional roles share about their decision to move to Bluestem Communities. For these residents, moving to a life plan community hasn't marked an ending, but rather it's opened the door to a different kind of beginning. With fewer day-to-day responsibilities and a strong sense of community already in place, they've found the freedom to keep contributing, pursuing meaningful work, and building connections on their own terms. Their experiences reflect a shifting narrative around aging and retirement – one where purpose doesn't have an expiration

date, and where "slowing down" is less about stopping and more about choosing what comes next.

TRICIA HARTSHORN, THE CEDARS, MCPHERSON, KANSAS

"I was really looking forward to downsizing and the maintenance-free living," said Tricia Hartshorn, a resident at The Cedars in McPherson, Kansas. "To have the freedom to not have to worry about those pieces of home ownership, but be able to give my attention to a new area I find energizing has been the best of both worlds for me."

When Hartshorn moved to The Cedars in spring 2026, she gained not only a new home, but a new job, accepting the role of Director of Fund Advancement at The Cedars, after working in higher education for 36 years.

"I felt like I was winding down in higher education, but I knew I still had a lot to

give," said Hartshorn. "I wasn't looking to find a job in the same place I was moving to, but it worked out and I'm really glad it did. I love talking with residents and others, hearing their stories and about their connection to The Cedars. It makes the work that I do really fulfilling."

In her role, Hartshorn works with donors and the larger Bluestem Communities Fund Advancement Team to build the Resident Assistance Fund, Bluestem Legacy Endowment and other special projects.

"I was a little bit nervous about how it would work to live and work in the same place," she said. "If I went to a resident event, would people think I was there to work? But I haven't found that to be the case at all. When it's time to go home, I take my nametag off and I'm Tricia, the independent living resident, and I can go about my day as that person."



Tricia Hartshorn (left), a resident at The Cedars who also works for the Bluestem Communities Fund Advancement team as Director of Fund Advancement for The Cedars, visits with a fellow independent living resident.

Continued on next page

LYNNE BETH, KIDRON BETHEL VILLAGE, NORTH NEWTON, KANSAS

Lynne Beth moved to Kidron Bethel Village with the intention of being retired and continuing to serve through volunteer roles, but when she moved to campus during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, volunteer roles were in short supply. She found one filling shifts at the Newton Area Senior Center, but was soon asked if she'd be willing to take the vacated director role.

"I had already been retired from my corporate job for six years, but I said, yes, I would take the job," said Beth, who worked for Ten Thousand Villages corporate in Pennsylvania for 23 years, then cared for aging parents before relocating to Kansas. "With my business background, I jumped in with both feet and we started tackling some challenges facing the center."

An aging building with most of its original features, a hit to funding, and low participation numbers were all part of the challenges Beth had to face. Over the last three years, she has spearheaded fundraising to renovate the bathrooms and fix the roof, re-



Lynne Beth, a resident at Kidron Bethel Village, serves as director of the Newton Area Senior Center.

secured funding from the city, and has been working steadily to bring numbers back to pre-pandemic levels.

"It's been such a blessing to have the success we've had," Beth said. "I just keep saying, 'Ok, God, just keep giving me these ideas, keep letting me use my gifts and lets see what we can do here.'"

"I'm grateful to still be able to work," Beth said. "I've worked hard all of my life – it's just part of my DNA, and I guess I wasn't really ready to give it up yet. I enjoy having something to do, somewhere to go, and not having to come home and worry about keeping up the yard or other maintenance things."

RON MUMAW, SCHOWALTER VILLA, HESSTON, KANSAS

Ron Mumaw has been a longstanding presence at Schowalter Villa for 25 years where he has served as a member of the Maintenance and Grounds team, so when he arrived as an independent living resident in 2024, seeing him around campus was just part of everyday.

