

UNITED
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HOMES

*Continuing
a 100-Year Tradition of
Service*

Window

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Planetree Spirit of Caring Award
Emotional Aspects of Aging
Extensive Renovations Starting at Wesley Heights



Joy Brown, an award-winning artist based in Kent, Connecticut, created the wood-fired terra cotta relief pictured above.

United Methodist Homes received this original relief at the 2005 Planetree Spirit of Caring Awards ceremony. The international Planetree organization works with hospitals and health care centers to develop and implement patient-centered care in healing environments. This award recognizes us for creating and implementing a groundbreaking model of relationship-centered senior living at Wesley Village in Shelton.

To me, the image depicted on the relief captures the spirit of what is so special about Wesley Village and the other communities operated by

United Methodist Homes. It is a celebration of life, and of how our organization supports the efforts of each person to continue learning and growing at every stage of life's journey. We do this by attending to life in all its dimensions – physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social, and by creating environments conducive to quality living.

In keeping with our commitment to provide surroundings that enhance the well-being of residents and staff, I am delighted to announce that HUD has awarded \$6.7 million to the Wesley Heights retirement community in Shelton to renovate the dining room, add an activity room, sunroom and library, remodel the bathrooms in each apartment, and improve handicap accessibility throughout the main building. These grants, combined with the donations from all of our friends who supported the Campaign for Wesley Heights, will enable us to begin these long anticipated improvements in 2006.

This issue of Window examines the emotional challenges that occur as we age. Even when these situations seem daunting, emotional growth takes place when we face these challenges as opportunities.

Environments that value the individual contributions of each member are also especially

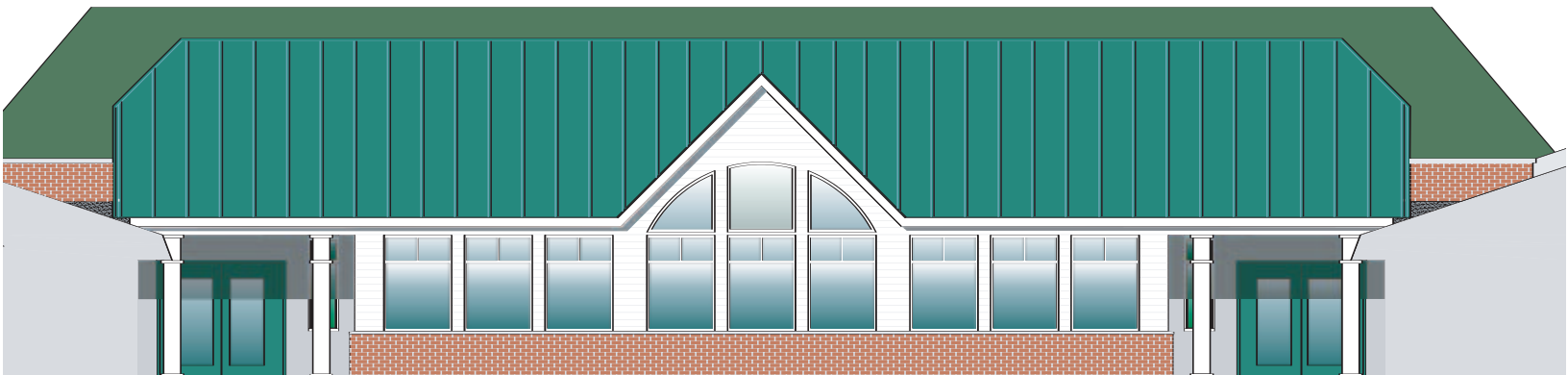
And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.

Abraham Lincoln

conducive to healthy aging. United Methodist Homes is dedicated to creating these types of environments – senior living communities that help individuals recognize their own inner resources and support them in body, mind, and spirit.



Robert L. Clapp
President and CEO
United Methodist Homes



Outside view of the new sunroom/activity room addition that will be built as part of the \$6.7 million Wesley Heights renovations

Yes, aging is inevitable, but how can we stay happy and emotionally healthy while it happens?

Psychologist Mark Edinberg shares some thoughts on the challenges – and the unique opportunities – inherent in the aging process.

Q What are the types of life stressors that occur as individuals age? And do these circumstances make them prone to depression?

A Older people do often face a large range of stressors centered around various types of loss. These losses can be social, financial, and physical. They can also be losses of familiar surroundings, of the roles that they held in the workplace or in the family, and of things that helped them feel connected to the rest of society. Any role, any source of identity that people have had in their lives, can be compromised as they grow older.

What triggers depression is an interesting question, and I don't think that there's an easy answer. I think that many older people have feelings of sadness, as would a younger person going through the same changes. I don't think it's a function of someone's age, so much as a function of the particular circumstances. People who went through Hurricane Katrina felt horrible loss, but those feelings of loss could be mirrored in a person who loses her mobility or her home due to age-related circumstances.

