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CHRISTIAN REST HOME
ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

1000 Edison Ave., N.W. • Grand Rapids, MI 49504 • 616-453-2475 Summer 2014



RESIDENTS:

UNDER HIS WINGS

"Under the feathers of his wings you will find safety. He is faithful."

— Psalm 91:4b

The Bible pictures the daily blessings we receive from our Creator. God gives sunlight, rain, and soil for growing food. God grants us courage, strength, and creativity to reflect his image. Meet three residents who have learned to work hard, yet depend not on their own efforts, but on God. This balance helps them remain a blessing to others.

From his room at Edison Assisted Living Center, **Jim Hoogewind** looks out on flowers, trees, and bird feeders. His wife, Bea, lives in Ritzema Hall, our memory loss unit. "I have her, but I don't have her to talk to," Jim says. Even so, he follows a lifelong habit of choosing a positive perspective. "God has given me a rich life," he says.

Jim, the sixth of eight children, was born in 1920 on a farm in New Era, Michigan. "My father came from the Netherlands and started out on a 60-acre farm. He retired at age 55 with a 620-acre showplace farm west of Grand Rapids. He was brilliant at fixing and building things. My big lesson from those years was learning how to work—and enjoy it," he says.

Jim left school after ninth grade, during the Depression. He

trimmed furniture for a store fixtures factory in Grand Rapids and trimmed boats at Chris-Craft in Holland. Like his father, he was good with his hands, which helped him graduate ahead of his peers during a tool-and-die maker apprenticeship. Jim got jobs at Extruded Metals in Wyoming and GM, where he worked six days a week till retiring at age 58.



Edison Assisted Living Center resident Jim Hoogewind in front of a family picture.

This hard worker made time for romance. He met Bea Bosman at a school play when she was 15 and he was 19. "I recall riding in a car, and she offered gum to everyone. For each to have some, she tore sticks in half. She was so generous, very loving. Because of my upbringing, I was strictly a Christian Reformed person. She went to Calvary Undenominational. When we decided to get married in 1944, we mutually chose Richmond Reformed. It was a big move in our spiritual life," he says.

Jim had had a lung operation, so wasn't drafted into World War II. He and Bea lived in Walker and had three sons and three daughters in 15 years. Besides his regular jobs, Jim sold water softeners and Minnesota Woolens door-to-door. "When George and Eleanor Teitsma asked me to be an Amway distributor, Bea and I thought that looked enticing and challenging, because you could grow the business. We made three elevations in the Amway organization," he says.

He did jail ministry every Sunday afternoon for 54 years through Forgotten Man Ministries. "I ministered in maximum security prisons with the Walker Brothers Quartet. They brought the gospel on wings of song, and I brought it in the spoken word. I got the blues when I didn't see results, but then I got the answer: 'It's not by the will of man but by the will of God.' When you get discouraged, but know you're doing God's will, that's when you grow the most. Not once, ever, did I get any disapproval from my family for jail ministry, though my oldest son once said, 'Dad, I don't know how you can do that,'" he says.

(continued on page 4)

From the Administrator . . .



Our summer newsletter features life stories of residents within our continuum of care. Their testimonies of faith encourage us in our daily walk with God. We are thankful to be part of their lives.

The Women's Service Board thanks those who collectively gave over \$4,000 during their recent "Bakeless Bake Sale." The service

board's recent gifts to the home include wheelchairs, overbed tables, evacuation equipment, media programming, and activity supplies. The board also covers ongoing expenses for our bird aviary. We thank the service board members for providing so many items to improve our residents' quality of life.

The Women's Service Board is again planning to host a concert with the Voices of Victory Quartet and the Covenant Christian Chamber Choir. The concert is scheduled for October 5, 2014, at 7:45 p.m. at Westend Christian Reformed Church. Please save this date to show your support for our residents.

Thank you for your gifts in response to our May appeal for \$38,000 to upgrade our computer technology and add Wi-Fi throughout our campus. Your support provides updated computerized convenience, speed, and security for our staff and residents. If you have not given yet, would you consider helping us with this improvement project?

The Michigan Department of Community Health budget for the next fiscal year continues to maintain provider rates and funding for aging service programs. A greater percentage of government funding is being directed to community-based care options in an effort to control future spending. The State has developed a managed care system, MI Health Link, for persons eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. An initial demonstration project, which does not include West Michigan, will operate for three years. Due to strained government budgets and the federal deficit, funding of programs for the elderly continues to be challenging.

Please keep praying for God's blessing upon our ministry. We appreciate your faithful support!

— Todd Nyeholt

ARE YOU MAKING THIS MISTAKE WITH YOUR LIFE?

We know of a couple in their early 90s who had not changed their will since their sons were teenagers. But if you haven't taken care of your estate plan, you can probably relate to that couple. After all, talking about wills means facing the fact that you won't live here forever.

The idea of putting together—or changing—a will sounds complicated, doesn't it? In fact, some people find thinking about wills so scary that they put it off.

Fortunately, Barnabas Foundation offers **free, no-obligation help** on making a will and on estate and tax planning. Because Christian Rest Home Foundation is a member of Barnabas Foundation, you are entitled to this confidential help and information.

