The weather is warming up (finally!) and everything’s turning green. In our family garden, fragrant flowers on the Mexican plum and Carolina Jessamine greet the sun. We are harvesting lettuce, planting tomatoes, and tilling the soil for seedlings.

Start with your faith. Then plant the seeds of goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, and love.

(Hosea 10:12; Psalm 126:5-6; Peter 1:5-8)

This Spring, House of Friends celebrates its 10th anniversary!

From a bulb a flower blooms and from a cocoon a beautiful butterfly takes flight. In each, there is promise of hope in God’s world. Starting with a vision in 2003, seeds were planted with care to form a dementia respite social program called House of Friends. We opened our doors in May 2004 with 6 dementia participants and 20 volunteers. From that pilot year going forward, we have tilled the soil, added nutrients, analyzed regularly and trusted God. We have cultivated wonderful, enduring friendships and built a strong volunteer team. God transforms His world in delightful ways! House of Friends has become a community of love and hope that connects people and transforms lives.

Trust in Me and do good to others. Cultivate faithfulness. Daily plant seeds of encouragement in others’ lives. Friendships increase your potential. They come to your rescue when life isn’t fun or when you falter. Friends stick by you in times of need, and a friend’s counsel is sweet to the soul.

(Psalm 37:3; Hebrews 3:13; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; Proverbs 17:17 27-9)

In 2013 House of friends directly served 654 individuals (dementia participants, their caregivers, volunteers and student nurses) over a scope of 10,382 hours and outreached to 4,255 people (651 service hours). We reach out to families in need in our weekly program and through our Caregiver Support Group and educational opportunities. Our in-kind partnership with Bethany United Methodist Church gives us a sturdy base. We are grateful for our 11-year mission partner Hope Presbyterian Church. We are pleased to connect with diverse organizations, multiplying our impact to those in need of love and care. As a public health learning site for 150 student nurses annually, our program expands awareness and understanding of dementia. We are delighted to mentor new and exciting programs.

Trust me to make the pieces of the puzzle fit. You can be confident that I’ll faithfully bring to fruition the good seeds I’ve planted in you. (Galatians 6:9; Philippians 1:6; Luke 10:2)

In Thursday HOF this spring, we will celebrate our friendships, through simply listening, a gentle touch, hearty laughter and a warm smile. We will plant seeds and pot plants together. We will do good works and continue to trust God’s direction to transform lives, remembering that life begins the day you start a garden. ~ Susie Petersen
Won’t YOU join us?

Attendance remains strong at the monthly meetings of the Bethany Alzheimer’s Support Group! We try to follow a pattern of having a speaker at one session followed by sharing at the next session. We are currently looking at the approach used by Teepa Snow, an internationally acclaimed Alzheimer’s and dementia care specialist, who has developed excellent techniques to care for those with dementia. She provides techniques to improve communication, mutual understanding, better manage distress, and more. Any caregiver or family member/friend of a caregiver is invited to join us at our meetings. Meetings are co-facilitated facilitated by Dave Lutz, Care Ministries Pastor, and Victoria Bovard, R.N. who has worked with Alzheimer’s caregivers for over 2 decades.

Our meetings this quarter will be held on April 10, May 8, & June 12.
The Bethany Alzheimer’s Support Group meets the second Thursday of each month from noon to 1:30 p.m. Questions may be directed to Pastor David Lutz, 512/310-9451 or dlutzbethany2000@gmail.com.
Researchers have discovered and validated a blood test that can predict with greater than 90 percent accuracy if a healthy person will develop mild cognitive impairment or Alzheimer's disease within three years.

Described in Nature Medicine (March 9, 2014), the study heralds the potential for developing treatment strategies for Alzheimer's at an earlier stage, when therapy would be more effective at slowing or preventing onset of symptoms. It is the first known published report of blood based biomarkers for preclinical Alzheimer's. The test identifies 10 lipids, or fats, in the blood that predict disease onset. It could be ready for use in clinical studies in as few as two years and, researchers say, other diagnostic uses are possible.

"Our novel blood test offers the potential to identify people at risk for progressive cognitive decline and can change how patients, their families and treating physicians plan for and manage the disorder," says the study's corresponding author Howard J. Federoff, MD, PhD, professor of neurology and executive vice president for health sciences at Georgetown University Medical Center.

There is no cure or effective treatment for Alzheimer's. Worldwide, about 35.6 million individuals have the disease and, according to the World Health Organization, the number will double every 20 years to 115.4 million people with Alzheimer's by 2050.

