



Dear Residents, Family Members and Friends,

This newsletter is being sent to all responsible parties listed as the primary contact for the residents of the Baldwin Care Center. Birch Haven Assisted Living is also sending this newsletter to responsible parties. The Apartment Manager distributes copies to the Birchwood Apartment tenants. Responsible parties can direct other family members to the Baldwin Care Center website at www.baldwincarecenter.com to read current and previous newsletters. If there is a topic you would like discussed in the newsletter, please contact me via email at elafavor@baldwincarecenter.com or by phone at 715-684-3231, Ext. 103.



From October 6th – 8th I had the opportunity to attend a conference in Green Bay with other long term care administrators and staff from facilities around the state. It was the first time in almost two years that we have had an opportunity to meet in person. It was wonderful to see everyone. I attended many educational sessions and learned a lot. I tried to focus on the sessions that involved workforce issues. In addition to what I learned in the educational sessions, I learned a great deal networking with colleagues. I found out that everyone is in the same boat regarding staffing challenges. The conference attendance was down because it is difficult for staff to get away. I spoke with Directors of Nursing who were working as a Nursing Assistant on the night shift and Administrators who are preparing and serving meals. There were varying degrees of staffing shortages around the state including both rural and larger metropolitan areas. A statistic I read recently indicated that only 1% of skilled nursing facilities in the nation say that they are fully staffed. It was clear when I checked into the hotel that the hospitality industry is short staffed as well. They let all guests know that there were no room services available during their stay. There would be no room cleaning services or meal delivery to rooms. When we attended the banquet at the hotel conference center, I noticed that the security guard was delivering meals to guests. I'm sure some of you have noticed staffing shortages in various local food service and other businesses. The difference is that many of those businesses can limit hours that the business is open if they are short staffed. Nursing facilities and assisted living facilities cannot close early. We need to care for people 24 hours a day.



The staffing shortage topic leads into the next thing that I want to talk to you about. As I have indicated before in the newsletter, jobs all across the campus remain unfilled. Staff in all settings are working additional shifts to provide the necessary coverage to care for people. We have certainly tried to fill open positions. Sometimes when we have placed an employment ad we have not received any applicants for the position. I am not sure what has happened to the work force or if we will see a change in the near future. As a result of the staffing challenges, we have had to limit the number of admissions that we can take, particularly in the Baldwin Care Center. We feel strongly that we need adequate staff to properly care for people. We don't want to accept admissions that we cannot care for. All skilled nursing facilities in the area are in a similar situation. All of us are receiving numerous referrals from hospitals stretching from Eau Claire to the Twin Cities. We have also received referrals from hospitals outside of the state looking for a bed. Hospital discharge planners are very frustrated right now at the inability of long term care facilities to accept admissions. Hospitals continue to be at or above capacity.

There are many COVID patients who are hospitalized. As a result of the staffing shortages, the Baldwin Care Center needed to develop a plan to "right size" the facility. We had begun to admit new residents to the Whispering Pines Neighborhood and fill that side up. We were not admitting residents to the Woodland Heights Neighborhood. We did contact guardians and family members requesting to move a handful of residents to the Whispering Pines Neighborhood. These residents require a higher level of care. We then changed the staffing of direct care staff so that more staff are assigned to the Whispering Pines side of the building. There will still be residents on the Woodland Heights side of the building, but they do not require as much assistance. As a result of the decreased census on the Woodland Heights side of the building we are also adjusting Dietary and Housekeeping staffing to provide more services to the Whispering Pines Neighborhood. Both sides of the building are adequately staffed based on the needs and numbers of residents in each of those areas. If you have questions about these changes, please feel free to contact me. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

We need to report that we did have a positive COVID-19 tenant case in the Birchwood Apartments. The resident was vaccinated and was apparently exposed outside of the facility. The Baldwin Care Center had a Dietary employee test positive, but there was no exposure to residents. Both Birchwood Apartments and Baldwin Care Center are completing the required follow up testing to make certain there are no more positive cases. As I believe I have indicated in a recent newsletter, the guidance from the CDC and State of Wisconsin has changed regarding quarantine. Vaccinated individuals no longer have to quarantine after they have been exposed to someone who has had COVID-19. That makes the continuation of visitation much easier in all of our settings.



Thank you to Joan Winter and family for the ice cream treats for the Baldwin Care Center staff. We wish Joan the best in her new home in the Birchwood Apartments. Jean Burke was also recently discharged home. Jean and her family treated the Baldwin Care Center staff to donuts. We wish you both the best! Thank you to the confirmation students at Gethsemane Church for making Halloween treat bags for the Birchwood Apartment tenants.

*Eileen LaFavor,
Administrator*

Autumn



Drive