More than 7,000 people have already accepted the Barnabas Foundation offer to help work out a plan to provide for loved ones and give to Christian causes they love.

You can read more about their experiences at www.barnabasfoundation.com.

Attorneys Steve Baker and Amy Bakker Baty, the local Barnabas Foundation representatives, have practiced law in business and estate planning. Typically, they need to meet with you just once, for only 60 to 90 minutes, to develop a free written analysis for you to bring to an attorney. They can even recommend attorneys who know how to include charity in wills and estate plans.

One of the easiest ways to remember us in your will is to make a bequest to the Christian Rest Home Association or Christian Rest Home Foundation. All you do is include our name and address and specify the bequest—a dollar amount or percentage of your estate—in your will. There's no need to tell us. We don't find out about a bequest till after a death, when an

executor or lawyer contacts us.

The number and total of bequests vary greatly from year to year. From June 2011 through May 2014, Christian Rest Home Association and Christian Rest Home Foundation have received 16 planned gifts totaling \$435,608. Whatever size planned gift you can give will make an important difference.

You can phone Steve Baker or Amy Bakker Baty at (616) 956-1232 and email them at sbake@barnabasfoundation.com and abaty@barnabasfoundation.com. Or call Todd Nyeholt at (616) 453-2475 for free confidential advice on estate planning.



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*Gifts Designated for Christian Rest Home Foundation

You might wonder whether Jim ever slept or saw his family. He explains, "You plan your life. You don't take it as it comes. Set aside time for what matters. Work with your best human effort, but pray as if you can do nothing on your own. I read the Scriptures early each morning. I set aside certain hours every day for my children and family. They were always first. After work I'd give others training or sell door-to-door. If I couldn't make a sale in three minutes, I was gone. I enjoyed everything I was doing."

Jim and Bea have 28 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, all living in the Grand Rapids area and all church members. "We're so thankful for our family. Our children do everything for us," he says. In July 2013, after Bea was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, the Hoogewinds moved here from another assisted living center. "I moved here because I wanted to be near my wife. I like the spiritual life here. I've made friends and talk about spiritual things but find it harder to remember where a Bible text is. It's stored up in my heart, though," he says.

If you visit **Ray Zeeff** at Christian Rest Home, he'll gladly sing for you. All you have to do is ask. He loves singing "Under His



Christian Rest Home resident Ray Zeeff with receptionist Ann Christy at the front entrance of Christian Rest Home.

Wings." Ray's music talent came from his mom, who played piano and organ. He was born in northwest Grand Rapids in 1916, the third of four children in a family that went to Seventh Reformed Church. "My mom played for church, and I learned to play on my own. I sang in church choirs. My dad liked it when we sang a few numbers by the fireplace at home," he says.

He went through tenth grade at Union High. "I ended of my own accord. I could see the struggles my parents were going through," he said. Ray gave his all wherever he found work—clerking in a grocery store, working in a factory, driving a gravel truck, and plowing snow. While working at a service station during the Depression, he met a cute Polish girl who lived across the street. "Lottie and I would go to Kewpie [a forerunner of Mr. Fables] for a hamburger and chocolate milkshake. Her father was Polish but had been an officer in the Dutch army before World War I," Ray says.

Ray and Lottie married in 1939 and had two children, Jim and Marilyn. The family attended St. Adalbert's. "Lottie was the love of my life. She liked me to sing to her. She was a good mom and she was good to her own mom" he says. Later in life he returned to Seventh Reformed. While his kids were growing up, Ray worked six days a week with his dad at their service station. Later, as five grandchildren arrived, Ray and Jim ran the station together.

After closing the station in his 70s, Ray drove and repaired trucks. "At age 75, I was driving an 18-wheeler," he says. "If I had to do it over, I'd make truck driving my vocation, because the longer the run, the more experienced you get. And it's a good way to provide for your family," he says.

Ray's daughter, Marilyn, recalls, "Dad played the piano and violin. Jim played drums and

bugle, though he never had a lesson. We listened to a lot of music, Beethoven and all kinds." She and her husband, John, lived across the street from her parents. Ray describes the family as really close, so it was a big shock when Jim died of leukemia at age 55 in 1995. Marilyn says, "Our mom never recovered. She got Alzheimer's. Dad and I took care of her for 10 years, and she was in nursing care for her last year. She died in 2005."

Marilyn recalls scolding Ray for mowing his lawn on a brutally hot, humid day when he was 90. In 2010, Ray fell at home in his shower. He rehabbed and then moved to Christian Rest Home, but he never regained his ability to walk. "It was hard to tell him he needed to stay at Christian Rest Home. We'd had relatives at Christian Rest Home, and I've been told many times how good the staff is. I went online and checked out the facility's good ratings," Marilyn says.

