Did you know?
Episcopal Homes celebrates its 125th Anniversary in 2019. Sister Annette Reif had a vision in 1894 and, while our services have expanded, our mission remains true to enriching lives and building community with older adults.

Stay tuned for details about this historical milestone!

Open for Healing!
After construction, the new and improved Transitional Care Unit opens.
A newly designed and configured therapy gym is the highlight of Episcopal Church Home’s recent capital improvement project. In the previous space, therapists, patients and equipment were crowded. Now, with more than double the square footage, and updated equipment, every patient has ample opportunity to recover in a top-notch rehabilitation facility.

In addition, both TCU guest and resident dining rooms were renovated, creating a full kitchen for elders residing in our Gilbert House. Now elders come early, joining staff cook Regina Sparkman while she preps for dinner. Regina says, “Our new open kitchen is very homey. The sights and smells trigger memories and we love to talk about good food!”

This renovation was part of a $1.5 million facilities investment in 2018 funded, in part, by the State of Minnesota. The project will keep Episcopal Homes competitive with nearby newer short term care facilities, while we continue to be recognized for our extraordinary care and hospitality.

Terri McNeill, a recent TCU guest, chose Episcopal Homes for her short term stay because she lives in the neighborhood and knew other elders living in Episcopal Homes communities. “I watched this place get built,” she said. During her stay Terri took advantage of additional therapies offered, like Healing Touch, where certified providers offer healing through therapeutic touch. She also bonded with many nursing staff, like LPN Angerline Chubby (see Scholarship feature). Terri said, “She makes me feel like I’m important. She listens to me. She knows that I know my body the best.”

Tour the TCU Today!
Ian Bruess
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Learning over a Lifetime
From 1 to 101, we are always learning.
Enrichment through education is engrained in our mission.

It’s not difficult to get excited about sharing this issue of At Home with you. At Episcopal Homes, we value education in so many forms: for our residents, our young friends at Kinder Village, our staff and even for our organization as a whole.

When I walk around our campus, I’m inspired by all the learning moments that I see, great and small. From lively discussions of structured classes hosted by Creative Ventures, ongoing training that keep staff skills sharp, and Spiritual Life-led book studies, there is no doubt that the learning never stops at Episcopal Homes.

Just as our founder Sister Annette Relf was accountable to the needs of elders in her community, Episcopal Homes continues to uphold her commitment to social accountability. This exercise conducted annually by our Social Accountability and Responsibility Committee documents and measures the many ways we impact our Twin Cities community.

We strive to improve, because no matter how well we are doing, we can always do better.
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Minnesota is an educational initiative for older adults passionate about learning and committed to the proposition that education is an action word for an entire lifetime. “A health club for the mind” is the OLLI motto. Throughout the year, OLLI classes scheduled through Creative Ventures are open to all Episcopal Homes residents on our campus and the broader community. Offerings range from Dante to Miles Davis to the Digital Age, and include single and multiple week offerings. Instructors are retired professors and professionals, experts in their fields and unapologetically passionate about sharing their knowledge with members.

Retired English teacher and former Episcopal Church Home resident, Anita M., raved about last winter’s OLLI Course on Dante. “It was really excellent. I got more out of one class with that instructor than I did from studying it an entire year in college. And the discussions were a lot more interesting than the ones I remember. But,” she winked, “that’s probably because everyone in the class has a lot more life experience to contribute than we did 70 years ago!”

Kinder Village is expanding!

Recent improvements in our KinderVillage space is allowing our intergenerational child care to serve even more children and families. Children thrive when learning in our loving intergenerational environment. Research shows positive benefits for elders in intergenerational settings – including an increased feeling of purpose, but research shows benefits for children also. For example, children who engage with elders may be less likely to exhibit ageism and more likely to feel comfortable around those with different abilities than children who lack those intergenerational relationships.

"I fell in love with the idea of an intergenerational care facility and I have not been disappointed. The interactions and activities with grandfriends is so fun to watch and I live for the daily pictures we get! The staff are amazing and truly care about not just my son but our whole family..."

Angela Vasquez, Parent of Kinder Villager

For enrollment information, contact Kate Beck, Director: 651-272-4974 or kbeck@episcopalhomes.org

www.kindervillage.org

Learning Over a Lifetime

There is something about Fall. The air starts to smell crisp with the occasional hint of a chill, trees begin to tinge in hues of red and gold, and the occasional fallen leaf crunches under our footfalls along sidewalks. But nothing evokes that delightful sense of anticipation like reminders that Back-To-School season is upon us. With the arrival of supplies in stores and pictures of children wearing backpacks in advertisements, we are reminded of the simple joy of freshly sharpened pencils, brightly colored folders, and a brand new box of crayons...maybe one with a built in sharpener!

And even though we’re no longer waiting for locker assignments and class schedules, Episcopal Homes continues to celebrate learning as a lifelong endeavor. Our campus is full of perpetually curious and enthusiastic learners, who invest in keeping their minds, and their lives, thriving.

With new studies showing the impact and benefits of continued learning on brain health in aging adults, we celebrate the importance of learning and all the opportunities available to our actively aging residents at Episcopal Homes.

In the Harvard Medical School Health Blog, Dr. Ipsit Vahia, of Harvard faculty, directly addresses the importance of keeping intellectually active. “When you exercise, you engage your muscles to help improve overall health. The same concept applies to the brain. You need to exercise it with new challenges to keep it healthy,”

The focus is not to earn a degree, or even take multiple classes, but to focus on a class to keep mental activity thriving.

