



CONNECTION

A Publication of Methodist Senior Services

Holiday 2023

Riggs Manor Retirement Community
dedicated a Wall of Honor to Veterans.



METHODIST SENIOR SERVICES

*The Gift of Honor
and Service*

...serving older adults in the spirit of Christian love.

Once again, another year has flown by! As we come to the end of 2023, I am in awe of the work our team is doing on behalf of elders across the state. While the world is still recovering from a once in two century pandemic, it is business as usual for us. Except the work they do is not usual, it's unusual and extraordinary—helping to bring love and living to God's "older children," as Bill Carroll, our founding President used to say.

We don't coast into the end of the year, and we don't stand still. This issue of *The Connection* illustrates that love and living. New Executive Directors, new Sunday Fund gifts, new Meals on Wheels opportunities, new elders to serve.

As I write this, I think about the saints who have gone before us, and on whose shoulders we stand. Please take special note of the story about Roy and Doris Ryan. It is especially meaningful to me, because I don't have a memory of not knowing Roy and Doris, life-long friends of my parents. I've heard some of the stories they tell from way back in my past—laying in the hall as a child when I was supposed to be in bed, listening to them and my parents in the living room laughing and loving each other. It was palpable and taught me about friendship and love. Roy and Doris are two of the giants our organization is blessed to have been served by, and I am blessed to have been able to stand on their shoulders! They are truly leaving the world better than they found it.

And Loretta Wadlington! 38 years of impeccable, steady service. Though I knew her first as the Executive Assistant to the former President, back in the day when I was a volunteer, I am grateful to have served with her personally these years. She has our "institutional memory", a gentle, kind spirit, and is such a joy in our office. She makes my work easier, and I am thankful!

Our blessings to you and yours as we move from a time of Thanksgiving to celebration of the birth of the Savior! Remember your giants and be thankful!



From the desk of
Steve McAlilly
PRESIDENT/CEO



Senior Services Statistics

Number of Units: 1,427
% of Occupancy: 91.3%
Total Residents: 1,419
Sunday Fund Recipients: 23
October SF Assistance: \$44,202
Gov't Rent Assistance Residents: 509
Outreach Service Recipients: 163
Total Served by Senior Services: 1,582
Total Employees: 916

Our Mission: *to serve older adults in the spirit of Christian love*

Our Core Values:

- *Servant ministry*
- *The dignity of elders*
- *Compassion for those we serve*
- *Equity and empowerment*
- *Operational excellence*
- *Innovative service*

Our Vision: *to ensure Mississippi elders and our team members are safe, secure, supported and loved*



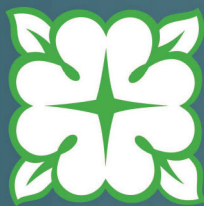
©2023 MSS Connection is a publication of Methodist Senior Services. It is intended to inform and educate our many constituencies regarding our ministry. If you have questions or comments, please contact:

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Stephen L. McAlilly, President/CEO
Bill West, Chair of the Board

Methodist Senior Services is related to the Mississippi Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Our family members make the best missionaries for our ministry across Mississippi. Often you are called upon to demonstrate your commitment and passion for the MSS mission. We thought it might be good if you had some of our best “talking points” to aide you in those conversations. Thanks, as always, for all you do to help promote our services.



Experience the **FAITH-BASED, NOT-FOR-PROFIT** *Difference*



Here are just a few of the distinctive traits that make us different from most providers.

not-for-prof-it (nät fer' präfet), adj.
another term for nonprofit; net revenues are reinvested into the organization

FAITH BASED/MISSION DRIVEN ORGANIZATION

Respect for aging is central to the Bible's teaching. Concern for elders is found in the stories of both the Old and New Testaments, and we recognize the contribution elders have made to family and community throughout the ages. This is the theological base upon which Methodist Senior Services has built our ministry. Our commitment is to hold the wisdom and experience of God's older children in high esteem.

GOVERNED BY A VOLUNTEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS

MSS is guided by the servant leadership of our board of directors who are completely comprised of volunteers. They are mission driven people with nothing to lose. They keep us focused and passionate towards our mission at all times. Residents are always first!

*This is who we are.
This is how we love!*

MORE THAN 60 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE

In June, 1961, the Mississippi Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church authorized the establishment of a special committee on aging ministries. Mississippi Methodist Senior Services was incorporated in 1962 as an independent organization and has since led the charge to accomplish its vision to make Mississippi the best place in the country to grow old. With twelve locations across the state, MSS provides a wide range of services including living options for elders, assisted living services, skilled nursing care and memory support. Through visionary leadership MSS became the first to revolutionize eldercare by constructing the first Green House® Home in 2003. MSS continues to seek innovative ways to address the needs of Mississippi elders in the most affordable and accessible ways.

