

The Mayflower Log



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THE ACTIVITIES STAFF: KEEPING MAYFLOWER COMMUNITY ACTIVE

Activity is important for everyone, especially in later years. Mayflower has a four-person Activities Department that serves the Health Center, South Village and Beebe. For independent-living residents, Anne Sunday, a Mayflower resident herself, coordinates the activities program.



Chery Nelson, Tracy Woolfolk

From leading excursions to whispering a comforting word, Mayflower's Activities Department touches the lives of residents of the Health Center, South Village and Beebe on a daily basis. The contact can take place at a staff-organized bingo game or in a quiet one-on-one conversation in a resident's room.

The activities staff says that, among their many duties, spending time with residents is the best part of their job.

"That's what we live for," says Chery Nelson, who heads the department. "I love the chance to make a difference in people's lives."

Chery, a licensed activities director, has been at Mayflower for 10 years. She came to Grinnell from northwest Iowa, where she worked for several years in a setting similar to Mayflower. Tracy Woolfolk, the other full-time staff member, has worked with Health Center residents for 18 years.

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Welcome New Residents



POUSH, Ed (* Sharon)



POUSH, Sharon (* Ed)



PFITSCH, Emily



Pauline McKenna, who works part-time with Beebe residents, started at Mayflower in 1984. Except for short periods away from the job, she has been at Mayflower ever since.

"Every time I retired, they talked me into coming back," she says.

Nancy Jones helps with activities in South Village. She worked at one time as an LPN in Beebe and has been in the memory unit for four years. She works three days a week from 4 to 8 p.m. – the time when South Village residents can become anxious and restless. She describes her role as assisting the nursing staff in whatever ways she can.

She spends most of her time one-on-one with residents doing puzzles, coloring, reading and singing. Part of one room in the common area is decorated with the artwork of several residents.

Activities at the Health Center range from group games (bingo is a favorite) to music programs to exercise to crafts. One of the most popular activities in both the Health Center and South Village is an all-purpose entertainment system called IN2L (It's Never Too Late) that offers computer games, sing-a-long music, classic movies, travelogues and even karaoke.

For Health Centre and Beebe residents, the staff offers a steady arm or a wheelchair ride to a wide variety of programs in the Carman Center.

Mayflower Chaplain Christine Tinker offers a weekly chapel service. Chaplain Len Eberhart conducts a monthly communion service and leads Advent and Lenten studies in Beebe. For women residents, there are times set aside for manicures, including nail painting.

Every Wednesday morning, Tracy and Chery invite Health Center residents to help prepare and bake a treat in the small kitchen in the Activities Room. Some residents like to join in, others are not interested. "They tell me, 'No thank you, I did my share of cooking raising my family,'" Tracy says.

Themed-parties and decorations pop up at every holiday – and at other times, too. Organizing the special activities takes time, the staff says, but is worth it.

"Everyone loves the parties," Chery says.

Those who are able and interested can venture out on trips to places such as Pella and the Old Creamery Theater in the Amana Colonies. Closer to home, residents can attend Music in the Park in the summer and tour residential Grinnell in December to see the holiday lights.

Individuals and groups frequently visit the Health Center and Beebe to offer music, special activities and companionship. Christmas carolers need to be scheduled because so many want to come.

In South Village, a family visits one evening every week, bringing sweets and snacks, to play games with residents of the memory-care unit. (Kings in the Corner is a favorite game.)

The family has come faithfully for seven or eight years, Nancy said, explaining that their volunteerism is done as a tribute to a loved one who once lived at Mayflower.

In recent years the Activities Department and Grinnell College have teamed up for an Adopt-a-Grandparent program, a partnership that benefits both young and old. In some cases, the

students offer a chance for a resident to have an unhurried conversation. At other times, students help residents with such tasks as writing letters to family and friends.

"The students bring a new dimension to what we do," Chery says.

The activities staff tries hard to meet the individual needs of each resident as well as provide socialization opportunities for all. They take care to respect the wishes of residents who prefer not to take part in group activities. "We encourage but we don't push," Chery says.

