Music at Saint Simeon's
Programs that are filling residents' hearts with sweet symphonies

Saint Simeon's is a mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma

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A Letter from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Spring fever is an issue at Saint Simeon’s. Residents are enjoying the courtyards. Grandchildren are scrambling through the dining room to visit grandparents, Simone, and the playground. The peacocks are sunbathing. Resident visits to the Wellness Center abound, and music is everywhere. We all have a new spring in our step thanks to you and your generosity.

It’s nearly impossible not to feel energized this time of year. At Saint Simeon’s, the new Wellness Center equipment, developed to combat symptoms associated with Parkinson’s disease, is creating a renewed sense of purpose among Residents and staff alike. Workout sessions are popular among Residents and include all around favorite musical tunes. Founders of Doctors’ Hospital Inc. made the new equipment possible for Saint Simeon’s Residents. Dr. Mary Nole, Wellness Center Director, and Sue Slama, Director of Nursing, attended an intensive training session by Parkinson’s Wellness Recovery, and are implementing innovative therapies throughout the community.

Music programs have the power to recall memories, brighten the afternoon, and lift spirits. We have two families to thank for bringing “Keys to Memory,” a program that uses a computerized piano to remind Residents of special memories through familiar music, to Saint Simeon’s. Ellen C. and Donald B. Atkins made possible Keys to Memory in the Memory Center last year. Wirick Resources, LLC, in memory of Margaret Jean and Harry Wirick; in honor of Jane Wirick, made possible Keys to Memory in the HealthCare Center. The clavinova was delivered immediately before the Residents’ Christmas Party bringing a special quality to singing along to Christmas carols.

You continue to make a great deal possible at Saint Simeon’s. Thank you to the individuals and friends who share in the mission of Saint Simeon’s. We have a song in our hearts thanks to you.

Carolyn Blair, Executive Director
Saint Simeon’s Foundation
 Resident Bernie Roback plays the Clavinova in the HealthCare Center, along with staff member Jamie Lee, during a Keys to Memory session.

ANNUAL RESIDENT ART SHOW
Our Residents fill Saint Simeon’s with a display of their artistic work.

MUSIC AT SAINT SIMEON’S
Read about how a variety of programs are bringing joy to Residents’ daily lives.

DONOR REPORT

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT
Meet our Western Days 2017: Seasons of Change Pioneer Spirit Award Recipient, Anne Evans.
Residents Display Their Artistic Side

Saint Simeon’s Residents had the opportunity to show off their artistic talents during the annual Art Show on Feb. 9. Some of the mediums featured were painting, cross-stitch, quilting, woodwork, and colored pencil. Many of the artists sat near their artwork and shared with fellow Residents and visitors about their pieces. Drinks and snacks were served. Saint Simeon’s is honored to have such talented people living under our roof.
Artistic Resident Brings Treasures to Saint Simeon’s

When Resident Anita Robards came to Saint Simeon’s in August, she brought with her many of the artistic treasures she has created over the years. Her apartment in the Dotson Family Assisted Living Center is filled with her paintings, which she manages to fit on everything from canvases to chairs to ornaments to wine bottles to bunnies.

Anita says she gets the most joy out of donating her art to causes or people she knows. She has donated many painted articles to P.E.O. Sisterhood for Cotey College. This year, Saint Simeon’s Western Days will benefit from some special items Anita will be donating to the silent auction.

“I get inspiration knowing I’m going to have people to give my items to,” Anita said.

Anita’s love for art grew during art school. After she put her husband Vic through medical school, he supported her to obtain an undergraduate art degree at Oral Roberts University and a master’s degree in educational counseling at The University of Tulsa. Since that time, she has painted everything from portraits to farm scenes to birds and much more.

Saint Simeon’s recently received a donation of art that Anita and her husband acquired while vacationing in New York City. The bronze statue of a boy and girl is now located just outside the Dotson Family Assisted Living Center in Oxley Circle. “When I saw it, I had to have it, because I said, ‘It’s our kids – Rodney and Laura.’

Thank you, Anita, for sharing your art with us!

Sweetheart Dinner
Residents enjoyed a delicious multi-course Valentine’s dinner on Feb. 13 thanks to a gift made by Caron and Shawn Lawhorn. They made the dinner possible as the winning bidders on the item at Western Days 2016. Thank you to Morrison’s Community Dining for making the meal extra special!

(from left to right, top to bottom) Shawn and Caron Lawhorn, Saint Simeon’s Trustee; Christopher, Lilybeth, and Kay Allen, and Barbara and Woody Allen, Saint Simeon’s Residents and parents of Caron Lawhorn.
Music at Saint Simeon’s

Music fills the halls of Saint Simeon’s every day, bringing joy to hearts and flooding minds with memories. There are several different music programs currently available at our community, each benefiting the Residents in special ways.

The Keys to Memory Program entails playing a piano that all Residents can participate in. The Memory Center is home to a clavinova thanks to the generosity of Ellen C. and Donald B. Atkins. The HealthCare Center is home to a clavinova thanks to the generosity of the Wirick Family, in memory of Margaret Jean and Harry Wirick, and in honor of Jane Wirick as made possible by Ruthie and Bob Landsaw and Susie and Jim Gilbert.

The Keys to Memory Program is a program created by Yamaha and offers several special features. The computerized piano houses literally hundreds of songs, and Residents can “play” the songs by hitting any key on the piano. The piano hooks up to a TV, and during sing alongs, a dot bounces along to the words, making it easy to follow along.