NET REVENUES ARE REINVESTED BACK INTO THE ORGANIZATION

All revenues go back into the organization rather than to shareholders. It is always about improving the lives of those we serve. Our goal is excellence and our motivator is our mission. No shareholders, only mission.

MEANING, PURPOSE AND GRACE

At MSS, how we live and how we love is influenced by the Eden Alternative® philosophy. Enhancing the quality of life for older adults and the belief that care of the human spirit as well as the care of the human body creates a life full of purpose, connection, empowerment and possibility.

CHARITABLE CARE AND SERVICES

Through the generosity of donors, MSS has never asked a resident to leave because they have outlived their resources through no fault of their own. Charitable contributions to the Sunday Fund benevolence program help MSS provide funding to assist elders despite their inability to pay. Additionally, donations to the general fund off-set the cost of renovations and operations, keeping our housing and services affordable for all.

THE RYANS: LIVES OF SERVICE

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” 1 John 3: 16-18 NIV

Rev. Roy Ryan and his wife, Doris, are more familiar than most with the history of Methodist Senior Services (MSS).

In 1961, Roy was one of four North Mississippi Annual Conference members who introduced a resolution to establish non-profit, and when possible charitable, facilities and services for older persons in North Mississippi without regard to religious affiliation, race, national background or economic circumstance.

“We never dreamed it would turn into an organization that covered the entire state,” Roy said.

He served on the initial exploration committee and later the site selection committee. While he left Mississippi to pursue a master’s degree in adult Christian education, specifically for older adults in retirement communities, and then served at the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, he remained involved as an MSS board member.

Throughout, Roy and Doris also supported MSS financially however they could. When their daughters were young, and money was tight, they gave what they could afford.

“There were times we did not have much to give, until we got the girls through college and married,” Roy said. “We were not able to save much money because our careers didn’t pay much, but because of careful management, we are better off financially now than we ever have been.”



“I tell others when they contribute to the Sunday Fund, it goes directly to helping older people with financial needs,” Roy said. “A lot of times people run out of money before they run out of time.”

The couple is passionate about supporting the MSS Sunday Fund because it directly supports seniors who have run out of financial resources through no fault of their own. During the lean years, the couple contributed what they could, and still support the Sunday Fund today.

When the now 93-year-olds retired, they discovered that they had more discretionary income and began to give larger amounts of money to MSS and other charitable organizations.

Because of their ties to MSS and Mississippi, they always knew they wanted to spend their retirement years at Traceway Retirement Community, one of what grew to 12 MSS communities across the state.

“Doris grew up in Lee County, and I grew up in Itawamba,” Roy said. “We met at Itawamba Community College, and we were recently honored as two of the four remaining graduates from the first class.”

LEAVE A LEGACY FOR MSS



The couple moved into their cottage at Traceway in 2002, where they still reside today.

After moving in, the couple reviewed their financial needs and their new living situation. They wanted to continue to support MSS, and decided to establish a charitable gift annuity.

A charitable gift annuity is a contract between a donor and a charitable organization. Through the contract, the donor makes

“We have looked upon the charitable gift annuity as a wonderful investment, not only providing capital funds to MSS, but providing us an income,” Roy said. “It’s very comparable to any other income in our portfolio.”



a sizable contribution to the charity using cash, securities or other assets. In return, the donor is eligible to take a partial tax deduction for the donation and receives a fixed stream of income from the charity for the rest of the donor’s life.

Recently, the couple took another look at their net worth and determined that they had more financial resources than they could ever need.

“Doris and I have the attitude that we need to leave this world better off than we found it,” Roy said. “Our estate had grown to a point that we felt we ought to give a larger gift because we would like to see the MSS Endowment grow. We were glad to make the gift to the MSS Endowment fund because we know

it’s going to continue to give long after we’re gone. That was a factor in us making the gift.”

Roy and Doris chose to use some of their stock investments to make the gift to the Endowment because a direct gift of stock helps them avoid capital gains taxes on those investments.

“We feel that for people like us, who support MSS, making a substantial gift to the Endowment is a way that they can continue to give for years to come,” Roy said. **“If they have the resources, it’s one of the best places to invest.”**

Brittany Cuevas, Vice President for Philanthropy at MSS, said getting to know residents and donors across the state enriches her life.

