



Sunnyside Communities
MORE THAN A CENTURY OF CARING

Summer 2026

Evergreen

The Magazine
of Sunnyside Communities



CONNECTION. PURPOSE. EASE.





Joshua O. "Josh" Lyons
President & CEO

President & CEO and Board Chair's Message



James J. Rowe
Chairman, Board of Trustees

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world."

There is a natural inclination to measure impact in numbers, as they tell a story that can be reported as milestones and metrics that indicate progress. Those numbers matter. They reflect real work, real outcomes, and real people. But that is only the beginning of the story.

In this edition of Evergreen, you will find our Community Impact Report, a closer look at the ways Sunnyside Communities continues to live out its mission, both within our campuses and across the broader community we are privileged to serve. This issue also marks a first for Evergreen. Throughout these pages, readers will find interactive QR codes connected to select stories, offering opportunities to go deeper through videos, digital storytelling, and additional interactive content that bring these moments to life in a new way.

For more than a century, Sunnyside Communities has held to a simple promise. Those who come here will be met with dignity, stability, and care not only in the best of times, but in the moments when it matters most. That promise is carried forward, day after day, by thoughtful and committed individuals who understand the weight of that responsibility.

Over the past year, more than 400 residents and patients were supported through rehabilitation services across our three communities. Each number represents a person, and each person carries a story of strength regained, confidence rebuilt, and independence restored. This work reflects the commitment of clinicians, caregivers, and team members who bring both skill and conviction to what they do.

Beyond our walls, that same sense of responsibility extends outward. More than 1,000 hours of service were given back to the broader community this year. Residents and team members supported local organizations, schools, and initiatives that strengthen the region we call home. Sunnyside has always believed that being part of a community means contributing to it.

There is also a quieter kind of impact that rarely finds its way into a report. The gift of giving offered so that a neighbor can remain in the place they call home or extended to a team member who has been met with an immediate need. These moments may never appear fully in charts or statistics, but they are among the clearest reflections of who we are. They are the natural outcomes of a community that has chosen, again and again, to value people above all else.

What you will find in the pages ahead reflects that shared commitment to community and relationships. Not just in what has been accomplished, but in the spirit in which it has been done. This is impact that can be measured, and impact that cannot. It is visible, and it is deeply felt. It is built over time, and it is renewed each day.

Joshua O. "Josh" Lyons
President & CEO, Sunnyside Communities

James J. Rowe
Board Chair, Sunnyside Communities

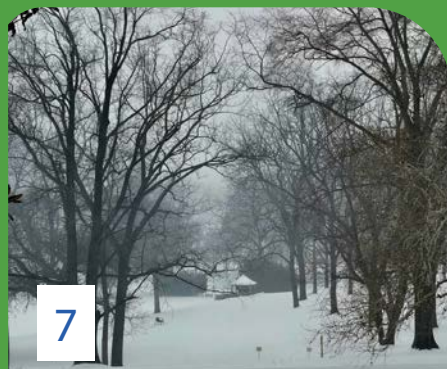
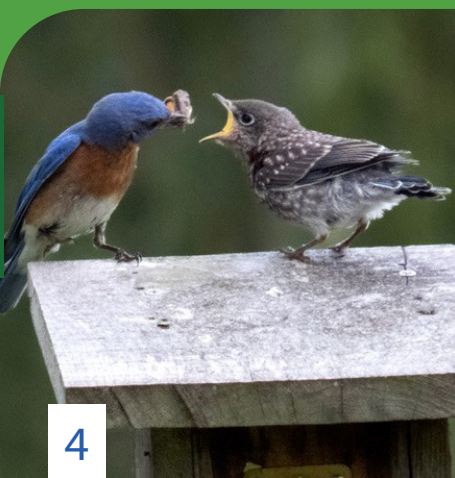


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Stay up-to-date with all of the happenings at
Sunnyside, King's Grant and Summit Square!

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Notes from the Bluebird Trail at Sunnyside

BY ERICA TURMAN

Walk into Gail Fisher's cottage at Sunnyside and bluebirds are everywhere.

Bluebirds on the wall. Bluebirds on the shelves. Bluebirds perched on the welcome sign beside the door. It feels less like decorating and more like a thesis statement.

Gail greets visitors with a grin. Light pours into the living space she and her husband Jim created after

moving to campus in June 2021. What was once a deck is now glass and sky, the Shenandoah Valley rolling out in front of them.

They traded decades in Cape May County, New Jersey for this view. They used to camp in the region for fun. Now they are here for good.



Gail's bird story did not begin at Sunnyside. Long before retirement she was a purple martin landlord in New Jersey, mentored by the founder of the New Jersey Bluebird Society. That mentorship grew into banding nestlings, managing trails, and eventually coordinating efforts countywide. She learned how to place boxes, how to monitor responsibly, and how to think like both prey and predator.

One year, just before she left New Jersey, a bluebird she banded was found in Nova Scotia after a storm forced it north. Someone read the tag, reported it to the federal bird banding lab in Maryland, and the data circled back to her. A small metal ring had mapped a life across state lines and into Atlantic wind.

When Gail arrived at Sunnyside, she found bird boxes already scattered across campus, remnants of earlier resident-led efforts to support bluebirds. Some were built from leftover wood used to create tree

identification signs. Residents had mounted them on trees and posts. They had heart. They did not always have predator guards.

In recent years, an "Adopt a Birdhouse" program led by residents helped keep many of those nest boxes active and built additional ones, laying the groundwork for a healthy bluebird population. Gail was able to build on that foundation.

She went to the Green Committee. She connected with Cindy Westley, Master Naturalist and resident force of nature. Together they took inventory, removed boxes that were beyond repair, and asked the campus woodworkers, affectionately known as the Termites, to salvage what they could. Gail sourced proper poles and predator guards. With no formal funding stream at first, she opened a small account. Donations quietly appeared.

Now there are five active trails and roughly 45 boxes across campus. Many are scattered along the golf course property Sunnyside owns, wide stretches of mowed grass that bluebirds love. That landscape is prime real estate. Open ground for hunting insects. Clear sight lines. A nearby perch for the male to guard while the female incubates. A shrub within fifty yards so fledglings have somewhere to disappear when they make their first terrifying leap.