Ray invites Marilyn and Sue, Jim's widow, to monthly theme dinners. Sue takes him to Sunday afternoon services at Christian Rest Home. "The ministers who preach are excellent, but the singing isn't as good as in a regular church," he comments. Ray's favorite activities are sleeping and singing. He's on oxygen, but whenever Ann Christy is working the reception desk, Ray wheels down to sing with her. "We first sang 'Tennessee Waltz' together," Ann recalls. People often gather around as Ray and Ann sing old favorites, such as "In the Garden" and "Whispering Hope." Ray also likes singing with Phil Perkins, a nurse aide.

Geneva (Noren) Christensen learned from a young age to depend on God. She was born in 1925, the third of four children raised on a subsistence farm in western Kansas. "The hub of our life was the nearest Evangelical Covenant Church," she says, but

(continued on page 6)

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*Gifts Designated for Christian Rest Home Foundation



Edison Manor resident Geneva Christensen in her apartment.

the family only had enough money to drive there every other week. "We lived through the Depression, Dust Bowl, and dirt storms. Our struggles to exist made us close," she says.

Close as she was to her family, Geneva didn't let on that, already as a young girl, she felt called to the mission field. Just before Geneva earned her R.N. degree at Swedish Covenant Hospital in Chicago, her mom asked in a letter what she planned to do with her degree. "It was the first time I divulged my plan. Mother wrote back, 'Before you were born, we dedicated you to the Lord's service,'" she says.

Geneva describes herself as a strong-willed person who gradu-

ally learned to listen to God rather than tell God what she was going to do for him. "I'd been telling the Lord I was going to China, never Africa, because Africa had more missionaries per capita. I also told him I was going to stay single, on the advice of other women who were missionaries," she says.

Imagine her confusion when she met Gordon Christensen, a gifted speaker who planned to go into missions. "There was a spiritual oneness with him that I'd never had with anyone. I complained to the Lord, because I had no intention of getting married. The Lord gave me Psalm 84:11: 'The Lord is a sun and shield...no good thing will he withhold from them who walk uprightly,'" she recalls.

Geneva ended up in the Belgian Congo. A year later, Gordon moved there and married her. They served 40 years in the Congo and Zaire, a fascinating story detailed in the book *Fire in their Bones*, by Philip Randall with Gordon and Geneva Christensen. Their first child, Susan, helped them do "baby buggy evangelism," because she was the first white child that many Congolese had ever seen or held. "My brother Ed and his family joined us in the Congo, and our sister, Evelyn, became a missionary too. Our younger brother stayed near my parents. His family and my

parents were like parents to our three children when they were in college," she says.

The Christensens retired to Florida yet remained active in evangelism, speaking, and teaching. Gordon has had Parkinson's for more years than people usually survive it and also developed dementia. Their three children and six grandchildren realized in summer 2013 that Gordon needed more care than Geneva could provide at home. "Our daughter Mary Lynne lives near Detroit. She knew about Christian Rest Home because my brother Ed's widow, Ruth, lives in Ritzema Hall," Geneva says.

Geneva now lives in Edison Manor and spends much of each day with Gordon in Christian Rest Home. "It's a plus for Gordon that there are male attendants. And the Lord is doing a wondrous thing, because Gordon still knows the Scriptures, loves to pray, and loves to have me read him stories about missionaries. Still, it's hard to see your loved one deteriorate. The Lord gives me strength day by day. I pray and I pray and I pray. I read the Word. And if concerns keep me awake, I get up and sing through the hymnal. Two very kind couples take us each Sunday to First Evangelical Covenant Church," she says.



ABOUT OUR RESIDENTS

- 145 residents receive nursing care in Christian Rest Home.
- 30 residents receive assisted care in Edison Assisted Living Center.
- 45 residents live independently in Edison Manor.
- 75% of our residents are women.
- Our youngest resident is 65. Our oldest residents are three women aged 100 or older.
- The average resident age is 88.
- Our residents come from 72 churches.
- 76% of our nursing residents receive Medicaid assistance.

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS (continued from page 5)

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Total Memorial Gifts...\$17,024

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IN LOVING MEMORY

March 2014 – June 2014

Lillian VanHoute	March 10	age 84	Helene Kooi	May 29	age 91
Victor Wayward	March 14	age 82	Betty Westers	May 30	age 85
Margaret Johnson	March 21	age 98	Helen Terpstra	June 7	age 91
Jakoba Byl	March 30	age 88	Carl Johnson, Jr.	June 8	age 83
Jean Dreyer	April 11	age 87	Marion Fischer	June 13	age 74
Marguerite "Maggie" Olivier	April 14	age 69	Sharon Karsten	June 15	age 96
Doris Posthumus	April 24	age 91	Gwenlynn Bos	June 17	age 87
Evelyn VanManen	May 3	age 99	Iris Heyboer	June 19	age 88
Dorothy VanSolkema	May 14	age 81	May Billings	June 21	age 93
Charlene Wagenmaker	May 14	age 69			

Edison Manor

has immediate occupancy available for studio apartments.

Edison Manor provides senior citizen independent living and offers meals, activities, and housekeeping services. Our residents enjoy secure, homelike comfort and Christian companionship.

For more information and a tour, call: (616) 453-0993 www.christianresthme.org



CHRISTIAN REST HOME ASSOCIATION

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