



*The Baptist Home – Chillicothe*

In June 2013, I visited [The Baptist Home](#) in Chillicothe. Administrator Lynn Jackson showed me around the 34-resident intermediate care and 20-resident assisted living home. There are also several free-standing independent living homes on the property. While I believe they are technically located within city limits, the large estate has the feel of country living.



*View from the front of the home*

Not only is the property very scenic, it provides built-in activities. The pond is stocked with catfish, bass, and hybrid sunfish, which many residents enjoy catching and eating. It is also home to as many as 25 geese. There were seven nests around the pond this past spring. One goose has had two successful hatches by a tree next to the driveway. The geese have learned that an easy meal can be had by knocking seed from the home's bird feeders. Some deer have also learned the trick.



*Residents' garden (Independent living home can be seen in the background)*



*Residents will soon be busy picking blackberries*

It seems that everyone benefits from the fruit trees and large gardens. There are cherry, apple, and peach trees; grapevines; gooseberries; blackberries; tomatoes; onions; green beans; peppers; strawberries; squash; asparagus, rhubarb; flowers; and more. A couple residents are so serious about gardening that they have personal gardens. Some choose only to go out when it is time to harvest. Others prefer not to work in the garden but enjoy helping by stemming the strawberries and gooseberries. Everyone enjoys sharing the harvest.

One of the most popular activities is the annual homecoming bake sale and barbecue. They have a very active auxiliary group that provides Mothers' Day makeovers and homemade pies and horse and buggy rides for Fathers' Day. They also decorate and provide gifts for the residents at Christmas. A local book club visits and reads to residents.

In many ways they have been providing person-centered care since they opened 25 years ago. However, they continue to improve and make changes. They have utilized the [Artifacts of Culture Change](#) tool to help drive some of the changes. They have also been involved with Missouri's culture change coalition, [MCS](#), including participating with the newly formed [North Central](#) group that now meets in Chillicothe.

Residents direct their own lives. They go to bed and get up when they choose. Dining choices and times have been expanded to accommodate residents' preferences. Residents choose from a list of menu items and the salad bar. The hearth room, with a community refrigerator and microwave, is always open and supplied with fruit, snacks, coffee, and tea. Residents oftentimes spend their afternoons baking cookies or cupcakes in the activity room kitchenette, which is available to residents and their families.

All residents have private rooms and are provided with assistance to move in personal furniture and decorations to help them make it their home. Caregivers are consistently assigned so that they know the residents they care for and can better meet their needs. Future plans include further expanding dining hours and enlarging the dining room, removing the nurses' station and converting the area into a living room, and naming the hallways.



*A chapel and full-time Chaplain is available to meet the residents' spiritual needs*



*Bathroom shared by two private rooms*



*Hearth Room*

Staff members are not required to wear uniforms. They are provided with Baptist Home t-shirts during National Nursing Home Week. They also have drawings every week that there is not an employee accident/injury resulting in loss of time. Among other prizes offered, winners may choose a new Baptist Home t-shirt.



*Residents Virginia Grisamore (left) and Una Grubbs (right)*

Mr. Jackson and I stopped in to visit assisted living Resident Una Grubbs. Resident Virginia Grisamore had also stopped in for a visit. Ms. Grisamore recently moved from one of the independent living homes to intermediate care and was getting decorating ideas from Ms. Grubbs. They were eager to visit and share their experiences. I would never have guessed Ms. Grisamore to be 94-years-old and Ms. Grubbs to be 92-years-old.

I learned that Ms. Grisamore was from Princeton, Missouri, where she lived on a farm with her parents and brother as a child. She grew up during the Great Depression, but she said they always had food and her mother made her dresses. They also had a pony that she and her brother loved to ride. Her brother reined and she rode behind carrying their lunch buckets when they went to school.

Her family moved to town because they couldn't go to high school where they lived without paying tuition. She took shorthand, which helped her get a job at the University Extension Office after graduation. At that time, grasshoppers were eating all the farmers' crops. It was her job to give out papers for them to get bran with poison to put around their fences to keep them out. She didn't think it was very effective.

After she married, she and her husband lived in Wichita, Kansas. She and her 3½-years-old daughter moved back in with her parents in Princeton when her husband was drafted to serve in the Army during World War II. He served in Okinawa where he operated heavy artillery. They chose to stay in Princeton after his return.

