Volume 17 No. 2

BRANCHING OUT

LIVING BRANCHES

Live & Grow – Together



PLANTING LINDEN GROVE at Souderton

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: LIVING BRANCHES NAMED WORKFORCE LEADER IN MEMORY CARE



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

THERE'S A STRETCH of open field across Cowpath Road from Souderton Mennonite Homes that you've likely driven past many times. In the coming months we will begin to transform that empty field into something new: Linden Grove at Souderton, the newest Residential Living neighborhood of Living Branches.

For centuries, community members have planted lindens at the heart of their villages. The linden is a hardy tree that often outlives the hands that plant it. When a linden goes into the ground, the planter might imagine markets and celebrations and afternoon picnics underneath its shade a century later. A linden is truly a gift to future generations.

That's how I think about Linden Grove at Souderton: planting for today and for tomorrow.

Current and future residents have shared invaluable feedback about what this neighborhood could be – not only the home layouts and features, but the character of the place. Linden Grove will have preserved green spaces, walking paths, native plantings to support pollinators, and a gathering place open to our whole community.

So much of life in a community like ours is about planting seeds. By listening, planning, and taking our day-to-day actions seriously, we grow something that shelters and gathers people – often without anyone noticing the daily tending.

That same quiet work is behind another story in this issue. All four of our Serenata Memory Care neighborhoods have earned Dementia Capable Care certification, and Living Branches has been named a Workforce Leader in dementia care. No other senior living community in our region holds this distinction. And it's the result of team members who simply wanted to offer the best possible care to residents living with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia.

You'll rarely see headlines about quiet behind-the-scenes work, but it makes all the difference to residents and their loved ones. The work of planting is always underway, and I'm grateful that you're with us to see it take root.

Edward D. Brubaker

EDWARD D. BRUBAKER
President/CEO

BRANCHINGOUT

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Together we empower older adults and families to lead lives of purpose and joy, guided by the Mennonite tradition of care and service to others.

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Table of Contents

COVER STORY:

4 Planting Linden Grove at Souderton Mennonite Homes

Presales are underway for a new Residential Living neighborhood coming to Souderton Mennonite Homes. Built across the street from the existing Villas, the new neighborhood — Linden Grove at Souderton — will offer large carriage homes, a clubhouse, and outdoor spaces that respect the natural environment.

8 Living Branches Named a Workforce Leader in Memory Care

All of Living Branches' Serenata Memory Care neighborhoods have earned Dementia Capable Care certification from the Crisis Prevention Institute.

10 Campus Happenings

Residents had a celebratory start to the summer with field trips, a community-wide festival, and programs about America's founding.



BEHIND THE LENS

"Victory"

Living Branches residents celebrated the start of summer – and the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding – with a Strawberry and Blueberry Festival in early June. Activities included outdoor games, like cornhole and ladder toss, open to residents in all neighborhoods.

Souderton Mennonite Homes residents Bob and Valetta celebrated winning the first game of the cornhole tournament. They came in second place overall in the tournament.

"I love cornhole because you really use your brain coming up with a strategy," Valetta says. "The competition and camaraderie at the tournament were great fun!"



PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

INTRODUCING

LINDEN GROVE *at Souderton*

AFTER YEARS OF PLANNING AND LONG-RANGE VISIONING, A NEW RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD IS BEGINNING TO TAKE SHAPE AT SOUDERTON MENNONITE HOMES.

Sales will begin soon for **Linden Grove at Souderton:** a neighborhood of single-family and twin carriage homes — and an important next chapter for Residential Living at Living Branches.

The new residences will be built across Cowpath Road from the existing Villas.

Linden Grove at Souderton reflects careful listening, intentional design, and an understanding of what many adults are looking for now.

"Future residents desire more space, stronger connections to nature, and homes that feel familiar without the responsibilities of traditional homeownership," explains Living Branches president and CEO Edward Brubaker. "Along with new offerings at Dock Woods, Linden Grove at Souderton represents our next investment in today's and tomorrow's residents."

FILLING A MISSING PIECE

For much of its history, Souderton Mennonite Homes has offered a range of apartments and small- to mid-size homes. What has been missing are larger residences: homes that provide flexibility, storage, and room to host family and friends, while still offering the benefits of community living.

That gap became increasingly clear through focus groups and conversations with prospective residents and community members.

"Over and over we heard about the dream of homes that support an active lifestyle while accommodating the future," says Alex Metricarti, chief advancement officer. "These new homes will fill that need. Not just for Souderton Mennonite Homes but for Living Branches as a community."