Bluebirds are methodical. The female builds her nest from pine straw or grass. She lays one egg each morning, usually five in a clutch. Incubation does not begin until the final egg is laid, ensuring the hatchlings emerge together. Fourteen days later, the eggs crack open. Both parents feed the nestlings for about sixteen days. When the young leave the nest, it is called fledging. They do not return to the box. The adults continue

feeding them for roughly two more

weeks while they learn to navigate a world full of risk. If the season allows, the female may begin again. Two broods before summer closes.

During nesting season, five resident volunteers monitor the trails weekly. They log dates. They calculate hatch windows. They estimate fledging days. Each box is opened carefully from its side door, knowing that proper management requires vigilance.

Several of the boxes have cameras installed inside. A handful stream footage to nearby homes. One is hard wired directly into assisted living, broadcasting a live feed into the puzzle room so residents can watch blue eggs turn into living, blinking creatures. It is reality television without producers.

A safe nest box is not decorative. It must be mounted on a metal pole with a predator guard. It needs thick wooden walls, a wide roof, ventilation near the top, no perch to give predators leverage, drainage holes in the floor corners, and small interior grooves so fledglings can climb out. Details matter. A poorly designed box can

cost a brood its life.

Gail often climbs into her golf cart and makes a full loop of the property, taking inventory. She checks placements. She studies habitat. She points out paired boxes installed to reduce territorial conflict between bluebirds and tree swallows. Density must be managed carefully. Too many boxes invite competition and predators. Too few limit opportunities.

She does not sugarcoat the darker side. Invasive house sparrows can take over a box, crush eggs, kill nestlings, even attack the adult male defending his family. Monitoring sometimes means opening a nest box door without knowing what waits inside. Conservation is not sentimental. It is hands on and sometimes hard.

Still, there is wonder threaded through all of it.

There was a male bluebird across the street who learned the sound of Gail's front door. At a soft kissing noise, he would appear instantly for live mealworms during cold, wet spells when insects were scarce. He

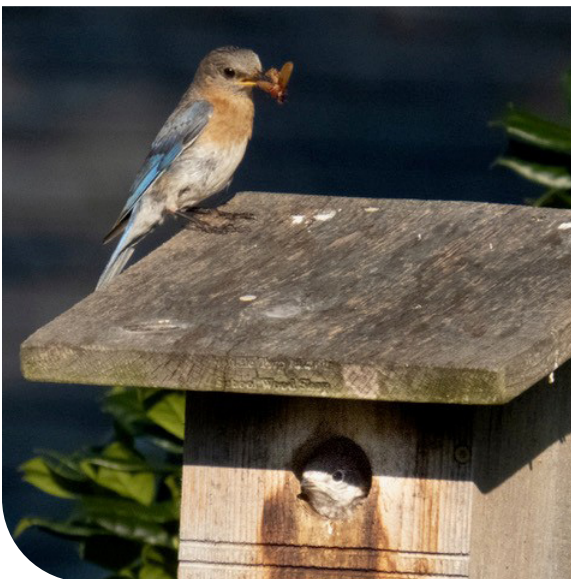
returned for three years. In bluebird terms, that is an epic run.

What Gail has built at Sunnyside is not just a trail system. It is an ecosystem supported by volunteers, funded through community partnership, and woven into daily life. Residents walk the golf course and glance at poles not as scenery but as active homes. Assisted living residents gather around a screen to watch hatchlings stretch their necks toward the light.

Those interested in learning more about bluebird conservation and responsible monitoring can explore additional resources through the Virginia Bluebird Society at www.virginiabluebirds.org/.

Spring is about to break open. The males will begin singing from the rooftops of their boxes. The females will inspect, decide, commit. Across campus, wooden doors will be opened carefully, notebooks in hand.

Retirement did not quiet Gail Fisher. It gave her acreage.



Steady Through the Storm

BY ERICA TURMAN

It was a cold winter. The kind that settles into your bones and lingers.



When one of the worst winter storms in recent memory swept through Virginia, roads closed, power flickered, and the rest of the world seemed to pause. Across all three Sunnyside Communities campuses, something else happened. Our teams leaned in.

At Sunnyside in Harrisonburg, Summit Square in Waynesboro, and King's Grant in Martinsville, staff stayed overnight, picked up extra shifts, brought sleeping bags, and checked on residents again, and again just to be sure. Dining teams improvised. Maintenance crews cleared paths before dawn. Nurses, caregivers, housekeepers, and leaders did whatever was needed, without hesitation.

While the storm raged outside, warmth held steady inside. Meals were shared. Laughter carried down hallways. Neighbors looked out for neighbors.

The weather tested us. Our people proved who we are.



Left to right: Allen Fretwell, Bo Madison, Gustavo Lopez





Judge James Rowe

Judge James Rowe brings a lifetime of public service to his role as board chair.

As Board Chair of Sunnyside Communities, James Rowe draws on decades of experience across the military, government, and the judiciary to help guide the organization's future.

His path to leadership was not a straight line.

Rowe's interest in law and public service began during his time in the military. After completing active duty, he moved to Washington, where he worked on Capitol Hill while pursuing his law degree at George Mason University School of Law. Balancing work and classes, he built the foundation for a career that would span both legislative and judicial service. He was later elected to the West Virginia Legislature, where he served four terms and fully expected to continue in that role after winning reelection to a fifth term. However, shifting dynamics within the Statehouse prompted him to reconsider his future in public service. When the opportunity arose to accept a judicial appointment as a Circuit Court Judge, he chose to step into a new chapter of leadership and service. During his years on the bench, Rowe became closely involved in initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of legal issues, including Drug Courts and Community

Corrections programs. These efforts focused not only on accountability, but also on providing individuals with the structure, support, and opportunities needed to create meaningful and lasting change in their lives.

"I've gotten the most satisfaction helping to develop programs that allow people to transform their lives," Rowe said, pointing to the impact of problem solving court models that support individuals working to rebuild stability and responsibility.

His experiences shaped a broader perspective on service.

"Every life has worth," he said. "Every individual is entitled to live the fullness of life." He believes that responsibility extends beyond the courtroom, applying to professional, volunteer, and everyday roles alike.

Rowe's connection to Sunnyside Communities is rooted in personal experience. He describes the organization as a "Godsend" for his parents, both of whom faced significant life challenges. In the years since, four additional members of his family have also been part of the community. When he was approached by Dick Lyons, the former President and CEO of Sunnyside Communities and father of current President and CEO Josh Lyons, Rowe said he saw it as an opportunity to give back. His role as board chair now focuses on governance and long term planning, helping to ensure Sunnyside Communities continues to serve residents and families across its campuses.

