Celebrating Our past Looking To Our future

From left, resident actors, Sears Eldridge, Mary Payne and Cherie Boen on stage during Episcopal Homes’ 125th Anniversary Homecoming Fundraising Celebration.

Photo Credit: St. Paul Camera Club
Dear Friends,

Our 125th anniversary year provided a great opportunity to honor the people and experiences that shaped Episcopal Homes since 1894 and to reflect on our next 125 years.

Beginning with Women’s History Month in March, we celebrated Episcopal Homes’ long line of strong, women leaders, starting with our founder Sister Annette Relf. Throughout summer, we searched attics and crawl spaces for artifacts and archived our historic documents for future generations.

Fall culminated with celebrations big and small showcasing stories from our history told through a hymn, play and newspaper. Local artists worked with our community residents to produce these works, exemplifying the value and impacts of our mind, body, spirit wellbeing programs. In September, we were deeply honored as 300 friends gathered at the Minnesota History Center for our anniversary celebration. Participants donated $300,000 to ensure we can offer wellbeing programming to all residents, including the 56% who are low income.

As we launch into the next 125 years, we are aware of the changing world around us. An aging population, elders’ desire to age at home among their neighbors as long as possible, rising healthcare costs and changing reimbursements provide cause to reflect on the needs of our times. This year, we strengthened financial controls and introduced the Baldrige quality program for organizational performance. In 2020, Episcopal Homes will launch NeighborCare, an innovative service to help older adults live longer, safer and more affordably in their homes. We are grateful to have won the state’s largest Live Well at Home grant to test this new model of home care.

The support and engagement of our friends has always and will continue to be fundamental to fulfilling our mission and we are deeply grateful.

Sincerely,

Marvin Plakut, CEO
Episcopal Homes recently received a grant from the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services to help launch NeighborCare, an innovative home care model designed to help older adults remain independent longer. The program, under development since 2018, is an extension of Episcopal Homes’ 125-year mission of enriching life and building community with older adults in St. Paul.

Unlike the one size fits all model common today requiring three or four-hour blocks of care as a minimum, NeighborCare offers a broader range of support options. In addition to the standard hourly block of care, NeighborCare will help clients with daily tasks that take an average of 20 minutes per visit, possibly multiple times each day. Through broader support options, NeighborCare is designed to reduce costs and make in-home support more affordable and accessible.

Support within a defined neighborhood hub allows care teams to remain within close proximity 24 hours a day, if needed, through a push of a button should an unplanned difficulty arise. Living longer amidst long-standing social support networks help older adults remain safe and independent in their homes.

“This service is critical as area residents have clearly said they desire to age in their neighborhoods among social support networks,” says Karen Vento, NeighborCare program manager. “This model helps them do that while saving funds and delaying possible assisted living or nursing home placement. We are very excited to begin serving seniors in this new innovative way.”

Episcopal Homes is one of 45 organizations across Minnesota to receive a grant from the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services, which recognizes innovation is needed to help support older adults in living well at home. To find out if NeighborCare is offered in your neighborhood or to learn more, please call 651-444-4000.

www.episcopalhomes.org/neighborcare
In 1900, the average family had an annual income of $3,000 (in today’s dollars) with half of all American children living in poverty. Decades before social security would offer some safety, the declining years of aging were so crushing that writers referred to growing old as “the haunting fear in the winter of life.” No social safety net existed and unless you were able to save money on your own, you just hoped you were physically able to work until you died.

Sister Annette Relf lived amidst these times in the Twin Cities while rapid urban growth brought greater disparity between rich and poor. She was desperate to help elders left behind without shelter. This dire situation moved Sister Annette to action, and in 1894, she founded the Church Home for Elderly Women. Episcopal Homes’ rich history tells the account of Sister Annette’s struggles to find space and funding for the housing and care of displaced older adults. Driven by a passion to treat everyone with respect and dignity, she affirmed that every person, regardless of their position in life, deserved a home, security, comfort, independence and joy.

Before the doors ever opened to the Church Home, Sister Annette sought a place where the Home would be close to shopping and churches, noting the desire to “see a little of the outside world passing our windows.” When the doors opened in 1894, two residents or “inmates” as they were called, found a warm refuge for their “winter of life.” Over the years, the community and churches rallied around the Home to offer residents nourishment—physical, spiritual and social. Supporters delivered fresh homegrown fruits and vegetables, raised funds and donated books to create a library and music to bring joy to everyday life. Volunteers helped ensure birthdays and holidays were celebrated.

