

BRANCHING OUT

LIVING BRANCHES

Live & Grow – Together

Writing the Next Chapter
in the Living Branches Experience...

TOGETHER!



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

LIVING BRANCHES EXPERIENCE:

ELEVATING CUSTOMER SERVICE

THERE HAS BEEN MOVEMENT IN THE SENIOR living industry to move to person-centered care. A shift away from efficiency that benefits staff, such as a set breakfast time, and a movement towards resident-driven care, such as allowing residents to eat when they choose. At the core is knowing each resident personally and caring for them in the ways that matter most to them.

Person-centered care is embedded in who we are at Living Branches. It is not an idea we needed to instill in our organization, but is something we wanted to improve. This movement would be driven by our core values and executed through excellent customer service. And thus the idea for the Living Branches Experience training program was born.

The Living Branches Experience was introduced to staff this past summer. The goal is to create positive experiences for both residents and staff, and to keep person-centered care strategies as the focus for staff each day.

An example is of a resident assistant who knew a resident's wife liked him to be wearing a hand-knitted sweater. If he was not wearing it, the wife would ask the assistant to find it. One day when the wife came to visit, the assistant remembered that the sweater was being laundered, so she took initiative to let the wife know before she started worrying about its whereabouts.

Now, to you and me, that may seem like a very small thing. It was, but the small things are what differentiate a good organization from a great organization. The assistant remembered the needs and desires of the resident in her care, and the resident's spouse. She chose to proactively engage to relieve the wife's worry. By doing so, she deepened her relationship with the wife and the wife's trust in her. That is what the Living Branches Experience is all about.

In this edition of Branching Out, you will learn more about the origins of the Living Branches Experience and the TOGETHER principles that are being implemented in our communities. I hope that you will be inspired, just as we are, to empower older adults and families to lead lives of purpose and joy in fresh news ways.

Edward D. Brubaker

EDWARD D. BRUBAKER
President/CEO

BRANCHING OUT

A PUBLICATION OF LIVING BRANCHES

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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Living Branches maintains a mailing list of people who we feel are interested in the activities, events, programs, and services of our communities. If for any reason you want your name removed from this list, please email the editor with your name, address, and request at BranchingOut@LivingBranches.org

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Writing the Next Chapter *in the Living Branches Experience...* TOGETHER!

By: Danielle Leheny

PART OF BEING GREAT AT SOMETHING IS A constant commitment to getting even better at whatever it is that you do well. If you ask any Living Branches staff member what they're great at – especially as a collective team – chances are, they'll talk about their passion for providing excellent care for residents and helping make our communities a loving, fulfilling place to live. That passion shows not only in every interaction with residents, but also in a shared understanding that true excellence isn't about reaching an end-point. It's a continuous journey with learning opportunities every step of the way.

O

Over the past few years, the Living Branches team has been writing an exciting chapter in this rewarding journey of excellent care. This chapter encompasses an organization-wide initiative called the Living Branches Experience – a collaborative effort to take customer service to the highest levels throughout our communities.

“We are already very proud of our core commitment to customer service,” said Edward Brubaker, President/CEO. “Our communities are welcoming, and our teams provide loving care to our residents – so on the one hand, we knew it would be challenging to ask even more of our staff. On the other hand, because we are blessed with staff members who care deeply for our communities and our residents, they are more than willing to come to the table to share their ideas and be open to new ways of offering service.”

The Living Branches Experience was first inspired by a broader movement within the healthcare industry that focuses on person-centered care – a more personal, empowering, and collaborative approach to meeting an individual's unique needs.

“For many years, we've been thinking about what this shift means for the Living Branches communities,” said Ed. “While we definitely want to enhance personalized care for each of our residents, we also need to nurture and support who we are as a community – comprised of residents, staff, and family members. Therefore, in designing our vision for the Living Branches Experience, we broadened our focus to customer service – a more encompassing and timeless approach to enhancing everything we do.”