"I hope my service on the board has been a way to express my gratitude," he said.

With a career shaped by public service and a personal connection to the organization's mission, Rowe brings both experience and perspective to his leadership at Sunnyside Communities.



Sunnyside | King's Grant | Summit Square



GOODBYE SANDY LEVENGOOD

After nearly a decade of dedicated service, Sandra Levensgood, director of payroll and benefits for Sunnyside Communities, has retired. Her final day marked the close of a chapter defined not only by expertise, but by relationships, trust, and a deep commitment to others.

Levensgood joined Sunnyside in April 2016 and quickly found a workplace that felt like home. "This is the best job I have ever had," she said. "I love what I do, but just as importantly, I love the people."

Throughout her time in the corporate office, she played a key role in major initiatives, including the implementation of the organization's HRIS system, while also navigating the complexities of evolving ACA requirements. Still, what she valued most were the connections she built along the way.

"I hope people remember that I was always willing to go above and beyond to help them," she said.

Known for her steady presence and care for others, Levensgood became a trusted resource for employees across the organization. In retirement, she is looking forward to more time with family and the freedom of a flexible schedule.

She leaves behind a legacy of professionalism, kindness, and quiet excellence. She will be deeply missed and always remain part of the Sunnyside story.

RACHEL SEAL, Senior HR Specialist

Sunnyside Communities is pleased to welcome Rachel Seal as Senior HR Specialist in the Corporate Office.

Rachel joins the team following the retirement of Sandra Levensgood in early 2026 and brings with her both prior experience at Sunnyside and a deep appreciation for the organization's culture. Having first worked at Sunnyside in 2019, Rachel describes her return as a full circle moment, noting that the people and sense of community stayed with her long after she left.

Her professional background is rooted in Human Resources, where she began as a Generalist and later advanced into HR Management, leading a department of one while also serving as a Safety Manager. This experience shaped her well rounded and thoughtful approach, with a strong understanding of how people, processes, and workplace culture intersect.

Rachel is particularly passionate about building relationships and believes that meaningful employee support begins with truly knowing the individuals behind each role. She is also looking forward to continuing to expand her knowledge, particularly in the payroll aspects of her position.

Rachel is excited to reconnect with familiar faces and build new relationships across the organization.





RHONDA JONES, Corporate Accountant

Rhonda Jones brings years of accounting experience to her role, along with a personal connection to Sunnyside Communities that began long before she joined the team. Her grandparents moved to the Highlands in the 1990s, making this work feel especially meaningful. She is drawn to the structure and purpose behind finance, seeing it as a way to help steward Sunnyside forward with care and stability. In her role, she oversees Fixed Assets and supports the Accounts Payable team, often found working through financial reporting, reconciling accounts, and partnering closely with her team.

Since joining Sunnyside, one of the most meaningful surprises has been meeting team members who still remember her grandmother, creating a sense of continuity that feels deeply personal. Known as dependable, supportive, and resilient, Rhonda takes pride in improving processes and solving problems along the way. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time outdoors, whether hiking, swimming, or exploring the mountains. Her story is grounded in perspective and gratitude, shaped by both her experiences and a strong sense of faith.

MARLENA DESKINS, Health Care Life Enrichment Coordinator

Marlena Deskins brings more than two decades of experience supporting others to her role as Life Enrichment Coordinator at King's Grant. Before joining King's Grant, she spent 20 years working with youth and families at the Boys & Girls Club in Martinsville and later supported victims of domestic violence and sexual assault at a local women's shelter. Her passion for older adults, however, began much earlier through visits to the nursing home where her mother worked, an experience that shaped her desire to create meaningful connections and provide compassionate support to residents.

In her role, Marlena focuses on creating engaging activities, encouraging social connection, and helping residents continue doing the things they love. She is known for her warmth, energy, and dedication to making residents feel seen and valued each day. Since joining King's Grant, one of the things that has impacted her most is the strong sense of teamwork and support among staff. Outside of work, Marlena enjoys camping, fishing, traveling, and spending time outdoors with her husband and young son.





JASON GRAY, Summit Square Dining Services Director

Sunnyside Communities is pleased to welcome Jason Gray to the team at Summit Square as the Dining Director.

Jason brings with him a unique and diverse professional background that spans military service, emergency response, and nearly two decades in information technology, most recently at Duke University, where he served as an IT service desk manager. While his career path was stable and successful, Jason recognized a desire for something more creative and personally fulfilling.

That realization led him in an entirely new direction.

What began as baking cakes from scratch in his spare time quickly grew into a deeper passion. Encouraged by those around him, Jason made the decision to pursue culinary arts, enrolling at Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College at age fifty-one. There, he immersed himself in a traditional culinary program, gaining a strong foundation in technique, flavor, and presentation, while also serving as Vice President of the Student Government Association and leading the competition cooking team.

Following graduation, Jason gained experience in several well regarded Asheville restaurants, including Chestnut and Corner Kitchen, before joining the Biltmore Estate. During his time there, he worked across multiple culinary environments, from banquets to line cooking, and was later selected as a personal chef for a member of the Cecil family.

Throughout his culinary journey, one thing remained constant. His appreciation for the connection between food and the people it serves.

Jason was drawn to Summit Square for that very reason. He saw an opportunity to combine his culinary expertise with a more personal, relationship driven approach to hospitality.

Now based in Staunton, Jason is settling into his role with a strong focus on both quality and connection. He is passionate about mentoring his team, supporting growth at every level, and helping create a dining experience that reflects care, consistency, and attention to detail.

Jason is especially excited to be part of a community where he can build relationships with residents and contribute to an environment where dining is not just about the meal, but about the experience.

JENNIFER WAYNE, Assisted Living Administrator, Sunnyside

Jennifer Wayne brings a diverse background in finance, law, and healthcare, with experience spanning accounts payable and receivable, business administration, purchasing, and personal injury law. Her path into senior living began in a clinical setting assisting a traveling wound care nurse, where she discovered a meaningful connection to serving older adults. Drawn to Sunnyside Communities' mission and history, Jennifer found her transition into healthcare felt both natural and certain. "Once you find a career that washes over you like the warm sun on a cool day, you know," she shared.

In her role, Jennifer supports both residents and team members while strengthening the systems that keep the community running smoothly. She brings a thoughtful, collaborative leadership style rooted in trust, compassion, and clear communication.

"Numbers tell a story," Jennifer said. "But at the end of the day, this work is about people."