For those in the Health Center for short-term skilled care, the staff recognizes that they are focused on recovery and rehab, and may not have the time or desire for group participation.

Spend an hour talking to the activities staff, as I did recently, and you come away feeling the tender bonds between staff and residents. "Hopefully we are enriching their lives, just as they are enriching ours," Chery says.

Independent-Living Activities



Anne Sunday

Anne Sunday describes herself as the coordinator, not the director, of activities

for independent-living residents at Mayflower.

"It's a team effort," she says. "I work closely with (Mayflower) groups and departments. I'm more behind-the-scenes, helping to make things happen."

Those "things" include planning social events, scheduling drivers for the Lester bus for transportation to community events and field trips, developing new programs, and making sure longtime programs run smoothly

Her frequent emails to residents to independent-living residents (sometimes more than once a day) keep everyone informed.

In order to keep in touch with residents' needs and desires for activities, Anne makes a point to have her noon meal in the Buckley Dining Room

"It is kind of like my office," she says. "People feed stuff to me there all the time."

For example, the idea for a Documentary and Discussion Series grew out of a conversation with resident Harley Henry at lunch in the dining room. Harley had the inspiration and Anne was willing to get it going. It has been very successful.

Anne has lived at Mayflower for six years and served in the activities job for the last five of those years. In her full-time working life she was a teacher, then a UCC pastor. Her last church was in Clarksville, Iowa.

She was familiar with Mayflower because her parents, Jim and Mary Sunday, lived here before their deaths several years ago. She attributes her easy adjustment to Mayflower and the activities job to her regular visits to her parents. "I knew a lot of people. I knew how the system works."

The chance to interact with a large number of residents is one of the many pleasures of her job, Anne says. "I enjoy helping people find the things they want to do."

Mary Schuchmann

Welcome Sharon and Ed Poush—M 5

Ed and Sharon Poush moved into Montgomery 5 in mid-February. Ed is well known here, having been the Associate Director and Administrator in charge of Beebe and the Health Center. He has been serving Mayflower for the past 30 years. Last year, Ed was diagnosed with Frontal Temporal Lobe Dementia. Ed and Sharon allowed me to share this information here. Ed is still in the early stages with this illness and not exhibiting many symptoms. But this situation dictated that they speed up their plans: retirement for Ed and moving into Mayflower now, rather than later. Ed will retire in June.

This couple met while attending Grace College in Indiana. There, Sharon earned her degree in nursing, and Ed took his degree in psychology. After working as a social worker in Minnesota, Ed took advanced training in nursing-home administration. In 1988 a professor who knew Ed's work, recommended him to Ted Mokricky, then the Director of Mayflower. Ted was looking for someone to fill the new position of Associate Director here, and he hired Ed.

Ed and Sharon have four children. The two oldest, Matthew and Michael, are their biological children, and Jenny and Seth were adopted. All the children and their families live fairly close to their parents. Matthew lives in Des Moines, and Michael, Jenny and Seth live in Grinnell. Once a month, the entire family including eight grandchildren comes together for a meal, conversation, and play. Sharon was concerned about having these gatherings in Montgomery because the kids play at full volume. I assured her that Montgomery Lounge exists to accommodate all kinds of meetings, including those of residents' family

members with young children who play just the way all children do—shouting and giggling.

To give you an idea of how much Ed and Sharon like children, they became foster parents to more than 70 children over the years. Caring for these kids takes a lot of heart, empathy and patience. Ed and Sharon have all those skills and then some.

In addition to her own family and her foster care- kids, Sharon has worked as a nurse for several institutions, including Mayflower. Currently, she drives a van for the Grinnell-Newburg School District. She's responsible for getting all the special needs children in the District to and from school.

After June 1, Ed and Sharon will make an all-family trip to the Mackinac Island on Lake Huron where they will celebrate Ed's 70th birthday in the famous Grand Hotel. In July, the couple will go on an Alaskan cruise.

