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**Chestnut Knoll Personal Care, Memory Care & At Home Services Celebrating 20 Years of Care!**



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# CHESTNUT KNOLL

## *Celebrating 20 Years of Care!*



**Shawn Barndt**

By Kathy Hunt

**N**estled at the end of a leafy side street in historic Boyertown, Pennsylvania, Chestnut Knoll Personal Care and Memory Care has provided award-winning senior care for 20 years. Since opening in September 2000, it has strived to meet the needs not only of its residents but also of seniors in the tri-county area through its home care services.

"We want to have a positive impact in the community and stay very attuned to its needs. We pride ourselves on being a community resource and on giving back to the community," said Shawn Barndt, executive director and one of the founding team members at the privately run, 119-resident facility.

### ***Serving the greater community***

Among the ways that Chestnut Knoll supports the region is through its preventive health care clinics. Open to the public, these clinics offer such services as blood pressure and balance screenings. They present informational sessions that cover a range of issues, including diabetes education and AARP driver recertification. The clinics are held on-site and at convenient, remote locations such as the Coventry Mall in Pottstown.



**Jodie Daniels**

"As a team, we identify what the need is or what we, as experts in the field of geriatric care, we see upcoming needs in the community. We then present the information ahead of the curve, so to speak, so that people are informed and prepared," said Jodie Daniels, director of community relations and assistant executive director at Chestnut Knoll.



PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE BY STYLISH IMAGES





To further equip people for those inevitable life changes, Chestnut Knoll hosts educational seminars on such topics as Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits. It runs education and support groups for community members caring for an aging loved one or coping with the diagnoses of Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease. It also sponsors a Parkinson's education and exercise group. Confidential advice from a certified senior advisor is available. All of these services are free for the outside community.

In addition to acting as an educational resource, Chestnut Knoll's staff and residents maintain a supportive presence in the region. They hold sidewalk sales, deliver Meals on Wheels and join in the Alzheimer's Association's "Walk to End Alzheimer's." They fundraise for the Boyertown Community Library, Boyertown Area Multi-Service and Boyertown Area Fire and Rescue, just to name a few.

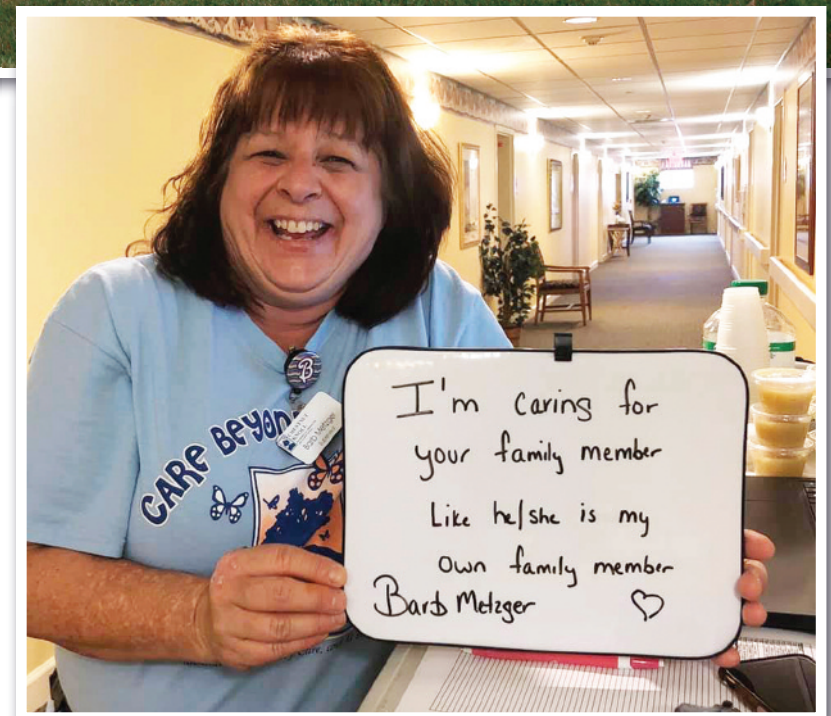
Another fun and enriching way that seniors stay involved is by spending time with local youths and participating in Gilbertsville Elementary School's yearly

Grandparent/Grandfriend Day. At this event, residents serve as "grandfriends" to children without grandparents. Thanks to this willingness to step in, the students can attend the school event with a new, older friend.

It isn't "all work and no play" at Chestnut Knoll. The facility arranges free transportation for such leisure outings as the Oley Valley Community Fair and Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square. Residents frequent local shops, eat out and go on walks. They take trips to such historic sites and museums as Valley Forge National Park and the Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles. Open to the public, Chestnut Knoll's complimentary excursions fill up quickly.

"We work hard to keep residents engaged. In fact, some are even more engaged than when they resided at home," Barndt said.

With the advent of COVID-19, Chestnut Knoll continues to adapt to best serve the senior population. "We've been staying educated about the new coronavirus. We constantly communi-



cate with our teams on all three shifts, providing round-the-clock education to all of the staff, residents and families. Education and communication are key," Daniels said.

Barndt added that Chestnut Knoll has been highly diligent and follows all

guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As a result, they have had no cases of COVID-19 within the facility.

