



# GOD AT WORK IN OUR MIDST

*Stories of the Called Ministries of  
Genacross Lutheran Services*



May 2020

In the April issue, Genacross Lutheran Services shared many examples of the ways God was caring for our residents and patients through the selfless and compassionate service of faithful staff members. These efforts were reinforced by family members, friends, local congregations, and businesses who supported our residents as well as our hardworking employees. The message is clear – when it comes to the coronavirus pandemic – we are “in this together.” Furthermore, there is clear evidence that God is, indeed, in our midst and working powerfully through all of us.

Now two months into an unprecedented time marked by social distancing and wearing masks, Genacross ministries are operating under a new “normal.” Employees who can are working from home. Visitors are still restricted at our care campuses in Fremont (Bethany Place), Holland (Wolf Creek), Napoleon and Toledo. Family members continue to keep in touch with their loved ones through window visits, video chats, phone calls, and many cards, letters, and pictures sent to the campuses.

The challenges of providing compassionate care and services remain, as the need for personal protective equipment increases and isolation areas are set up to protect and care for the vulnerable populations Genacross serves. Many people may, at times, feel like the psalmist who cried out, “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? (Psalm 13:1). It is true, when the future is uncertain and a difficult present drags on, as this one is, it is hard not to get discouraged.

The good news, though, is that just as the challenges are continuing, so are the many signs of God at work. As one looks around the Genacross ministries, it is



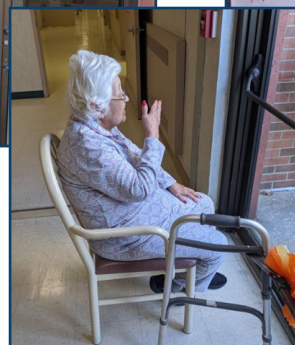
This window message at the Wolf Creek Campus reminds everyone we are “In This Together.”



Napoleon Campus resident Betty Bartel celebrated her birthday with a window visit from her family.



Even snow in April could not keep these family members from sharing time with a loved one at Wolf Creek.



The family of Toledo Campus resident Maria Montez gathered at the “Window of Love” to show how much they care.



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clear that members of our dedicated staff are not giving up. Home health nurses and therapists continue to care for individuals in their homes. Direct care staff on our campuses provide loving attention to residents, adding moments of fun, laughter, and special touches that show creativity. Some recent examples include the Casino Day held on the Napoleon Campus and the treats passed out to residents from an ice cream cart pedaled around Bethany Place senior community. In one of our group homes, Family & Youth Services staff coordinated a Cinco de Mayo celebration that included youth cooking the food and decorating their home.

Spiritual care continues on our care campuses, with our chaplains using creative ways to provide devotions and encourage worship, along with a great deal more one-on-one conversations. Activities departments are working hard to keep residents' spirits up as well, providing birthday celebrations, special Mother's Day treats, bingo, manicures, and much more every day. All this is accomplished with everyone practicing the required social distancing and staff wearing masks.

Of course, Genacross is not doing this alone. Congregations, community groups, businesses, and families are bringing pizza, sandwiches and cupcakes (just to name a few) to support our hard-working staff, along with signs and other messages of encouragement. There are groceries and hot meals delivered to residents in our senior communities, and visitors even brave crazy weather with signs and smiles to celebrate a birthday or simply to say "We love you."

The message is clear. No matter how uncertain the future may be, we are not alone. God is at work in our midst. That may be why the same psalmist who asked God if he had forgotten him, ends his song with the words, "I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me." (Psalm 13:6). We are, indeed, in this together, supporting one another. Thanks be to God!



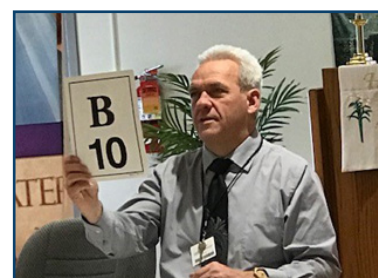
Several youth in care celebrated Cinco de Mayo by cooking food and decorating their home.



Bethany Place residents were surprised with ice cream treats from creative staff.



Napoleon Campus Executive Director Jessica Kirkendall (left) poses with resident Sherry Joseph during Casino Day.



Chaplain Lee Genter hosts virtual bingo via closed circuit TV at the Napoleon Campus.



A Kozy Corners Restaurant employee delivers lunches to Covenant Harbor senior community in Oak Harbor.



St. Peter Lutheran Church in Norwalk provides groceries and meal delivery to residents of Luther Oaks.



These employee yard signs show neighbors that a caring Genacross hero lives in their midst.



Toledo Campus staff were treated to fresh cupcakes by Scooter's Bakery.

Although pseudonyms are used in the above ministry stories, Genacross follows HIPAA guidelines and has either obtained permission from our residents, patients, or clients, or has sufficiently concealed their identities, thereby enabling us to use their stories of God's grace.