Local musician Danny Miller knows all the special functions of the piano and often wows the Residents as he plays on it. Karen Harrington, a music teacher, has been bringing piano players to show us the many choices available on this computer with piano keys.

In addition to the Residents being able to play and sing along on the Clavinova, it is also used as background music, setting a more hospitable mood in the Memory Center and HealthCare Center, respectively.

Another special music program at Saint Simeon’s is the Wirick Music Series, which takes place every Friday at 10:30 in the HealthCare Center. Thanks to the generosity of Wirick Resources, Inc., local musicians like Luigi Balietto, Bill Rowland, Jerry Dwayne, and Chris Middlebrook bring beautiful music to our Residents. Residents from all over Saint Simeon’s visit the HealthCare Center on Fridays to take part in the concerts.

In May, Saint Simeon’s will unveil a new program called Music and Memory sponsored by LeadingAge. Life Enrichment staff members are interviewing Memory Center Residents about their musical tastes, and they will be loading iPods for the Residents with the exact songs and artists the
Residents enjoy, “It will be very personalized,” said Chris Grusczekzi, Administrator.

Music is used every day in Residents’ lives as a calming technique, a way to help them wake up in the morning, or even a way to get them to come out of their shell. “One Memory Center Resident wasn’t talking at all,” Grusczekzi said. “We gave him a CD player with some of his favorite music, Eric Clapton, in it, and afterwards, he conversed for the first time with our staff.”

Saint Simeon’s is also lucky to have talented staff members who often perform for the Residents, including Nicole Graham, Chris Grusczekzi, Father Bill Holly, George Barton, and Karen Stanhope.

Grusczekzi said that while former Residents enjoyed music from the ’20s and ’30s like big band, today’s Residents span a number of decades and like music from the ’40s and ’50s, and the Beatles and ’70s rock and roll.

“Music touches everyone – no matter what their condition or cognitive status,” Grusczekzi said. “Residents in the late stages of dementia may not talk anymore, but they can still sing. People who can’t do anything for themselves will still tap their toe along to music.”
A Message from our President & CEO

I love spring! Daffodils have bloomed, tulips are standing tall ready to open with vibrant color, blades of grass are sprouting green, and trees are budding in whites, yellows, and lavender. As nature unfolds this time of year, I am reminded of a symphony. Each element springs to life, melding together to create beauty and a sense of hope.

Music has that effect in our lives – evoking memories and emotions that spring forth joy, laughter and sometimes tears. Music opens our hearts and minds to years past. Music is in some ways a universal language that stays imprinted in our minds throughout our lives. This aspect of music is especially moving for those with memory loss. A mind that may not remember the time of year will instantly recall a tune or melody learned in years past. For this reason, music and music programs are a vital part of life at Saint Simeon’s. I want to take this opportunity to thank those individuals who are featured in this edition of Ambiance. Their generosity is a symphony of blessings for those we hold very dear – the Residents of Saint Simeon’s.

Lindsay Hurley Fick, President/CEO, Saint Simeon’s

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*deceased
Each year, the Western Days committee selects a Resident who has displayed a pioneering spirit throughout his or her lifetime to honor at the event. This year, the Pioneer Spirit Award Recipient at Western Days 2017: Seasons of Change on Sept. 12, 2017 will be Anne Evans.

Anne was raised in New Canaan, Conn. and attended boarding school in the area. After graduation, she went to visit family members living in California, and it was there that she met Bob Evans, who had recently returned home after fighting in World War II. They started dating, and after about a year, he asked her to marry him. They were married in 1949 in Connecticut.

Bob had a degree in geology, but it took him a while to find his first job. “He was still unemployed when we were married. My family wasn’t too excited about that,” Anne laughed.

Bob eventually landed a job at Shell and participated in a 7-year training program. “That meant we had to move every four months for a year,” Anne said. The couple eventually landed in Oklahoma City for 11 years and had 3 children while living there – Kenneth, Lee, and Kate.

During their time in Oklahoma City, Bob felt a call to the ministry. So the family sold their house in Oklahoma City and moved to Nashotah, Wisc. to a humble two-bedroom apartment while Bob went through seminary. “It seemed like we were constantly downsizing,” Anne said.

During seminary, the couple had their fourth child, Tom.

While Fr. Evans was going through seminary, Anne took a job as a teacher’s assistant at the kids’ school. She has fond memories of funny things that happened while their kids were growing up.

“One of the summers during seminary, my kids and all the neighborhood kids took the Memorial Day flags that were up at the local cemetery and used them in a little parade,” Anne said. “They didn’t know they weren’t supposed to take them. When we found out what they had done, we had to try to put all the flags back.”

After Fr. Evans was finished with seminary, he was offered his first position as a priest at an Episcopal church in the small town of Lindsay, Okla. After two years in Lindsay, he was offered to become the priest at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Bartlesville, Okla. The family was in Bartlesville for 10 years until they moved to Milwaukee, Wisc., where Fr. Evans oversaw a church. After 10 years in Milwaukee, he retired, and the family moved back to Bartlesville in 1977, where the couple lived until they moved to Saint Simeon’s in 2009.

Fr. Evans passed away in 2013, and his smiling face is still missed at Saint Simeon’s. Anne has made Saint Simeon’s her home for almost eight years now and enjoys reading, visiting with Simone, and sitting outside in the courtyards.

We applaud Anne Evans for her pioneering spirit in seeing her husband through his call to ministry and many changes in life, and we’re grateful to have her as a Resident!
Saint Simeon’s
TULSA'S SENIOR COMMUNITY
3701 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Tulsa, OK 74106-6450

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