“Roy and Doris have amazed me with their unique involvement in the birthing of Methodist Senior Services and by their generous support for the Sunday Fund and the Endowment,” Cuevas said. “They truly believe in the heart of this ministry. They have given their time, passion, and resources as volunteers, donors and residents of Traceway. The powerful impact of living in community, living a legacy, and living by giving your life away is exemplified by these two.”

For more information on how you can make a planned gift to Methodist Senior Services or one of MSS’ 12 communities, contact Brittany Cuevas at (662)844-8977.

There's no better way to **Give and Receive** than to make a gift that helps others this time of year.

As we unwrap gifts and wrap up another year, this is the time when we think most of others. The familiar saying reminds us it is “better to give than to receive.” As the year winds to a close, take time to make sure you have given to yourself by giving to others.

The remaining weeks of the year give you a final opportunity to balance your income and giving for the tax year. When you give a gift to a qualified nonprofit organization, you receive an income tax deduction. Even if your income is less this year than it was last year, you may still want to offset it with a tax deductible contribution.



Your gift can go a long way toward helping others. This holiday season, take a moment and consider the gifts you would like to make, then make them happen. Call us if we can be of help to you in your giving.

This information is not intended as tax, legal or financial advice. Gift results may vary. Consult your personal financial advisor for information specific to your situation.

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YOU have made the following IMPACT so far this year:

- Supported elders in need as \$429,583, has been spent in Sunday Fund assistance (\$504,821 for the last twelve months!)
- Contributed over \$388K to the MSS Endowment to care for elders now and in the future
- Helped Trinity elders receive a new comfortable bus for community outings and medical appointments
- Helped Wesley Meadows raise funds through a local golf tournament to upgrade the gazebo for elders to enjoy
- Provided 5 meals per week to 163 hungry, homebound elders in Lee County!

**Thank YOU for INVESTING in elders across Mississippi!
YOU are making a difference.**

www.mss.org/donate



Riggs Manor Welcomes New Executive Director

MSS is pleased to announce that Wendy Welch-Cockrell has joined Riggs Manor as its new Executive Director. Wendy comes to us as an 11-year health care professional, who has been in the senior living industry since 2012. She began her service at Riggs Manor October 9, 2023.

Her senior living journey began as a Resident Care Associate at Villa South in Florence, where she quickly demonstrated her dedication to the well-being of Elders. Over the last six years, she has served as the Associate Executive Director at Brookdale Assisted Living in Clinton, where she played a pivotal role in the organization’s growth and success. Prior to her role as Associate Executive Director, Wendy served as the Activity Director at Brookdale for two years. Her passion for enhancing the lives of elders and her commitment to excellence was evident to members of the Riggs Manor selection committee.

When not working, she spends time with Corbett, her husband of two years and their nine-year-old fur baby, Hudson. On the weekends, the couple enjoys spending time with the family, cooking out and watching football. Wendy grew up in Mendenhall, MS, and currently resides in Florence, MS.

‘I am so honored to be a part of the Riggs Manor family and to be a part of the Mission of Methodist Senior Services,’ said Wendy.



On Veteran’s Day, Riggs Manor dedicated a Wall of Honor celebrating the Veterans who live at Riggs Manor Retirement Community.

Mission Possible: No elder hungry in Mississippi

Ashley McDaniel is on a mission. The Meals on Wheels Director's dream is that no elder in Mississippi goes hungry, especially those near one of Methodist Senior Services' (MSS) 12 campuses around the state.

McDaniel leads MSS's only Meals on Wheels program based at Traceway Retirement Community in Tupelo and is the program's only paid employee. The MSS Meals on Wheels program is not affiliated with the national Meals on Wheels program and is not eligible for related federal funding.

The program serves around 165 residents in Lee County along 12 meal delivery routes. Besides Traceway, McDaniel contracts with local restaurants and grocery and convenience stores to prepare meals, and all routes are delivered by a crew of around 200 volunteers. The average cost is \$5.75 per meal at an annual cost of \$140,886 for the 12 routes.

"No elder should have to sit there every day and ask himself, where am I going to get food from today?" McDaniel said. "And people don't realize that a Meals On Wheels program is more than just a hot meal. I tell people, it's a safety check and conversation."

Her volunteers monitor whether the previous day's meal was picked up, and they're quick to call and ask McDaniel to call and check on that elder. During COVID-19, Meals on Wheels was often the only person that elders on the routes got to see in a day, and many were waiting by the door to talk to the volunteer delivering meals.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Meals on Wheels, from delivering meals to fundraising and marketing and everything in between. Dot Gann and Wynell Benson, residents at Traceway, are McDaniel's right-hand women for the operation.

"I think the jobs you enjoy most are the ones you don't get paid for really, that you do in service for others," Benson said.

