

July 2020

The

GRACIOUS GROUNDS

Newsletter

Spring and Summer arrived with a few challenges, but were also filled with friendship, laughter, celebrations, giving and being grateful.



Update:

These last months have been uncharted territory not only for Gracious Grounds but for our County and the world. The patience and positive outlook our residents have had while adjusting to not being able to live their lives as freely, or with the independence they have come to know, is a testament to their resilience and ability to rise up in even the most difficult circumstances. The invaluable support from our board, staff, families and volunteers, along with so many friends both inside and outside our community has enabled Gracious Grounds to continue with our mission while ensuring that all our residents remain safe & healthy.

For the foreseeable future we know we're living in a "new normal" yet with a circle of friends that extends beyond Gracious Grounds we know together everything will continue to be possible.

Thank you.

Your Friends at Gracious Grounds

Board Highlights

Throughout the COVID19 shutdown the Gracious Grounds board continued to work to fill the Executive Director position following the retirement of founder Sandy Baker at the end of 2019. On Monday, June 1st it was formally announced that David Burdo joined Gracious Grounds as the Executive Director.

“We conducted a regional search for this position utilizing the expertise of HR Collaborative, a Grand Rapids-based consulting firm that specializes in nonprofit recruitment. Given the scope and thoroughness of our search, it was a pleasant surprise to have David, a Tri-Cities resident and community leader, rise to the top. His professionalism and track record for serving this community are impeccable. We cannot wait to see how he furthers the mission of Gracious Grounds.” - **Katie Appold - Board President**

Gracious Grounds is Going Green!

In an effort to reduce our carbon footprint and save on the cost of mailing we will be going green for future Newsletters.

This issue will be the last one that will be mailed out. If you wish to continue receiving the Gracious Grounds Newsletter we would ask that you go to graciousground.org and sign-up using the link on the Gracious Grounds homepage **www.graciousgrounds.org** or you can call Gracious Grounds to sign-up **616.414.9209**.

Thank you for helping us go green!



Welcome to Executive Director David Burdo!

My professional career has included 15 years of leadership and law practice in both nonprofit and for-profit organizations. After graduating from law school, I spent 9 years working as an attorney, including both time as a public defender, and in a private practice. I most recently served as the Director of Membership and Marketing, including a period as Interim Executive Director, at the Tri-Cities Family YMCA. This experience provided me with the opportunity to share the positive impact of the organization throughout our community, speaking on its behalf at numerous events and collaborating with other local organizations and non-profits. It was during this time that I was able to fully grasp and understand the philanthropic spirit of the Tri-Cities.



I am both honored and excited to join Gracious Grounds as Executive Director and to lead a passionate and dedicated team of staff and volunteers. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to many of you who I have not yet had the privilege to meet.

I am originally from greater Kalamazoo and our family relocated to the area in 2014 from Cleveland. My wife, Gina and I live in Spring Lake with our two kids, Ethan (10) and Emma (7). In our spare time, we love to camp, travel, and spend time with our family and friends. I am a big believer in impacting our community through volunteerism. I am an active member of the Tri-Cities Kiwanis Club, serve on the Board of Directors with the People Center and Dunegrass Healing LLC and coach youth hockey with the Lakeshore Chiefs.

Prior to joining Gracious Grounds, I was familiar with the organization and was lucky to know a few of the residents who I would see out in the community. I have quickly found in my first few weeks that being a part of Gracious Grounds and spending each day surrounded by our residents, staff and volunteers far surpassed any of my expectations. Experiencing and witnessing the pure joy, love and passion that resonates from Gracious Grounds is completely contagious.

The strength of any organization comes from those who support it. Gracious Grounds was founded to provide a resident centered environment, with the goal of providing affordable housing, life enriching activities and inclusion by promoting community involvement, employability skills and opportunities. I look forward to ensuring that we will continue to be a resource and meet the needs for our growing community.

I am eager to work with you, learn from you, and continue to meet the needs of our residents. I want to thank Rose and the Board for their support and assistance as I transition into this position. I welcome the opportunity to connect with you or to share your thoughts and ideas about our organization. Thank you for your continued support.

Property Updates



Thank you to Everyone who Contributed towards this much needed addition at Despelder.

Despelder

A shed that could be used for additional storage has long been needed. Resident Assistants Tom & Jamie Langeler collected donations from both work and family friends towards the purchase of one. We were able to find just the right one at Mast Mini-Barns.



Gracious Grounds at Lakeshore Flats steadily taking shape!

Lakeshore Flats

We are still on track to begin moving residents into Gracious Grounds at Lakeshore Flats beginning August 3rd! We have appreciated everyone's patience and understanding as we made adjustments to the timeline due to the ongoing health crisis.



Mitchel, David and RA Kathy working together to get it done with a smile.

Ohio

Each year residents gather to do a little yard work around Gracious Grounds on Ohio street. The tradition continued this year that also included social distancing and staying safe. Everyone worked hard to give our Ohio building some TLC for the spring and summer months ahead.

Donations, Friends, Outings, and Celebrations!

Celebrating another trip around the sun means cake, laughter and fun for everyone!



Despelder Residents decided to show Joanne (one of our dedicated Volunteers) just how much they've been missing her. They made a sign, hopped in the van and Diane (Super Staffer) drove them over to her house so she could enjoy a safe distance visit!



Amid "stay at home" Laurie Mason was delayed in getting back to MI and to hanging out with her Despelder gang. We welcomed her back with smiles & lots of stories.



MOKA (day program) is helping David stay connected throughout Coronavirus with ZOOM and sent a package containing everything he needed to grow and plant his own garden.



"Stay at Home" made for making sure everyone was staying active including walks around the neighborhood together and over to Norms Ice Cream for something sweet.



The GHHS Pay It Forward group had originally planned to put together a fundraiser for Gracious Grounds. When they had to cancel it due to COVID they still wanted to do something special for our residents and delivered a box packed with games, goodies, and needed supplies.

Photographers around the country are supporting charities by taking “Front Porch Portraits” documenting families during Coronavirus. Thank You to Kelly Ruffing Photography for capturing most of the Gracious Grounds residents. We Are Family!



Little did we know when we put together the “YES YOU CAN” pop can drive that the response would be enough to pack our garage! It was wonderful to meet so many giving people and help you regain some of your household space.

A while back a Friend of Gracious Grounds donated a Trike Bike for residents. Our Friend donated another shiny new Trike Bike! Having safe wheels to use is one more way for residents to have their independence. Thank You so much Mark Schumacher!



How can I help?

Wish List

Gracious Grounds is always thankful for all the ways our community gives to us. If you're wondering how and what to give in the future our wish list currently includes the following;

- Lysol, disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer, cleaning gloves (small & large sizes)
- Paper towel, toilet paper
- Body wash "puffs", men's & women's body wash
- Outdoor Games, passes for Harbor Transit, Craig's Cruiser's, or to the Zoo
- Canned, boxed or frozen food, condiments

Volunteers

We are always thankful for our anyone who can give of their time and talents to Gracious Grounds. We are currently looking for volunteers to help incoming Gracious Grounds Lakeshore Flats residents become familiar with their new city. Showing new residents where to shop, fun things to do, how to get around and more. If you or someone you know is interested, please call Gracious Grounds (616) 414-9209.



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