

Connection

ISSUE 2, 2025

Establishing a replicable model for senior life that is focused on brain health, wellness and purposeful living.



At the Heart of Our Mission

Team Members With a Passion for Their Work

Meaningful engagement has been the heart and cornerstone of our mission to enrich the lives of those living with dementia since we opened the doors of our memory support suites ten years ago. Day in and day out, we rely on a hand-picked team of dedicated, compassionate individuals to bring this mission to life. Guided by the innovative *I'm Still Here*® approach, the Life Engagement team goes beyond traditional caregiving, fostering joy, connection, and purpose for all individuals who call Abe's Garden Community home.

Project Manager Kristy Mellons reflects how this philosophy goes deeper than the phrase *I'm Still Here*. "Yes, we're acknowledging that the person is still present—but it's also about finding ways to help them continue enjoying the things they've always loved in meaningful and accessible ways," Kristy says. She continues, "It's one thing to talk about golf, for example, but it's another to place a club in their hands, read about the game, have a conversation about it, or watch drone footage of a golf course."

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At left: Project Manager Kristy Mellons and resident. At right: (Top row) Valerie Snider, LEC Manager; Scott Corey, LEC; Malloree Grimes, Community Programs Manager; Ken Moss, LEC; Beverly Theis, Sr. Director, Resident & Family Support; (Bottom row) Kristin Todd, Volunteer Coordinator; Gracie Ault, LEC & Music Therapist; Janice Benn, LEC

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The goal is to bring their passions back to life—even if it looks a little different than it did before.”

Life Engagement Coordinators (LECs) curate and lead six or more hours of programming each day, forming meaningful connections with our residents and their families. Ken Moss, a cherished member of the LEC team, shares, “It is tremendously rewarding to engage with the residents through mind and body exercise, enriching conversations, shared laughs, and community events. Every day I witness the difference I make in their lives and the profound impact they have on me.” He recalls that one resident who significantly impacted his journey was Carolyn Brakefield.

“Carolyn and I both had a love for being outdoors, and she would help me water and tend to the garden each afternoon. Her face always lit up the minute that I entered the room, and she had a knack for making witty comments that cracked me up,” he reflects warmly.

Restoring joy, dignity, and meaning in the lives of these individuals is what drives



our team. For Volunteer Coordinator Kristin Todd, this mission is deeply personal. Inspired by her late grandmother who had Alzheimer’s, Kristin sees her work as a calling, saying, “I think about how I hope she was treated, and that’s how I want to treat others!” The daily smiles and conversations she shares with residents remind her that small gestures make a big impact in their lives.



LEC Manager Valerie Snider also finds deep meaning in her role. “I love helping our seniors live out their purpose in their later years,” she reflects.

One special connection that stays with her is Glynn Clark, a resident known for his fun personality. “Whether reading articles or enjoying the sunshine, spending time with him really deepened my appreciation for the relationships we form here.”

These energetic, creative, compassionate individuals bring our mission to life every single day. Their work not only uplifts those in their care but also inspires families, colleagues, and our entire community. We are deeply grateful to have such a remarkable team at the heart of Abe’s Garden Community enriching lives, creating connections, and embodying the spirit of what makes this place so special. It is this commitment to truly seeing and celebrating each resident as a unique individual that transforms AGC from a place to live into a place to **thrive**.



Families Supporting Families

Meet the Brakefields

When a family entrusts their loved one's care to us, they become an integral part of our community and find a place for support, comradery, and connection. Over the past few years that the Brakefield family has been involved with Abe's Garden Community, they have enhanced our organization—not only through the love they showed for their late mother Carolyn Brakefield but also through the support they shared with her fellow residents and their families. Whether visiting on a special holiday or a bright summer day, these compassionate and talented siblings: Betsy Brakefield Funk, Pat Brakefield, Caroline Brakefield Rochford, and Eleanor Brakefield Wells, and their families have generously shared their unique talents and spirit to make AGC a special place for many to call home.