"I think my wife and I always knew we would end up moving to Schowalter Villa," said Mumaw. "There's a long history of her family living here. When we started having some health concerns, we knew it was time to make the move, and we're so glad we did. We actually signed our contract on the day I turned 62!"

When Ron and his wife, Stacey, were touring potential homes, he was working as the maintenance person in the Arbor Vista neighborhood – the same neighborhood they chose to move to. He now serves as the maintenance person in the Villa Life Center (long-term health care), giving him a bit more separation between work and home.



Ron Mumaw continues to work in Maintenance for Schowalter Villa after becoming an independent living resident.

"It's been a good and simple balance of living and working in the same place," Mumaw said. "When I come to work, I work, and when it's time to leave I'm a resident, not an employee. I haven't felt much blurring of that. In fact, I really like that I am here and conveniently located to tackle an after-hours emergency call from time to time."

"I'm glad that I'm able to continue to work, and I'm glad that we made the move to Schowalter Villa when we did – when we were still physically able to do it," Mumaw said. "It gave us the opportunity to be selective with the home we wanted and be able to relinquish some of the details of home ownership. Schowalter Villa is such a wonderful place with wonderful people. When I started working in the Villa Life Center, there were 97 residents in health care, and 57 of them I had taken care of through maintenance when they were in independent living. There is such a richness to the connections that are created. That's been the most fulfilling part."

The quiet reset of a Kansas summer

by Holly Hajjaj, Director of Bluestem Wellness Center – Hesston & Bluestem Employee Wellness

By late July, many begin to feel the weight of summer. A season that starts with excitement – graduations, vacations, family gatherings, ballgames, outdoor events, projects and more — can eventually feel overwhelming and exhausting. Weeks of heat, long daylight hours, disrupted routines, and constant activity can leave us feeling lethargic and drained.

Yet summer also offers something quietly valuable: the wisdom of slowing down.

There is something restorative about a Kansas evening after the heat begins to fade. The prairie wind settles in, sprinklers hum in the distance, and conversations move to front porches and back patios. Whether it's watering a garden, taking an evening walk, or simply sitting outside as the sun sets among the fireflies and cicadas, these moments of stillness often provide the kind of reset our minds and bodies most need.

In today's world, slowing down can sometimes feel unproductive, even morally wrong. Many push through fatigue believing rest must be earned. But our wellbeing is not only built through activity and accomplishment. Rest and recovery play a vitally important role. Taking time to recharge can improve exhaustion, burnout, lack of focus and low mood. Chronic stress affects the body in ways we do not always realize. Ironically, allowing ourselves time to slow down often improves our productivity while also positively influencing other biomarkers like weight, blood

pressure and inflammation. Our own soothing can also soften rough edges in our relationships.

In the end days of summer, our team at the Bluestem Wellness Centers encourages you to think about creating moments of self-care in small, sustainable ways. This does not require major changes or perfect routines. Sometimes it begins with simple but refreshing choices like drinking a bit more water during extreme heat, cooling off in a pool or shaded space, putting phones away to be more present with others, taking the time to appreciate nature, or just simply allowing yourself some restorative time without guilt.

As summer begins to wind down and we begin to prepare for the renewed pace of fall, take this opportunity for a mid-summer reset. Not a dramatic overhaul, but a chance to pause and check in with yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. What do you really need today to feel more like your best self, to settle, to recover, to feel more at peace?

Sometimes the healthiest thing we can do is slow down long enough to listen — to the wisdom of our bodies, the needs of our minds, and the quieter rhythm of a beautiful Kansas summer.

For more information about offerings at the Bluestem Wellness Centers go to bluestemwellness.com

Making peace with reality

by Jill Schmidt Weaver, Schowalter Villa Chaplain

In January 2025, Rick and I adopted a dog from the Kansas Humane Society – a terrier mix. Lulu is young, enthusiastic, and has boundless energy! One of her favorite activities is going to the dog park to chase balls, wrestle with other dogs, and get muddy! One of her least favorite activities is getting her paws wiped with a towel afterwards.