Bonnie Scott, director of human resources development, has spearheaded the project and helped design the Living Branches Experience as something more than just a series of trainings and activities.

“Two key aspects of the program will ensure our efforts have staying power,” said Bonnie. “First, we tied our vision to our existing core values of respect, integrity, community, compassion, excellence – because we're not aiming for a culture makeover, but rather, a culture enhancement. Second, we designed the program to be collaborative, so that our team members can continually share their experiences and input to guide our approach to boosting customer service throughout our communities.”

During the early planning stages, Bonnie and her team

reached out to other companies known for excellent customer service, such as The Walt Disney Company, for advice and best practices.

“While we received some excellent guidance from those companies, it quickly became clear that we needed a partner who specialized in programming for customers who receive service 24/7 – 365 days a year,” said Bonnie. “This is a vastly different approach compared to what most other industries offer, so the expertise we were looking for was very specialized.”

Enter Red Carpet Learning Systems, a company with a long history in the healthcare and senior living spaces. Their crystal-clear approach to customer service aligned perfectly with the vision of the Living Branches team: make the person in front of you feel important and special – with every interaction.

“Red Carpet founder Donna Cutting and her team brought high energy, great ideas, and a strong interest in learning more about who we are as a community and where we want to grow,” said Bonnie. “We knew from



MAKING A DIFFERENCE... TOGETHER

Given the importance of community among the Living Branches residents, staff, and family members, it’s no surprise that the acronym “TOGETHER” was chosen as the foundation of the Living Branches Experience.

TOGETHER, staff members are working in tandem to better serve residents and family members – with the following goals guiding every interaction:

- T - Take Time and Be Present
- O - Own the Entire Experience
- G - Get to Yes!
- E - Extend Hospitality
- T - Treat Them to Memorable Moments
- H - Honor Response Times
- E - Empower with Choices
- R - Recover with Compassion

“With every caring effort, creative idea, and personal touch, we boost our collective ability to make our residents’ experiences here truly special,” said Bonnie Scott, director of human resources development. “We want to do everything within our power to help our residents lead lives of purpose and joy, and we do that – each and every day – by working TOGETHER.”



I’ve always been impressed with the service our team provides...

the start that the Red Carpet team would be able to help us create a program that would be practical, interactive, specific to our needs, and of course, fun!”

But first, the team has some big questions to answer...

DISCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES TOGETHER

“Before we fully could design our game plan, we needed the answers to some very important questions,” said Bonnie. “What aspects of customer service are we already good at? Where do we have room to improve?”

To find the answers, Bonnie organized a series of focus groups – for residents, staff, and family members.

“It was wonderful to hear people share their positive experiences and describe the Living Branches communities as welcoming, warm, and caring,” said Bonnie. “It was also enlightening – and exciting – to tease out opportunities where we could enhance service.”

Common themes emerged from the discussions, and the team identified eight principles – which form the word TOGETHER (see callout for details) – that would serve as the foundation for the Living Branches Experience.

Two of the principles stood out as the biggest areas of impact: “Get to Yes!” and “Encourage Hospitality.”

“We immediately knew that ‘Get to Yes!’ would need much of our focus,” said Bonnie. “As with any healthcare-based organization, we are trained to follow all of our essential policies and procedures – which can sometimes limit flexibility in service. However, there’s a balance to be achieved here – and a shift in mindset. The immediate answer doesn’t always have to be, ‘That’s not how we do it.’ There are ample times when we can offer custom service to our residents to address individual needs; it just might take some thinking and collaboration! And we might not always ‘get to yes,’ but the goal should always be to get as close to it as we can – as often as we can.”

With “Encourage Hospitality” – the second of the top two focus areas – the aim is to inspire all Living Branches team members to think about customer service the way they think about hospitality in their own homes.

“The big things in customer service are generally expected, such as high-quality meals, clean environments, and friendly staff,” said Bonnie. “But it’s the unexpected and personal touches that truly make someone’s day special – the above and beyond hospitality you offer guests visiting your home to make them feel truly cared for and welcome.”

