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volunteer spotlight

WALKER DUNCAN



Inspired by the life-enriching experiences he saw residents enjoy at Abe's Garden®, former healthcare journalist, Walker Duncan, was determined to help share stories about the groundbreaking work happening at Abe's Garden® every day. In writing for the Abe's Garden® newsletter, *Seeds*, he has found a perfect vehicle.

Duncan was introduced to Abe's Garden® in 2016 through Board Member, Paula Lovell, who asked him to help promote the Urban Land Institute Award Abe's Garden® won that year.

"From that initial project, I began to understand more of Abe's Garden's mission, which resonated with me deeply," says Duncan. "In a town built on for-profit healthcare, the idea of an organization addressing such a glaring need and elevating care while also remaining committed to sharing those best practices to raise the level of care everywhere was nothing short of inspiring." He has been writing for *Seeds* ever since.

"It's exciting to have the opportunity to play even a small role in helping Abe's Garden® improve the care for people living with Alzheimer's disease and those who love them," he says.

A former beat reporter with various Nashville news outlets, Duncan also has an extensive background working as a ghostwriter and content strategist on behalf of numerous local companies and national corporations. Although he maintains his passion for writing, he was recently inspired to switch careers and has begun pursuing a Master's degree in Social Work at the University of Tennessee.

His most important job, however, started this past June when he and his wife Lisa welcomed their daughter Myers Elizabeth Duncan.

www.abesgarden.org

FALL 2018

Transforming the care of individuals with
Alzheimer's disease and other dementias



seeds



Kincaid and resident Marcia Beranek
take a walk through the courtyard.
Photo by Hunter Armistead.

WHAT WE DO

Abe's Garden® is establishing a model of residential, day, and community-based programs for those with Alzheimer's disease. The goal is to transform care for those with Alzheimer's and other dementias throughout the United States by providing an unprecedented level of care for individuals diagnosed with these disorders. Equally important, it is a site of research and teaching, setting a new standard for other programs and residential communities devoted to caring for our nation's rapidly expanding senior population.

MEET CHRIS KINCAID: Abe's Garden® and Park Manor's New Executive Director

by Kim DiGangi

Chris Kincaid was always close to his older relatives. While other kids were doing what kids do, he would hop on his bike and spend time with his relatives instead. "You learn so much from seniors," says Kincaid. "I loved listening to their stories."

Perhaps his favorite stories came from his great-grandmother who was one of his greatest inspirations. In 1994, while summering in Colorado, she had a stroke, leaving her with some minor paralysis and in need of assistance at home. Kincaid drove from Oklahoma to Colorado to provide the help she needed and says, "It was one of the best times of my life."

Continued on Page 2



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“I have never seen an organization more dedicated to its mission.”

Kincaid and resident Sam Bartholomew talk football after lunch. Photo by Hunter Armistead.

Kincaid’s 23-year career has been spent exclusively in senior living. From a small assisted living community in Oklahoma, which grew into the Sterling House Corporation during his tenure, to his most recent position as Regional Operations Director with Americare, one of the nation’s largest senior living providers, he has a wealth of experience holding a variety of executive-level positions. “The industry was like a magnet for me,” he says. “Once I discovered I could make a living taking care of seniors, I never thought about doing anything else.”

Kincaid describes himself as having a for-profit mind with a not-for-profit heart. “In all my years working in this industry, I have never seen an organization more dedicated to its mission than Abe’s Garden®. Abe’s Garden® is the epitome of what everyone else in senior living strives for, and I am truly excited to become part of its legacy and to lead it into the future.”

Kincaid says Abe’s Garden® is already a successful organization. His goal is to build on what exists and continually improve the caliber of programming it offers. “My priority is to first maintain the program, then strengthen it, and then expand it outside the Abe’s Garden® walls,” he says. “Recognizing that 70 to 80 percent of seniors say they want to remain in their homes as they age, we must continue looking for ways to ensure these people have access to quality care and programming.”

Kincaid and his wife Shannon reside in Franklin, TN. They have five children ranging in age from 15 to 23.



Photo by Hunter Armistead.



Kay Butterworth was happy to give a bunny some affection.

Bunnies are not just for springtime. Thanks to volunteer, Robin Mahoney, residents enjoy pet therapy throughout the year. Photos by Dan Heller.

Residents, Janice Elliot (l.) and Emma Schwaber were intrigued by Robin and her bunny.



Dr. Natalie Steinberg, AuD, CCC-A, who volunteers to help manage residents’ ear health on site at Abe’s Garden®, examines Katie Gingrass (l.). Photo by David Abbott.



Abe’s Garden® Community Group (AGCG) participants channeled their inner hippie during a “Summer of Love” tie-dyeing activity. Photo by Connie Tomlin.



Abe’s Garden® in the News!

