



Health and Wellness

Keenan's Keen Eyes



Have you ever taken a walk with your eyes closed? It can be disorienting and even a little scary. That is the feeling Stephen Thal experiences every day – and is why, as a blind person with severe hearing loss, he relies on the services of a guide dog.

Stephen recently moved into the Notch Hill Apartments with his wife, Eleanor, and his guide dog, Keenan. Guide dogs have been used in the United States since 1938, and are specially bred, raised and trained to navigate curbs, revolving doors, traffic signals and other obstructions.

Stephen and Keenan, a beautiful yellow lab from Freedom Guide Dog School, Cassville, N.Y., are working as a team to become

familiar with Ashlar Village and Notch Hill. Keenan will bring Stephen to and from his apartment, through the many hallways and walkways ("So far, he has been spot on," Stephen said). While it may seem like a lot of work to leave the familiar surroundings Keenan is accustomed to, the Thals felt the move was worth it. "We can enjoy a more independent lifestyle here while being better prepared for our future," Stephen said. "Plus, the services are terrific and we appreciate the great diversity of residents and staff."



The Thals have been helping staff and residents better understand service dogs – especially reminding them to resist the temptation to pet or feed Keenan. Also, with his vision and hearing loss, it helps Stephen when you identify yourself each time you meet him. "We feel welcome here," Stephen said. "And we are glad our new neighbors have been so accepting of Keenan." ■

You're Invited to an Open House

Come see for yourself what life at Ashlar Village offers. Our Open House gives you ample time to tour a variety of housing options — including apartments, cottages and villas — as well as the shopping, dining and activity areas in The Hartog Activities Center. You'll also hear from our residents why they chose Ashlar Village. Meeting and socializing with current residents provides valuable insight into the Ashlar Village lifestyle. So mark your calendar for one of our next Open Houses:

Thursday, March 24

Thursday, April 7 or Wednesday, April 27

Thursday, May 12 or Wednesday, May 25

11:00 a.m. Presentation and Q&A

Noon Lunch with residents

1:00~2:30 p.m. Tour of residential options

For further information on attending an Open House, please contact the Ashlar Village Marketing Department at 800-382-2244.

Our Mission

The mission of Masonicare is to enhance quality of life through an exceptional continuum of person-centered care.



Masonicare at Ashlar Village
Cheshire Road, PO Box 70
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www.ashlarvillage.org



Villager

Masonicare
at Ashlar Village
Wallingford, Connecticut

Free (and Happy) as a Bird

Upon retirement, some people become "snow birds," heading south for the winter. For Linda and Gerry Griffin, retirement has turned them into "free birds," adventurous souls who want to spend their time traveling, exploring and enjoying quality visits with family and friends. Moving to the Notch Hill Apartments at Ashlar Village has really made that lifestyle possible.

While Linda and Gerry loved their home, they both grew tired of caring for it. Instead, they wanted to hit the road in their campervan, get out on the water in their sailboat, or spend the day on a great bike trail. After a 40-year career in commercial construction, Gerry was done thinking about buildings and maintenance and deadlines; and, after a career in the education field, Linda was ready for a change of pace and a chance to spread her wings.

"We always thought we would downsize to a condo before moving to a retirement community," Gerry said. "But a condo still needs work, and condo living does not include any of the fun, social parts."

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Linda and Gerry enjoy biking throughout the scenic Ashlar Village campus.

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Free (and Happy)... continued

Linda also said she was hoping to avoid the situation her mother experienced when she became ill late in her seventies. "Mom did not have a plan and suddenly, making decisions about housing and healthcare became very difficult for her," she said. "We wanted to be better prepared for our needs today and in the future. That's a big reason we chose to live here at Ashlar Village."

Right now, Gerry and Linda are healthy and pretty much moving at full speed doing the things they really enjoy. They take that campervan all around the country, bringing their bikes so they can explore state and national parks. And they make use of that sailboat with their children and grandchildren, now taking voyages in New England waters. Here at home, they explore walking and biking throughout the Ashlar Village campus, as

well as nearby beaches and "rails to trails" bike paths.

"Living at Ashlar Village gives us the freedom to pick up and go as we like, for a day, a week or a few months," Gerry said. "We don't have to worry about mowing the lawn, shoveling snow, or even getting our mail. We can just make our plans and know our home here is perfectly fine."

As much as they move about, Gerry and Linda treasure the time they do have in their two-bedroom plus den apartment. Gerry has taken over the den for his computers and books and Linda uses the second bedroom as a sewing room, making projects for herself as well as for Ashlar Village's Specialty Shop.