Federoff explains there have been many efforts to develop drugs to slow or reverse the progression of Alzheimer's disease, but all of them have failed. He says one reason may be the drugs were evaluated too late in the disease process. "The preclinical state of the disease offers a window of opportunity for timely disease-modifying intervention," Federoff says. "Biomarkers such as ours that define this asymptomatic period are critical for successful development and application of these therapeutics."

"The lipid panel was able to distinguish with 90 percent accuracy these two distinct groups: cognitively normal participants who would progress to MCI or AD within two to three years, and those who would remain normal in the near future," Federoff says. "We consider our results a major step toward the commercialization of a preclinical disease biomarker test that could be useful for large-scale screening to identify at-risk individuals," Federoff says. "We're designing a clinical trial where we'll use this panel to identify people at high risk for Alzheimer's to test a therapeutic agent that might delay or prevent the emergence of the disease."
1 Lindsey & Todd Hutchison crafted “mocktails” with no added sugar for the Starlight Gala.
2 Yvette & John Espinosa, owners of Senior Sitters (http://www.seniorsittersusa.com/), provided a fried chicken lunch for HOF in February.
3 Lively singing and keyboarding accompaniment by Joel Barry were the perfect blend for spirited dancing & singing! Joel’s visit was underwritten by Senior Sitters who provided lunch that day.
4 Preceptor Mu Tau (Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority) members help Christine & Catherine with decorations set-up for Starlight Gala. Many of the decorations were on loan from Preceptor Mu Tau.
L to R: Beverly Bagleman, Chuck Rossa, JoAnn Rossa, Christine (Leap to Success member), Catherine Johnson (Starlight Gala Decorations Chair), Jan Nissen, & Darlene Austin.
5 Katie Stine, Marketing Outreach Director of Regency Nursing & Rehabilitation Centers, Inc. provided delicious Schlotsky’s deli sandwiches for lunch on January 2nd. Regency Nursing & Rehab Centers (http://www.rnci.com/), provides management & administrative services for nursing facilities, including Windsor Nursing & Rehab Center (Duval Rd., Austin) & Pflugerville Nursing & Rehab (Rex Kerwin Court, Pflugerville).
6 University of Texas instructor Shalonda Horton & nursing student visit HOF.
7 Barbara Van Tassel, Director of the Wesley Respite Center at First United Methodist Church, Marble Falls, visited HOF on Feb. 13th to gather program ideas. HOF provided organization materials & guidance to this program, one of several in the Highland Lakes region, that started up 2 years ago. See recent article at: (http://www.dailytrib.com/2014/02/06/wesley-respite-center-gives-caregivers-break-weekly-program/).
8 University of Texas visit on Happy Day with instructor Ana Todd (second from left, 1st row).
EVERY DAY AT HOF IS A DAY TO CELEBRATE!

“B-12”, Linda Tenpas calls BINGO!
Ross Goldsmith – energetic youth service volunteer
Sharon Reeves – help with lunch prep and serving
Mindy Long – Gala print framing
Shannon Mantrom – consultation to Gala planning
Chris Todd – service volunteer
JW White & Ken Bray – faithful early morning set up crew
Starlight Gala Committee – months planning stellar Starlight Gala!
Linda Tenpas – BINGO caller extraordinaire
Starlight Gala Volunteers – 61 individuals donated 400 hours for Gala set-up & prep
Chef Pat Bodn and Nancy Ruiz – a Gala dinner to remember
Alison Meador – Blue Star Cafeteria gift cards and RR Express tickets
Todd Hutchison – built PVC frame for Gala
Ladies of Preceptor Mu Tau, Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi – loaned decorations and helped set up Gala decorations
Epi Chavez – mounted mirror ball & special facilities needs
Nancy Ruiz & Virginia Alexander – led morning volleyball warm-ups
Helen Gneechtel – help where needed for Starlight Gala
Jim Jones – brought snowmen for theme, helped out with early morning set-up
Mrs. Derryberry’s pre-kindergarten class – sent handmade Valentines to HOF
Monika Knesek – prepared Mardi Gras craft, assist with craft leadership
Linda Tenpas – early pickup of Starbucks pastries weekly, arranged special entertainment & room set-up
JW White & Virginia Alexander – made notification calls when HOF session cancelled (elevator broken)
Kathy Maurer, Bob Swem, Nancy Ruiz – morning humor
Virginia Alexander – dressed in shirt to match session themes
Mary McNeill Smith – plated meal when outside organization provided HOF lunch, January
Clay Kennedy – thanks for spending the day at HOF
Lindsey Hutchison – brought 3 bunnies to hug

By Check, to Bethany United Methodist Church, with House of Friends on the memo line.