Once Bonnie and the Red Carpet team better understood what they wanted to accomplish, they worked together to

design a training program that would loop all Living Branches staff into the conversation – because they knew the staff would offer the best insights for how those goals could be achieved.

ONE TRAINING PROGRAM – COUNTLESS SHARED EXPERIENCES

“As we created the Living Branches Experience introductory training, we took each of the TOGETHER principles and defined tangible behaviors to make them easy to apply in the day-to-day,” said Bonnie. “We also created a series of videos filmed on-site with volunteer actors that showcase the differences between good service and excellent service.”

But the biggest learnings from every training session come directly from the staff, who are encouraged to share their personal experiences to spark ideas.

“Sometimes staff members share real-life challenges they face, and everyone in the room is part of the discussion about possible solutions,” said Bonnie. “Not surprisingly, many of the challenges revolve around ‘Get to Yes!’ – but we have discovered many surprising solutions for doing exactly that by putting our heads together.”

Other times, staff members shared personal successes they had experienced – which has helped trigger even more ideas and possibilities.



“The outpouring of personal experiences from the training sessions has been truly inspiring,” said Ed. “For example, one of our Health Care staff members shared that for one particular resident, she always makes sure the resident’s favorite sweater is in-hand when her family is visiting. Sure, it’s good service when our staff is happy to fulfill requests, but it’s excellent service when we anticipate and satisfy needs before a request is even made.”

Each training session is comprised of staff members from across departments to help inspire enhancements everywhere from dining to accounting to nursing.

“The cross-functional mix of staff members has ensured a wonderful diversity of thinking and shared experiences,” said Bonnie. “And it’s also fantastic to see staff members enjoying the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues who they don’t normally get to interact with in their day-to-day work.”

By the end of the year, approximately 700 Living Branches staff members will participate in three training modules – a huge undertaking – but as Bonnie is quick to acknowledge, the task at hand is not nearly as huge as the effects of the training, as staff members begin to embrace what they have discovered and test out new ideas and practices.

EARLY RESULTS LIGHT THE WAY TOWARD FUTURE GROWTH

“It’s been fun hearing the language from our trainings in hallway conversations, as staff members keep the learning and sharing alive in their day-to-day activities,” said Bonnie.

“I’ve heard people say, ‘I’m working hard to “Get to Yes!” today with a new request,’ as well as sharing exciting successes with each other in passing conversations.”

Continuing to highlight individual experiences will be key to creating a powerful ripple effect throughout the community.

“We are looking for new ways to share success stories with our staff members, residents, and family members,” said Bonnie. “Not only does this recognize individuals and teams for enhancing the service they provide, it also encourages others to try out similar ideas to enrich interactions with our residents. It’s contagious – but in a good way!”

“For me, the most eye-opening learning from the program to date is just how much our staff cares about our residents,” added Bonnie. “I’ve always been impressed with the service our team provides, but the enthusiasm, openness, and commitment they have brought to Living Branches Experience has demonstrated the strength of our shared mission to offer the best care possible to our residents.”

With over 700 staff members who are eager to make a difference with what they are learning – from the training and from each other – there will be countless contributions from individuals, as well as successes from teams working in tandem.

“When you add it all up, the sky is the limit!” said Ed. “There’s definitely more to come in this exciting chapter in the Living Branches communities – and we look forward to writing it TOGETHER.”

Living Branches BRAND CHAMPIONS

Lead THE Charge

TEAM YES

Susan Baranowski
Director of Human Resources

Jamie Brecker
Cook

Charlynn DiBonaventura
Communications
and Support Coordinator

Donna Godshall
Sales Counselor

Susan Hamburger
Service Manager

Tesemma Headen
Business Office Manager

Marianne Kane
Nutrition Care Manager

JC Kolb
Housekeeping, Laundry,
Custodial Supervisor

Crystal Kratz
Social Worker

Wendy Mang
Certified Resident Assistant

Michele Moreland
Life Enrichment Coordinator

Bonnie Scott
Director of Human
Resources Development

“Our staff members are the face of who we are to our residents, so it made perfect sense to select employees throughout our departments to serve as ‘Brand Champions’ for the Living Branches Experience,” said Ed Brubaker, President and CEO. “It’s been inspiring to see them step out of their usual roles to build excitement and collaboration throughout our communities.”