Certainly, there are certain factors more common in older people that will increase the risk of depression.

But I have also seen people turn this mindset around, and do so quickly. Depression is not, automatically, a part of everyone's aging and should not be treated as inevitable and unstoppable. That thinking, to me, is a tragedy and becomes an expression of prejudice against the elderly.

Q What sadness is a normal part of aging and loss, and how is that different from depression?

A Sadness is a normal part of being human. As we get older, we suffer more losses, and with those losses comes grief. It's easy to confuse these feelings with depression, particularly when you don't know the difference between the two.

I consider grief a normal part of loss. It is the price we pay for loving, the price we pay for connection. Grief is universal; it is experienced in all cultures. My perspective is that grief is something to be experienced and gotten through. Depression is a state of mind and a state of body that can be triggered by those losses, but it has its own symptomology. Grieving is not the same as feeling helpless, hopeless, or full of despair.

Q What can you do if you see a loved one experiencing problems with grief or depression?

A Being with the person and being willing to listen to that person without judging is important. It is also important to let go

of the feeling or impulse that we have to *do something* about the situation. If you are unsure about what to do, it is important to seek compassionate help from sources such as clergy, mental health and medical professionals, or other folks, depending on the situation.

Q What do you see as the some of the keys to emotional well-being as we age?

A Having appropriate social supports and ways in which to make one's life meaningful can contribute to healthy aging. It is important to have an internal locus of control, appreciating what you can contribute from within yourself. Another key is making peace with what you have. I believe that happiness comes from life's journey and how we have worked at improving ourselves and dealing with our challenges.

Here's a story that has a lot of lessons for all of us. About three years ago, I had the experience of working with an older gentleman whose adult son had died. This man was absolutely devastated by his son's death. I met with him a couple of times and he got through this difficult period, but something remarkable also happened. His son was very interested in photography, and one of the great joys in his life was seeing the photographs that his son had taken. On the front of his most recent family Christmas card was one of his son's photographs. On the inside were the family's well wishes for the holidays, with another one of his son's photographs on the back. There was no mention of his son in the card. This gentleman was able

to take his son's gift and integrate it into his good wishes for other people.

Older people are more different than any other age group in their circumstances, the kinds of things that distress them, and their varying responses to these challenges. But with these challenges also come unique opportunities. Under

the right circumstances, people can make incredible gains and grow in ways that would surprise anyone. Sometimes you turn a corner and discover something that you never expected you could do. You learn things and experience things in a way that you never could if you were younger.



Mark Edinberg is a psychologist, author, organizational consultant, and part-time jazz pianist based in Fairfield, Connecticut. He has

been working in the field of Gerontology for the last 30 years. The primary focus of his private practice is older adults and their families.

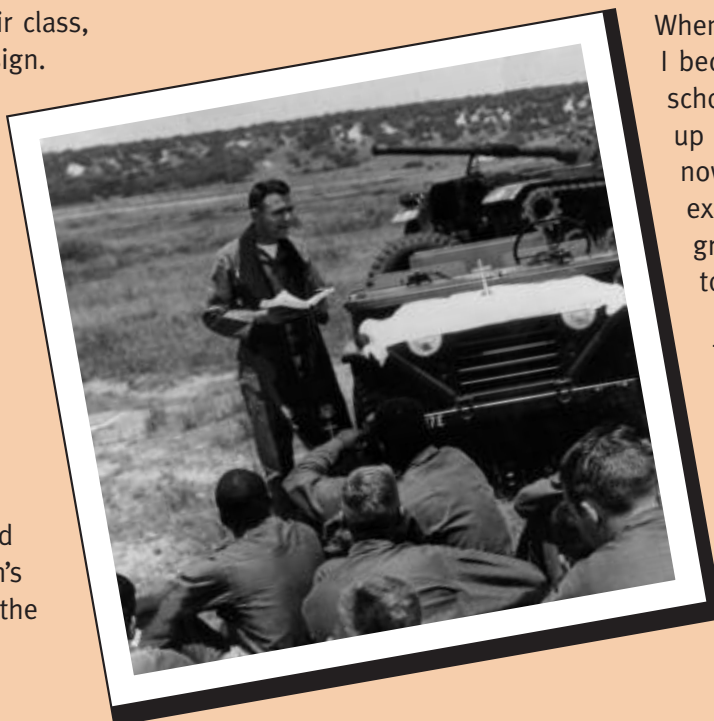
The Vital Life Stories program at Wesley Village affirms the wisdom and richness of experience that individuals bring to our community and provides an opportunity for residents to be better known by neighbors and staff. It is part of the Planetree Senior Living Model of relationship-centered care.

George Hilton graciously agreed to allow us to publish some excerpts from the Vital Life Story that he shared with a trained volunteer. George moved to Wesley Village in 1999 after having served as an Army chaplain and a minister in a variety of churches in the New York and Connecticut area.