Betsy Brakefield Funk's daughter, Hattie, with her Grandmother, Carolyn Brakefield.



“ I began working at AGC in 2015 as a physical therapist, and my Mom became a memory care resident in 2022. So, my co-workers became Mom's caregivers. The staff cared as well for our family as they did for our Mom. From taking the time to do Mom's make-up every morning to having administrators come back late in the night to check on us during her final day, above and beyond is really just the norm at AGC.”
- Betsy Brakefield Funk

“ Mom spent her days with friends, eating delicious meals, petting therapy dogs, and participating in a large variety of group activities. We enjoyed watching her engage with the other residents and staff and participating with her during activities. The staff members were loving and kind to Mom, always smiling and greeting her by name, and treating her as an individual. This journey has not been easy, but we are immensely grateful that Mom and our whole family had an extended home at Abe's Garden Community.” - Eleanor Brakefield Wells



Above: Pat Brakefield's wife, Stephanie with Carolyn Brakefield surrounded by loving grandchildren and great grandchildren.
Above Left: Eleanor Brakefield Wells shares her enthusiasm with residents about the exciting and much-needed expansion of Abe's Garden Community.



A Decade (And More!) of Dedication
These committed team members have served our community for 10 years or more, building lasting relationships every step of the way.



Members of our dedicated, compassionate staff celebrating a decade of



**Judy Shmerling
Given, LCPC**
Co-founder &
Sr. Dir., Campus
Development
17 Years



Jacob Pursell
Sr. Dir., Facility
Management
17 Years



**Samantha
Hamilton**
Business Office
Manager
17 Years



Pamela Bass
Care Partner
16 Years



Cheryl Maney
Care Partner
15 Years



innovative, best-in-class dementia care at Abe's Garden.



Beverly Theis, LCSW
Sr. Dir., Resident &
Family Services
10 Years



Matt Monier,
MBA, SHRM-CP
HR Project
Manager
10 Years



Tamatha Jackson
Concierge
10 Years



Rana Morris
LPN
11 Years



Donna Starks
Care Partner
13 Years



LaCola Parker
CQI Coordinator
12 Years



Chauncey Beddingfield
Culinary
11 Years

Enthusiastic Leader and Engaged Resident

The Journey of Charlotte Langford

After earning multiple degrees and building a storied career, Charlotte Nesbitt Langford was facing a new challenge. What should she do after spending two years cruising around and exploring 35 Caribbean islands while running a charter yacht business and narrowly surviving Hurricane Hugo? Charlotte decided it was time to take action on her dream of helping at-risk youth in her home state of Indiana. Within five years she made her dream a reality and then led the Southwest Indiana Regional Youth Village for ten years.

It was that experience of fulfilling her vision that led her to say yes when her long-time friend Mike Shmerling recruited her to help him with his dream of developing a memory support Center of Excellence in Nashville. In 2008, Charlotte was hired as Executive Director to share her vast management expertise. Charlotte oversaw the addition of assisted living to the existing independent living apartments in what was then known as Park Manor, as well as the overall operations for the campus.

Charlotte's experience and expertise in residential care communities were invaluable during the development and design phases of Abe's Garden Memory Support. As Executive Director, Charlotte served on the board of directors and remained an active board member even after she retired from her staff position in 2011. In 2018, she again answered the call to serve and returned to lead the organization on an interim basis.

As a result of Charlotte's dedicated professional and board service to Abe's Garden Community, in May 2023 she was unanimously endorsed as



Jim Shmerling, Charlotte Langford, and Mike Shmerling at Abe's Garden Community during the September capital campaign announcement event.

the board's first Trustee Emeritus. Now, as an independent living resident, Charlotte lives in the very place she once led! She seldom misses the opportunity to attend a board meeting and offers insights from her new perspective. Charlotte's continued involvement and support demonstrate her unwavering commitment to helping ensure a bright future for the organization.