While much has changed in the last 125 years, the spirit of the Church Home still honors Sister Annette’s early vision. From two residents in 1894 to 1,400, Episcopal Homes today offers a bustling environment where residents live among friends and with independence, dignity and respect.

Just as Sister Annette went door to door asking for support, Episcopal Homes’ reliance on philanthropy remains critical. Longstanding relationships with churches, residents, families and community were evident at the 125th Anniversary Fundraising Celebration on September 20th, when nearly 300 friends came together to celebrate 125 years of enriching lives and building community with older adults.

Residents, family and friends joined together to support wellbeing for older adults at our recent 125th Anniversary Homecoming Fundraiser Celebration.

In 1937, a donation party and unveiling of the Eliza May portrait was held. Plans for May Hall were also announced. From the 1937 Minneapolis Star.
Residents took to the stage to perform a play written based on stories from Episcopal Homes’ history showcasing the fundamental importance of mind, body, spirit wellbeing programming to help residents live fully in the winter of life. Donations of $300,000 were raised for these programs which depend on philanthropy.

Past and present; Recognizing those who have made an impact

Numerous stories surfaced this year of individuals who dedicated decades of their lives to operations of the Home. Many passed down their passion to future generations. Episcopal Homes has been working to recognize the friends and leaders of our community by providing a plan for preserving their stories into the future. Plaques for each of the named spaces on campus are in production with installation planned for January to commemorate the advocates and leaders in Episcopal Homes history.

Eliza May portrait comes home

Eliza May served on the board from the beginning of the Home, eventually becoming the first female board chair in 1930. Eliza committed 38 years of her life to the Home. Her daughter Grace May, a professor at Macalester College, worked as a volunteer at the Home in the 1930s. In 1939, Grace unveiled a portrait of her mother, Eliza May, that adorned the walls for many years. The portrait eventually found its way back to the May family.

This year, staff reconnected with the May family including great-granddaughter Melissa Nichols and grandson, George May. After a lunch gathering Melissa noted, “I am so impressed with the facility and the legacy of my great grandmother.” She then offered to return the portrait to Episcopal Homes. Seventy years later, a second unveiling will take place as part of honoring our leaders and recognizing their place in the history of Episcopal Homes.
The Dream of Annette

As part of our 125th celebration year, Episcopal Homes’ Spiritual Life team commissioned a hymn honoring Sister Annette’s mission. The Dream of Annette lyrics were written by Episcopal Homes resident and Sage Singers member Doris Shennum with music written by J. David Moore. The Hymn debuted during the Feast of All Saints and Remembrance of All Souls service in Coventry Chapel on November 3.

We sing of our past:
A woman whose faith and good works
Founded a home for the elderly poor
A legacy of compassionate care,
to those with vision
Blessed by the wisdom of elders.

We sing of the Spirit, the dream of Annette
Her fearless devotion calls to us yet.

We sing of the present:
A welcoming place for all people,
Regardless of creed or homeland or race,
Building a community of love and respect
Blessed by the wisdom of elders.

We sing of the future:
Lifted by leadership
Helping people
from far and from near
Find joy, education, wellness,
and cheer, in a home of loving care
Blessed by the wisdom of elders.

www.episcopalhomes.org/spiritual-life

From the 1915 Star Tribune.
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Marion McCarthy

CAROLE MULCAHY
Jo Lortsfeldt

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TOMI BERNABEI
Paul & Paula Bernabei

VIRGINIA PARRISH
Dusty Mairs

Thank you to all of you who remembered family, friends and loved ones through a recent memorial or tribute gift. The listing below reflects gifts given from April 1 to October 31, 2019.
In 2017, Episcopal Homes adopted the Baldrige Framework to start an organization-wide quality improvement program. The framework advances performance excellence within organizations, individuals and communities. In 2019, Episcopal Homes completed its first Baldrige assessment through the Minnesota Chapter of the Performance Excellence Network (PEN). From the assessment, leaders are better able to identify strengths and areas for improvement that are used to organize resources, knowledge and best practices to ensure continuous improvement.

Baldrige evaluation criteria focuses on key competencies of leadership, strategy, customer, measurement and knowledge management, workforce and operations. By improving these areas, organizations systematically improve their results. By being a part of PEN, Episcopal Homes is involved in sharing best practices and methods to its key competencies.

“We know it is hard work to achieve and sustain excellence. And the farther down this road we go, the more we understand what the hard work of the Baldrige method is. It’s such an inspiring journey,” says Marvin Plakut, President and CEO, Episcopal Homes. “We are marching forward.”

We invite your suggestions for improvement
www.episcopalhomes.org/contact-us