I grew up in New London. As a child, I was known for getting into mischief from time to time, like the time that I played barber and cut off the hair of my neighborhood girlfriends. When the Sunday school teachers discovered that I would be in their class, some would threaten to resign.

bar and used the bar as a pulpit. Usually, about halfway through the service, the sheet behind me came down and exposed a collage of Playboy centerfolds. (That's enough said on that one.)

As a young man, I decided to become a Methodist minister. A challenging part of my life was the time that I spent working with the young men and women in the military in Vietnam. We'd have worship services in unusual settings. For example, for one unit, I held services in the enlisted men's club. I set the altar up on the



Since I moved to Wesley Village, I have been honing my piano skills. A couple of years ago, I bought a piano and now practicing classical music takes up a certain amount of time every day.

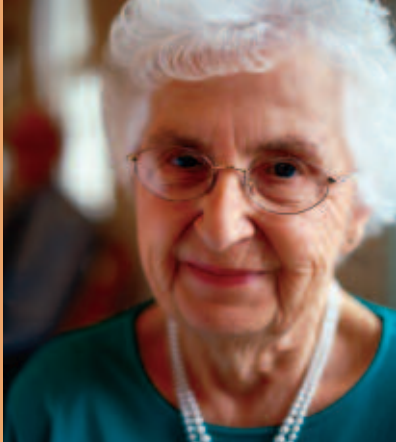


When I first moved to Shelton, I became a mentor in the Shelton school system. I was teamed up with a nine-year-old who is now in high school. It's a good experience to watch someone growing up and have the ability to advise him.

These days, I try to stay healthy. I take my 2 mile walk every day. I also take it a day at a time.

Increase your Income: Receive a High, Fixed Rate of Return from a Gift of Cash or Stock

“I’m still surprised that by making a gift to United Methodist Homes, I actually improved my income.



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stock to purchase an investment paying more income, I would have had to pay 15% of its value in capital gains taxes. Under this plan, I am receiving an income based on the full value of the stock.

“On top of that, I received a substantial income tax charitable deduction. And I have the satisfaction of knowing that my gift will help United Methodist Homes take care of older folks in the coming years.

“No wonder they call this the gift that keeps on giving!”

If you would like more information about lifetime income gift plans offered by United Methodist Homes, contact Bob Congdon, Vice President for Development. Simply return the coupon below or call him at 203-925-4952.

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Do you realize you can make a gift that may actually increase your income? Compare the guaranteed payments below to what you are currently receiving on one of your investments. If you are more than 70 years old, you would receive a higher annual income.

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Enclosed is my contribution of
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My gift is in honor of in memory of _____

Please list my name in the donor report as _____ I prefer to give anonymously.

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Making a gift through my will or a trust A gift that will pay me a lifetime income My date of birth _____
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Return this form to:
Office of Development and Public Relations, United Methodist Homes, 580 Long Hill Avenue, Shelton, CT 06484



Our Mission

To provide meaningful lifestyle options built upon a foundation of spirituality that allow people to maintain their independence for as long as possible, to rehabilitate from sickness or injury, and to be vital members of their community.



Travel with UMH

Learn about all of the travel opportunities at our travel presentation at Crosby Commons on March 14th at 2 pm

(RSVP TO 203-925-4952)

Assisted living at three Connecticut locations: **Crosby Commons** at Wesley Village in Shelton, **Middlewoods of Farmington**, and **Middlewoods of Newington**. Services include meals, activities, transportation, housekeeping, and personal care.

Skilled nursing and rehabilitation at two Connecticut locations: **Bishop Wicke Health Center** at Wesley Village in Shelton and **Sharon Health Care Center** in Sharon. Both short-term rehabilitation and long-term care are offered. JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) accredited.

Retirement living: Wesley Heights at Wesley Village in Shelton. Independent living with meals and optional supportive services available.

Care Management: Coordination of community-based services for senior adults living at home. Professional care managers assess needs, evaluate options with family members, and arrange services in the home and the community.

Hospice Volunteers of Northwest Connecticut: Serving residents of Northwest Connecticut and neighboring New York.

Consulting and management services: The Long Hill Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary, manages properties in the Northeast, Florida, and the Midwest.

United Methodist Homes

203-925-4952
www.umh.org

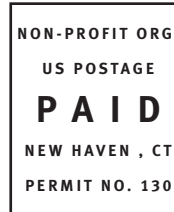


Tulip River Cruise	May 5, 2006	\$2,599
Alaska Land and Sea Discovery	August 31, 2006	\$3,549
Secrets of Sedona/Scottsdale, AZ	October 6, 2006	\$1,599
Alpine Christmas Tour	November 26, 2006	\$1,749
Tropical Costa Rica	March 28, 2007	\$1,899

To RSVP for the travel presentation or for more information about trips, call 203-925-4952.

Office of Development and Public Relations
United Methodist Homes
580 Long Hill Avenue
Shelton, Connecticut 06484

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