



# The **Sunny Side** of Life

The monthly family/staff newsletter of  
Sunshine Meadows Retirement Community

400 S. Buhler Rd., Buhler, KS 67522

## **MOVING ON FROM GOOD TO GREAT. . .**

Some brief reflections on changes during 2022:

- Activities and dining arrangements were finally back to normal.
- Buhler Singers, FFA Club & Buhler Grade School students were able to come back on campus in December.
- Staffing still low; however, stable.
- Covid virus in the mix of all the viruses going around.
- Twice as many residents expired this year, versus the past two years.
- Census on campus at an all-time low, mostly in the independent apartments.
- Inflation: food costs, supplies, and insurance premiums continue to escalate.
- Invested reserves sadly reflect negative returns.

Even though a lot of this news isn't positive, we remain optimistic for the future. We are making some adjustments to help us line up stronger for 2023.

With this said, I am happy to announce that come January 1, Nathan Spencer will take over the responsibility as the licensed Administrator. What this means is he will oversee the licensed sections of the operations – Nursing Care, Assisted Living with all the rules and regulations, plus management of personnel, will fill his plate.

I will go part time, working 3 days a week during this coming year. My focus will be on oversight for marketing, fundraising, the MCU building project, Independent Living, strategy for the Wildflower Inn, plus a few other developing projects.

SMRC is fortunate to have a friendly workplace for our 130+ employees to offer their expertise, talents, and servant hearts. With Nathan at the helm, working with a strong team, SMRC will be positioned well, moving into the future.

Keith Pankratz, CEO

**We Welcomed:**

Vern A Carol B Karen K  
Lloyd and Verla E

**We Said Goodbye to:**

Naomi F Verla E  
Doris S Karan K  
Jim M Lloyd E

**Discharged:**

Sheila C Verla C Rita P  
Clarence P

**Resident Birthdays:**

Paul R	08	Reba J	20
Eleanor J	14	Kay N	27
Carol E	16	Joanne E	30
Tommie L	19	Irvin P	31

**Staff Birthdays:**

Jennifer Belcher	04
Suzie Parrott	06
Kaylie May	16
Melanie Koehn	18
Carolyn Reissig	21
Kristyne Burton	25
Nathan Spencer	27

**Sponsoring Churches/Board of Directors:**

Bethany Nazarene– open

Buhler Mennonite-Beth Schwabauer

Buhler MB– Sara Hunt, Mary Ellen Jantz, Charlotte Smith

Buhler Methodist- Open

Crossroads Christian– Open

Hoffnungsaus Mennonite- Louis Martens

Victorious Life- Open

At large- Cameron Kaufman, Mary Frazier, Ed Berger

**STAFF CONTACTS**

Keith Pankratz, CEO: keithp@sunshinemeadows.org

Nathan Spencer, Facility Director:

nathans@sunshinemeadows.org

Stacie Klassen, Marketing:

marketing@sunshinemeadows.org

Mariah Schrader, Human Resources:

hr@sunshinemeadows.org

Carla Barber, Funding: fund@sunshinemeadows.org

Londa Tipton, RN, Director of Nursing:

don@sunshinemeadows.org

Rachel Perry, LPN, Care Manager:

rperry@sunshinemeadows.org

Amanda Downtain, RN, AL Care Manager:

almanager@sunshinemeadows.org

Hazel Brott, LPN, MCU Care Manager:

hazelb@sunshinemeadows.org



When gifting clothes or blankets to residents, please take them to laundry to label, prior to gifting them. Laundry staff can only return clothes marked with the owner's name, so **PLEASE** mark them before giving them to your loved one.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

**EVENTS:** GALA will soon be here! See below; Help improve our Physical Therapy department, page 9; Have you visited the Wildflower Inn yet? Page 11

**FOOD:** Sunny's Specials, page 8; Senior Center Meals, page 10.

**SENIOR LIVING:** pages 7 & 12.

# SAVE the DATE!

Friday, March 3,  
2023

Doors open at 5p.m.; bingo begins & buffet line opens at 5:30; live auction begins at 7.

A delicious meal, bingo, live auction, fun with friends, and the chance to help the elders in our community suffering with dementia to see each day as a new adventure.

Please join us in celebrating

The  
Days  
of Our Lives

Sunshine  
Meadows'  
Annual Gala



*Every day is a  
new adventure.*

**The list of auction items & tickets  
will be available in February.**

*.A Daughter's Letter ... a waiting room for Heaven.*

Merry Christmas to all of you incredible Sunshine People!!!!

I have to start this off by telling you that I can't believe how much I'm missing visiting with so many of you. I'm not so sure you miss seeing area code (303) pop up on your phones and wondering, 'what does she want now?' I hope I wasn't too much of a nuisance! And to those of you who gave me your personal cell phone numbers, I hope you never regretted it! I still might leave you a message from time to time just for fun!

