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712-256-2741

**Shalimar Gardens**

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402-721-1616

**College View**

Hastings, NE  
402-462-6264

**Northern Hills**

Sioux City, IA  
712-239-9400

**Meridian Gardens**

Columbus, NE  
402-564-6300

**Heritage Pointe**

Omaha, NE  
402-614-5222



# Meridian Gardens

Assisted Living Community

## Rejuvenating Lives

Volume 9

Fall 2008

### October is "Booked"

*by: Cindy Gasper Life Enrichment Coordinator*

The magical month of October offers many reasons to cheer: the turning leaves of autumn, cool breezes and harvest festivals, and perhaps best of all, it's Book Month!

If the thought of curling up with an engaging book in a cozy porch chair on a bright fall day piques your interest, you might want to check the newly organized library at Meridian Gardens. Jean Knapp had spent numerous hours volunteering her time organizing our library shelves. She has created a wonderful user friendly library. All the books are labeled so if you are looking for a bit of mystery, a little romance or a good old western you'll know just where to find it. We are very grateful for all of the time Jean has put into our library and truly appreciate her knowledge of books and talent for organizing.



*Jean Knapp keeps our library in tip top shape.*

All of the books in our library have been generously donated. Some came from sister facilities, others from various individuals. We have also worked with Columbus Library's Friends of the Library to help stock our most popular section which is the Large Print section.

There is no need to check out your book at our library, we just ask that you place it in the Book Return Basket located on the library counter when you are done with it.

*(The activity department continually accepts donated books to add to our library and is currently needing large print books and children's books in good condition.)*

*Janet Hiemer checks out one of the exhibits at the Platte County Fair.*



*Lawrence & Lillian Hillen take in an exhibit at the Platte County Museum.*



*An enjoyable afternoon at the Columbus Museum was had by all.*

Heritage Management Services, Inc. follows a non-discrimination policy on age, race, sex, national origin and disability.

This applies to employment practices, residents and the provisions of services.

Heritage Management Services, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

# In Mark's Words

by Mark Zebr, Executive Director

At Meridian Gardens we do our best to educate our potential residents, existing residents, and their families based on their individual situations. We realize decisions are difficult to make and want to help. Financial options are always in the discussion.

For those individuals who have long-term care insurance, we work diligently with the individual, their families, and their doctors' offices to make sure all information needed by the insurance company is submitted. Residents need to qualify for Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) such as eating, bathing, dressing, toileting, continence, transferring and mobility. The policy may also cover cognitive issues such as various forms of dementia (Alzheimer's).

Recently we have learned The Veterans Coalition is aiding senior veterans and their families by coordinating potential claimants to establish eligibility for certain disability programs and special benefits. (Please see the note on the upcoming community information seminar in this newsletter).

Some individuals pay privately. Some have worked long and hard to prepare for those retirement years. Those folks have come to realize, "Those years are here!" Many times it is difficult for them to think about spending their money on themselves when they have given so much to others for so many years.

For those individuals who are paying privately, we know it is possible that personal funds and assets may become depleted. Our management company is dedicated to helping those individuals who have lived with us for a two year period and are facing this financial fact. Therefore, we are a licensed Medicaid/Waiver facility.

Two to three months prior to the depletion of assets, the resident will need to go through the Medicaid application process through the Department of Health and Human Services. Medicaid pays for the housing portion of the stay. The Waiver application process is done through the Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging and covers the care portion of the stay. The resident will have to show a need with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). Cognitive Impairment is also a consideration. If the resident qualifies for both Medicaid and Waiver Programs, the resident may remain at Meridian Gardens.

Sometimes, families want to supplement their loved one's expenses for a variety of reasons. This provides the resident with peace of mind in a special, personal way.

This could be something as simple as paying for hair care or an extra whirlpool to supplementing part of their rent or level of care.

We strive to provide the best care at the most reasonable price. We value our residents and what they have and continue to contribute to the community. To our families, thank you for sharing your loved one with us. We value each and everyone.



*An adorable, but shy little donkey brings a big smile to Art Miksch and Sue Lovci.*

## A delicious Autumn Dessert from our Dietary Department:

### OATMEAL CHEESECAKE CRANBERRY BARS

2 cups flour	2 eggs
1-1/4 cup oatmeal	2 tsp. lemon juice
3/4 cup brown sugar	1 tsp. vanilla
1 cup soft butter	1 can (16 oz) cranberry sauce
1/2 cup sugar	2 tsp. cornstarch

Sift flour, oatmeal, brown sugar and butter together until it forms crumbs. (Reserve 1-1/2 cups) Press remaining on bottom of 9x13 pan.

Bake 15 minutes at 350 degrees

Beat cream cheese and vanilla. Spread over crust. Stir cranberry sauce and cornstarch together. Spoon over cream cheese layer, sprinkle with remaining crumbs.

Bake 40 minutes at 350 degrees

Cool, cover and chill for 3 hours.