Since joining Sunnyside, she has been especially moved by the sense of community. "It truly feels like a village," she said.

Outside of work, Jennifer enjoys spending time with her family and exploring the Shenandoah Valley.



The Art of Getting It Right

BY ERICA TURMAN

There is a difference between good and exceptional. You feel it immediately.

It is in the way someone greets you by name.

*In the quiet confidence of a
nurse who knows exactly what to do.*

*In a dining room where the lighting
is soft, the plate is thoughtful,
and the conversation lingers.*

In 2026, Sunnyside Communities received national recognition from Activated Insights with the Customer Experience Award across all three campuses, Sunnyside in Harrisonburg, Summit Square in Waynesboro, and King's Grant in Martinsville. Based on confidential interviews with residents and families, this honor places each recognized service area among the top fifteen percent of care providers nationwide.

Statistics only tell part of the story. Texture tells the rest.

Care, Elevated

In Skilled Nursing at each campus, residents spoke of nursing care that inspires confidence, cleanliness that feels effortless, and therapy that restores both strength and spirit. They named dignity. They named respect. They named responsiveness. They described an experience that felt not institutional, but intentional.

In Assisted Living, personal care was not simply adequate. It was attentive. Dining was not routine. It was considered. Communication was clear. Concerns were addressed with care. Activities felt vibrant. The move in process felt human.

In Independent Living, residents highlighted dining, transportation, programming, and the ease with which questions are resolved. Many said they would recommend their community to others, which may be the most meaningful endorsement of all.

The Details Make the Difference

These awards span the visible and the invisible. Nursing care and professional therapy. Housekeeping and laundry. Transportation and activities. Communication and response. Admission and move in. Food that satisfies. Spaces that shine.

Excellence here is not theatrical. It is practiced.

It is a housekeeper who notices the smallest detail. A therapist who celebrates the first unaided step. A server who remembers your favorite table. An executive director who pauses long enough to truly listen.

The recognition is national. The impact is deeply personal.

At Sunnyside Communities, across every level of living, the experience is not accidental. It is curated through consistency, compassion, and a refusal to settle for ordinary.

When residents themselves say it feels exceptional, that is the only review that truly matters.



Fitness for the Mind:

Inside Sunnyside's Brain Gym AI Launch



View BrainGym
AI in action!

BY ERICA TURMAN

When the Broaddus Vitality Center first opened its doors, it was more than a new space. It was a meaningful extension of our wellness culture. A commitment to never rest on our laurels, even though our success at providing award winning wellness programming had been proven time and time again. From the beginning, the vision was clear. Wellness would not be static. It would evolve.

"For me, it was never just about opening a building," said Annie Shaffer, Director of Wellness. "When the Vitality Center came to life, I kept asking myself what more we could offer. How do we stay ahead. How do we continue to challenge what wellness can look like for our residents."

That question has now led Sunnyside into new territory. Sunnyside is only the second senior living community in the country to introduce BrainGymAI, an innovative cognitive engagement platform designed to strengthen, challenge, and support the mind through personalized experiences. More notably, it is the first to place it directly into the hands of residents from the very beginning. From the moment BrainGymAI arrived, it became part of daily life.

"That mattered to us," Shaffer said. "We did not want this to be something that lived on the sidelines or felt clinical. We wanted residents to engage with it immediately, to explore it, to make it their own."

Cognitive changes rarely happen all at once. They emerge gradually, often disguised as small shifts. A missed step in a familiar routine. A hobby that quietly fades into the background.. BrainGymAI meets residents in those moments, but it is just as powerful long before then. It reframes cognitive wellness as something active. Something practiced.

"This is not about reacting," Shaffer explained. "It is about staying engaged. About giving residents tools that keep their minds moving, curious, and

confident. That has always been the goal!"

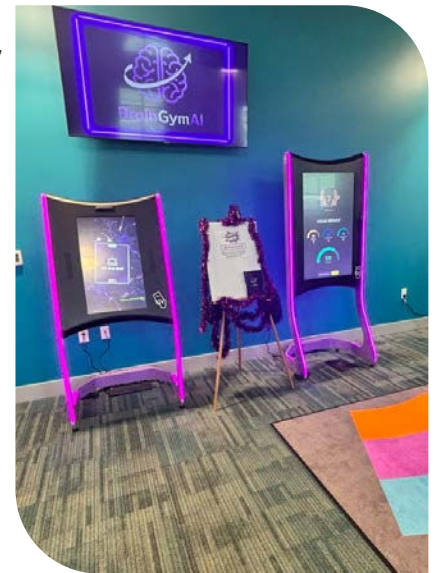
At the center of the platform is Coco, a built-in guide that helps residents navigate their experience, track progress, and understand how their engagement translates into real outcomes. It brings structure without

rigidity. Feedback without pressure. What emerges is not just participation, but ownership. Residents begin to see patterns. To recognize growth. To reconnect with a sense of capability that is often underestimated in conversations about aging. That shift, subtle as it may seem, is where the real impact lives.

"There is something powerful about watching someone realize they are still learning, still improving," Shaffer said. "You can see their curiosity, their drive to keep improving and their excitement for learning. There is a confidence that builds."

For Sunnyside, this step forward is not about adopting technology for the sake of it. It is about alignment. A continuation of a philosophy that has long defined the community. Wellness is not one dimensional. It is layered, evolving, and deeply personal. The introduction of BrainGymAI simply adds a deeper element to that belief.

"We have always said that wellness is about the whole person," Shaffer said. "Physical, social, spiritual, vocational, emotional, intellectual and now even more intentionally, cognitive. This is just the next step in honoring that."



Sunnyside...**COMMUNITY NEWS**

A New Chapter at Highlands Dining



Construction has officially begun on the Highlands dining venues, marking a significant milestone in one of Sunnyside's most anticipated campus enhancements. Demolition is complete across much of the existing dining space. Ceilings, bulkheads, and major systems have been removed, opening the area for a full reconfiguration. Crews have also begun early work on the terrace, greenhouse, and the footprint for a planned addition, with excavation expected to follow. Despite the scale of the project, daily operations have continued without interruption. Dining services have been successfully relocated to a temporary space in Blue Ridge/Alleghany Rooms, where residents are still being served three meals a day. According to team members, residents have responded with patience and flexibility throughout the transition, helping ensure a smooth shift during construction.