"Gardening and cooking are two things I worried I would miss," Linda said. "Fortunately, our apartment overlooks

beautiful gardens and I have plenty of patio space for my own containers. As far as the cooking goes, the meal plan is so delicious and convenient, I quickly got over it!" (Linda even credits the nutritious meals and stress-free lifestyle for her recent drop in blood pressure.)

The Griffins have made many new friends in the dining room, at special events, in exercise and yoga classes, and in the woodshop (which Gerry says is very well equipped). They also are able to spend time with Gerry's sister who lives nearby on the Masonicare campus.

"I feel guilty for having such a great life," Gerry said. "I was lucky to have a good job and wonderful family, and am lucky to be here with Linda."

Sounds like these free birds are as happy as songbirds. ■



Assisted Living Insights

Carolyn's Chrysalis

Throughout the world, butterflies are much loved. They are known to represent life, change, hope and endurance. In some cultures, butterflies are even associated with our souls or with heaven.

It is easy to understand why Ashlar Village's Pond Ridge resident, Carolyn Young, has adopted the butterfly as her personal trademark. Known to many people as "Madame Butterfly," Carolyn wears a butterfly pin every single day (choosing from her collection of more than 50). Her apartment, too, flutters with a happy collection of butterfly art, sculpture and figurines. Visitors can't help but smile when they enter her home.

Carolyn says her love of these colorful insects started when she was a child growing up (one of 12 siblings) on the 22-acre Garden Acres farm in North Haven, where butterflies would flourish. She spent her married life on another farm, Young's Pleasant View Farms in North Haven, again in the presence of butterflies.

After Carolyn's husband died, she lived alone (with her Doberman Pinscher). About nine years ago, Carolyn's younger sister, Clarisse, started to notice small changes.

"She would forget little things or repeat herself or get anxious," Clarisse said. "We became concerned and felt she needed to consider different living arrangements."

The two sisters have a life-long bond of love and friendship that is evident the moment you meet them. Since they always looked out for each other, Clarisse began researching assisted living communities help her sister. Together, they attended an open house event to promote an expansion of Pond Ridge, which was just being built.

"We knew almost immediately that this was the place for Carolyn," Clarisse said. "Everyone was so friendly and helpful and, of course, it was very exciting to be in a new building and have your pick of apartments."

Clarisse stayed with Carolyn her first three nights at Pond Ridge to be sure the transition was smooth and that she was comfortable there. They went to the dining room for meals and took part in activities. Right away, Clarisse knew her sister was happy.

It's almost as if, like a butterfly, Carolyn has had a sort of "chrysalis" at Pond Ridge transforming into a more relaxed and carefree person in a wonderful new home.

For the past eight years, Carolyn has made many friends at Pond Ridge, stayed active and social, and has enjoyed wonderful health care. Her sister and friends visit often and Carolyn takes trips to Clarisse's house for dinner or to spend the night. Clarisse noticed that Carolyn began preferring shorter visits so she could hurry and return "home."

Carolyn flashed a large smile. "This is my home," she said waving her hand around the butterfly-filled apartment. "But the best thing about being here is that my family and friends know I'm well taken care of." She sits back in her favorite chair, looking like a butterfly spreading its beautiful wings. ■



The Finer Things In Life

30th anniversary/Honoring Ed Kilby

In 1985, Ashlar Village officially opened its doors amidst massive rainfalls and piles of mud to welcome its first residents – "pioneers," they were called. That day was 20 years in the making, starting out as an ambitious dream to "improve lives through a continuum of care."

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Edgar G. Kilby, Masonicare's former CEO, and his predecessor, Dr. Kurt Pelz, were the primary architects of this dream. Ed (now retired) returned to Ashlar Village to celebrate this 30th anniversary milestone and to receive a plaque of appreciation.

"As overwhelmed as we were to open our doors 30 years ago, I am more overwhelmed to see the successes Ashlar Village enjoys today," Ed said. "What started out as a desire to provide healthcare and housing for seniors has become a shining, national example of how to operate an exceptional retirement community."

Ed also mentioned Ashlar Village's financial strength, with assets in excess of \$400 million and an endowment in excess of \$150 million.

"This shows the deep commitment so many people have to the dream that is Ashlar Village," Ed said. "I consider this my legacy and thank you for staying true to our mission." ■



JP Venoit, COO; Stephen McPherson, CEO; Carol Isaacs, President Ashlar Village Residents Association; David Gessert, Chairman Ashlar Village Board; Edgar Kilby, retired CEO of The Masonic Charity Foundation of CT and who was being honored; Carleton Erickson, retired Chair of the Masonicare Board of Trustees; Hilde Sager, Executive Director of Residential Services; Wallingford Mayor William Dickinson



Carolyn (right) and her sister Clarisse enjoying an afternoon together at Pond Ridge.