Sharon said that she brought too much "stuff" to Mayflower, and I told her most of us downsized again once we get here. Among Sharon's "stuff" is an amazing collection of nativity scene figures. Some are wooden, some are ceramic, some are foreign, and some are old. She's unable to display them all but always keeps one set in her glass-front cabinet. Perhaps she'll share some of these for the Pearson Treasure Chest next December.

I think what stands out about this couple is their strong devotion to family and to people in general. They are warm, personable, humorous and strong. They're a good fit for Mayflower.

Alice Breemer

Welcome Emily Pfitsh—B 201

Emily Pfitsh is happily dwelling in an apartment on the second floor of Buckley.

Until recently, she lived happily in a house on 9th Avenue in Grinnell. Emily taught Spanish for 25 years at Grinnell High School. As the Spanish teacher, she took students to Spain every third year for an immersion experience. She has visited and loved many areas of Spain, but feels a special fondness for Madrid: "The people there are open and friendly."

She also functioned as the spouse and support of John Pfitsh, a legendary figure in Grinnell College sports, who retired reluctantly after coaching for 50 years and being athletic director for 35. John died in 2012.

Emily came to Grinnell in 1948, when, at age 23, with a 4-month-old child, she accompanied John to Grinnell. While he became a member of a 6-person Physical Education Department, she took courses at the College to become certified to teach Spanish.

Over the years, she and John travelled to Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Ecuador, and Panama. Often during these travels he coached while she worked on improving her Spanish skills.

Emily considers herself to have been "fabulously fortunate" to have lived in Grinnell and to have been associated with Grinnell College. Beginning in the 1980's, she and John invited soccer alumni, friends and coaches to return yearly for games against the varsity, a tradition that now continues in other Grinnell College sports. She kept in touch over the years with a

large number of Grinnell grads, whom she describes as "remarkable."

In fact, when Emily was awarded an honorary degree from Grinnell College in 2017, soccer alumni were among those who nominated her. In her gracious acceptance speech, Emily reminded those attending that she represents many "behind the scenes people," including spouses of faculty and staff members, whose work contributes to the strength of the College. She insists she is "not any more worthy than any of them."

Emily has three children and seven grandchildren; three of the grandchildren graduated from Grinnell College. She also has three great grandchildren.

Emily's move to the Mayflower came after an injury required a two-month stay in the health center. She was reluctant to move from her house: "I never thought I'd be content in an apartment at the Mayflower." However, after friends and family convinced her to move and helped her move into the apartment just after Christmas, she discovered that she is really happy at Mayflower.

She says it is a welcoming place, and she is continually surprised by how happy and busy she is. She plays bridge, attends Bucket Courses at the library, participates in film series offered by the Mayflower, and joins morning coffee and conversation. She says, "This is home. I am content and I am lucky."

And Mayflower is lucky to have this new resident.

Judy Hunter



COLLABORATING WITH GRINNELL COLLEGE STUDENTS

One of the most delightful discoveries that Ed and I have made since moving to the Mayflower Community four years ago is the connection that happens here with Grinnell College students. Ed taught at the college for 40 years, so of course we were used to collaborating with college students, but we were surprised to see many opportunities for continued contact with Grinnell College students because of our move to the Mayflower community.

In those four years since we moved here I have had the pleasure of being part of a book discussion group with Education students at the college as well as several discussions with other Grinnell college students from various classes on a variety of topics. How often do you get to sit down with 19 and 20 years olds and talk about what brings "joy" into your lives?

Last fall, and again this spring, our residents were invited to attend a luncheon with Grinnell College international students. Both times the Lester Bus took a group there to share discussions of what it's like living in Grinnell.

In addition to discussions held with specific classes from the college, I have gained valuable help from a Grinnell College volunteer "Techie Tutor" through that special program as I purchased a new iPhone and needed help in getting up to speed on that device. The tutors come to our homes by appointment once a week as needed and help us with a variety of electronic device questions we have. Who says you can't get good help any more? This is great help!

