

## Navigating a New Way of Life

COVID-19 has roared in to change life as we knew it. Last November we were pleased as we welcomed new residents into our just-opened Wheat Ridge apartment building. That expansion was a big project, and we looked forward to life slowing down enough to catch our breath a bit. But by mid-March, COVID changed everything. All campus events were postponed, then canceled—our Ham & Cheese Fundraiser, Book Sale, Heritage Day, and other programs. One week later, PA Governor Wolf prohibited travel for anything but essential needs, and visitors were prohibited anywhere on our campus. Masks, quarantines, and social distancing became norms. We grew concerned as sister retirement communities began reporting infections and deaths. There was no operating model to follow.

It could have been easy to give in to fear; instead, strength and support emerged both from within Fairmount and from the broader community. So many rose to the challenges and supported one another in this time of crisis.

### *The Local Community Steps Up*

When the virus first began spreading across our



*To maintain a social connection, several residents began meeting outdoors, with masks and plenty of distance between them.*

national, personal protective equipment was in short supply or unavailable. Several local families quickly went to work making cloth masks—first for all our staff, then for all residents. At final count, they had sewn and donated 1,500 cloth masks. When our special

COVID unit opened, these families also stitched together a total of 24 gowns for staff use.

Petra Church in New Holland provided free grocery delivery service for our residents. One of our staff was designated to take calls from residents and place their orders online from a local grocery store. When the groceries were ready, Petra Church volunteers picked them up and delivered everything to Fairmount.

A number of local children cheered up residents by making over 1,000 cards of encouragement—enough to give several to every resident and some to team members.

Several local singing groups gave outdoor concerts at various campus locations, where residents could come outside to listen, or enjoy the music from their rooms, patios or balconies.

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Fairmount Homes *Perspective* is published quarterly for the residents, staff, volunteers and friends of Fairmount Homes, a Christian retirement community governed by a Board from the Weaverland Conference of the Old Order Mennonite Church.

### Core Values

Community • Compassion  
Dignity • Integrity  
Quality • Teamwork  
Trust

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*Please visit our website for additional information and to download an Application for Residency. [www.FairmountHomes.org](http://www.FairmountHomes.org)*

## Faith over Fear - *The President's Perspective*

In early March, we learned that COVID-19 was invading our nation and wreaking havoc along the way. Our concern grew quickly, and we began to consult with various experts. Fairmount soon created a COVID Task Force that met daily to navigate these uncharted waters. We had lots of questions and concerns but no template to help us make sure we were addressing all the issues!

At every meeting we prayed for wisdom and direction. Then we created policies and procedures, and discussed the questions and concerns

of staff, residents, and families. From the beginning, we committed to open and honest communication. Our motto became **Faith over Fear!** Most importantly, the Task Force always kept our seven Core Values a central part of our conversations, referring back to them often.

We truly believe Fairmount exists to care for not only residents on our campus, but also vulnerable and compromised residents of our broader community, **and** to be a faithful witness as Christians and Anabaptist believers. So we wrestled with the question, "How do we fulfill our mission while keeping our own residents and staff safe? Will we be able to minimize the risks?" The most difficult question became, should we accept COVID-positive patients if local hospitals reached capacity?

The Task Force kept coming back to the fact that we wanted to serve the

broader community. One member compared our decision to the parable of the Good Samaritan and asked, "Are we the Priest or Levite who walked by the beaten man, or the Samaritan who stopped and cared for him?" We all agreed that we wanted to be the Good Samaritan neighbor who helped a COVID-positive patient in need. But we had to talk through various scenarios until all of us felt comfortable bringing in such high-risk residents.

The Task Force met with team members in the Nursing Department to assess their level of comfort if they were

asked to work with COVID residents. A dedicated team not only approved but **personally volunteered** to work on a COVID unit.

Once we had buy-in from our Board and team, we began to explore the idea of creating a special negative-pressure isolation wing to safely accommodate recovering COVID residents. After sharing the idea with several donors, they offered to cover the costs of the necessary equipment.

We learned that the University of Colorado School of Engineering had created an isolation wing in a hospital in California. After numerous consultations with them, as well as with our Medical Director and our Respiratory Therapist, and reading as much as we could from the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Health, we moved forward and created the unit.

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*A group of dedicated team members personally volunteered to work in the new negative-pressure wing designed to safely admit recovering COVID-19 residents.*



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*Our first recovering COVID-19 resident was given a joyous send-off as he left Fairmount to return home.*



*Messiah College student, Mackenzie Brubaker, braved the mid-March cold to hold an outdoor hymn sing for residents. She played and sang at five campus locations, while residents joined in from their balconies, patios and windows.*



*Residents and their families can visit safely in the conference room outfitted with a plexiglass barrier, a special sound system, and a separate ventilation system.*



*Local children donated hand-made encouragement cards for residents and staff.*

### *Faith over Fear - The President's Perspective ... (continued from page 2)*

Fairmount installed special fans, filters, protective barriers, and anterooms. We ensured that we had several weeks' worth of personal protective equipment available. We retrained staff on infection-control procedures. Then we took a leap of faith and admitted our first COVID-positive resident. To date, a total of 29 residents have recuperated and been discharged from the new negative-pressure wing.