The project is being led in partnership with Harrisonburg Construction, whose team is currently overseeing site work and preparing for the next phase. Structural steel installation is expected to begin in the coming weeks, along with continued progress on exterior elements of the build. A notable aspect of the project is the intentional effort to repurpose materials. Furniture, fixtures, and equipment from the original dining venues have been redistributed across campus and into the community, reducing waste while extending their usefulness. Construction updates will continue to be shared regularly as the project progresses.

Rob Cook Retires

After 46 years, Rob Cook, building maintenance manager at Sunnyside, retired on May 19, leaving behind a legacy built on service, relationships and heart.

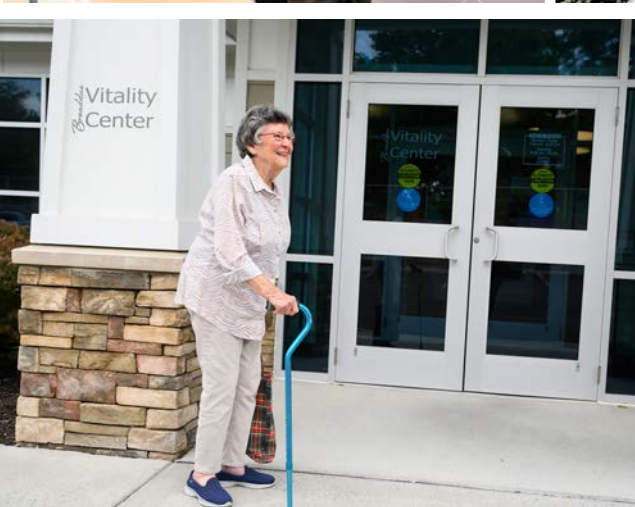
In this special conversation, Rob sits down with Robert Shenk and Nancy Wayland to reflect on the decades he spent at Sunnyside, what has changed over the years, what has stayed the same and why family has always been at the center of this community.



*Seated left to right: Rob Cook, Robert Shenk
Standing: Nancy Wayland*



Listen to Rob's story
here!



King's Grant Awarded CMS Grant to Launch Immersive Empathy Training Program

King's Grant Retirement Community has been awarded a Civil Money Penalty Reinvestment Program (CMPRP) grant to implement Immersive Empathy, an innovative training initiative designed to enhance understanding, compassion, and quality of care for older adults.

Funded through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, CMP grants reinvest penalty funds into programs that improve resident care and outcomes. Through this opportunity, King's Grant joins a select group of Virginia communities participating in a statewide effort to elevate care through advanced training and technology.

At the center of the program is a virtual, first-person learning experience developed in partnership with Embodied Labs. Using virtual reality and web-based immersive modules, team members step into the perspective of older adults experiencing conditions such as dementia, vision and hearing loss, and social isolation. The goal is to build deeper empathy, strengthen communication, and improve the overall care experience.

Research behind the program shows meaningful impact, including increased confidence among staff, stronger communication skills, and a measurable reduction in caregiver stress.

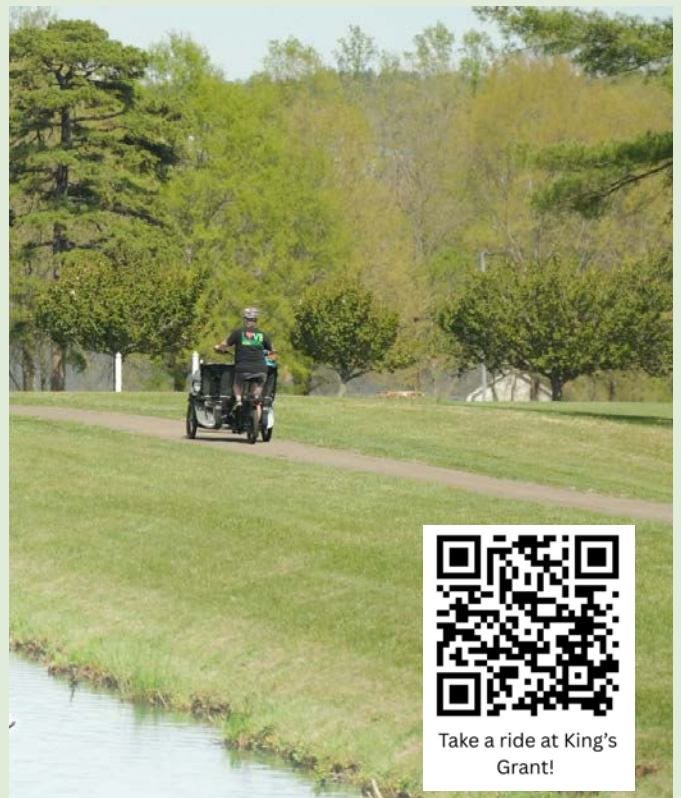
Over the course of the program, King's Grant will work to train at least 50 percent of its staff through these immersive modules, creating a shared foundation of understanding across the team.

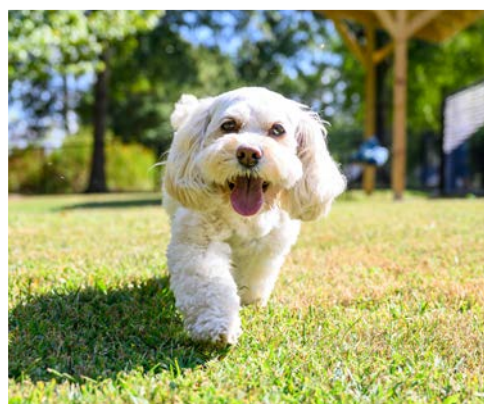
The initiative builds on King's Grant's long standing commitment to innovation in memory care and whole person wellness. By combining advanced technology with hands-on training, the community continues to lead with intention, ensuring residents are met not only with clinical excellence, but with empathy, dignity, and connection.

A Trishaw for Residents

This winter, King's Grant became the first of the three Sunnyside Communities campuses to purchase a trishaw for residents. As soon as warmer weather arrived, residents and staff eagerly took to the scenic trails across campus, enjoying a bicycle built for two or more that proves adventure has no age limit. The excitement around the program has continued to grow across the organization. During the Great Community Give, Sunnyside in Harrisonburg came together in a powerful way to help raise funds to purchase a trishaw for Sunnyside residents, raising more than \$12,000 during the highly successful giving event.

In this video, take a ride alongside King's Grant resident Kara Lisa as she enjoys a joyful afternoon with Life Enrichment Director Sharon Shepherd, sharing laughter, fresh air, and the simple freedom of the open trail.