Charlotte's life is marked by success and accolades in education and business. On campus, she is best known for her great hugs and words of encouragement. Charlotte continues to spread love and kindness throughout the campus while enjoying the freedom to travel. She plans to continue to make the most of each moment!

Service and Support Lead to Success

Current Board Members

- **Michael Shmerling, CHAIRMAN** | Chairman, Clearbrook Holdings Corp.
- **Donald Holmes, VICE CHAIRMAN** | Retired VP, HR, Delek US Holdings
- **Phillip Billington, TREASURER** | VP Internal Audit, HCA
- **Susan Foxman, SECRETARY** | Attorney, Foxman Law PLLC; Adjunct Professor of Law, VUMC
- **Scott Burns**; Private Investor
- **Kim Campbell**; Founder, Careliving.org & The Care Living Foundation
- **Katie Crumbo**; Retired Nurse Practitioner & Community Volunteer
- **John Hassenfeld**; Founding Partner, The Write Source!
- **Mina Johnson**; Former Metro Nashville Planning Commissioner
- **Charlotte Langford**; Former ED, Park Manor; Former Interim CEO, Abe's Garden Community
- **Ryan Moses**; Executive VP President, Best Brands
- **Mary Kate Mouser**; Owner and CEO Sideview Partners, LLC
- **Bernard Pargh**; Founder and President B.A. Pargh Company; Private Investor
- **William Purcell**; Attorney, Frost Brown Todd LLC; Former Mayor of Nashville; Former Member of Tennessee House of Representatives
- **James Shmerling**; President and CEO Connecticut Children's Medical Center
- **Saurabh Sinha**; Founder & Board Chair, Emids Technologies
- **Abby Trotter**; Partner, Hall Strategies
- **Brenda Wynn**; Davidson County Clerk

Former Board Members

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| • Janet Ayers | • Steve Moran | • Jim Phillips |
| • Chris Brown | • Faith Ott | • Deborah Robin |
| • William Cochran* | • Bob McKown* | • Mary Ellen Rodgers |
| • Ron Corbin | • Lynn McPheeters | • Jayne Sallerson |
| • Jim Daniell | • Patty Marks | • Anna Sir |
| • Joe Galante | • Peter Miller | • Anne Westfall |
| • Paula Lovell | • Tom Ozburn | • John Ziesel |

Abe's Garden was recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2008, and a Board of Directors was selected to manage all business activities and policies. As we celebrate ten years since Abe's Garden Memory Support opened in August 2015, we acknowledge that our success is in large part due to the dedication and generosity of the individuals who have served on our Board.

We offer our sincerest thanks to these community leaders who have shared their skills, talents, and resources to ensure that we can continue a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Perennial Society Founding Members

We are grateful for the individuals who have included Abe's Garden Community in their estate plans. These gifts represent significant commitment and future support to ensure that Abe's Garden Community continues to provide brain health, wellness and purposeful living for seniors.

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Sarah Anderson | • Paula Lovell |
| • Christopher Brown | • Patty & James Marks |
| • Geraldine Bryant | • Sharon & Moises Paz |
| • Anita Cochran | • Mollie & Robert Perry |
| • Donna & Mark Coleman | • Anonymous |
| • Helen Cummings | • Suzanne & James Schulman |
| • Anonymous | • Debbie & Jim Shmerling |
| • Joe Galante | • Lisa & Mike Shmerling |
| • Judy & Gil Given | • Lisa & Rob Shmerling |
| • Stacy Harris | • Lisa & Steve Small |
| • Reva & Eugene* Heller | • Larry Trabue |
| • Anonymous | • Anonymous |
| • Ann Marie Ives | • Beth Zeitlin |
| • Amy Katz | |
| • Paul Kuhn | |

Please let us know if you have included Abe's Garden in your estate plan. We'd love to add you to our list.

*denotes deceased



115 Woodmont Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37205

Let's Grow Together
Use this QR code for
more information about
our capital campaign.