By Check, designating a Memorial. Make check to Bethany United Methodist Church, with House of Friends-In Memory of [insert name] or House of Friends-In Honor of [insert name] on the memo line.

By Check, using a Gifts and Memorial Form. This form is available at House of Friends, in the Bethany Church Office, or may be downloaded at http://www.bethany-umc.org/filerquest/7231. Designate gift to Specific Project – House of Friends. Attach check with form and submit to Bethany office or to House of Friends Thursday program. This is a meaningful way to honor or celebrate a person or special occasion.

Bethany Website, Give Online. Follow this link http://www.bethany-umc.org/generosity/give_online to directions to give to House of Friends. All HOF donations go to a designated House of Friends account. You must designate your gift to House of Friends.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) and credit card giving are available. For more information contact the Bethany Finance Office at 512-258-6017.
Our HOF Starlight Gala was a stellar affair! Twinkling lights and glittery stars transformed the Bethany Fellowship Hall into a glamorous and intimate space, complementing the gourmet dinner created by Chef Patrick Bodin and Nancy Ruiz and their talented culinary team. Gala guests were greeted with a refreshing mocktail drink in a decorated glass flute, which was also a favor to take home. A wait staff of 20 served the dinner, adding to the evening’s elegance. 200 attendees enjoyed dinner music by Mike Vasquez and musical entertainment by the Stardust Four. Boarding at the “Chattanooga Choo Choo” station, this harmonious trio (Catherine Bartoli, Ann Moeller and Judy Ratliff) and their splendid pianist Vernon Moeller took us on a musical journey through classic melodies of the 1930s and 1940s. Director Susie Petersen highlighted the accomplishments of House of Friends’ 10th anniversary, noting that a community group envisioned HOF in 2003 and the weekly program opened its doors in 2004. She thanked Bethany United Methodist Church for its sturdy in-kind support. She introduced a Program Training Overview video, funded by a St. David’s Foundation grant, that highlighted HOF program education, organization, and leadership components.

Eight fabulous Drawing packages added to the Gala benefit! Nine lucky attendees won packages valued from $125 to $1300! All Gala proceeds ($8800) will directly benefit House of Friends’ weekly Alzheimer’s respite program. As a self-funding community outreach ministry of Bethany UMC, HOF must raise its own funds for its operating budget.


WITH SPECIAL APPRECIATION: to the 63 volunteers who contributed 720 volunteer hours to make this event possible! Many thanks to the hard-working Gala Committee: Patrick Bodin (Chef), Syble Goodwin, Helen Gneechtel (Project Management), Catherine Johnson (Decorations), Christine Levermann (Marketing Support), Mindy Long (Tickets & Drawing), Linda McLeod, Pam Mitchell (Stage Manager), Pat Oliver, Susie Petersen (HOF Coordination), Sharon Reeves (Hospitality), Nancy Ruiz (Food) and Deann Rene Walters (Graphics). With special appreciation to the 50 additional volunteers, a cross-section from our community, who worked on the committees! Event photography was provided by Kevin Gourley, Kevin Gourley Photography. The Photo Slide Show. 10 Years of HOF Transforming Lives, was compiled by Kim Natwig. Generous in-kind event support was given by Bethany United Methodist Church. The decorated kitchen screen was built by Todd Hutchison and the drape sewn by Pat Oliver. Two groups provided significant Gala in-kind support: Leap to Success, Job Support Launch Pad, in our event planning, and Preceptor Mu Tau, Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority, in decorations.

THANK YOU to everyone who made the Starlight Gala a very successful benefit!
1. Sandra, Ken, & Andrea celebrate Mardi Gras.
2. Margo & Linda present Ollie with a beautiful bouquet of roses for Ollie’s 95th birthday.
3. Susie & Mindy reminisce over snowflakes & cold, cold winters.
4. Bob, Wayne, & a nursing student have some fun.
5. Youth volunteer Ross pitches in enthusiastically in all areas at HOF!
6. Linda & Pat show that even washing dishes can be fun at HOF!
7. Barbara concentrates on a strike during bowling.
8. Terra helps Jewel open the perfect snowflake.
9. Henry, Kathy, & Marilyn clap to the music.
January - February - March
In-Kind Donations

We are grateful for the generous donations from the following friends of our program.