Summit Square... **COMMUNITY NEWS**

Summit Square wrapped up its largest food drive yet at the end of 2025, and the impact was something to celebrate. Under the thoughtful leadership of Brad Wyant, Summit Square's Social Worker, and his steady heart for serving others, the community came together in a remarkable way. Residents, staff, and friends donated 360 pounds of pantry staples along with thirty turkeys, enough to provide 280 meals for families in need throughout the greater Waynesboro area.

This effort reflected the generous spirit that defines Summit Square. To everyone who gave, shared, or helped spread the word, thank you. Your kindness reached far beyond the campus and made a meaningful difference for neighbors in the greater community.



In April, Summit Square residents enjoyed a charming High Tea experience that brought a touch of elegance to the spring season. Tables were set with classic tea service, complete with delicate cups, fresh pastries made by Summit Square staff, and a variety of teas to enjoy. Residents gathered to sip, savor, and spend time together, sharing stories and laughter in a setting that felt both timeless and special. It was a simple but meaningful way to celebrate community, connection, and a moment of everyday luxury.



"This honor belongs to everyone who calls Summit Square home," Executive Director Matt Dameron added. "It's the daily moments of kindness and connection that make all the difference."





Summit Square is always buzzing with activity. Visit our Facebook page and check out some of the fun happening around campus!

WHAT LOVE LEAVES BEHIND

Links of Love and the Legacy of Care

BY ERICA TURMAN/JEN DUVON

Not every act of care arrives loudly. Some forms of love are built slowly over time, carried not in grand gestures, but in consistency. In habits. In sacrifices quietly made. In the instinct to make certain another person feels safe, seen, and supported.

The influence of that kind of care rarely disappears. It reshapes itself. It moves outward.

At Sunnyside Communities, that continuation often takes tangible form through the Fellowship Fund and through longstanding efforts like Links of Love, a ministry partnership that for fifty years has helped ensure residents are not asked to leave the place they call home because of financial hardship beyond their control.

Links of Love began in 1976, when Bessie “B” Lewis and Jerry Close invited Presbyterian congregations to participate in something modest but enduring. Give a dollar. Become part of a chain of support. Help preserve dignity for older adults in need. The Presbyterian Women of the Synod of the Mid Atlantic responded with steady commitment, and over time, that quiet act of generosity became something larger than a fundraiser. It became a promise.

Its impact is often most visible in moments of uncertainty. When savings are exhausted unexpectedly. When circumstances shift. When stability feels fragile. In those moments, the structures of care remain intact. Residents continue living within the familiarity of community, relationships, and routine.

There is a practical side to this work, but also something deeply symbolic within it.

Cindy Noftsinger, development director, reflects, “Many gifts are made in honor of someone who shaped a life in quiet but lasting ways. Those gifts carry that influence forward. They allow one person’s legacy of care to become part of someone else’s stability.”

That idea sits at the heart of both Links of Love and the Fellowship Fund. Love is not confined to a single relationship or moment. It is transferable. It can be extended outward, creating conditions in which others are supported in ways that feel both immediate and lasting.

Mother’s Day and Father’s Day often invite reflection on the people who first taught us what care looked like. A parent’s influence lingers long after childhood, appearing in the small decisions and instincts that quietly shape a life. For many, giving becomes one way to honor that inheritance. Not as an ending, but as a continuation of something first received.

For more than a century, Sunnyside Communities has held to a belief that community carries responsibility. Care is not transactional. Belonging is not conditional. The commitment to residents extends beyond circumstance.

Fifty years after it began, Links of Love remains rooted in that same conviction. It does not rely on visibility or recognition. It continues because individuals, across generations, have chosen to participate in something larger than themselves.

The original act of care remains present, reshaped and passed on.



Scan here to give a
Mother's Day/
Father's Day gift online.



Celebrating a Legacy of Generosity Through Emerald Hour

This spring, Sunnyside Communities celebrated the generosity and lasting impact of Evergreen Fellowship members through a series of special donor appreciation gatherings held across all three campuses. Known as Emerald Hour, these members only events were created to recognize individuals whose steadfast support of the Fellowship Fund continues to strengthen the lives of residents throughout Sunnyside, Summit Square, and King's Grant.

Hosted by the Development team, each gathering offered an opportunity for fellowship, gratitude, and reflection among many of the communities' most dedicated supporters. Several guests in attendance have faithfully supported Sunnyside Communities for decades, with some giving for more than 35 years.

The Fellowship Fund provides meaningful financial assistance to residents in times of need, helping ensure that compassion, care, and community remain at the heart of the organization's mission. Membership in the Evergreen Fellowship is extended to individuals who have contributed \$10,000 or more in cumulative giving to Sunnyside Communities.

Emerald Hour gatherings at Sunnyside, Summit Square, and King's Grant served as a heartfelt reminder that the strength of these communities is deeply rooted in the generosity of those who continue to give back year after year.

Individuals who believe they qualify for Evergreen Fellowship membership but have not yet been contacted are encouraged to reach out to the Director of Development, Cindy Noftsinger, at cnoftsinger@sunnyside.cc.



The Woman Who Kept Saying *Yes*

BY ERICA TURMAN



Meet the resident behind the story!



On a recent afternoon at King's Grant, in an apartment painted a particular shade of yellow that once belonged to a house in Henry, Virginia, Anne Hartman sat near a window and began, as she has likely begun many conversations in her life, at the beginning.

"Originally, Charlotte, North Carolina," she said.

Anne has the calm composure of someone who has made peace with a long string of relocations. She grew up in Charlotte and met her husband, John, at Wingate College, just outside the city. He was from Roanoke. She speaks of their meeting as providential, not accidental. "We felt like God did that," she said, the way some people say we met at a party.

They married in 1964. From there, their life became a series of addresses.

Roanoke. West Virginia. Virginia Beach. Back to Roanoke. St. Louis. Cleveland. Back to St. Louis. Back to Cleveland again. Finally, retirement brought them to Smith Mountain Lake.

The list sounds exhausting when recited aloud. Anne does not present it that way.

"It wasn't really easy," she said. "But, I knew what I needed to do."

Her husband worked for the railroad. Transfers came with little warning and less negotiation. Each move meant new schools for their two daughters, new churches, new neighbors, and new jobs. Before each relocation, Anne would cry. Then, almost without fail, she would find herself loving the place she had dreaded.