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### *In Loving Memory*

*"In my Father's house are many dwelling places: If it were not so, I would have told you for I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2*

We wish to express our sympathy to the family and friends of James "Jim" Prucha who passed away on August 1, 2008, and Lowene Jackson who passed away on September 2, 2008. Jim and Lowene truly touched our hearts and we were blessed to have the opportunity to care for them.

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### DID YOU KNOW?

An estimated \$1.93 billion in candy sales makes Halloween the sweetest holiday of the year, beating out Easter, Valentine's Day, and Christmas. In fact, one quarter of all the candy sold each year is purchased between September 15th and November 10th.

# Nursing News

By Jose Kodad RN, Director of Healthcare

Want to keep your brain in shape?? Work it.

According to AARP.org, one of the best ways to stay sharp is to exercise that muscle between your ears. Research indicates that you can work your “noodle” many different ways, every day.

Here are a few suggestions:

1. **Walk.** Walking for just 20 minutes a day can lower blood sugar, with helps blood flow to the brain, so you think more clearly.
2. **Listen for details** when a friend tells a story. Conjure a mental image of the story. By doing this, you activate multiple areas in the brain and encourage memory formation.
3. **Keep a calendar** in every room. Checking calendars keeps you focused and oriented, while creating a mental picture of the day in your head.
4. **Turn up the tunes.** TV may provide stimuli, but music can lower stress hormones that inhibit memory and increase feeling of well-being that improves focus.
5. **Choose a side.** Engage in a good debate, talk sports, business, or politics.
6. **Sleep.** This is when your brain consolidates memories. Poor sleep can cause a multitude of problems.
7. **Read the news.** Keeping up with the latest not only activates the memory part of the brain, it gives you something to talk about with friends and family.
8. **Join a book club.** Pick up a good book and share your readings with a group.
9. Play a board game. They activate strategic, spatial, and memory parts of the brain and require you to socialize, which can help form new neural pathways.
10. **Have a chat.** Talking with someone else not only gets you out of your rut (lack of activity can decrease brain-cell formation), but the socializing can also reduce potentially memory sapping depression.
11. **Shake your body.** Gentle bouncing of your knees and shaking out of your limbs reduces the sapping stress hormone cortisol. It also triggers relaxation and alertness that keep the brain sharp.
12. **Stop in** and visit your local Nurse! I love to visit with each and every one of you. Take care and stay sharp!! Jose



*The men got to work husking the corn! Pictured are Harry Weber; Larry Rosenthal, James Scanlon and Don Garretson.*



*Agnes Prucha & Lillian Hillen enjoy flower pressing with members of the Master Garden's Club.*



*The ladies enjoy a lunch outing to Richland.*



*Marcy Zima's great-grand sons, Tyler and Dallas Abbott help us out with the piñata on Mexican day.*



*Medication Aide Erin Rausch enjoys a massage by Avenue Chiropractic Center.*

# Massage Benefits Both Residents & Staff at Meridian Gardens

*by Cindy Gasper, Life Enrichment Coordinator*

Research shows when a person has a massage it boosts their immune system for up to 27 days. Having a massage:

- Improves joint range of motion
- Promotes better posture, body awareness, skin color, and muscle tone.
- Reduces stress, improves mental clarity, and enhances work performance.
- Lowers anxiety levels, brain waves prove more relaxed and alert, and stress levels are reduced.
- Relieves tight muscles and also helps the body remember to breathe.

Studies also show improved speed and accuracy on math computations. Massage has also proven to be beneficial to people who suffer from chronic fatigue syndrome, ADHD, and fibromyalgia.

With that said, we are delighted to have the opportunity to offer massage therapy to our staff & residents. On the first Thursday of the month a massage therapist from Avenue Chiropractic and Wellness Clinic pays us a visit. Massage is offered to our residents & staff that day from 9:30 am until 12:00 pm at the cost of \$1.00 per minute.

To make our morning massage a fun and special time, we have created ways our residents & staff can win a free massage. Each resident's name is put into a drawing every time they participate in exercise class. At the end of the month, a name is drawn out for a free massage. For our staff, each month staff votes for one of their peers to receive the honor of being Employee of the Month. One of the perks of winning this is receiving a free massage.

We are pleased to provide this service at our community. If you would like to give a gift of a massage to your loved one, you can do so by calling our office and make arrangements with us. Just a five minute back massage can do wonders for both body and mind.



*Executive Director, Mark Zebr enjoys a visit with Lucille Hollmann & Jay Jackson at our 2nd Anniversary celebration.*

## Meridian Gardens Announces New Resident Referral Program

Meridian Gardens is pleased and excited to announce our New Resident Referral Program wherein all residents and their family members can earn unlimited rent credits in the amount of \$1000.00 for referring new residents who move into our community. To find out more about this program, please contact our Executive Director, Mark Zebr, at 402-564-6300 or simply stop by his office at Meridian Gardens.