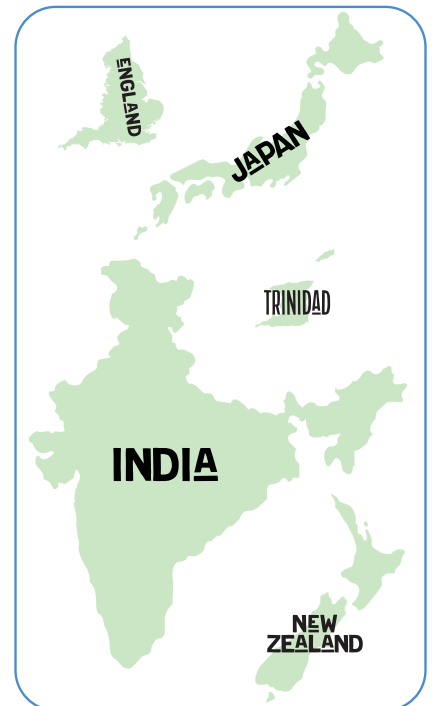
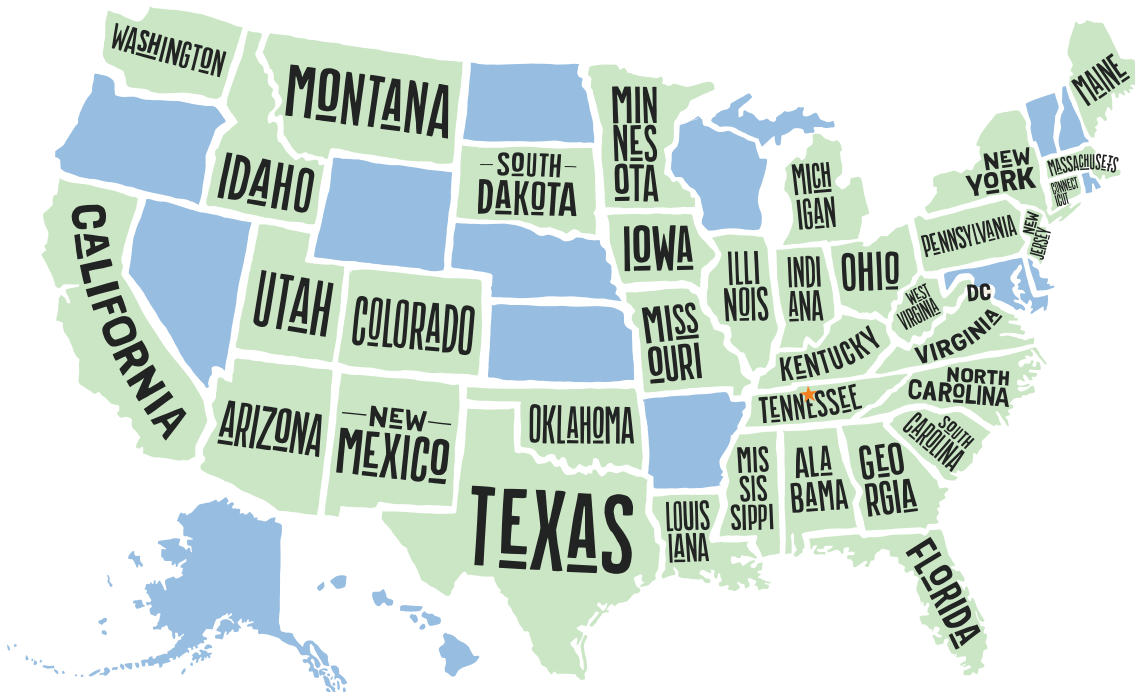


629.249.1141

www.abesgarden.org

Abe's Garden® Community is a
501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

From Near and Far, AGC is Their HOME!



Abe's Garden Community residents come from places as close as your childhood backyard and as far as the other side of the globe!