Gann agreed. She worked for 30 years as a minister's assistant at First Baptist Church in Okolona, Miss., where she learned what it meant to be a servant of the Lord.

"It filled a vacancy that I had," Gann said. "After I came to Traceway, I was kind of lost that I wasn't busy anymore. And so I found that there was a way to help with Meals on Wheels, and Ashley has just given us some wonderful opportunities to serve the community and to serve Traceway."

The pair starts the week packaging cookies that are delivered with the meals. On a recent Monday, they individually packaged more than 100 cookies for the week's meals, but they can package up to 200 cookies a week. The cookies are donated to the program by a local bakery. They assist with fundraising and marketing Meals on Wheels, which includes setting up and working at yard sales and bake sales.

The most unique fundraiser involves one-of-a-kind stained glass items they make. With donated stained glass, the women make jewelry, suncatchers and Christmas ornaments. The donated stained glass comes from all over the world, including remnants from church windows destroyed in natural disasters. Each item is different with pictures of angels, crosses and mangers.

"So, it seems like God has sent us what we need to make money to help supply the needs," Benson said.

Gann drills holes with a drill or drill press, and Benson puts together the many items they sell.

"I'm not as artistic as she is, but I am good with the drilling," Gann said.

While they only raise about \$2,800 a year, the items generate conversation and awareness of the program. Gann and Benson help recruit other volunteers, help McDaniel speak to different groups about the purpose of Meals on Wheels, and hand out literature about the program.



Buy an Ornament, Support our Ministry!

MEALS ON WHEELS OF LEE COUNTY

purchase your

Handmade Christmas Ornament

by calling Ashley at (662)231-1614

Single Ornament - \$20
Ornament & Chance - \$25
(chance to win a second ornament)

Ornaments can be picked up at Traceway Manor during weekday business hours.

Ornaments made and generously donated by an 87-year-old elder who lives at Traceway Manor.

“The whole reason why Meals on Wheels is even available to the public is because of the volunteers I have,” McDaniel said. “I have volunteers that cook food and donate food and money. I have volunteers that run routes. Then, of course, I have volunteers like Dot and Wynell that helped me. I call it the groundwork because even though you don’t see them out delivering meals every day, they are working for Meals on Wheels every day.”

Benson and Gann are so passionate about Meals on Wheels that not only are they donating their time, but they both are financial supporters as well.

“They personally donate to Meals on Wheels, and their families donate to Meals on Wheels. It’s something that they believe in that they talk to their aunts and nieces and uncles and children about. I could not do this job without Wynell and Dot,” McDaniel said.

Meals on Wheels is just one of the women’s volunteer activities. Gann is also the volunteer librarian for the campus, and leads a Women’s Bible Study. Benson and Gann both serve on the resident council and are hall monitors on the hall where they live.

“We volunteer for other things besides Meals on Wheels, but I have to say it’s the closest to our hearts,” Gann said.

To receive Meals on Wheels, you must be 62 or older, no longer be able cook for yourself or no longer have transportation to get food. Most of the recipients are 80 and older. For many, it may be the only meal they have each weekday.

McDaniel says Meals on Wheels is a gateway for future Traceway residents. They have 10 or 15 current campus residents who are

past Meals on Wheels recipients. They came to Traceway because their families were familiar with the senior living community through the program.

“Meals on Wheels kind of lays the groundwork out in the community for how special Traceway is,” she said.

McDaniel said she believes every MSS community could offer Meals on Wheels. She estimates it would take around \$16,000 to get a new route going to deliver meals to 12 elders, between 20 and 25 volunteers to deliver meals 20 to 23 days a month and ongoing financial support.



MSS' Priceless Pair

“The quality of your work, in the long run, is the deciding factor on how much your services are valued by the world.” ~ Orison Swett Marden

How does one find words to recognize the dedication, commitment and hard work of someone celebrating a long-term work Anniversary?

Methodist Senior Services is fortunate to have enjoyed the leadership of Steve McAlilly, President/CEO for 30 years. In addition, Loretta Wadlington has been serving MSS for 38 years. Both shared their milestone Anniversaries in November 2023. Three decades of service is a rare and remarkable accomplishment, and we congratulate each of you on this achievement!

Its safe to say we would not be where we are today without both of you!

CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS AT THESE CAMPUS EVENTS!



Methodist
Senior Services
Celebration. Innovation. Hope.

Flowers
Retirement Community
(662)627-2222

'Tis the Season to
**jingle
and
mingle**

December 3rd
2-4 PM

1251 Lee Drive • Clarksdale, MS

Friends and families are invited to enjoy refreshments
and fellowship. Bring your camera to take photos of
your visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Music provided by Jimmy Harris & The Show.