*A wonderful variety of sweets put out by our Dietary staff on our 2nd Anniversary celebration.*



*Wanda Zuroski and Opal Jabn examine one of the 4-H exhibits brought in by the "Dandy Baker's 4-H club.*

# Are you a Victim of Sticker Shock?

By Gwen Sander, Marketing Director

So many times we define the term "sticker shock" as being a cost beyond expected. Whether you're buying a car, home or other major purchase, if the cost is larger than expected, we are shocked. If we are price shopping we tend to look toward comparable items and factor in the value received.

So how does Assisted Living compare? As a whole, senior housing costs have increased 5-13 percent just in the last 2 years according to a published report from Prudential Financial. That being said, the average assisted living charge is significantly lower than skilled nursing options. Nationally the average daily cost of Assisted Living is about \$100 per day versus that of a Skilled Nursing Facility of \$217/day. Alaska is the most expensive Assisted Living in the country averaging \$226 / day. The least expensive areas include Oklahoma City, OK and St. Louis, MO.

So how does that relate to our area Assisted Living facilities? Have you been comparison shopping on senior housing options? On a regular basis, we do area analysis to keep pricing in line with operating costs and area facility charges. When your costs rise at home for utilities such as gas, and electricity or groceries; they rise for us as well. That noted, we work hard to provide the most cost effective services to provide the greatest value for our residents.

How does that compare to living in the home costs? Most people underestimate how much money they spend on living in their home. They may factor in mortgage, food or utilities charges but forget about all the miscellaneous expenses that creep up. Assisted living costs are inclusion and accurate. There are not surprise charges. Meridian Garden's pricing includes those 'other' incidentals such as 24-hour security and nursing care, weekly housekeeping, trash removal, lawn care & maintenance, snacks and various forms of entertainment.

Many seniors cut back on home entertainment as a way to save money. Yet cutting out socialization may be harmful in the long run. Social activities are important for folks to keep physically and mentally alert. It enhances the individual's self-esteem and self-worth. Focus is given on the positives of life versus medical challenges. Socialization can even provide preventative care for the mind and body.

So what value do you place on achieving a higher quality of life? What price is fair to be well taken-care-of and have your medical, social and nutritional needs in check? What value do you place on the quality time spent as a family without concern for maintenance of home or an individual's daily living burdens? And finally what value do you place on Mom or Dad's happiness in their later years of life? Seeing them enjoying life and thriving, to the best of their ability, in my mind is priceless.

The best gift we can give our loved ones is their happiness, safety and well-being. Do your homework, but factor in the value. Don't hesitate to let us give both the resident and family the gift of senior housing success. Meridian Gardens can provide the right combination of cost and value. Come check us out and see for your self. It's a secret we'll be glad to share.

## We welcome new manager Gail Larson, Housekeeping Supervisor



Gail Larson has recently accepted the position of Housekeeping Supervisor at Meridian Gardens. Her responsibilities include general cleaning of resident apartments and other areas of the building as well as overseeing the housekeeping staff and supplies. She has excellent customer service experience and over four years previous experience.

Gail resides in Columbus and has a special friend Rob and son John.

Former housekeeping supervisor Darcy Warth will maintain her employment with Meridian Gardens as a part time dietary assistant. We thank her for her service.

## Housekeeping

"I'd like to thank the residents and staff for making me feel so welcome. Due to unforeseen circumstances the annual cleaning has been slower than anticipated. However, we will be addressing that to make sure our residents have a very clean and sanitary place to call home. Any special cleaning requests, please feel free to let me know. I look forward to getting to know my new extended family."

*Gail Larson, Housekeeping Supervisor*

## EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

*Congratulations Employee of the Month  
for the following months!*

JUNE

**Shelli Brabec, Medication Aide**

JULY

**Lacey Valenzuela, Medication Aide**

AUGUST

**Tammi Schwichtenberg, Cook**

SEPTEMBER

**Judy Mahoney, Life Enrichment Assistant**

## Are you a Military Veteran or Surviving Spouse?

You may be eligible for financial assistance to subsidize your stay in at Meridian Garden's Assisted Living Community.

Come learn about the Department of Veterans Affairs Aid and Attendance Pension program.

Attend a free community seminar on Thursday, November 6th at 7 pm at Meridian Gardens.

We appreciate your RSVP by calling 402-564-6300.



Assisted Living Community

4515 38th Street  
Columbus, Nebraska 68601

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## MANAGEMENT TEAM

*Got a question?*

*These people can help - call (402) 564-6300*

- Executive Director.....***Mark Zehr**
- Director of Health Care.....***Betty Jo “Jose” Kodad**
- Office Manager.....***Royce Lewis**
- Life Enrichment Coordinator .....***Cindy Gasper**
- Marketing Director .....***Gwen Sander**
- Executive Chef.....***Jenny Sloup**
- Housekeeping Supervisor .....***Gail Larson**
- Maintenance Supervisor .....***Jeff Aldredge**

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