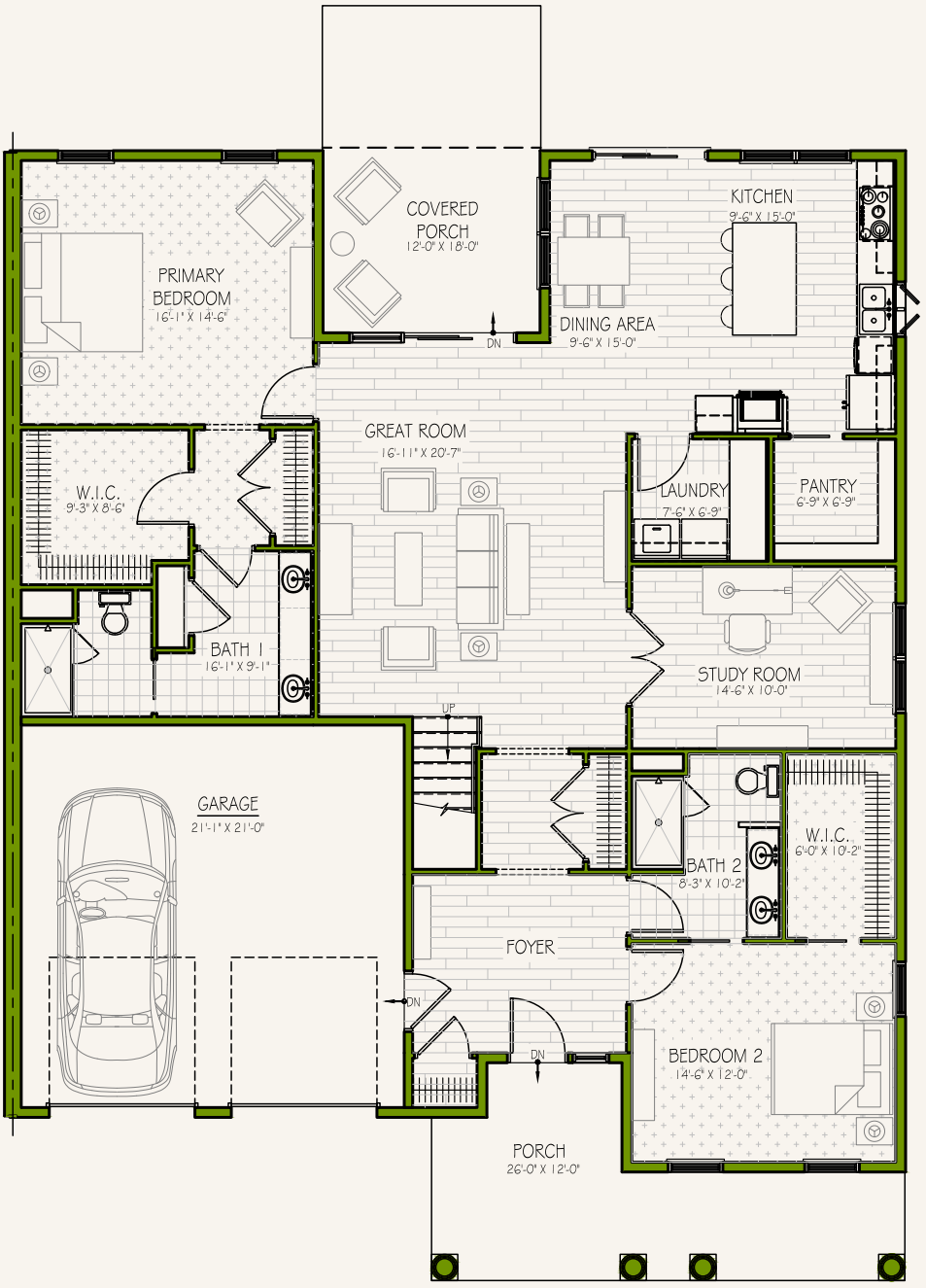
The 69 homes coming to Linden Grove will be available in four floor plans, each featuring two-bedroom layouts with optional dens, attached two-car garages, and single-level living that can be expanded to a second floor. Residents can personalize their homes through a wide range of upgrades and customization options, including covered patios to four seasons rooms that invite residents to spend as much of the day outside as in.



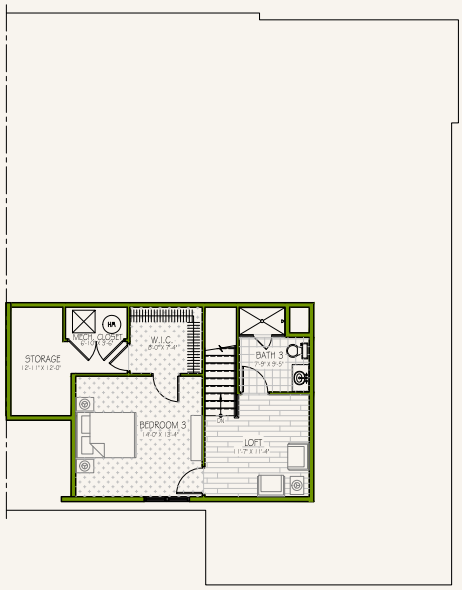


REDMOND FLOOR PLAN
TWO-STORY OPTION





FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

LETTING THE LAND SHAPE THE DESIGN

The setting at Souderton Mennonite Homes played a key role in the neighborhood's design.

