



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 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](http://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](mailto:elafavor@baldwincarecenter.com) or by phone at 715-684-3231, Ext. 103.



Each year the Baldwin Care Center holds a pumpkin decorating contest. The staff submits entries. The residents, staff and family members vote for their favorite pumpkin. The winners are announced at the Halloween party for the residents. This year we have the most amazing entries! There are some incredibly creative staff working at the Baldwin Care Center. The entries included Cinderella’s carriage, a unicorn, a baby, a Day of the Dead bride and groom, a mother pig and her piglets, the Olaf character from Frozen, Charlotte’s Web characters, kittens, Cousin It from the Addams Family, an owl, a mug of A & W root beer, Cookie Monster from Sesame Street, a dental student, a margarita, an alien, and a peacock. It was incredibly coincidental that two staff decided use the Day of the Dead theme. Neither one of them had any idea what the other was creating. One staff member created the bride and the other staff member brought the groom. It was a perfect match! The residents, staff and visitors had a great time looking at the pumpkin entries. *(Photos included in this edition)*. The Therapeutic Recreation Director contacted the Baldwin Bulletin. Hopefully we will see photos in an upcoming edition. In addition to the pumpkin decorating contest, the staff dressed up in some really cute costumes for the Halloween Party. *(Photos included in this edition)*.

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During the most recent two week period we have not had any new cases of COVID-19 anywhere on the campus for either residents or staff. The community transmissibility rate for St. Croix County remains high. This means that we need to continue to test unvaccinated staff twice weekly.

I still do not have any news regarding the federal mandate for COVID-19 vaccines. The target dates for release of the published rule have changed several times. At this point, the indication is that the rule will be released in late October or early November. I will let you know as soon as I know anything.

I would like to make you aware of a couple of changes regarding staff who work on the campus. Kevin Brathol who was the Maintenance Technician/Transport Driver, has taken on the role of Director of Environmental Services Director. We have found a replacement for the Maintenance Technician/Driver position. Kyle Wickboldt will start working on Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. Dori Thompson, Administrative Assistant who works in the office of the Baldwin Care Center has announced her retirement. She will be retiring by the end of the year. We are currently interviewing internal candidates for her position. Dori has worked in the Baldwin Care Center office as the Administrative Assistant for the past five years. We wish her the best in her retirement.

Recently, I have had the opportunity to discuss the staffing crisis with other area nursing home administrators. I can share with you that all of the facilities in the area are facing significant staffing challenges. None of us can recall a time when staffing was so difficult. Many of the administrators in this area have been in the long term care field for 20-30 years. As a result of the staffing challenges, Baldwin Care Center has been very selective about the admissions that we are able to accept. At this time Birch Haven Assisted Living and Birchwood Apartments are accepting admissions.

The staffing crisis has created a financial challenge for businesses as well. I am sure that many of you have seen signs at fast food establishments indicating starting wages of \$15.00+. Because of the short workforce supply, businesses are having to offer a higher wage to attract staff. Many businesses such as restaurants or manufacturing companies are able to increase the price of their product or service to pay the employees a higher wage. Long term care facilities are unable to generate revenue for additional wages in the same fashion. We do have some ability to increase private pay rates, but the challenge is that majority of residents in both the Baldwin Care Center and Birch Haven Assisted Living use Medical Assistance (Medicaid) as a payer source. The Medicaid reimbursement rates that we receive for residents are incredibly inadequate and have been for a number of years. There is a glimmer of hope regarding a rate increase for Medicaid residents in the Baldwin Care Center. The state legislature and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services approved the largest increase in years. Next month we should begin receiving a pretty significant rate increase for the residents in the Baldwin Care Center. I plan to use the dollars from the rate increase and pass them along to all staff for wage and benefit increases. Staff across the campus are currently completing a survey indicating what is most important to them regarding wages and benefits. There are no easy answers to this workforce crisis. Baldwin Care Center Campus is making every effort to retain the amazing group of employees that we have and trying to recruit other qualified staff for the open positions.



Thank you to the family of Charlene Bretl for the donations in her memory.

**Happy Halloween!**

*Eileen LaFavor, Administrator*