These brand champions, who call themselves Team Yes, received the Living Branches Experience training early in the process, and are now leading their own training sessions – as well as serving as a resource for anyone with questions or feedback. Here’s what they have to say about this unique experience:



BRENT DAUBENSPECK
FITNESS AND AQUATICS
COORDINATOR

The opportunity to serve as a Living Branches Brand Champion has allowed me to grow both personally and professionally. I am a father of three young boys, and I constantly think about how I am creating experiences for my family – which is the foundation of the Living Branches Experience. How am I strengthening relationships, and modeling this behavior for my children, so that they can enhance their own relationships with the people in their life? Maya Angelou once said, “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” The Living Branches Experience embodies this thinking, and I’m grateful for the impact it will continue to have in all aspects of my life.



JAMIE BRECKER
COOK

I have always tried to live by the Golden Rule and to treat others the way I would want to be treated. I believe the Living Branches Experience and our TOGETHER goals reinforce this approach in how we interact with our residents. The program has given us the tools to not only treat others how we want to be treated, but also to rise to the next level and truly give our residents a “red carpet” treatment. As a cook in the Apple Orchard Café, I especially enjoy frequent opportunities to “Treat Them to Memorable Moments,” by making someone’s day with a delicious meal cooked with creativity and care!



DONNA GODSHALL
SALES COUNSELOR

Amazing things happen every day throughout the communities of Living Branches. We have a passionate team that takes our mission and living out our core values very seriously. Even though we already do many things well, the potential for growth is before us every day. It is inspiring when people work together to raise the bar even higher – to reach beyond expectations and not just provide good customer service but create extraordinary experiences for our residents and their families. The TOGETHER standards are helping us do just that! And it’s inspiring to see the impact that happens when these standards become a priority and consistently transfer into our daily lives and interactions.



Getting to Yes!



Leona Hoffman, resident at Dock Woods, and Ray Hurst, director of pastoral care and service, have developed and maintained a great friendship over their years together at Dock Woods. And this fall, Ray helped Leona check one thing off her bucket list!

One day when Ray was visiting with Leona he mentioned his motorcycle during their conversation. She commented, “That’s one thing I’d really like to do – take a ride on the back of a motorcycle.” Ray didn’t give it much thought until Leona mentioned it again a few weeks later. He realized she was serious about wanting to ride on a motorcycle. Ray shares, “I knew this situation involved some risk, and it would be an easy no. But I had just completed first module of the Living Branches Experience training and Get to Yes! was fresh in my mind. I decided this was worth pursuing.”

Ray gave Leona’s daughter a call to see if this was something she and the family would also be comfortable with. Leona’s daughter was on board, so then Ray called Bruce Alder, chief risk officer, to inquire about next steps. Bruce and Ray worked with our compliance liaison, lawyers, and staff at Dock Woods to consider safety and work through logistics. Leona and her family signed a release form and a date for the ride was selected.

This fall, before the weather became too cold, Leona took a ride on the back of Bruce Alder’s motorcycle around the Dock Woods campus. “Leona had a great time. She was waving to friends and neighbors as we drove through campus,” shares Bruce. “I was pleased to witness her enjoying the moment.”

After the ride, the happiness was shared by many. Ray reflects, “This was something worthwhile. Even though it took time and creativity, we were able to create wonderful memories for Leona and her family.” That is what the Living Branches Experience is all about.