She moved to Chillicothe to be near her daughter after her husband passed away. She later moved to an independent living apartment, and was in the process of moving again to intermediate care during my visit. She said downsizing again was hard but "there is more going on here." "There is plenty to do, if you want to do it." She went on to tell me how much she enjoyed the horse and buggy rides on Fathers' Day. "It was fun." She also enjoys cutting strips of material that a volunteer uses to make rugs that they sell.

Ms. Grubbs was born in Winston Salem, North Carolina and lived there until she married. She had four sisters and one brother and attended RJ Reynolds High School. She has been married 61 years and has one daughter and two grandchildren. Her husband was from Georgia and they went to Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

They moved to Missouri when her husband was called to pastor a church in Bethany. They then served at a church in St. Joseph for 40 years. He retired, but continued to serve as a supply and interim-pastor for several years until his health deteriorated from Alzheimer's disease. They moved to The Baptist Home 3½ years ago and shared adjoining rooms until he needed to move to intermediate care. Like Ms. Grisamore, she said the most difficult part of moving was giving up her home and moving to a smaller area. She had to sell a lot of furniture and property.

"We have things to do all the time; we are never bored." Children from the Grand Oaks campground come and play games. They go out shopping whenever they want; most prefer Wal-Mart. She enjoys folding towels; helping with the garden; snapping beans; capping strawberries; taking joy rides to see the trees blooming, the Christmas lights, or visiting the Grand Oaks campground; and participating in Bible studies. She especially enjoyed the Mothers' Day makeover. She got a facial, hairdo, and her nails done.

She likes the long breakfast hours. "You can go anytime you want and stay and visit as long as you like." She prefers to go around 7:00. Both she and Ms. Grisamore complimented the food and good desserts. Neither could think of anything that could be improved.



*Bath Aide Michelle Reed*

Mr. Jackson told me about Bath Aide Michelle Reed, who he described as specializing in the bathing experience. That was an understatement! I've seen a lot of bathing rooms and met several bath aides, but I can't say that I've experienced anything quite like my visit with Ms. Reed who obviously loves her job.



She has worked there five years and her list of residents who want a bath has grown and grown. The environment and individualized care makes a difference. She said she assists 15 residents with baths each day, and she doesn't rush them. She begins by visiting each resident to determine their schedules and choices. She shared several stories of residents who were once resistant to bathing, but now look forward to it.

One resident likes to be read to during her bath. She reads specific books that she discovered that the resident enjoys. Another resident wants her bath at a specific time based on the programming schedule of a local radio station that plays a specific type of music that she enjoys to listen to during her bath.

She told me about another resident who had been resistant to bathing. The resident enjoys painting, so she decorates the bathing room with the resident's paintings, which the resident chooses and switches out seasonally. She also learned that she prefers to bathe with the lights off, so she turns the lights off and uses electronic tea lights. The resident now enjoys her bath and spends an hour bathing. The resident recently requested to be baptized in the whirlpool tub. The Chaplain baptized her and several staff members were present.

Mr. Jackson had already told me that Michelle uses specialty soaps and lotions, sometimes at her own expense, so I thought it was kind of funny when she hunted me down after our visit to make sure I knew that she did not use "institutional soap."



*Resident's paintings that decorate the bathing room*



*LPN Cheryl Huffman*

LPN Cheryl Huffman was born and raised in Jamesport, Missouri. She is married and has one son, one daughter, and four grandchildren. Her husband is a farmer and they raise crops and cattle. She enjoys feeding hummingbirds and collecting bird figurines.

She has worked at the Baptist Home since they opened 25 years ago. She and her family went through the farm crisis in the 1980s and she had to go to work. She picked nursing because she thought she would be able to get a good paying job. She didn't realize at the time how much she would enjoy it. She enrolled in an LPN program and worked at another nursing home during her training.

She said she used to drive by The Baptist Home as it was being built and thought she would like to work there. She didn't figure they would want someone right out of school. She believes she was led there. "I guess it was what I was supposed to do." She has worked in two other homes, "but this place is different. It is a totally different atmosphere. I will never go anywhere else."

Residents there have always had more choices than other homes offer and it has been expanded. She has seen a lot of changes over the years. They used to use restraints, wake up residents early, and deliver meals to rooms on Styrofoam. They have repainted and decorated to look more like home. They only use overhead paging in emergencies. The best change has been the buffet dining. Residents have the right to eat what they want. "We don't tell them what they can or can't do; we ask and offer choices." New employees say, "This isn't what I was expecting."

I also met the wife of a resident who recently passed away. She continues to visit to "collect hugs" from the residents who have become her family. Another testament to the quality of life at The Baptist Home is the fact that they maintain a waiting list of individuals who are waiting for an opportunity to move in.