The July 29th cover story of *Parade* featured former resident Glen Campbell’s wife, Kim. In the article, Kim spoke about her caregiving journey and shared details of her husband’s memorable last days at Abe’s Garden®. “Once Glen had moved in to Abe’s Garden®, Kim had a chance to exhale, ever so briefly,” reads the article. “She says during this time, more than any other time in her life, she drew on her faith to move forward.”

A viral fan video of Jay Allen singing “Blank Stares” to his mother, Sherry Rich, 54, on stage at a fair in Iowa caught the attention of *ABC World News Tonight*.



Photo by Jay Allen Music/Instagram.

On August 3rd, the program highlighted the musician’s mission to raise awareness of Alzheimer’s and contribute profits from his touching tune about his mother with early-onset dementia to Abe’s Garden®. Since then, various fan videos of Jay singing to Sherry at concerts have reached over 100 million views.

ABE'S GARDEN® HAPPENINGS

Residents and staff shared a range of skills during a talent show in August. Photos by Robert Heller.

Resident, Ann O'Day, and Volunteer Coordinator, Kelly Massey, tap danced their way into the audience's heart.



Joke-tellers Continuous Education and Quality Improvement Coordinator, Chris Coelho, and resident, Jean King, had the crowd laughing.



Care Partner, Marikia, and resident, Julia Evans, shared their sweet voices during a rendition of "Amazing Grace."



Life Engagement Coordinator, Mallorie Grimes, and Gene Heller sang "Five Foot Two" with a smile.



The Exit Planning Institute's Annual Summit Giveback Charity Event, held in Nashville on September 24th, included a silent auction that solely benefited Abe's Garden®.



From left to right: Christopher Snider (EPI CEO/President), Scott Snider (EPI VP), Mike Shmerling (Abe's Garden® Founder and Board Chair), Beth Zeitlin (Abe's Garden® Director of Marketing and Development), and Gary Rzucidlo (BNY Mellon Senior Wealth Director) celebrated raising over \$20,000 for Abe's Garden®.

From left to right: William Jarry (BNY Mellon Senior Director), auction winner of an autographed guitar by Vince Gill and Amy Grant, with EPI Member of the Year Rzucidlo.

Another Advancement in Continuous Quality Improvement: Family Partnership

By Lori Latusek



Continuous Education and Quality Improvement Coordinator, Chris Coelho (r.) now works on Saturdays. Photo by Raeanne Rubenstein.

While most senior living communities focus public attention on their strengths, Abe's Garden® directly addresses areas in need of improvement.

Abe's Garden® recently opened another line of communication between residents' families, organization leadership and direct care staff. As part of the organization's mission to continuously improve, the Family Partnership initiative was launched, and has garnered significant changes.

In June and September, loved ones of residents and Club members attended the inaugural and second quarterly Abe's Garden® Family Partnership meetings. The town hall-style gathering was hosted by the leadership team; and the organization's on-site physician and dietitian. Victor Legner, MD, and Registered Dietitian Cathy Corder were the featured speakers. Dr. Legner addressed the "Progression of Alzheimer's" and Ms. Corder, with assistance from Chad Ellis, Abe's Garden's Food and Beverage Director, discussed "Dietary Needs of Adults with Dementia".

Attendees voiced concerns and asked questions, which informed the creation of a questionnaire distributed to family members within weeks of the first meeting. The survey provided an opinion-sharing outlet for those families, as well as families who did not attend the town hall meeting and those who are less vocal.

Three-quarters of Abe's Garden® families completed the survey. "The response rate was phenomenal,

and the comments provided direction for immediate and long-term action," says Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Sandra F. Simmons, PhD.

Valuable feedback from the first Family Partnership meeting identified nutrition as a key concern and appropriate topic for the second meeting. It also identified staffing, engagement and activities of daily living as areas of interest, which is assisting Dr. Simmons and the leadership team in prioritizing quality improvement initiatives.

Since receiving the survey results in July, the following changes and initiatives have been implemented:

- Increased leadership and nursing staff presence on weekends and late evenings
- Submitted a grant funding request to enhance team members' skills in engaging residents during all waking hours
- Created a system to further assist residents with frequent clothing changes and other activities that improve their physical appearance



Meet our new evening Assistant Nurse Manager, Anna Freels. Photo by Dan Heller.



Check out the new look of our website at www.abesgarden.org!



Mouth care is one of the activities of daily living addressed in AHAG training. Photo by David Abbott.

ABE'S GARDEN® NOW TRAINS AT-HOME CAREGIVERS

By Lori Latusek

In September, with the financial support of The Memorial Foundation, Cal Turner Family Foundation, and Dugas Family Foundation, Abe's Garden® added to our community-based services a pilot program that trains family members and other caregivers in their homes. Through **At Home with Abe's Garden® (AHAG)**, experienced staff members counsel and coach clients on effective person-directed care approaches. Techniques are then integrated into daily life with the help of a caregiving toolkit and follow-up support.