Thank You, Physical Therapy Peeps, for every single minute you spent with our sweet little mama! (with my brother, Gary, too!) You did amazing work in order to keep mama's body functioning and to keep her active as long as you did. Your work with her definitely kept her on this planet a little bit longer than she would have stayed without your help. Kelley – thank you from the bottom of our hearts for being our IT tech and helping Mom to be able to communicate with the outside world. All of our lives would have been devastated on such a deep level had we not been able to see and talk with our little mama. Hopefully someday in the future, all rooms will be set up with Alexa-Echo type equipment so every family can have this special advantage of visiting with loved ones! Thank you Denise (Kelley) for your beautiful commitment with mom and pushing her at times when she didn't think she wanted to move her body... but you gave her just the right amount of persistence to keep trying and to keep her body physically moving... mentally too! I remember it was only a few years back when I was visiting, and Mom and I were both on the exercise bicycles. I seriously could not believe how capable she was of maneuvering it, along with how long she was able to stick with it! What a great memory! When I come across this video, I'll forward it to you! Mostly – thank you for loving this sweet little lady as much as you did. Your kindness and your big hearts helped her to keep motivated in life because she truly knew that she was loved by you!

Thank you, Assisted Living Peeps, for everything you did for our sweet little mama when she first moved into Sunshine. It didn't take long at all for her to bond with several of you and it didn't take long at all for you to fall in love with her. You did so much for her and helped her transition from the outside world to living inside the walls of Sunshine. She would say, at times, that she felt like she was living in a resort and being extremely spoiled. I always told her that she deserved to feel that way. Thank you for gifting her with this peace that she was able to feel within a very short period of time after moving in.



I also feel that you, at times, went above and beyond with catering to her and her needs, which enabled her to stay a little bit longer in your assisted living area before needing the Wheatland wing. I absolutely, still to this day, hate the day that she fell in her bathroom which changed her whole life-style... and of course, stupid Covid didn't help at all. Bad timing all the way around. I think it was hard on our whole family when she had to move out of assisted and away from her (and our) comfort zone. You ladies treated her like your own mom and gave her the attention that she needed and desired. So...

Mostly – thank you for loving this sweet little lady as much as you did! Your kindness and your big hearts helped her to keep motivated in life because she truly knew that she was loved by you! Thank you Wheatland Peeps for everything you did for our sweet little mama (and Gary too!!) There truly aren't enough words to express our family's gratitude to every single one of you along with a few in particular ones who helped us out in so many ways! Mom and I rarely had a phone call where she didn't talk about how special she felt, thanks to so many of you. She felt blessed and wanted and special and loved! Thank you – every single one of you! Every little elderly person should have the joy of knowing in their hearts what a special human being they are... especially as they approach their final days on this planet... and that's what you gifted her with! She was truly made to feel special! Mom quite often said that a nursing home is a 'waiting room for Heaven'. She was quite correct in that statement. As mother's body started slowly failing her over her last year to two years, you were all there for her, helping her to transition into her next stage, whatever that was in the moment. You encouraged her, helped her to use her Echo with calling and answering (Caley – I still miss seeing your great big smile when I called in!), watched and manipulated meds depending on her current needs, fed her, visited with her, sat with her, prayed with her, hugged her and loved her! And in return, she truly loved all of you with her great big heart. Thank you for referring to her as "mama"!!! That made her feel soooooo good!!!

Oh – and as you continue to use 'Abe,' I hope you smile inside as you remember mama referring to 'Abe' by name ... a name that she always took credit for! Quick Thank You's to Nathen for your beautiful prayers during the sing-along gatherings, which were each absolutely priceless! And to each and every one of you who crowded into their rooms and sang Christmas songs!



Stacie, Keith, Sheryl – for your kind notes that you sent! To the kind ones who delivered mama’s favorite desserts! (In reality – it wasn’t the desserts that she loved as much as loved you all just thinking of her and walking into her room with your great big smiles ... because you took a little extra moment out of your day just for her!) To those of you who gave her hugs – maybe before or after your shift and told her that you loved her! To all of you who attended Mom’s memorial and just warmed our hearts with your presence... and with your ‘mama’ stories! Pam, Rachel – for your endless phone calls and patience as we continually reached out to you both. AND – to every other single person who is reading this! There are so many others that I’m certain to be leaving out but I can only hope that you feel our grateful hearts!

As I look back on mom’s life now ... along with my brother, Gary ... it was only right that they ‘exit’ close to each other. After our daddy passed away, they had each other to get through the grief because Gary was living in their home. After that, they helped each other through the rest of their lives. I could give you tons of examples and stories ... but long story short, God kept mom on this planet to help Gary so he wouldn’t be so alone in helping him deal with his Parkinson’s and more recently, his Pancreatic Cancer.