*(Continued on page 8)*



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## COVER STORY

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### Staying active with the FOX Optimal Living Program

Seniors stay physically active with exercise programs created in conjunction with FOX Rehabilitation. In 2012 Chestnut Knoll partnered and assisted in creating the FOX Optimal Living (FOL) Program. This individualized, evidence-based program considers each person's physical strengths and weaknesses and structures therapeutic exercises around them. Held in either group or one-on-one settings, its classes aim to improve the residents' endurance, flexibility, strength and balance. The courses also support daily function and reduce the risk of injuries.

Through FOX Optimal Living, residents have the option of receiving 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. This applies not only to those living in Personal Care and Memory Care but also to individuals on short-term respite stays. The latter are people who have been discharged from a hospital or rehabilitation center but still require assistance to reach their maximum potential.

Once participants have achieved their therapeutic goals, they transition into a wellness program. Led by a certified exercise physiologist, the program's classes enable people to maintain an exercise schedule and sustain their physical gains.

"Chestnut Knoll's FOX Optimal Living is a unique rehab program and a totally different model of therapy in personal care. Through it, we have the resources, expertise and clinicians to work with our residents to reach their highest level of function. It is something that takes time and consistency," Daniels said.

Along with a full-time physiologist, Chestnut Knoll has two physical therapists, two occupational therapists and a speech and language pathologist on site.

They, too, aid in this whole model approach, helping residents to remain as active and independent as possible.

Chestnut Knoll's clients range in age from 49 to 103. Because the Optimal Living program is individualized, it can be altered to benefit people of any age.

### A Positive Approach to Memory Care

The practice of considering the whole person applies to every aspect of life at Chestnut Knoll. This is particularly true in its engaging and secure memory care neighborhood. Residents with memory loss, dementia and Alzheimer's disease receive structured, individualized care that emphasizes their strengths and skills. Chestnut Knoll's Memory Care Neighborhood offers ongoing, specialized training in Teepa Snow's Positive Approach to Care, which provides caregivers the opportunity to enhance residents' lives. The highly structured, secure environment is designed to promote independence, socialization and quality of life while maintaining residents' self-worth. Included in the programming are art, music and pet therapy, and participation in the FOX Optimal Living therapy program.

### Providing care at home

As supportive and stimulating as life at Chestnut Knoll may be, not every older adult wants, or needs, to move to a personal care residence. Sometimes all that a person requires is a bit of assistance with daily tasks. If they can receive this hands-on help, they may continue to live in and enjoy the comfort of their own home. This is the motivation behind Chestnut Knoll At Home Services. Created in 2003, it gives aging adults and their family members direct support, education, and, ultimately, peace of mind about remaining at home.

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## COVER STORY

(Continued from page 8)

"Home care started as a way to meet the needs of older people in tiny communities not being served by other agencies and counties. We'd say, 'Your mom lives by herself in Bechtelsville? We have a worker who lives in Bechtelsville. Would you want her to swing by and check on your mom?' That's how it began. We saw a need," Barndt said.



**Linda Detwiler**

*"Our caregivers learn about people. They put themselves in the persons' shoes and treat them as they'd like to be treated. They're empathetic. We always say, 'You can teach skills, but you can't teach heart. You can't teach someone to care,'"*

Licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Chestnut Knoll At Home Services covers Berks, Chester and Montgomery counties. It employs 100 staff and caregivers, all of whom are trained, bonded and insured. Certified in CPR and first aid, caregivers assist with bathing and hygiene, meal preparation and delivery, medication monitoring, light housekeeping, laundry and personal grooming. They transport clients to appointments, run errands and shop for them. They also offer companionship, which is immensely important, especially now, during the pandemic.

said Linda Detwiler, who oversees Chestnut Knoll At Home Services.

In addition to direct care, Chestnut Knoll At Home Services offers case management and daily wellness calls. It also has behavior management and family education for those with Alzheimer's disease.

"We are a private agency. We are not a franchise. I stress that because we customize our care based on need and work with families to reduce stressors for both the family caregivers and the aging loved one," Detwiler said.

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## Success starts from within

During the past two decades, Chestnut Knoll has won numerous awards for its exemplary service to its residents and the community. Earlier this year it was named a "Caring Super Star of 2020" for service excellence in senior living by Caring.com. The go-to website for evaluating senior care options, Caring.com selected 59 nationwide Caring Super Stars of 2020.

Barndt attributed this success to the employees. "We have a great respect and gratitude for the people who work here. We're only as good as our team. Without them, we don't have a program," she said.

The approximately 100-member staff comes from a variety of backgrounds and interests. Some have embarked on new, meaningful careers in long-term care. Others possess a long history in the profession. All attend new hire and annual in-house trainings to stay up-to-date on the best practices in senior care.

Having trained, educated staff is one of Chestnut Knoll's strengths. So, too, is the longevity of its staff members and their familiarity with their clients. "Many staff have been with us for the full 20 years. So, although we have college

kids and part-timers who use us as a stepping-stone in their careers, the majority of our staff stay," Barndt said.

She noted that in October 2019 Chestnut Knoll recognized 40 employees for at least 10 years of service. Out of those 40 individuals, 36 had worked for 11 or more years at Chestnut Knoll. The group was honored at the annual President's Club luncheon at the Bally Inn.

"If you believe in what you do and you have people who believe in the same things, you'll build a strong community," Barndt said.

For more information regarding Chestnut Knoll Personal Care, Memory Care and At Home Services, contact Jodie Daniels, executive director and certified senior advisor, at 610.473.8066 or [jdaniels@chestnutknoll.com](mailto:jdaniels@chestnutknoll.com), and please visit [www.chestnutknoll.com](http://www.chestnutknoll.com).



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