Portions of the land at the back of the site are not suitable for traditional development. Rather than forcing that land to conform to a conventional layout, the plan embraces it. The neighborhood will incorporate preserved natural areas, native plantings, and pollinator-friendly landscaping.

Walking paths will connect homes to open green spaces, and the overall layout is intentionally spacious. Homes are positioned to allow for light, air, and views, creating a neighborhood that feels open and spacious.

"One of our goals is to encourage residents to spend time outdoors and feel connected to nature," Alex says. "Every home will offer opportunities to enjoy that environment, with options for enclosed or expanded patios and easy access to trails and green space."

A SHARED GATHERING PLACE

Planned as part of a future phase is a flexible clubhouse designed to serve the entire Living Branches community.

The building will include areas for events, fitness classes, educational programs, and informal gatherings. A large multi-use room with a kitchen will support dining services and life enrichment programming, while smaller spaces will adapt to different group sizes and activities.

This will not be a private amenity limited to Linden Grove residents. Programs like fitness classes and Living U courses will be open to all Living Branches residents, making the clubhouse a new hub of activity and connection.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Naming a new neighborhood is both a creative and intentional process — and one Living Branches has long approached collaboratively.

The marketing team began with internal brainstorming, then partnered with an external consultant to explore a wide range of options. The new name was ultimately coined by future residents during a focus group, where it drew a warm response.

"As a kid growing up across the street from Souderton Mennonite Homes, I remember biking to the apple orchard and the beauty of the surrounding property," says future resident Rich Godshall, who was present for the focus group that coined the name. "The word 'linden' reminds me of the calm of the old orchard. It's a fitting name and one I hope brings people together for many years to come."

> *"One of our goals is to encourage residents to spend time outdoors and feel connected to nature,"*

The linden is native to Pennsylvania and has carried meaning for centuries as a gathering tree, traditionally planted at the center of villages, its broad canopy shading markets, weddings, and seasonal celebrations. "Grove" is a nod to the orchard and the agricultural roots of Souderton Mennonite Homes. And "at Souderton" anchors the development unmistakably to the charming, walkable town that is one of its defining features.

"From the start, we wanted a name that would feel rooted in this place and consistent with who we are," Alex says. "Linden Grove at Souderton captures both, and it also fits naturally within our Living Branches family of tree- and nature-themed communities."

LOOKING AHEAD

With the Franconia Township approval in process, presales for Linden Grove at Souderton will begin soon. Architectural renderings, floor plans, and updated information continue to be released as the project moves forward.

To learn more and be one of the first residents to choose their home, please reach out to sales counselor **Jana Alderfer at 215-723-9881.**

Prospective residents can submit applications, view floor plans, select homesites, and begin the customization conversations that will turn carriage homes into individual residences.



Living Branches Named a **WORKFORCE LEADER** in Memory Care

PROVIDING EXCELLENT CARE TO A SENIOR WITH DEMENTIA IS PART EXPERIENCE, PART EDUCATION.

Some techniques come from years of working with residents in Serenata Memory Care. But others are best learned in a classroom.

"Good care is consistent care," explains Annette Echanis, director of resident engagement. "Every team member who serves residents — including nurses, aides, housekeepers, servers, and others — needs the same background knowledge."

A REGIONAL LEADER IN MEMORY CARE

In the last year Annette spearheaded an effort to help all four Serenata Memory Care neighborhoods achieve Dementia Capable Care certification from the Crisis Prevention Institute.

Both Serenata Personal Care neighborhoods were certified in 2025 and the Serenata Health Care neighborhoods in early 2026.

Because all four neighborhoods achieved certification, Living Branches has been named a Workforce Leader by the Crisis Prevention Institute. This recognition requires that at least 75 percent of each neighborhood's team is trained in Dementia Capable Care.

No other senior living community in our region holds this designation.

"For the loved one of a person in Serenata Memory Care, it's challenging to not be there for every moment," says Edward Brubaker, president/CEO of Living Branches. "Our hope is this certification signals that when family members cannot be there, someone who knows exactly how to help will be."

Many communities have a memory care specialist or a certified lead. The Workforce Leader designation is more comprehensive: most of the team in every Serenata Memory Care neighborhood is trained.



HITTING THE BOOKS

Unlike other forms of certification that are only for certain health care workers, Dementia Capable Care is designed for any team member in a memor care setting.