When John told her that they were moving to Cleveland, she cried "my eyes out." She did not know much about the city and imagined gray skies and distance from everything familiar. Instead, she discovered Lake

Erie, sailing, and a banking career that would eventually make her a senior vice president. "It was hard to leave," she said, as if still slightly surprised by that fact.

Anne's first degree was in math and French. She loved both, but she did not want to teach. In St. Louis, a principal once told her that if she would just finish her teaching degree, he would hire her immediately. She tried. One semester back in education courses convinced her it was not the path.

A professor suggested business.

At the time, it was not an obvious choice for a woman with two children who moved every few years. "This was something women didn't do a lot of at that time," she said.

She earned a degree in business administration from the University of Missouri–St. Louis and took a job at McDonnell Douglas, working with engineers on the F-15 fighter jet. It was a position the company had never hired a woman to fill. She loved airplanes. An uncle had helped start Piedmont Airlines, and the hum of aviation felt familiar.

The barriers were not abstract. When she later interviewed at a Ford plant in Cleveland, the hiring manager told her they did not even have women's restrooms. "They didn't hire women," she said, not with outrage but with clarity.

So, she pivoted to banking. Health care, teaching, banking—those were the professions she decided could move with John's railroad career. She joined a bank in Cleveland and entered its management training program as the first woman to do so. She remembers giving a cost saving presentation to a room of eight bank presidents. "Men," she added, with a small pause. She eventually rose

to senior vice president, a title she mentions without flourish, as if it were simply the logical conclusion of showing up and doing the work.

Through all the relocations, her daughters adapted with a resilience that still amazes her. "They were good sports," she said. She remembers being struck by their lack of tears when leaving friends behind. Anne did not work outside the home until they were nearly in middle school. In those early years, she was a Girl Scout leader and a steady presence. Later, she balanced corporate responsibility with motherhood and church life.

Church was a constant throughout.

Every time they moved, the pattern was the same. John would find a house. Anne would evaluate it. They would move in. Then they would look for a church. They worked with children and youth groups in nearly every congregation. John served as chairman of the deacons more than once. "We just wanted to serve God," she said.

Sixteen years ago, that partnership changed.

After retiring to Smith Mountain Lake, drawn by their love of boating, Anne and John moved closer to their younger daughter and son in law in Henry, Virginia. They bought an acre from them and began building a house. During construction, John was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia.

Anne's sister's husband had died from the same illness a decade earlier. They had never heard of it until then.

The signs were subtle at first. A crash in the garage after forgetting to open the door. A moment on the boat when John, once capable of sailing in a storm, seemed disoriented. A friend quietly urging Anne to get him to a doctor. Eventually, a physician familiar with the disease confirmed it.

He lived three years after the diagnosis. For most of that time, Anne cared for him at home. She was teaching Bible study, managing the household, and watching the man who had navigated rail schedules and church committees slowly lose his bearings. The final three months were spent in a memory care unit in Salem, a long drive from Henry but a place where, she said, "they were so good."

Caregiving took a toll. She does not dramatize it, but she acknowledges the weight. In her journal, she wrote to God, sometimes unsure whether to keep going. Those journal entries, shared in emails with a cousin who asked regularly how she was doing, eventually became a book.

A cousin read the emails and told her, "You have got to write this in a book."

The book is titled *Though He Slay Me*, taken from the Book of Job. It is a phrase that captures both defiance and surrender. John, she said, remained devoted to his faith even as his mind failed him. Years later, a woman who had been in their youth group in St. Louis wrote to Anne's daughter on Facebook. She described the impact Anne and John had on her life. She was now married to a pastor. "You don't know who you're helping," Anne said. "You just don't know."

Nearly two years ago, Anne faced another decision.

Her son in law suggested she begin looking at senior living communities while she was in good health. She visited friends in South Carolina, who had recently moved into a similar community. When she asked them for the pros and cons, they answered almost in unison, "There are no cons."

She toured several places. One had too many views of parking lots. "I want scenery," she said. King's Grant offered trees, familiarity, and friends she already knew from church. She chose an apartment, not a cottage. "If I was going to do that, I would have stayed in my house," she said.

She prayed for two years before deciding.

Now she leads Bible study here, as she has done since she was 20 years old. She serves on the Resident Council. She participates in GriefShare, a grief recovery support group, at church and speaks to those who have lost spouses. When asked what she would want people to understand about grief, she answered without hesitation: "Depend on Jesus and God to help you get through it."

On a side table in her apartment are printed Bible verses she hands to people. Ephesians 2:10. Philippians 1:6. She recites them as if they are coordinates.

The yellow walls are the same Sherwin Williams shades she chose when she built her house in 2006. The paint numbers have not changed. The plants by the window will go back outside in warmer weather. Her daughter and son in law visit every Wednesday before church.

"I told Him," she said, referring to God, "I'll serve you anywhere."

In a life marked by departures—Charlotte, Roanoke, Cleveland, St. Louis, the lake, the house in Henry, the husband she lost—Anne Hartman's story is less about where she lived than about how she responded. Each move, each promotion, each illness, each grief has been met the same way: with a quiet, persistent yes. Now, in the apartment painted to match a house that no longer belongs to her, that "yes" continues.

The Long Way, Well Lived

BY ERICA TURMAN



interview and more like a conversation you do not want to end.

From there, his story unfolds the way good stories do. Not in a straight line, but through memory, laughter, and the quiet moments that shaped a life well lived.

He was born in New Jersey in 1929, the same year the country slipped into the Great Depression. When Bob was ten years old, his family moved south to Martinsville, Virginia, following the first steady work his father could find. Martinsville became the place that raised him. It gave him his footing, his people, and his sense of home.

Baseball was his first love. He played throughout Little League and high school and was good enough to earn a tryout with a St. Louis Cardinals farm team in Lynchburg. They offered him a minor league contract. It was real and within reach. But by then, Bob was already thinking about something else.

Martha.

Bob met Martha while working at the Rives Theatre concession stand. He still likes to joke that he always charged her full price. They married in 1949. Bob remembers the length of their marriage down to the day. Seventy three years, three months, and twenty days.

On their wedding day, Bob went home from the church to change clothes. His brother in law and two of his wedding ushers offered to drive him. Somewhere along the way, they stopped in the middle of the woods. True to his prankster nature,

If you did not know Bob Frank was 97, you would never guess it. He speaks with wit and humor, his mind moving quickly from one idea to the next. He knows a lot about a lot of things. History, investing, baseball, people. He listens closely, remembers details, and delivers stories with a humor that lands just when you least expect it.