VETERANS

ON SEPTEMBER 24, eight veterans from Dock Woods were honored with a trip to Washington D.C. sponsored by Honor Flight Philadelphia, a local not-for-profit organization that honors World War II and Korean War veterans. The trip included transportation with police escort, breakfast, lunch, a visit to the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War memorials, a heroes welcome home, and a dinner party in their honor.



STANDING, LEFT TO RIGHT:

- Richard Raab**
US MARINE CORPS
1955-1964 – Jet Mechanic
- Frank Keenan**
US AIR FORCE
1952-1956 – Shoran Beacon Squadron
Korea and Langley AFB
- Robert Dell**
US COAST GUARD
1953-1957 – Electrician
USCGC Campbell and USCGC Chautauqua
- Wilbur Eastlack**
US NAVY
1949-1954 – Machinist
USS Norton Sound, Guided Missile Ship

SEATED, LEFT TO RIGHT:

- Bob Heacock**
US ARMY
1952-1954 – Medical Unit
Korea-36 Combat Engineers
- Gordon Bell**
US COAST GUARD
1955-1992 – Yeoman/Warrant Officer/
Commissioned Officer
USCGC Campbell and shore stations
- William Reichert**
US NAVY
1943-1946 WWII
Turret Gunner on Avenger Bomber
USS Bennington
- Stafford Keer**
US NAVY
1950-1954 – Electronics Technician
USS Fulton and USS Sunbird



RENOVATION UPDATES



Renovations are underway at all three Living Branches communities. Many of these projects have been in planning stages for many years, and residents and staff are excited to see the improvements and updates at their communities.

AT THE WILLOWS OF LIVING BRANCHES, renovations are currently happening in the south wing, as renovations in Meadow House and the north wing were completed in phases one and two. The south wing project includes renovating the common spaces such as the entrance, lounge, hallways, and dining room. Two other upgrades include the addition of a game room and a sprinkler system. Additionally, small studios are being combined to create one-bedroom apartments.

At Souderton Mennonite Homes, plans are currently being finalized with the expectation that work will begin on the 3000 level in early spring 2019. This renovation will include an update to common spaces in the Personal Care hallways and lounge, Four Seasons Room, Friendship Rooms A & B, Sunflower Room, quilting room, and the Summit View dining room. Plans for the dining room include updated lighting and changes to make the space feel more open.

Additionally, the salad bar will remain and will receive an equipment upgrade, as this is a favorite spot for residents. The renovation will be a cohesive continuation of the renovations that took place in the main lobby and Apple Orchard Café on the 2000 level earlier this year.

At Dock Woods, the renovation project is currently in stages two and three. Renovations in Dock Gardens North, the library, Fisher Auditorium, and the new bistro are complete. Residents, staff, family members, and visitors are enjoying the bistro immensely. It truly has become the heartbeat of the community! Renovations are now in Dock Gardens South, the game room, and the previous Café in the Woods which will be a restaurant in the future plan. If you'd like to see more of the renovation progress, visit our YouTube channel and tune in to the Tool Time with Todd episodes which share updates from Todd Detweiler, director of environmental services.





DOCK MENNONITE ACADEMY DAY OF SERVICE (1)

Each year, students at Dock Mennonite Academy High School participate in a day of service at local businesses and organizations. This year, thanks to Kathleen Roberts, director of dementia care strategy, and other staff persons, we were able to organize a fun-filled day to engage the students in the arts, exercise, and fellowship. From talent shows to art projects to sharing meals and singing together, it was a day of intergenerational fun for both residents and students.

FRIENDS DINNER (2)

The Friends of the Sharing Fund dinner was held at Dock Woods in October. Renovations were completed just in time for this annual event that benefits the Dock Woods/The Willows Sharing Fund, which is one of three benevolent care funds in the Living Branches Foundation. Residents, donors, business partners, and friends enjoyed a fantastic meal provided by our dining services team and enjoyed entertainment by Timothy Bentsch, tenor, his daughter, Emma, and accompanists Bethany Brooks and Anne Aderman Kang. We extend a heartfelt thank you to all who donated to the Sharing Fund as part of this special event.