Starbucks @ Hwy 183 & Anderson Mill Rd – assorted pastries, weekly
Stardust Four: Catherine Bartoli, Ann Moeller, Vernon Moeller, Judy Ratliff – musical show for HOF Starlight Gala
Mike Vasquez, guitarist – dinner entertainment for Starlight Gala
Kevin Gourley, Kevin Gourley Photography – photographer, Starlight Gala
Cedar Park Jewelry – diamond & gold cross
Catherine Johnson – Starlight Gala decorations
John & Yvette Espinosa, Senior Sitters, Inc. – provided guest entertainer Joel Barry & lunch for 40 in February
Linda Tenpas – donuts, zucchini & banana bread
Bruce & Sharon Leach – homemade cinnamon rolls
Kathy Maurer – conversation hearts & fresh fruit
Monika Knesek – jewels, glitter glue, & fresh fruit
Mindy Long – fruit tray & picture frames for Starlight Gala
Tracey Blazer – setup online Starlight Gala donation portal
Leap to Success, Launch Pad Job Club – support services to Starlight Gala planning
Nancy & Pat Ruiz – bread, pitchers, & chef beanies
Susie Petersen – Mardi Gras masks
Myrna Jaks – birthday dessert to honor her mother, Ollie
Bill Power, Bob Swem, Nancy Adams, Jim Jones, Andrea Stocks, Helen Pringle, Bob & Sue Hosking, Sandra Thompson, Ken Bray – assorted fruit tray for morning social time
Pat Oliver – Starlight Gala frame drape
Helen Gneuchelt – frames
Marilyn Appleby – fruit tray & cheese curds
Katie Stine, Regency Nursing & Rehab Centers – HOF lunch
Ford Boenig’s 4th grade class, River Place Elementary – cards of love to HOF, to honor Ford’s grandfather, Dr. David Kerr
Joe Harper & Vernon Moeller – Irish program for HOF
Hudson’s on the Bend – cooking school gift certificate
Jewelry John – Seantel Bell with silver chain
Shannon Mantrom, Praxis Fundraising Solutions – first aid kits & New U Plastic Surgery gift certificate
Carrabba’s Italian Grill – bread for 250 for Starlight Gala
Ikea – gift cards
H-E-B – grocery gift cards
Freda, Freda’s Seafood Grille – restaurant gift certificates
Russell Oliver – service help at HOF sessions
Zelinda Yanez, The Yoga Room – 5 class pass
Michaela Massage & Bodywork – one hour massage
Eydie Toll, Salon E – ladies’ hair cut
Austin Aquarium – VIP passes for 2
Alamo Draft House – food & beverage gift cards
J. Don Evans, artist – series of numbered wildlife prints
Pat Oliver – sewed Gala drape for frame & assisted at HOF session
Alison Meador – Blue Star Cafeteria gift cards & 8 Round Rock Express seats, Intel Club passes & parking
Sam’s Club – gift certificate
Home Depot, Lakeline – PVC materials to build cover to kitchen serving window

WANT TO HELP? Call Sue at 512-258-7848 to donate fruit & baked goods!

“God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.”
Genesis 1:31

Some time ago a retreat was held in a beautiful setting of mountains, trees, and lakes—perfect places to explore and enjoy God’s creation. Before the first meal, the retreat leader suggested that we spend our afternoon wandering and relaxing in our environment and find something in nature to bring back to share with the group. That evening everyone brought the items they had found during the afternoon: feathers, leaves, tree limbs, seedpods, wildflowers, and rocks. Stories were told of each discovery and all celebrated God’s gifts. The gift of marveling at the work of our Creator energized the group and brought it together.

From that experience it can be learned that we can marvel everywhere. When I see the brilliant colors of the sunset, I marvel. When I hear a bird singing, I marvel. When the air smells clean, I marvel. When I see a rose, I marvel. Sometimes we let the business of the day interfere with enjoying nature’s beauty, but we should always try to save part of every day to pay attention to God’s “wonderful creation.”

Sending a Message to God
by Pastor Dave Lutz

“God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.”
Genesis 1:31

This new six week course of study is designed for caregivers of those with dementia. It emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes for better caregiving and will be offered at Bethany in the near future. Pastor Dave Lutz and Linda Chambers, Assistant Director of the House of Friends, have recently been trained by Caregiver University to teach this course.

This program has been developed to help the caregiver manage daily life, manage resources, manage behavior, and manage the caregivers’ well-being. More information will be available in the future.