Enriching the lives of older adults is at the heart of Episcopal Homes. So go ahead and consider this your personal invitation to challenge yourself, and thrive away! There are always new opportunities – intellectually, academically, artistically, physically, spiritually, and socially – all across our campus, and the benefits are far reaching. Be sure to savor that nostalgic flutter of excitement that heading into the first day of a class brings!
New Scholarship program invests in employees' future
Your gifts of gratitude build our strong workforce and improve care

Three to five times each night, Sheryl Stone, Chief Bartender in Episcopal Homes’ Watts Pub, has to tell a community resident or family member about our “no tipping” policy. A common dance ensues as our Pub guest asks how they can express gratitude for the caring service of the cook who prepared a meal to their special needs or the kindness of waitstaff, who know each person’s preferred drinks, meals or need for a cane or walker.

All over campus, families ask how they can give back to staff members with whom they’ve formed relationships while caring for their parent. These staff members often exceed all expectations out of genuine loving service.

Made possible through the combined efforts of a foundation grant, a large family donation, a state scholarship program and contributions of all sizes from our staff and families, we are excited to announce an employee scholarship program at Episcopal Homes. This program connects gratitude for employees in all areas of the organization with employees’ education and our industry’s growing workforce needs across the Twin Cities metro and our state.

Troubling state of our workforce

With more than 10,000 Baby Boomers turning 65 years old each day, the number of older adults needing services, especially long-term direct nursing care is expected to double by 2050. With the growing need and shortage of health professionals, our nursing homes in Minnesota already must turn away residents in need due to staffing shortages. At Episcopal Homes, we work very hard to offer competitive wages and benefits that support hard-working employees and their families who come day in and day out to give care and service to others in need, impacting lives in unparalleled ways. Scholarships are a key to open the door to further education and, while that means we may lose some of our good people to higher paying opportunities down the road, it’s the goodwill of investing in their families as they have invested in our own that keeps other good people coming to our workplace each day.

3 Ways Episcopal Homes helps employees pay for school.

Sister Annette Scholarship
Open to employees of our skilled nursing facilities, Episcopal Church Home and the Gardens, who are pursuing health professional degrees in long term care, we can award scholarships of $10,000/year for 3 years. These scholarships fit the State’s tuition reimbursement guidelines, so in 2 years when the funding is reimbursed, it will be used to award more scholarships to Episcopal Homes employees.

Professional Scholarships
Open to all employees and all fields of study, Episcopal Homes will award approximately 5 new awards annually of up to $2,500. Not eligible for state reimbursement, these scholarships need annual financial support from donors to continue and grow.

Tuition Reimbursement
Different than the tuition scholarship program, Episcopal Homes offers tuition reimbursement to employees who qualify for a MN state reimbursement program. This requires that employees pay their education expenses first and submit their receipts upon completion of each semester.

Solutions through scholarship
We’re not alone in recognizing the critical challenge that is growing in the senior care workforce. The State of Minnesota provides funding to reimburse some education expenses for health profession degrees for employees working in skilled nursing care. With new seed funding, we can invest in employees while building a rotating scholarship fund. This year, GIVING WoMN, a local women’s philanthropy club, invested $20,000 of seed funding in our Employee Scholarship program.

With this seed funding, a few major donors from our community were also inspired to designate their gifts of gratitude to the Scholarship Fund, building more of our seed base to launch a robust program. In August, our employee fund drive spotlighted giving to employee scholarships. It shared the story of a former employee planning a larger gift though her IRA to support scholarships, rather than waiting to give through a bequest.

Currently the scholarship fund can commit about $80,000 to support 5-7 employees annually. We know that our employees’ needs and desires for education are much greater. To continue to grow the scholarship fund, we need to raise at least $25,000 a year from our residents, families and community members, like GIVING WoMN.

Our Employee Scholarship Program offers a new, special way for you to show your gratitude for unparalleled service offered by outstanding staff members. You can remove barriers to their pursuit of education by funding scholarships that pay for education expenses up front, including tuition, books, and even transportation and child care.

By supporting the success of our staff members we are improving employee satisfaction, retention and service quality. You, our community of residents, families and staff who benefit from these improvements, can express gratitude for the care, service and kindness of employees by helping grow our scholarship program.

2018 Employee Scholarship Awardees

Sister Annette Scholarship

Angerline Chubby, LPN, Transitional Care Center
Chika Ezike, LPN, Transitional Care Center

Chidi Ibekawa, LPN, Transitional Care Center

Professional Scholarship

Alessandra Arlington, Dietary Aide
Food Services
Sarah Koopman, Team Lead CNA & Receptionist
Iris Park Commons
Summer Nelson, Bartender & Dietary Aide
Terrace/Watts Pub
Bethlehem Tegegne, Bistro & Shabaz
The Gardens

Scholarship Spotlight: Angerline’s story

Earlier this year, Angerline Chubby, an LPN in Episcopal Homes’ Transitional Care Unit, didn’t know how she was going to reach her dreams. After years of balancing work, her family of six and nursing school in North Dakota to earn her RN, she was dropped from her nursing program with just one semester left after missing a clinical shift because of a flat tire. With loans coming due and her RN seemingly out of reach, Angerline felt hopeless and defeated.

Angerline shared her challenge with her supervisor, Inez Kalle, who recommended that she apply for the newly launched Sister Annette Scholarship. As our first Sister Annette Scholarship recipient, Angerline continues to provide personal, loving care in the TCU while going to school much closer to home. With graduation and her RN degree within sight, she is incredibly grateful to everyone who helped and continues to help make scholarship possible. And when the time is right, she is committed to pay forward what she can in order to help others.