NEW BISTRO OPENS! (3)

In early November, the Café in the Woods closed its doors and the new bistro became open for service! A ribbon cutting ceremony and hors d'oeuvre reception was held to commemorate the special occasion. Residents and staff enjoyed a taste of the new bistro menu offerings and received tours of the various stations including a salad station, pizza oven, and grill. The final touches in the space will be light fixtures. The response to the new space and new menu has been overwhelmingly positive and it is exciting to see this space become the hub of activity in the community.





CHICKEN BBQ

The 43rd Annual Chicken BBQ at Souderton Mennonite Homes was held on Saturday, August 25. We were thrilled to have beautiful weather and a campus filled with residents, staff, family members, and visitors. New this year were pony rides and the shuffleboard and pickleball courts. We were also thrilled to welcome Downtown Scoop and their ice cream truck. They arrived midday and the line was long all afternoon! Entertainment for the day was provided by Avenue Trio, with a gospel music concert, Suburban Dog Training Club, with a dog show, and Seth Laucks, the Living Branches creative arts therapy coordinator, who held a sing-along for kids to close out the day. We are so grateful to the volunteers and staff who made this day possible!



Annual Report

Letter from Chair / CEO



Dear Partners in Mission:

Thank you for your continued support of Living Branches. At Living Branches we strive to empower older adults and families to lead lives of purpose and joy. And it is through relationships with residents, staff, family members, volunteers, local businesses, and the wider community that we are able to achieve that mission.

We are very pleased to report that the communities of Living Branches are alive and well. Our financial results for fiscal year ending June 30, 2018 were positive. The occupancy for Living Branches remains above national averages in Residential Living and we have a very strong waitlist. We experienced some challenges with occupancy in Health Care and Personal Care as in years past, but have found this to be an industry-wide trend.

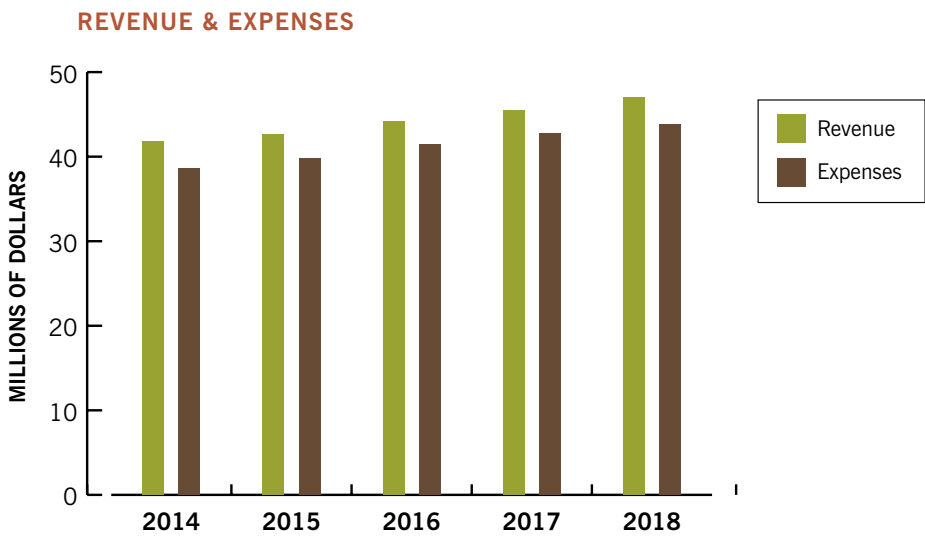
Renovations are currently underway at all three Living Branches communities. At Souderton Mennonite Homes, renovations on the 2000 level, including the main lobby and Apple Orchard Café, were completed earlier this year and now work will continue on the 3000 level. At The Willows of Living Branches, units in the south wing are being renovated and combined to create larger floor plans. At Dock Woods renovations continue in the common spaces and hallways; residents and staff are enjoying the new bistro immensely. We recognize the importance of staying competitive in the market and meeting expectations of future residents.