In her early days of living with us, we’d gently lift one paw to clean it and she would tense up, jerk her paw out of our hand, and quickly slink away from us. We’d have to follow her, bring her back, and try again. Oh, she would strain and fight and pull away from us! Finally, after much struggle, we’d finish the paw-cleaning task, both of us tired (and grouchy).

Slowly over time, Lulu began to relax as we cleaned her paws. Perhaps she resigned herself to the fact that fighting us would not help – her paws were still going to be cleaned. Maybe she realized that getting her paws cleaned wasn’t indeed the catastrophe she originally thought it was! Maybe she began to trust us more. Whatever the reason, she has stopped resisting, stopped trying to run away, and now allows us to wipe her paws without the struggle. Life seems a lot easier now.

How often do we, like Lulu, strain and fight against challenging circumstances that come our way? How much more stress and suffering do we create by resisting what is

here? Could there be an easier way to live?

May the gentle words of this poem open our hearts to seek to make peace with reality.

Let go of the ways you thought life would unfold, the holding of plans or dreams or expectations – Let it all go.

Save your strength to swim with the tide.

The choice to fight what is here before you now will only result in struggle, fear, and desperate attempts to flee from the very energy you long for.

Let go. Let it all go and flow with the grace that washes through your days whether you received it gently or with all your quills raised to defend against invaders.

Take this on faith; the mind may never find the explanations that it seeks, but you will move forward nonetheless.

Let go, and the wave’s crest will carry you to unknown shores, beyond your wildest dreams or destinations.

Let it all go and find the place of rest and peace, and certain transformation.

- by Danna Faulds

UPCOMING EVENTS

CEDAR RIDGE OPEN HOUSE

Residents & Staff First Look
Wednesday, August 5
4 to 5 p.m.
The Cedars

Public

Thursday, August 6
9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
The Cedars

100 YEAR CELEBRATION

Thursday, August 27
Kidron Bethel Village

COUNTRY BREAKFAST

Saturday, October 17
Kidron Bethel Village

10 YEAR CELEBRATION CARNIVAL

Thursday, September 10
Bluestem PACE, McPherson

BLUESTEM GALA

Thursday, November 5
Newton, Kansas



Understanding the changes that come with age

Aging is a natural part of life, and while no two people experience it exactly the same way, certain physical and cognitive changes are common as we grow older. Genetics, lifestyle choices, health history and life experiences all play a role in how we age. At Bluestem Communities, understanding these changes is an important part of helping residents live well, maintaining independence, wellness and quality of life throughout every stage of aging.

The aging process affects nearly every aspect of daily living, from physical health and mobility to memory, social connections, and decision-making. While some changes are inevitable, a supportive environment like Bluestem Communities can help older adults continue to thrive through wellness programs, social engagement opportunities, nutritious dining options and access to healthcare services.

One of the most significant age-related changes occurs in the cardiovascular system. Over time, blood vessels may become less flexible, causing the heart to work harder to circulate blood throughout the body. This can increase the risk of high blood pressure and other heart-related conditions. Regular health screenings, fitness opportunities, and healthy dining choices available at can help individuals support heart health as they age.

Changes in bones, joints, and muscles are also common. Bones gradually lose density, making fractures more likely and sometimes resulting in a slight loss of height. Muscles naturally lose strength and flexibility, which can affect balance and mobility. These changes can increase the risk of falls, making regular physical activity especially important. Exercise and wellness programs designed to help maintain strength, coordination and confidence in daily activities is an important addition to regular routines.

Digestion and nutrition may also be affected by aging. Older adults can experience slower digestion and changes in appetite. In addition, reduced sensitivity in taste buds may make food seem less flavorful. Thoughtfully prepared meals and nutrition-focused dining services help ensure individuals receive the nutrients they need while still enjoying satisfying and flavorful dining experiences.