Their relationship was more than special and they both lived each day with the genuine concern in their hearts for the other one. I’m certain that many of you knew, as you watched Gary quickly decline, that our sweet mama’s days would be numbered. God gifted Gary with her presence and her stability that only she could offer him and then when it was time for Gary to leave ... it was only right that God quickly prepared our mama to leave shortly after. I was almost concerned that mama would be laying/staying too long because of her strong heart but thankfully, God had that already taken care of! They were only separated for 23 days before mother and son were re-joined in Heaven. How cool is that!!! It still brings me to tears to have them both gone but I (we as a family) know that it was all God’s perfect timing. And to you – Sunshine peeps – you were all there to walk them through their final days and we as a family felt peace because of you. We knew that they were properly being cared for and that many of you would be there to love on them when our own family could not be by their sides. Thank you seems like such a small gesture for what you have done but I hope that somewhere in this wordy note, you can feel the extreme genuine grateful hearts that our whole family has for each and every one of you! Sent with more love than you can imagine ...

Love and Hugs from Carol, Marian’s proud daughter ... along with my whole family!

## Christmas Activities

Melanie Koehn

This December seemed more like a normal holiday month compared to last year. We were able to do the things that we have missed doing because of the pandemic. This year we made peppernuts with the 5th Graders from Buhler Grade School. And what fun we had. There were approximately 40 students with their teachers and then our residents. I don't know who enjoyed it more, the students or our residents. Children always seem to brighten up everyone's day. The FFA also came to play games with our residents which was great. We were also able to host several music groups to come and sing for our residents. The group Forgiven came to sing for us as well as a group called Calvary Echos. The Prairie Hills Middle School also came to sing for us as did the Buhler Singers. We always appreciate any groups of singers that want to come to perform for us. We also had a Christmas party for our residents and this year we were able to bring everyone together. We opened gifts and sang carols, and of course no Christmas would be Christmas without Santa coming to visit. We were also the glad recipients of warm blankets and stockings filled with goodies from our local Chamber here in Buhler. I think we can safely say that our residents have truly felt the Christmas spirit this holiday. We want to give a Big Thank You to all of you who have made it a great Christmas. Most of all we cannot forget the staff at the Sunshine Retirement Community who make everything work for us during this holiday season. May you be blessed during this time and Have a Merry Christmas 2022. Merry Christmas to all - - - the Activity Department.



# Making Tuesdays & Thursdays something to look forward to!

**TUESDAYS**

**11a.m. -2p.m.**

**THURSDAYS**



Every Tuesday, build your own taco salad!  
Fast & friendly service.  
\$8.50+ tax

Choose from Pepperoni, Cheese, All Meat, & Supreme by the slice: \$4.25; with small salad, \$8.20; 2 slices of pizza, \$7.50.

Build your own salad:  
Small, \$3.95; Large, \$6.95.

**FREE DELIVERY**

**620-543-5707** for orders of 5 or more in Buhler  
400 S. Buhler Road, Buhler



Inside Sunshine Meadows

*Please help Sunshine Meadows* to help residents, staff, and community members get *healthier* through physical therapy!



Sunshine Meadows is blessed to have **physical therapy specialists** within our facility.

**GOOD SERVICE:** Over the past 20 years, Sunshine Meadows has contracted with various physical therapy companies to provide rehabilitation services within the nursing facility, for the benefit of our residents at Sunshine Meadows, as well as our employees and the community at large.

**20 YEARS MAKING IT WORK:** SMRC provided PT in various places, finally settling on the northeast side of the building, close to parking spaces for handicapped individuals as well as those requiring PT. Those gravel parking spaces recently were paved in order to make walking safe, thanks to a grant. Various equipment was purchased through other grants. In these past 20 years, Sunshine Meadows has been “making it work” - but our residents and community deserve a better space to get better in.

At this point, **it’s time to re-paint, add better lighting, and re-carpet** this somewhat dreary space; also, the walls of the office and consultation rooms don’t reach the ceiling. We need to complete these rooms to **provide some private spaces for consultation**. In addition, the closest short set of stairs to use to prepare for the return home requires therapists to walk patients a long distance in the facility. **A set of safe stairs in the PT area**, as seen in the photo, will keep patients from using all of their energy in the walk, rather than focusing on the challenge of stairs. We hope to raise \$12,000 to revitalize this space.

**Please consider making a donation\* to this worthy cause.**

**\*WAYS YOU CAN HELP:** EASY- Send a check to Sunshine Meadows, noting “PT” on the bottom left corner of the envelope. EASIER—Call Sunshine Meadows and donate over the phone with a credit or debit card. EASIEST- Use the Sunshine Meadows website to send a donation.