Bob has lived long enough to see the world change many times over, but he has never stopped paying attention to it. Curiosity has stayed with him. So has his sense of humor. Sitting with Bob feels less like an

the brother in law tied Bob up and left him there. Bob laughs now when he tells the story, saying he was kidnapped on his wedding day. He was not tied very tight and managed to get himself loose in about ten minutes, but his mother-in-law was furious. Martha, though, took it in good spirit. Bob still has a photograph from that day. It remains one of his favorite memories.

Bob chose marriage over baseball. He chose steadiness over uncertainty. He never signed the contract, though he played semi pro ball on weekends for several years. Eventually, life carried him forward and he let the game go without regret.

Bob built his career with the telephone company, working first in Martinsville and later transferring to Charlottesville. He worked hard and admits now that he probably worked too much. Still, he provided. When the company reorganized, Bob retired early so a younger colleague with children could keep his job. He walked away at 56, ready for something different.

Bob now had more time to pursue his "second profession." Bob had bought his first stock in his early twenties, borrowing money from his aunt at a time when most people around him did not even understand what stock was. Over the years, investing became both discipline and companion. Bob has now lived more than forty years in retirement, supported by his own decisions and his lifelong curiosity. He still manages his investments himself. He still pays attention.

After learning they could not have biological children Bob and Martha adopted two children. Their daughter came to them as an infant on New Year's Eve in a Richmond hotel. Their son was adopted at seven weeks old. Years later, their son was killed at nineteen in an unsolved homicide. It is a loss Bob carries quietly, one that reshaped everything that came after.

In 2011, Bob and Martha moved to Summit Square. They toured other communities, including King's Grant, and people still joke with Bob about why he did not choose to live closer to Martinsville. Bob laughs when he answers. He says the problem with King's Grant was that he already knew everyone. Martinsville would always be home, but Summit Square offered something different. A fresh start. The Valley itself captured their hearts, and Summit Square felt just the right size. Small enough to feel known. Large enough to feel new.

Bob thought he might live there five years. He has now been there nearly fifteen.

Step into Bob's office and you will see what matters to him. On the wall are photographs of Summit Square staff. Faces he sees every day. Faces he trusts. Among them is Sara Johnson, the first face most people meet at Summit Square. Bob watched her grow up. He talks about her the way a grandfather might. She has become, in his words, an adopted granddaughter.

There are other photographs too. Dining staff who took Bob out for ice cream after Martha died. Simple kindnesses offered when he needed them most. Bob keeps those faces close. They remind him that grief does not have to be carried alone.

Bob believes Summit Square added years to his life. He believes connection matters. He believes curiosity keeps you alive. He believes laughter is necessary and that you should never go to bed angry.

Bob Frank has lived nearly a century. He has known joy and heartbreak, chance and choice. He has traveled the long way and arrived somewhere that feels like home. And if you sit with him long enough, you may find your story woven quietly into his own.

Community and Connection

BY GRACIE MOYERS

Being sure to get her 6,000 steps in, every day since 1999, the first floor halls of The Highlands have been walked by long-time resident Marvel Dunn.

Dunn along with her husband Martin, known as “the M & M’s,” moved to Sunnyside from Bradenton, FL, 27 years ago. Martin had just undergone his fifth bypass surgery, and they wanted to move closer to their family.

When choosing their new home, the Dunn’s decided on an apartment in the Highlands rather than a cottage. They moved into their one-bedroom apartment and never looked back.

“We thought the Highlands would give us the best chance of meeting people,” she shared.

They were right. From the very beginning, their life at Sunnyside was filled with connection.

“Once we moved in, we hardly ever ate dinner alone because we would eat with other couples,” Dunn said. “I kept a notebook and wrote down peoples names and what floor they lived on so that I could keep everyone straight.”

Today, Dunn still lives in that same apartment—still walking the same halls—but now, each step is layered with memories, friendships, and familiar faces.



“The beauty of living here is that you’ll go out in the hall, meet someone, and chat with them,” she said. “Then you’ll walk a little further down the hall and meet someone else.”

But it was during one of life’s most difficult moments that the true meaning of community revealed itself.

In 2005, Dunn lost both her son and grandson in a tragic airplane crash.

In the midst of unimaginable grief, she was not alone.

"People would stop and visit, invite us to eat, and offer their prayers," Dunn said. "We just had a real community around us."

That support, presence, and quiet kindness is what turned neighbors into something more.

"I've made a lot of wonderful friends," she said. "It's just been perfect."

As Dunn will holds on to the memories and connections that Sunnyside has given her, the halls of The Highlands will forever carry the imprint of her footsteps—27 years of walking and creating a life filled with community.

From the Ground Up

Throughout the years, Dunn has had a front-row seat at watching Sunnyside grow and evolve into the community it is today.

"When we moved in, the Glen was nothing but a cow pasture," Dunn said. "My husband worked for the dairy division in the department of agriculture, so we would walk down and look at the cows."

She has witnessed the construction of the Glen, the addition of the Chapel to the Corson building, the growth of the Village, and is now going through her third Highlands dining renovation.

Change continues right outside of the sliding doors in her living room, through the renovations of the green space in the middle of the Highlands.

What was once "Granddaddy's Putting Green" is now the Fountain on the Green—a refreshed space filled with new life and new memories waiting to be made.

"Everytime my grandkids would come to visit, they'd just have to go out and play putt putt," Dunn said.

Now, she plans to use the new putting green and is excited to use the pergola to read a good book or sit outside with her friends and family!

Volunteering

For 17 years, Dunn volunteered all around campus. From helping with gardening to setting up for resident games on the weekends, she was lending a hand in various departments.

"You can be as active as you want to be," Dunn said.

Dunn had a passion for volunteering, which she inherited from her dad. She started off helping out in the mailroom, where she would mail out the Funside before it went digital. From there, she took on more roles.

One volunteer opportunity, specifically, stuck with her.

"I loved helping in shipping and receiving," Dunn said. "I had such a good time and I genuinely looked forward to going over there to help."

Today, those connections remain.

Dunn stays in touch with each of the departments where she volunteered and says she's built wonderful relationships!

"The friendliness here is amazing," Dunn said. "Everyone is truly interested in what you're doing and it's just a very caring community."



Sunnyside Communities
MORE THAN A CENTURY OF CARING

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