



Riding in style



Message from
Amy Jo Powers
—Executive Director

“Ooh la la!” This is what a resident exclaimed one morning when she realized the surprise in the lobby. Our brand-new Toyota Sienna was displayed and admired in the lobby for several days. The purchase of the new van will provide an alternative to the bus for daily transportation, consequently saving money on gasoline and wear and tear on our large bus.



Executive Director Amy Jo Powers (front) and residents pose near Touchmark's new van.

Touchmark's new van is yet another service that residents can be proud to call their “own.” We take pride in offering a wonderful array of amenities and services at Touchmark. The Greatest Generation deserves nothing less than the best!



Follow your heart

by Marge Coalman, EdD
—Vice President of Wellness & Programs, Touchmark

In today's world there is a good understanding of the workings and function of the human heart. There is even a live television show that features surgeons doing open heart surgery (let the viewer beware; it is bloody). How is it then that we continue to attribute the heart with being the center of human emotions? In reality, the emotional data

“To understand the heart and mind of a person, look not at what he has already achieved, but at what he aspires to.”

—Kahlil Gibran

center for humans is the prefrontal cortex of the brain. This is where we discern pain from pleasure, friend from foe, gratuitous compliment from genuine praise.

It is an amazing and complex interaction of all of the lobes of the brain that integrates emotion and fact and al-

lows humans to form opinions and make judgments about how to assess an incident or person as to whether there is danger in a given situation. The same automatic analysis can reveal a safe situation and often provides insight into

who we can trust with our emotional well-being.

So, although in the 21st century it is well known that the mainframe of the brain does generate the full range of emotions, our culture continues to use the heart as the universal symbol of the repository for emotions. Sage advice would be to take care of both of these important organs to have “good heart and brain health.” In general, what is good for the heart is good for the brain. That applies to diet, physical activity, balanced work and play time, positive relationships, and good financial choices. It is the total combination of lifestyle choices that allows people to “follow their hearts and create their own future.”

At Touchmark, the Life Enrichment/Wellness program components are designed to support good heart and brain health. For information on the offerings and opportunities available, contact Director of Life Enrichment/Wellness Bobbie Thompson.

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Join the Mardi Gras party

by Bobbie Thompson
—Life Enrichment/Wellness Director

Feathers, beads, costumes, and merriment: Whether you celebrate Fat Tuesday or you just like a good party, you won't want to miss our fun and colorful Mardi Gras Party Monday, February 19 from 2:30 to 4 pm.

The origin of Mardi Gras in America is somewhat debated, but it is generally accepted that Mardi Gras has been celebrated for hundreds of years based upon a festival that was popular in France. According to one version of the origin, it is said that a French explorer sailed into the Gulf of Mexico and launched an expedition along the Mississippi River. When the expedition set up camp just south of present-day New Orleans, on the very day of the French festival, Mardi Gras in America was established.

Regardless of the origin or why you celebrate, we will take the opportunity to enjoy a costume party, complete with jugglers, costumes, masks, refreshments, and live music by the very impressive Riverboat Rascal and the Belle of the Mississippi (his wife). The Riverboat Rascal has been showcased on Wisconsin Public Television *Prime Time*, CNN-TV, and the BBC television network in England—to name a few. He has played extensively along the Mississippi River on river boats and in music halls. He is often referred

to as the “Liberace of Banjo Players,” because of his many wardrobe and instrument changes during his show.

Costumes and masks are encouraged. Masks created by Touchmark residents will be available at the event also. Reservations are required to assure adequate seating and refreshments. To register, please call 920-832-9100.

Upcoming events

Thursday, February 8, 4:30 and 5:30 pm—February birthday party. Live music by Ted Young at 6:30 pm. Meal ticket or guest ticket accepted. Call 920-832-9100 to make reservations.

Monday, February 12, noon—Potluck performance and presentation by Ken Anderson (teacher, director, and presenter on American musicals). Cost for residents: \$1. Cost for community members: \$1 and a potluck dish to share. For more information or to make reservations, please call 920-733-2860. Thompson Community Center (cosponsored by Touchmark).

Wednesday, February 14—Sweet Sensations. Send a special Valentine's Day delivery within the building for a fee. Ask for details by calling 920-832-9100. At 6:30 pm, delight your ears with live piano music with Bob Bushman and indulge in sweet treats (sugar-free options will be available). No charge. Four Seasons.

Monday, February 19, 2:30 to 4 pm—Celebrate Mardi Gras with the Riverboat Rascal! Costumes, prizes, jugglers, masks, refreshments, and live music with the Riverboat Rascal and the Belle of the Mississippi. No charge. Please call 920-832-9100 to make reservations.

Design your lifestyle. Begin your “someday” today!

by Jen Thompson
—Sales Associate

Almost everyday we wake up telling ourselves to exercise more, eat healthier, save money, and spend more time with our family. While we're sometimes successful in our resolve, most often we struggle to keep these promises that we have made.

Over the next few days, we challenge you to connect with

your goals. What is it that you really want? Are you looking for something more? As you reflect on your dreams and desires for the year ahead and the life that you really want, remember that you have worked hard, and you deserve it (yes, you can have it!).

To help you quit saying that same old phrase, “Someday I’m going to ...,” let Touchmark be your motivation. We have set our resolutions at Touchmark to focus on fun, comfort, health, lifestyle, and—most importantly—on you!