If you are interested in possibly taking the course, please contact Pastor Lutz at 512-310-9451. Enrollment will be limited.
TESTIMONIAL

Hi Susie,

This is Susan Wroe Perry writing to you. After reading your note I remembered all the love the HOF offers to its members. What a miracle program! Thank you.

The main reason I’m writing to you is to say that the memory board is still such a useful thing for all of us. The staff loves it and talks to mom about the pictures and events all the time. I love it, too.

Please tell the person who made it thank you for me. The enlarged photos and simple, descriptive captions along with the colorful, attractive layout really hit the mark. Thank you, thank you, thank you. …… Love, Susan

Mary Jo Wroe, Susan’s mother, was a HOF participant in 2009-2010. Mary Jo currently resides in the Harbor at Buckner Villas. Susan continues to keep in touch with us.

CURRENT VOLUNTEER NEEDS

Be a HOF volunteer! Opportunities:

☐ Enjoy coffee & chat with a new friend at HOF (1 hr.)
☐ Make phone calls to update resource list (1 hr)
☐ Straighten HOF Library materials (1/2 hr.)
☐ Organize HOF materials (1 hr.)
☐ Update HOF database (2 hours)
☐ Share your musical talent at HOF 1/2 hr.)
☐ Talk about your favorite hobby at HOF 1/2 hr.)
☐ Be a Thursday HOF volunteer. (2-4 hrs.)
☐ Help put together a HOF group craft - guidance provided (2-3 hrs)

Try these Foods that Help Fight Fatigue!

Oatmeal
Pumpkin seeds
Lean proteins
Whole grains
Spinach
Walnuts
Dark chocolate

Reflections from Texas Nursing Students

University of Texas Nursing Students rotate through HOF (visiting for a day) during the year to familiarize them with community health programs. After spending a day with HOF, these are some comments from this group of students during the debriefing after the session.

… Everyone seemed happy to be here.
… It is a wonderful atmosphere.
… It was a more cheerful place than expected, like a social and entertainment event.
… Everyone seemed like equals. This is important because they (participants) are people - should treat people like people - and this happens at HOF.
… Impressed with the organization and structure of program.

UT Student Nurses wearing Mardi Gras masks they made with HOF participants during crafts. 2/27/2014.
Together we are the hands and heart of God building a house of friends.
The House of Friends is a faith-based, volunteer-staffed social program for those with early stages of Alzheimer’s and related diseases and provides respite to caregivers.

If you wish to be removed from this newsletter mailing list, or receive the newsletter digitally via e-mail, please send an e-mail to Sally Foster at sally.foster@bethany-umc.org

HOF VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION … by Nancy Kier

One of our newest House of Friends volunteers has quickly become one of our most active. Nancy Ruiz joined the HOF group just 6 months ago (Sept. ’13), but she has jumped in with both feet! She has proved willing to do almost anything during the Thursday sessions including sharing morning humor and leading exercise warm-ups, in addition to partnering with a participant.

Nancy and her husband, Patrick Bodin, were the key people responsible for the elegant dinner served at our February Starlight Gala fundraiser. They planned the menu, recruited a cooking crew, shopped, prepped, cooked, served, and cleaned up for the excellent dinner for 200 hungry folks!

Born in Wilkes-Barre, PA, Nancy claims nearby Dallas, PA as her hometown. As an Air Force brat she lived in numerous states during her growing up years. College took her to Denton and Houston, TX where she earned a degree in physical therapy from Texas Woman’s University.

Austin has been Nancy’s home for almost 30 years, and she is a member of Bethany UMC. She is co-leader of her Sunday School class and also participates in the prayer shawl ministry.

Job-wise Nancy is currently in transition (i.e., looking for a job). She is a physical therapist and has worked as conference coordinator and standardized patient educator simulation coordinator. She really loves working with standardized patients in healthcare education.

Nancy and Patrick are the proud owners of 2 cats. They are also aunt and uncle to over 50 nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and grandnephews! Nancy loves crocheting, yoga, reading, eating, cooking, and traveling—especially to Italy.

One thing Nancy Ruiz would like you to know about her: let her know if you have chocolate cake. Any day. Any time.

House of Friends is blessed to have the very versatile Nancy Ruiz on our great team of volunteers.

If you think you might be interested in becoming associated with the House of Friends & would like to learn more about becoming a volunteer with the program, go to: www.BethanyHOF.org or contact Nancy Kier at 512-250-5501 to set up a time for you to come and visit our program.