Many older adults notice changes in their senses as they age. Vision may become less sharp, making it harder to focus on nearby objects or adapt to changes in lighting. Hearing loss, particularly with higher-pitched sounds, is common and can make conversations more challenging in crowded settings. Taste and smell may also decline over time. These sensory changes can affect safety, communication, and overall well-being, which is why supportive living environments play such an important role in helping individuals remain engaged and connected.

Cognitive changes are another normal part of aging. Healthy older adults may occasionally forget names or struggle to multitask. However, occasional forgetfulness is different from dementia, which affects a person's ability to learn and retain new information. Bluestem Communities recognizes the importance of cognitive wellness and offers opportunities for lifelong learning, social interaction, and activities that help keep minds active and engaged.

While aging brings change, it does not mean giving up an active, fulfilling lifestyle. At Bluestem Communities, individuals are empowered to embrace aging with confidence through a community that prioritizes wellness, connection and purpose. By understanding what is normal and taking advantage of supportive services and resources, older adults can continue to enjoy meaningful, vibrant lives for years to come.



Bluestem PACE marks 10 years of service

Bluestem PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) is marking a decade of service of helping older adults remain independent in their own homes while receiving comprehensive, coordinated care. The milestone anniversary highlights the program's continued commitment to supporting seniors and their caregivers with a model designed to keep participants living in their own homes for as long as possible.

"Marking 10 years of Bluestem PACE helping seniors live well at home serves as a testament to the need that exists to support seniors in this way," said Bluestem PACE Executive Director Emilie Rains. "Partnership and teamwork with participants and their caregivers have truly been impactful in helping participants continue to safely live well at home for the last decade."

Bluestem Communities formed in 2012 through the affiliation of the life plan communities Kidron Bethel Village and Schowalter Villa. Shortly after, leadership recognized the growing need for senior care and services, particularly in the largely rural areas they serve in south central Kansas. They began exploring PACE, a national care model that has existed since the early 1970s that offers participants an alternative to residential care homes by enabling them to stay in their homes and communities while providing a full spectrum of medical and supportive services all from one source. Bluestem welcomed its first participants to the PACE center in McPherson in August 2016.

The program operates from its primary location in McPherson, and an alternative care site in Hutchinson, Kansas, that was established in 2021. 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.

Over the last 10 years, Bluestem PACE has become an important player in senior health care services. With a six-county service area of Harvey, Marion, McPherson, Reno, Rice and Saline counties, today Bluestem PACE serves more than 120 participants.

As Bluestem PACE celebrates its anniversary, the program continues to build on its mission of compassionate, community-based care. By expanding access, strengthening partnerships and adapting to the evolving needs of older adults, Bluestem PACE remains dedicated to helping seniors live with dignity and independence in the place they call home. This milestone reflects a decade of impact, but also a commitment to serving the region for years to come.

Alternate PACE care site in Hutchinson, Kansas.





Bluestem Communities celebrates milestones with open house events

Bluestem Communities is celebrating its past and future with a trio of open house events. Residents, staff and the public are all welcome to join in the celebrations.



CEDAR RIDGE OPEN HOUSE AT THE CEDARS

First look for residents and staff:
Wednesday, August 5
4 to 5 p.m.

Public open house:
Thursday, August 6
9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Cedar Ridge Houses 805 and 807
805 N. Maxwell St., McPherson,
Kansas

For the past couple of years, The Cedars had shared some of its space with McPherson College to help meet student housing needs. Earlier this year, those spaces within the Cedar Ridge House complex were returned to The Cedars and have received updates to adequately fit the needs of health care residents. Stop by to see the refurbishments and learn more about the top-quality health care provided at The Cedars.



CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF KIDRON BETHEL VILLAGE

Thursday, August 27
3:30 to 6 p.m.
Kidron Hall at Kidron Bethel Village
3001 Ivy Dr., North Newton, Kansas

In May of 2026, Kidron Bethel Village in North Newton observed the 100-year anniversary of its founding organization, Bethel Home for the Aged, an auxiliary ministry of the Bethel Deaconess Hospital. The last 100 years have seen Kidron Bethel Village grow and evolve into what it is today. The open house celebration will be a come-and-go event with light refreshments, historical display, live music and opportunities to connect with the Kidron Bethel Village, Bluestem and wider communities.



BLUESTEM PACE 10-YEAR CELEBRATION CARNIVAL

Thursday, September 10
4:30 to 7 p.m.
Bluestem PACE
113 S. Ash St., McPherson, Kansas

Bluestem PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) has been helping seniors live well at home for the past 10 years by providing comprehensive coordinated care from one source. See how Bluestem PACE impacts the community by coming out for an evening of fun for the whole family with food and drinks, carnival games, face painting, crafts and more.

Quiet lives of inspiration

Behind the quiet routines of senior living, every resident has an extraordinary story of who they are and what they have experienced. They come with lifetimes shaped by innovation, service and history.

For Calvin Beydler, a health care resident at The Cedars, those stories include helping build the technology that powered space exploration and the rise of modern computing. Beydler's career as an electrical engineer unfolded during a remarkable era of technological transformation, placing him at the forefront of innovations that helped shape the modern digital world.

Born and raised in Lyons, Kansas, Beydler's path to engineering was influenced when he joined the U.S. Air Force out of high school during the Vietnam War. His service included work at a listening post in Iran, where he maintained critical communications equipment, received top ratings in electronics training and earned a high-level security clearance. Upon completing his military service, Beydler attended Hutchinson (Kan.) Community College for pre-engineering studies, then earning his degree from Kansas State University (Manhattan). It was during this time that both his personal and professional futures took shape, when he met his wife, Judy, and prepared to enter a rapidly evolving field.

Upon graduating, Beydler began his career at Motorola in 1974. He was hired as part of a team that developed transponders for NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. This communication system was integral to the Viking 1 and Voyager 1 missions. Viking 1 successfully landed on Mars in July 1976, capturing the first images of the planet's surface, while Voyager 1 continues today to actively transmit data back from deep space more than 16 billion miles from Earth. Beydler speaks of his work with pride. His team at Motorola stood out for successfully completing their ambitious project while many others failed.

Later, Beydler accepted an offer from Texas Instruments (TI), moving from Tempe, Arizona, to Houston, Texas. There, he worked in developing essential semiconductor technologies that helped expand the world of personal computing, helping to develop microprocessors and dynamic RAM—technologies essential to the emergence of personal computing. He witnessed firsthand the early days of the PC revolution and transformation of the industry.

Beydler's work with TI expanded globally. From 1987 to

1991, he helped build microprocessor manufacturing plants in Dallas before relocating to Italy in the early 1990s to assist in developing a semiconductor facility based on CMOS (Complementary Metal-Oxide-Semiconductor) technology.

After retiring from TI in 2006, the Beydlers returned to Kansas, settling in McPherson, where he continued contributing to the community by substitute teaching subjects ranging from math and physics to welding.

Today, Beydler's story continues in a quieter setting at The Cedars, where he has lived for just over a year. He is a reminder that behind every door resides a legacy of talent, contribution and resilience, and that extraordinary lives can continue to inspire.



A former electrical engineer whose work supported NASA missions and semiconductor breakthroughs, Calvin Beydler helped shape technologies and established a legacy of innovation that continues to inspire.



3001 Ivy Dr.
North Newton, KS 67117

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

To receive or stop receiving The Bluestem Post contact:
316-836-4837 or rachelm@bluestem.org.

CONNECT with US   or VISIT US ONLINE: bluestem.org



Aging is inevitable.
You get to choose
how you embrace it.

Call 888-388-7445 to book your tour.

live well.
bluestem.org



Your non-profit option for senior care settings and services.