Recently, the Department of Health conducted an Infection Control Survey with two surveyors reviewing our policies and procedures. They even wanted to tour our COVID wing. We received no citations from the survey, and they spoke highly of our nursing team and appeared impressed with how the COVID wing worked.

I understand that our decision to create a COVID wing brought concerns and questions from residents, families, and team members, but we relied on medical expertise and sought wisdom from God. I am so thankful for the team that stepped forward and did not allow fear to deter our plan. Again, Faith over Fear! ->



*Jerry D. Lile*  
Jerry D. Lile  
President/CEO

### ***Team Members Went Beyond the Call***

It quickly became apparent that the virus was not going away anytime soon, and with the singular goal of keeping residents safe, Fairmount began implementing added safety precautions. All meals were served to Health Care and Personal Care residents in their rooms, increasing the workload for Dining and Nursing staff. Team members from other departments pitched in to help. All staff were deemed essential; everyone helped to do whatever needed to be done.

Recognizing the need for social interaction and engagement to combat residents' loneliness, our staff quickly adopted new routines. Multiple times over the next several months, while resident travel was restricted, the Residential Living team visited



*"Hallway Bingo" remains a favorite resident activity.*

each Residential Living resident, checking to see if they needed anything, serving treats and delivering cards. The Activity Department devised innovative ways to conduct activities that fit within the state-mandated and CDC and DOH guidelines. An iPad donated by a resident's family member helped residents FaceTime or meet via Zoom with friends and family members. Recognizing the value of these virtual connections, Fairmount purchased eight additional iPads to serve the social needs of more residents. Then as we moved into the reopening phase, our Maintenance staff created a place for residents to visit with their families by dividing a conference room with a Plexiglass barrier, and added a special sound system and a separate ventilation system to keep our residents safe.



*With an outpouring of community support, team members were the beneficiaries of many special treats.*

### ***Community Spirit from Within and Without***

Residential Living residents offered to be Pen Pals to Health Care and Personal Care residents, sewed masks for a Mennonite Disaster Service project, and found safe ways to interact with each other while wearing masks and socially distancing.

In an outpouring of support for our dedicated staff, Fairmount's Administration, our Board of Directors, community businesses, and several individual staff members donated food and treats—subs, ice cream, doughnuts, various snacks, frozen yogurt, pizza, and boxed lunches—as well as many other tokens of appreciation for the sacrificial service of the entire team.

Navigating a pandemic has been more challenging than anyone could have imagined, and currently there is no end in sight. The times ahead are still full of uncertainties. But grappling with this coronavirus has proven that with the strength and support of Faith, Family, and Community, we can not only survive, but thrive. ➤



*Personal Care resident Mary Keener is happy to have her meal delivered to her in her room.*



*The Bocce court in the courtyard of the new Wheat Ridge Apartments has drawn many competitors in the past few months.*



*Team member Brenda Weatherspoon cheered residents by going room to room, playing her accordion for them.*

## Thank You to All Who Contributed

- MacKenzie Brubaker held an outdoor hymn sing
- Petra Church provided grocery delivery
- Family Member donated an iPad for resident use
- Local families sewed 1,500 masks for everyone, staff and residents, and 24 gowns for staff
- Local children donated 1,000 handmade encouragement cards which were distributed to residents and staff
- Green Hills Discount Grocer donated subs
- Glenwood Foods donated fruit, potato chips, ice cream, and boxes of snack crackers for residents and staff
- Univest sponsored frozen yogurt
- Weiser's donated doughnuts
- The Cleason and Sylvia High family performed an outdoor concert for Mother's Day
- The Darrell Weaver family sang on campus outside
- Fairmount staff ordered pizza for all team members
- A team member provided potato chips for staff
- A team member donated bracelets
- Fairmount Board of Directors provided boxed lunches for all staff
- Burkholder's Golf Carts loaned Fairmount a golf cart to take residents on rides across campus
- Ambassadors for Christ donated masks
- Goodville Mutual Casualty Company donated funds for the new COVID unit  
"As part of our ongoing commitment to the community"
- Therapy Trip: A Medical Travel Company donated funds for the new COVID unit
- Paul Risk Construction donated funds for the new COVID unit



*Resident Henry Gehman was delighted to ride around campus with Activity Aide Michelle Stahl in a golf cart on loan from Burkholder's Golf Carts.*



*Bible studies were held when small groups were again able to meet with plenty of room for social distancing.*



# Fairmount

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## Views. Values. Value.

For over 50 years, Fairmount has provided some of Lancaster County's best views. However, we provide much more. Our Christ-centered focus and Mennonite values drive us to enrich the lives of our residents, and the broader community, with compassion, quality care and a commitment to dignity. We accomplish all this at very affordable prices.

When you choose Fairmount as your home you experience lively and friendly neighborhoods in our Independent Living apartments and cottages. Living at Fairmount frees you to spend more time with family and friends and pursue favorite pastimes. Should you require additional assistance in managing your activities of daily living, we provide Personal Care and Health Care, all here on our campus.

Our new Wheat Ridge Apartments provide you with the opportunity to customize your new home to meet your individual style and taste. Select your choice of cabinets, countertops, flooring and more.

Only a few of these Wheat Ridge Apartments remain available, so call 717-354-1800 today to learn more and to arrange your personal visit.



## 31<sup>st</sup> Benefit Auction & BBQ

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*Go to [FairmountHomes.org](http://FairmountHomes.org)  
for more information and to bid.*