Abe's Garden® hosted two focus group sessions comprised of family caregivers whose loved one with Alzheimer's is living at home with them. The families' feedback was analyzed to make certain the program aligned fully with current needs.

Activities of daily living and engagement are the training focuses. This program also provides **counseling, support and education** for family caregivers. Training pillars will be adjusted and customized, if needed, as the program progresses.

The grant funding received in 2017 is underwriting the program's development and providing services at no cost to six qualified families. Eligibility includes three low-income families from Davidson, Sumner and/or Robertson counties.

For more information or to determine program eligibility, please contact Judy Given at jgiven@abesgarden.org or 615.543.5785.

ABE'S GARDEN® WELCOMED SUMMER INTERNS

By Lori Latusek

Abe's Garden® staff and residents were pleased to have two summer interns from the HCA-sponsored Opportunity NOW program that connects high school students with paid internships at local non-profit organizations.

Jessica, a high school senior from Hume-Fogg Academic High School, assisted Continuous Education and Quality Improvement Coordinator, Chris Coelho, with engagement group observations for continuous quality improvement and data entry. She also interviewed residents about their interests and what they thought about the engagement that was happening at Abe's Garden®. She created an internal newsletter with what she saw and learned from the residents.

"It was a great experience," she says. "I was really excited to be here every day. Being with the residents made me smile." Coelho was happy, too. "Jessica was a great help," he says. "From day one, she was professional and ready to bring a positive attitude and great work ethic to Abe's Garden®."

A recent McGavock High School graduate, Niesha's tasks included participating in engagement activities, visiting residents one-on-one and assisting the staff with organization and preparation of supplies and manipulatives for resident engagements. "It was wonderful to have an additional person to assist with keeping the residents engaged," shares Director of Life Engagement and Volunteer Services, Brenda Nagey.

In fact, Nagey would love to have interns again. "Opportunity NOW was a very good partner," she says. "They did all the work. They supported me and the students. I welcome the opportunity to participate again."

In turn, Abe's Garden® team members modeled good work ethic and communication skills in the workplace, so Jessica and Niesha will be armed with this knowledge for the future.

Last names of interns have been excluded for privacy.



Intern Jessica, interviews resident, Edith Hudson. Photo by Dan Heller.

ABE'S GARDEN® RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENT THERAPEUTIC GARDEN DESIGN

By Walker Duncan



One of the features at Abe's Garden® that truly stands out is the centralized courtyard and garden. The visually appealing environment provides a host of stimulating outdoor residential programs, sunshine and exercise. In recognition of these excellent facets, The American Horticultural Therapy Association® (AHTA) has awarded Abe's Garden® this year's Therapeutic Garden Design Award.

The garden serves as a vital extension of the Abe's Garden® model to leverage the best person-centered care and evidence-based design, as well as the organization's mission to set an elevated standard for other programs and residential communities caring for seniors. Numerous opportunities are crafted for residents at every stage of physical and cognitive ability, and thanks to this well-designed space, include vegetable gardening, flower arranging, garden walks and discussions and a gardening and beautification committee and culinary club.

Overseeing all of Abe's Garden's horticultural programs is Lead Life Engagement Coordinator, Debra Edwards, HTR, BLA, who also helps maintain the garden's highly intentional design. The space includes features such as multiple natural sitting areas, raised beds for easy accessibility, a water feature, outdoor cooking and dining areas and large central lawn for hosting games or chipping golf balls. In addition to promoting resident choice and freedom, the garden seamlessly blends safety, accessibility and wayfinding into its design.

Thanks to the sustained balance of safety and stimulation, the garden is a constantly available feature that anyone on campus is encouraged to engage with at any time. "We love to see residents and their loved ones enjoying the garden," says Edwards. "They do all kinds of things, like dig beds, cut flowers and plant."



Debra Edwards helps maintain the award-winning garden. Photo by Robert Heller.

Help Grow Our Great Staff

Abe's Garden® and Park Manor are looking for people with big hearts and an interest in teamwork. If you know someone great, please share the lead. Positions include care partners and full-time cooks.

Please contact hr@xmigrowth.com with your referral, or to learn more.



Care Partner Kay Jordan assists Park Manor resident Betty Thomas. Photo by David Abbott.

3 WAYS TO GIVE SMARTER

Transfer appreciated stock to Abe's Garden® and avoid the capital gains tax.

If you are 70 ½ or older, make a direct transfer from your IRA to Abe's Garden®. You pay NO federal income tax on the transfer and it DOES count toward your minimum required distribution.

Update your will, trust, IRA, 401(k) or life insurance policy beneficiaries to include Abe's Garden®.

Want more info or other smart giving ideas? Visit abesgarden.org/giving/give-smarter or contact:

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