



GOD AT WORK IN OUR MIDST

*Stories of the Called Ministries of
Genacross Lutheran Services*



December 2021

HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

Throughout the month of November, many Thanksgiving celebrations were held at the various Genacross housing locations. At Luther Grove senior community in east Toledo, staff members created a wonderful treat for the residents: a Thanksgiving feast prepared by the Manager and Service Coordinator. Residents received a hot, home-cooked meal delivered to their apartments. They were thrilled to get a "real meal" to celebrate the holiday. Not all the residents had been able to join in the potluck held earlier in the month or had families to share the holidays with, so the meal really meant a great deal to them. This is just one example of how caring staff members can positively impact the residents. The residents' response was overwhelming, and they were so appreciative of having a home-cooked meal prepared for them with love.

FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES

"Penelope" was first placed at Genacross Family & Youth Services in 2017, when she was just 10 years old. She was diagnosed with autism and is non-verbal. She also suffered from scoliosis and failure to thrive. Prior to coming into foster care, she had lost 20 pounds in two years, leaving her thin and frail. The children services agency that had custody of Penelope was looking for a short-term placement until a scheduled surgery for her scoliosis. While Penelope was almost always happy and smiling, the curvature of her spine was so severe that she could not stand and her gait was very unstable. This required more care than most foster homes are able to provide.

After her surgery, however, Penelope returned to Family & Youth Services. She gained weight, improved her gait through physical therapy, and began to thrive. For the past few years, she has lived at the East Toledo Group Home, attending mainstream school in special education classrooms. She is still as happy as she has always been. While she is still completely non-verbal, when staff walk into the home, she will grab their hands and dance and play music on her See 'n Say. Due to the progress that Penelope has made since being placed with Genacross and the success of her surgery, the children services agency has located a foster family eager to have her join them. Penelope will begin her new family life a week before Christmas.



TOLEDO CAMPUS

It is not goodbye...not really. With the pending sale of the Genacross Lutheran Services-Toledo Campus, an era has ended. However, team members at the Toledo Campus do not feel as if they are saying "goodbye"; it is more like they are saying "you've got a friend in me." There are so many employees with longevity, going back years and even decades. The patients that they have loved and lost, loved and healed, and loved and are still caring for will forever be part of the Genacross story. As one employee stated, "We want to say thank you, Genacross, for allowing us to grow in our careers, our faiths, and our love for others as we took a journey in long-term care and skilled nursing. So many residents we have cared for will forever be a part of our hearts. We will forever thank you for having us be part of the Genacross family. You will always be a special part of us." The work begun at the Toledo Campus as part of the Genacross family will continue in the future as a friend of the organization.

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.

GOD AT WORK IN OUR MIDST

WOLF CREEK CAMPUS

A dry erase board in assisted living at the Genacross Lutheran Services-Wolf Creek Campus is being used to recruit euchre players and directs people to call “Dan.” He is fulfilling a dream to organize a regular card game with friends and neighbors. It is not unusual that Dan is tenaciously pursuing a goal, for he is strong-willed and might even admit to being stubborn. What is remarkable, though, is that Dan is back in assisted living at all. Twice in the last year, he found himself flat on his back in skilled nursing care. In each case, illness not only effected his physical health, but left him discouraged and unmotivated. While Dan received the support of his family, the community of care at the Wolf Creek Campus also supported him. Several staff members he knew from assisted living, including the Clinical Director, came to see him. Each time, Dan turned a corner and brought his extraordinary will to bear. A rehabilitative aide and therapy staff worked with him and kept reminding him of his goal – to get back to his assisted living apartment, just a few hundred feet away. Slowly, progressively, Dan recovered. He made it back to his apartment – not once, but twice. Busy recruiting for his card game now, Dan is focused on each moment connected to his friends and family.

NAPOLEON CAMPUS

Early in December, a small group of care center residents from the Genacross Lutheran Services-Napoleon Campus boarded the bus to go to the Festival of Lights at Ruihley Park in Archbold, Ohio. The Activities Department coordinated the special Christmas outing to celebrate the holidays. The campus bus drove through the dark, cold evening, and there were audible murmurs of joy and awe when the light display came into view. The driver drove slowly, pausing at different scenes. There were gingerbread men, elves on a teeter-totter, Santa, farm animals, and a full manger scene complete with the star of Bethlehem. One resident, “Rose,” talked about how the trip brought back memories of seeing the lights with her family in years past. As the residents returned home and were getting off the bus, Rose squeezed



one staff member’s hand and, with tears in her eyes, said, “Those lights were something special and having you take us out to enjoy them was something I needed more than I knew.” It was an unforgettable moment. It was so wonderful to see the joy on the residents’ faces, especially after all the isolation of the past couple of years. Doing things for residents, big or small, will always be worthwhile because of the joy it brings them.

GENACROSS AT HOME

“Gary” and his wife lived together in their home, and Gary has been his wife’s caregiver since she was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease several years ago. Recently, when he fell ill and had to stay in the hospital, his wife went to an assisted living facility for a respite stay. When Gary was able to return home, his wife was anxious to join him. He was discharged from the hospital with nursing care and therapy services provided by Genacross at Home, and Gary’s wife returned home a few days after he did. Genacross at Home staff monitored Gary’s rehabilitation and his ability to care for himself. His abilities had deteriorated while in the hospital, and he had not regained his strength. It became clear that he might never regain the strength he had prior to his illness and that he could no longer care for his wife. Staff members expressed their concerns to Gary, and a Genacross at Home social worker was able to help him explore options. Eventually, Gary chose to place his wife in an assisted living facility close to their home, which was where she had previously stayed for respite services. The social worker was able to help with the referral and secure placement. With his wife being cared for, Gary is able to focus on his recovery and has since been discharged from skilled home health services.