Over the last fiscal year, the board of directors and executive leadership team have continued with master planning for Living Branches. We partnered with RLPS Architects to assist in this process. Focus groups were held with residents, future residents, staff, and board members this past summer, and from these sessions we are developing a vision for the next 10-20 years. A top priority, among many other changes, will be private rooms in the Health Care centers at Souderton Mennonite Homes and Dock Woods.

Living Branches is blessed with wonderful residents, hardworking staff, strong leadership, and many committed partners who join us in our mission. On behalf of our residents, staff, and board of directors, we thank you for your support as we continue to live with purpose and joy – together.

EDWARD D. BRUBAKER
President/CEO

KENNETH J. CLEMMER
Board Chair

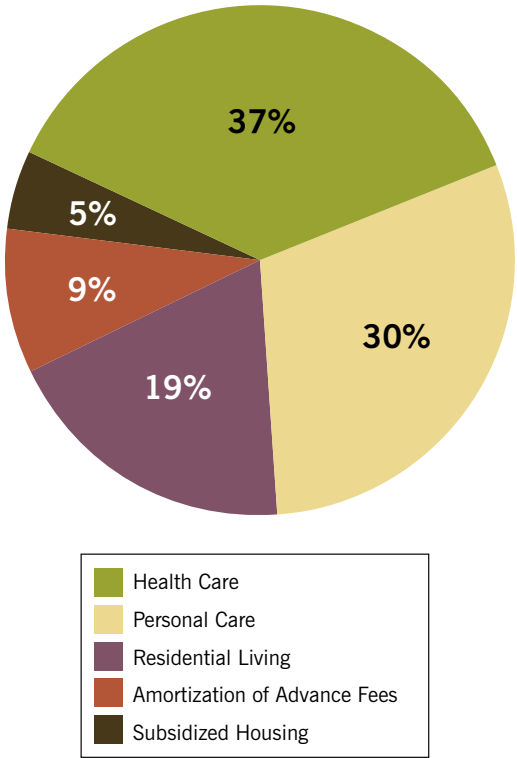


LIVING BRANCHES CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET
JUNE 30, 2018

ASSETS	
Current Assets	\$8,947,588
Assets Whose Use is Limited	105,547,457
Property & Equipment (Net)	61,984,250
Other Assets	385,811
TOTAL	\$176,865,106

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
Current Liabilities	\$5,910,906
Long-Term Debt	4,695,731
Refundable Fees & Deposits	23,265,255
Deferred Revenues from Entrance Fees	22,191,708
Other Liabilities	71,699
Total Liabilities	\$56,135,269
Net Assets	\$120,729,837
TOTAL	\$176,865,106

2018 RESIDENT SERVICES
REVENUE SOURCES



BENEVOLENT &
UNREIMBURSED CARE

Health Care	\$1,783,346
Personal Care & Residential Living	1,344,349
TOTAL	\$3,127,695
NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS	
Health Care	73
Personal Care	47
TOTAL	120

Benevolent and unreimbursed care is provided to residents when their savings, income, insurance, and public assistance benefits are not sufficient to fully pay for the cost of care provided by the organization.

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Mennonite Homes**
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215-723-9881

Dock Woods
275 Dock Drive
Lansdale, PA 19446
215-368-4438

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SAVE THE DATE

MARKETING DISCOVERY TOURS

Discovery Tours are designed for first-time visitors to Souderton Mennonite Homes and Dock Woods. Each event begins with light refreshments and a brief presentation to explain the communities and help you become better acquainted with Living Branches. Then you'll take a tour of the community center and residents' homes, visiting a villa, a cottage, and an apartment. There is no fee for this event, but registration is required. *To register, visit www.livingbranches.org/events.*

Dock Woods – 1:30PM

Thursday, January 10

Thursday, February 7

Souderton Mennonite Homes – 1:30PM

Thursday, January 24

Tuesday, February 26