EASY– Sunshine Meadows

EASIER- 620-755-5132

400 S. Buhler Road

Buhler, KS 67522

EASIEST - [www.sunshinemeadows.org](http://www.sunshinemeadows.org)

# BUHLER SENIOR CENTER MEALS

Come 'n' Get It!

SMRC residents, please call Stacie Klassen for more information.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board near the Assisted Living dining room. Community members, please contact the Senior Center at 620-543-6858. Cost per person is \$7.



A kindly 90-year-old grandmother found buying presents for family and friends a bit much one Christmas, so she wrote out checks for all of them to put in their Christmas cards.

In each card she wrote, "Buy your own present" and then sent them off.

After the Christmas festivities were over, she found the checks in her desk!

Everyone had gotten a Christmas card from her with "Buy your own present" written inside, but without the checks!



*Merry  
Christmas  
And  
Happy  
New Year  
From  
Our Family to  
Yours*

**Wildflower Inn**  
**406 West Ave. A, Buhler, KS**  
**620-543-2248**

Owned by Sunshine Meadows, not only is it the only option for overnight stays in Buhler, it's a fun, attractive place to visit.

Innkeeper Monique is a seasoned professional. The Inn offers three attractive bedrooms and lovely common rooms. **Check out the amenities on Facebook.**

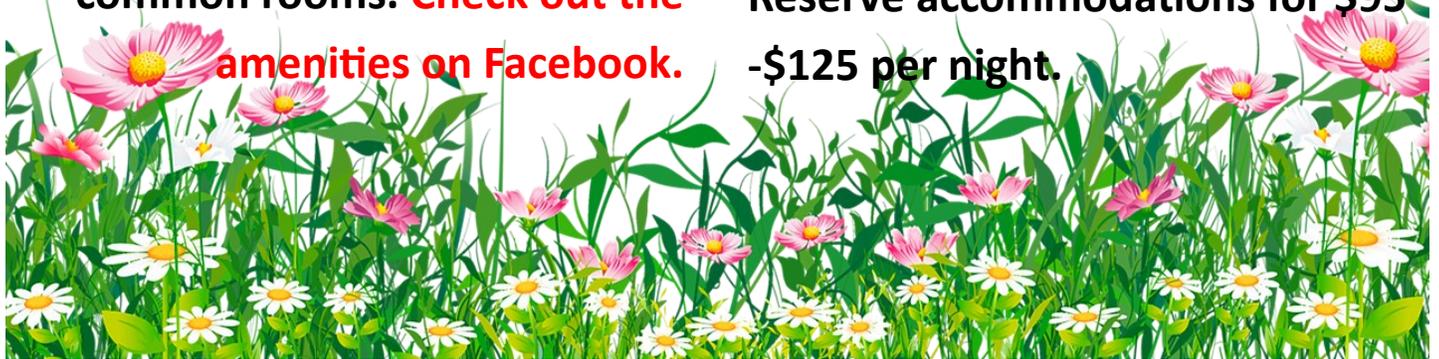
ALSO: Call to reserve a dinner for four to twelve people.

Full gourmet hot breakfast: \$19 each

Fondue bowls & serving board: \$79 per couple

Order a Charcuterie board: \$75

Reserve accommodations for \$95-\$125 per night.



Joy does not simply  
happen to us. We  
have to choose joy  
and keep choosing it  
every day.

Henri J.M. Nouwen



## Social Interactions & Sense of Purpose

According to Neuroscience News- Older adults who experience more positive social interactions report feeling a higher sense of purposefulness, especially after retirement. A research team found a correlation between adults reporting feeling more purposeful in the evening after experiencing more positive interactions during the day. For older adults, people in their lives matter significantly and can fill one's life with positivity.

A higher sense of purpose is often associated with maintenance of some health

healthier sleep, higher consumption of fruits and vegetables, smoking cessation, and increased use of preventive healthcare services. By increasing a sense of purpose, retired older adults are more likely to experience the benefits of both cognitive and physical health.

Ways to increase social interaction and feel a sense of purpose:

- Meet up with others on a regular basis to converse on common interests.
- Participation in social activities in the community such as

a book club.

- Stay connected with friends and family via technology through social media platforms such as FaceTime, Instagram, and WhatsApp.
- Adopt a pet or obtain a plant to care for in your home
- Engage in meals together in a dining area to be able to interact and enjoy the company of others.
- Maintain attendance at a desired religious place of worship.
- Volunteer to assist in an area of interest within your community.

**“Every Person has a longing to be significant; to make a contribution; to be a part of something noble and purposeful.”**

**- John C. Maxwell**

**NOTE: Anyone living in the 313 school district who is age 65 or over can get a FREE ticket to any USD 313 event by calling USD 313 at 620-543-2258. Not usable for state playoffs or tournaments not hosted by Buhler schools.**