"We want to see residents enjoy activities with neighbors, learn something new, explore a hobby, have joyful visits with family, and embrace each day," Annette says. "To make that happen, every team member needs to know the best practices."

Dementia Capable Care training focuses on person-centered techniques. Students learn how dementia impacts the brain and body, how to proactively engage with residents, how to interpret dementia behaviors, and how to give appropriate support if a resident is distressed.

The approach is evidence-based. Team members learn to prevent distress before it builds and to de-escalate, to read what a resident may be trying to communicate, and to protect each person's independence and dignity at every stage of the disease.

Classes run throughout the year so that new team members can receive training.

Training is led by Living Branches team members who have been certified by Dementia Capable Care to be instructors, including Annette, marketing specialist Crystal Kratz, and director of talent and culture Samantha White.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Classroom learning isn't helpful if it never leaves the classroom. To keep new techniques in daily use, an engagement binder now sits in a common area of each neighborhood. This grab-and-go reference holds person-centered activity plans and resident engagement evaluations the team can reach for in the moment.

But the measure that matters most isn't the certificate on the wall. It's the person-centered care provided every day in Serenata Memory Care.

"As a family member of a loved one living with dementia in one of our Serenata neighborhoods, I'm thrilled we offer this training," Crystal says. "In every class I see our team's compassion and dedication, which is professionally rewarding and personally encouraging to me."









WHEN THE PAST MEETS THE PRESENT

Living U students took a trip to the Museum at Hoppenville, located on the estate of John B. IV and Linda Haines of Haines and Kibblehouse, Inc. The collection includes restored construction vehicles, farming and mining equipment, and historically significant Mack trucks.





A Red, White and BLUE SUMMER

A summer for the history books! Residents celebrated the 250th anniversary of the United States' founding as well as the World Cup being hosted in the United States. Closer to home, residents enjoyed the annual all-campus summer festival: a weeklong Strawberry Blueberry Festival as a nod to America's red, white, and blue flag.





LET'S MAKE ARRANGEMENTS

Residents at The Willows of Living Branches were joined by volunteers from the floral department at Wegmans for a flower-arranging workshop. Each student got to craft and keep a beautiful bouquet.

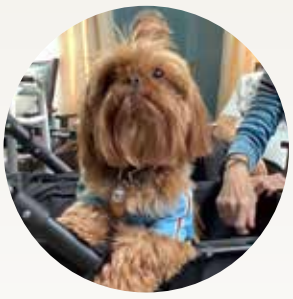












FOUR-LEGGED FRIENDS

You haven't lived until you've pet a pup in a Phillies jersey! Furry friends Luna and Bentley came to Souderton Mennonite Homes in May to spread smiles and joy.









A SWEET START TO SUMMER

Living Branches residents, team members, and volunteers came together for another all-campus weeklong celebration in early June. Popular activities included lawn games like croquet and cornhole, hymn sings and concerts, carnival games, and a special visit from a petting zoo. Local food trucks also stopped by to provide delicious eats and waffles and ice cream with strawberry and blueberry toppings.









PLANTING WITH DAISIES

Daisy Troop 51175 visited The Willows of Living Branches this spring for a fun afternoon of tea and flower crafting.



WE SHOOT, WE SCORE!

In celebration of the United States hosting the World Cup over the summer, residents at The Willows played tabletop soccer. With four nets instead of one, every player had a chance to score!



DANCE THE DAY AWAY

Ribbons flew and spirits soared during ribbon dancing at Dock Woods. Led by team members in creative arts therapy and life enrichment, this accessible blend of music and movement invites residents to sway, swirl, and trail color through the air.







HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Green thumbs abound at Living Branches! Residents in many care levels have enjoyed rolling up their sleeves and working in the standing garden beds in their neighborhoods. Popular plantings include strawberries, herbs, and tomatoes.







WATCH THIS EPISODE
Scan with Your Phone Camera

SOUDERTON LEGENDS

In celebration of America's 250th anniversary, Souderton mayor Dan Yocum conducted a number of audio interviews with "Souderton Legends," including a few Souderton Mennonite Homes residents. One resident, John Butterwick, worked with the life enrichment team to record his interview with Dan at Allebach Creative on Main Street.

LIVING BRANCHES
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DISCOVER LIVING BRANCHES

Discovery Tours are designed for first-time visitors to Souderton Mennonite Homes and Dock Woods interested in learning more about the opportunities available in Residential Living. Each event begins with light refreshments and a brief presentation to explain the communities and help you become better acquainted with Living Branches. You'll take a short walking tour of the community center and driving tour of the campus.

THERE IS NO FEE FOR THIS EVENT, BUT REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

Please call Crystal Kratz to register

Crystal Kratz
215-723-9881 ext. 42319



