



# *This is Personal*

TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF THOSE AFFECTED BY DEMENTIA



## Shovels in the Ground

April 17 marked a major milestone for the *This is Personal* Capital Campaign and for Willow Valley Communities, as the Foundation hosted the **Groundbreaking Ceremony of the Marlin and Doris Thomas Memory Center**. The construction of this world-class memory center begins during the same year that Willow Valley Communities celebrates 40 years of offering premier senior living and the promise of Lifecare.

Laughter, tears, and heartfelt hope filled the Cultural Center as over 600 attendees gathered to hear Marlin Thomas, Founder of Willow Valley Communities, and John G. Swanson, CEO of Willow Valley Development Corp, share stories about the evolution of Willow Valley Communities and the vision for transforming the lives of those affected by dementia.

Resident, Dwight Jasmann, inspired all with a beautiful message that spoke to the importance of recognizing and embracing little moments of joy. A glimmering smile graced Dwight's face as he described his wife, Nina, with radiant beauty and a perpetual love of dancing. He recalled a memory from the Sweetheart Dance this past February, and explained that this dance was different because of the cognitive changes Nina continues to exhibit well into their journey with dementia. With pause, he recounted the moment that he pulled Nina in close to dance, and Nina whispered "I've forgotten how." But in her next breath, as she leaned her head on his shoulder, she smiled and admitted, "but I still love you." "These are moments of sheer joy," Dwight convinced the audience.

*(continued inside)*



*Making music with the Mobii Magic Surface as a ball is rolled across the table*

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A virtual tour of the seven-acre memory center campus and discussion about therapeutic engagement led into special remarks shared from the construction site of the Marlin and Doris Thomas Memory Center. A rendering of the front entrance backdropped the dig site where a countdown gave way to the ceremonial groundbreaking, triggering bursts of confetti to shower attendees with hope and anticipation.

Following the ceremony, Residents, Team Members, business partners, and others in attendance were invited to explore a preview of amenities to be available at the Memory Center. The Brain Tech Center highlighted the value of brain games to encourage neuroplasticity and engagement. Currently, Willow Valley Communities is partnered with an organization called Linked Senior to provide this technology to Residents in Supportive Living.

Technologies offered in Supportive Living, which foster support and engagement for Residents, family,

and friends were also on display. Adventurous attendees were seen wearing oculus goggles as they embarked on a virtual hot air balloon ride over Portugal using a tech platform called Rendever. Others interacted with CRDL (pronounced cradle), a therapeutic instrument used to create meaningful connections, and Mobii Magic Surface, an interactive surface used to promote physical activity and reminiscence. A low-tech option: therapy pups greeted attendees, offering comfort and companionship.

The Brain Café station featured a brain-healthy bite, a brain-food sculpture, information on the MIND diet, and introduced Master Chef Richard Rosendale as a partner in helping to develop the culinary program at the Memory Center.



*Residents gather hand-in-hand to experience CRDL*



*Taking a virtual trip using Rendever*

# Clinical Partnership

As we celebrated the groundbreaking, Willow Valley Communities also announced the selection of the clinical partner, Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, who will join us in this mission and extend services via the Assessment Center at the Marlin and Doris Thomas Memory Center. Professionals from the dedicated team of neurologists, neuropsychologists, geriatricians, executives, and researchers participated in the celebration, greeting Residents and highlighting the goals of the clinical partnership.

Our relationship with Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health enhances the initiatives taking shape within the programmatic elements and built environment of the Memory Center to transform the lives of those impacted by dementia. Efforts to advance research, increase awareness, enable easier access to neurological care, and reduce caregiver stress will be hallmarks of this partnership. Together, we are excited to lead and support a community that better understands and prioritizes brain health.

Offering further insight into the goals and roles of this clinical partnership, and descriptions of the Memory Center program in general, the **Foundation is hosting community gatherings** where Residents are invited to ask questions, share their experiences, and hear the latest updates regarding the development of the Center. These gatherings are purely for education. If you are interested in attending, please reach out to Morgan Poillon, Development Coordinator, at 717.464.6044. It would be our pleasure to extend an invitation!



*Clinical Partners join the celebration  
From left: Dr. Jesse Main, PsyD; Dr. Connie Metzler, MSW, RN, DCP; Brad Stevens, Executive Director - PMLGH Orthopedic and Neuroscience Service Lines; Tammy Ober, Chief Growth Officer - PMLGH*



*Dr. Michael Ripchinski, Chief Physician Executive - PMLGH, shares his excitement with a Resident*



*Rendering of the future Assessment Center at the Marlin and Doris Thomas Memory Center*

## Looking Ahead

The season of giving is a few months away, but the time to explore opportunities for giving is now. The Foundation exists to nurture a culture of philanthropy, and connect your values and passions with opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others. Helping donors make informed decisions about how to support an organization matters to us. Philanthropy is effective when the gift is advantageous for both the donor and the non-profit.

Two popular and impactful vehicles for giving are **Estate Giving** and **Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)** from

an IRA. While detailed, both vehicles are surprisingly easy to facilitate and very beneficial for the donor and the Foundation. If you have questions about these or other giving vehicles, please reach out to Lauren Renehan, Executive Director, at 717.464.6704. It would be our pleasure to assist in guiding your philanthropic impact. There is no obligation in exploring opportunities to meet your philanthropic goals.

### May I Still Support the Campaign for the Memory Center?

Yes! Continued support for the Memory Center will bolster resources to enable the highest quality of life. Gifts in support of capital construction and the Memory Care Endowment have given breath to and will perpetually strengthen the mission of the Memory Center. This vision was encouraged by the generosity of many donors who believe that Willow Valley Communities is embarking on a project that is truly groundbreaking. To all of those who have supported this campaign, please accept our sincere “thank you.” You have made this possible.



Rendering of the front entrance of the Memory Center

**The Foundation serves as a vehicle for Residents to make a lasting effect on the community they call home, the broader Lancaster County community—and beyond.**

Whatever your philanthropic intentions may be, the Foundation is here to serve as a resource for you.

To support the Campaign and Memory Care Endowment, please call 717.517.3901, or give online through our website.

To view the recording of the Groundbreaking Ceremony, head over to the Foundation's website: [Foundation.WillowValleyCommunities.org](https://Foundation.WillowValleyCommunities.org)



**Lauren Renehan**  
Executive Director  
717.464.6704  
[lrenehan@willowvalley.org](mailto:lrenehan@willowvalley.org)

**Morgan Poillon**  
Development Coordinator  
717.464.6044  
[mpoillon@willowvalley.org](mailto:mpoillon@willowvalley.org)