Many of us have enjoyed getting to know Ariel, a recent Grinnell College graduate who has remained in the community and actually lives here at the Mayflower for a year as she contributes to various programs here through Anne Sunday's activities for Independent Living residents. Ariel helps out with activities and with transportation to events

throughout the community. One thing that is special about Ariel is that she lives here with us.

So many of our cultural gatherings and entertainment options are enhanced by Grinnell College students; for example think of all the Lyceum programs that feature college students sharing their stories, their music, and their lives with us. And as you can read elsewhere in this issue, we have a regular enthusiastic group of Mayflower fans attending Grinnell College athletic events and cheering on the players, students who are so well known to their fans here that we could probably start a fan club!

Perhaps the most exciting connection to me personally is a wonderful collaboration that the MRA officers have had with an advanced computer science class at the college. This particular collaboration has been going on for three semesters and is resulting in an MRA on-line Directory.

I gave a summary of the Directory project in the winter issue of the Log, and now I am happy to report that the officers anticipate a roll out of the new directory the first week of May. Watch the Informer for more information about how the college students will help us all get on the new directory site and begin to use it.

Thank you Grinnell College students for being there for Mayflower residents in so many interesting and helpful ways.

Karen Phillips



A BRIEF HISTORY OF GRINNELL COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

by Luther Erickson

The pictures below show several Mayflower residents—some transported from the Mayflower Community by the “Lester” bus--among the fans at one of the last two games of

the 2017-18 Grinnell College men’s basketball season in the Darby Gymnasium setting that has been a favorite venue for those events for many years. One picture shows the current



When I came to interview for a position in the chemistry department at Grinnell 45 years ago, after dinner with science division faculty chairs and President Howard Bowen, Joe Danforth and I walked from his house to old Darby gym and watched the John Pfitsch-coached pioneers win a basketball game on their way to the 1962 Midwest Conference title, their last for many years.

The impressive performance record of the team over the more recent past few years is reflected in some of the records displayed on posters near the scoreboard and around the field house. After the game pictured above, the team was identified as the winners of the 1000th

game won by a Grinnell men’s basketball team since their first game in 1902!

David Arseneault Sr, who is wrapping up a very successful 30-year career as an outstanding and innovative coach has had significant influence on the way the game is now played—not only at Grinnell. A long article recently published by the Des Moines Register highlights Arseneault’s impressive and influential career. His son and Grinnell College graduate, David Arseneault Jr., has assumed the head coaching position and, we are confident that he will continue the team’s recent winning tradition.

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Robert G. Mann, Executive Director
616 Broad St., Grinnell, Iowa 50112
(641) 236-6151

LOG Staff

Alice Breemer
Luther Erickson
Judy Hunter
Selva Lehman
Betty Moffett
Karen Phillips
Mary Schuchmann

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The history of the Darby name and the earlier facility it replaced is nicely summarized in a brass plaque that is mounted on the wall just inside the main south entrance door of the Bear Complex.

DARBY GYMNASIUM

Darby Gymnasium was originally constructed in 1942 on Eighth Avenue. It honored the generosity, loyalty, and leadership of J. Fred Darby, class of 1895, Phi Beta Kappa, three-sport letterwinner, successful businessman, and life trustee.

Darby served the College gracefully for 62 years-witnessing the birth of intercollegiate athletics for women, hosting luminaries from Doctor Martin Luther King to Bruce Springsteen, and marking numerous athletic triumphs. Darby came to embody hard work, determination, and accomplishment. Its mystique is synonymous with what is *possible*.

In recognition of Fred Darby's spirit and philanthropic leadership, the Grinnell College Board of Trustees made an unusual, but unanimous, proclamation to preserve the Darby name at the new gymnasium on Tenth Avenue.

It is fitting that The Weitz Company constructed both the original and current Darby. The curved trusses in this building are reminiscent of the gently arching wooden rafters in the 1942 structure; the torches on this wall once graced its north and south facades. They are symbolic of the enduring spirit of Fred Darby, the legend of Darby gym, and the flame within all Grinnellians who seek to achieve and do well in the world.

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