Call for a tour today with Chad, Jen, or Amy at 920-832-9100.



Wearing her favorite skunk coat, Elvira stands with her husband, Marty.

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Let Your Spirit Soar

Writers, photographers, and poets live and create in Touchmark communities, and Touchmark is featuring some of this talent and creativity in each newsletter. The Let Your Spirit Soar theme for February is a Heart-to-heart/love story.

The love of a lifetime



by **Elvira Levy**
—Resident

Elvira recalls the love of her life.

In the 1940s, when I was in my very early 20s, I was crowned Miss New York City. I loved clothes and nice things, and people would comment that I was “quite a looker.” If there was anything I had been looking at, it was a skunk coat I had my eye on. One of my girlfriends had a cousin who worked in the fur business, and

so one day my friend and I went to visit the fur business called B. Geller and Sons on 7th Avenue in Manhattan. They were highly successful furriers who supplied fur coats and other fur items to the department stores in New York City and beyond.

While I was at B. Geller and Sons, a young man who worked there, who turned out to be the son of one of the owners, saw me. This young man was a cousin to the girlfriend I had come with to the shop. After I left the wholesale shop, having seen what they had to offer in beautiful skunk furs, this fellow, Martin Geller, called my friend for my telephone number. I remember it like it was yesterday!

This fellow, Martin, started calling my house. He explained he got my number from his cousin and that he’d seen me in the fur shop that day we were shopping. I suppose he said something like, “I liked the way you looked,” and he wanted to go out with me, but I didn’t know who he was other than the fact that he was my friend’s cousin.

Now, here’s the way my mind works: I thought, if he had been anything to look at, I would have noticed him when I was in the wholesale shop, and since I didn’t remember him, I was certain that I wasn’t interested.

One day after many calls from Martin, my mother came to me and said someone was at the door for me. I asked her who it was. She said it was a young man. I asked “what does he look like.” After all, I was popular. My mother said he looked like a nice young man. I went to the door reluctantly, and there I stood face to face with a man with the bluest eyes I had ever seen. I love blue eyes! (In fact, my sons tell me that I messed up their blue eyes, because I have brown eyes, and so their eyes are not as blue as daddy’s.)

Well, Marty, as I like to call him, said to me “I’ve called you so many times, and now I want to talk to you.” I could hardly catch my breath. He was so good looking. I decided to go out with him. Marty was such a good-looking guy, and he never let a day go by without making sure he got to see me. A few short months later, we were married. He continued to insist on seeing me and being with me everyday of our marriage. If I went on vacation or was gone from home a day, he’d find a way to see me. Marty seemed to understand this Hungarian gal! Even when I got mad, he’d put up with my temper. He was great! Soon after we were married, Marty made me a skunk coat.

We were married until Marty was in his 50s. (They didn't know as much about hearts then as they do now.) I eventually married again, but nobody was like Marty. There may be plenty of nice men out there, but Marty was the love of a lifetime.

For March, please submit a humor and laughter poetry feature. Deadline for this issue is February 10. For a list of the guidelines, monthly themes, and deadlines, please contact Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Bobbie Thompson.

Clay forms new hobby for Touchmark resident

Residents recently completed a four-week, eight-session pottery class with artist and potter Alan Schroeder of Cornerstone Kiln. Alan, who was an art teacher in the Appleton Area School District for 32 years before taking early retirement, spends time teaching students and adults of all ages the creative art of pottery.

Resident Lillian Gitter decided to take the pottery class, because she has always enjoyed working with her hands. Lillian's first handiwork hobby was woodworking. Through the years and as her eyesight has changed, Lillian has decided to work less with wood and power tools and has instead tried different ways to create and learn new things.

"In the first class, Lillian immediately picked up on the techniques and proper position of a potter," Alan Schroeder stated proudly of his student.



Lillian Gitter molds clay on the potter's wheel.

Fox Valley selected as grant recipient

Macular degeneration and various diseases affect the vision of nearly 10 million Americans. To help address this problem, the Touchmark Foundation is funding a pilot program to provide reading magnification systems to senior communities.

Locally, the special equipment will be installed at Touchmark on West Prospect and will be available for use by people throughout the Fox Valley area. Touchmark will collaborate with a number of local agencies and groups to design and implement the program, including Thompson Community Center, local ophthalmologists, the Wisconsin Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Wisconsin Council of the Blind, Prevent Blindness America, and Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Inc.

According to Touchmark Foundation Executive Director Janet Plummer, the low-vision project is a top priority of the Foundation in its ongoing efforts to improve the physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual lives of seniors. "Not being able to read causes many seniors to feel isolated, frustrated, and dependent on others," she says, adding, "Having access to this magnification equipment truly will improve the lives of seniors with low vision."

"We are thrilled to have been chosen for this important project," says Touchmark Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Bobbie Thompson, who is heading the project locally. "We are looking forward to working with people in the community to implement a comprehensive program that will help seniors who have vision problems."

The Foundation has ordered an Optelec ClearView+ Desktop Video Magnification System, which will be installed in Touchmark's Cottage Room. When fully developed, the program will include the magnification equipment as well as volunteers who will drive seniors to and from Touchmark and people who will read to participants.

If you have questions about the equipment and its use or upcoming programming, please contact Bobbie at 920-832-9100. Also, look for additional details in the next Touchmark Foundation newsletter.