Join us at  Traceway for
Retirement Community

Breakfast with
Santa & Mrs. Claus

Saturday, December 9TH

8:00-11 AM

at Traceway Manor



Including photos with Santa & Mrs. Claus and carols by Erin Bristow!



\$10 Per Person

Proceeds Benefit
THE SUNDAY FUND

**WALK-UPS ARE WELCOME, BUT
RESERVATIONS ARE RECOMMENDED**

go to <https://forms.gle/6bz134ky4aMWCr2w8> or
scan the QR code to fill out your form and **pay online.**

For more information, call
662-432-1753

2800 West Main Street
Tupelo, MS 38801

**MERRY
IN THE
MEADOWS**

Wesley
Meadows

DEC.
10th

2-5
PM

Wesley
Meadows
Retirement
Community

Photos with Santa
& Mrs. Claus

Horse-Drawn
Carriage Rides

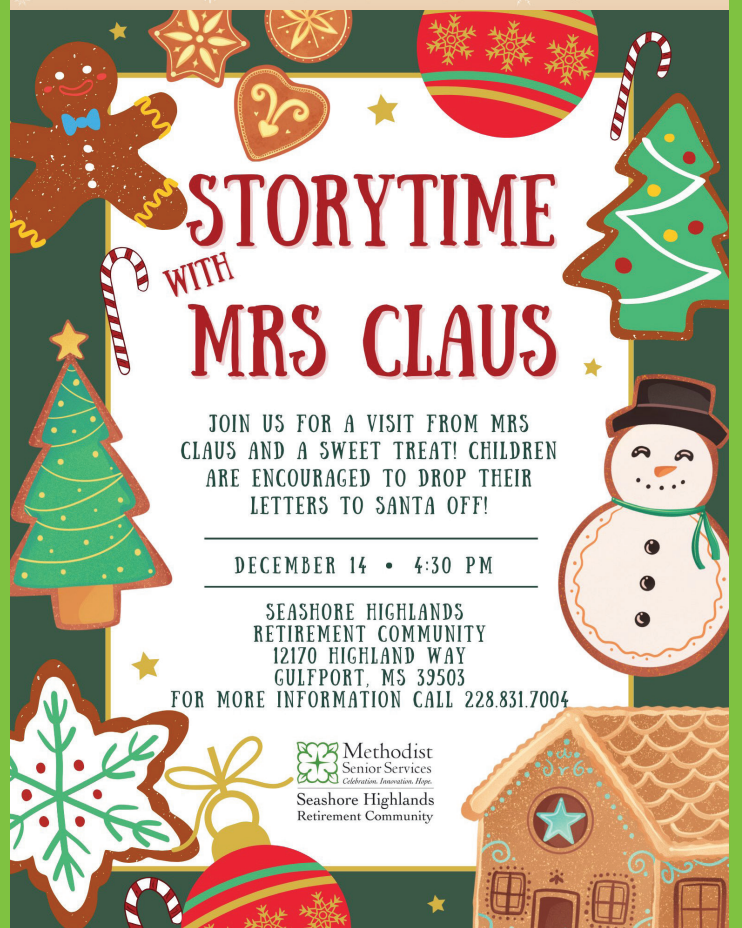
Hot Chocolate Bar &
Light Refreshments

Come celebrate the Season with
the Elders and Team Members

1325 McIngvale Rd.
Hernando, MS 38632

Don't Miss Special Performances
by the Wesley Meadows
Choir & Cheerleading Squad

For more information, call (662) 429-2070



**STORYTIME
WITH
MRS CLAUS**

JOIN US FOR A VISIT FROM MRS
CLAUS AND A SWEET TREAT! CHILDREN
ARE ENCOURAGED TO DROP THEIR
LETTERS TO SANTA OFF!

DECEMBER 14 • 4:30 PM

SEASHORE HIGHLANDS
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
12170 HIGHLAND WAY
GULFPORT, MS 39503

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 228.831.7004

Methodist
Senior Services
Celebration. Innovation. Hope.
Seashore Highlands
Retirement Community

Trinity Place Retirement Community Thanks You

for making
The
**Diamonds &
Dancing Gala**

a huge success!



Diamonds & Dancing
raised **\$20,000.00** for
THE SUNDAY FUND.

We are so thankful
for our community
and all the support
you give to
Trinity Place
Retirement
Community.



For additional photos
from this fun event,
check out the Trinity
Place Facebook Page.



(Top Left) Mission Messengers from around the state had a HERE TO HELP refresher course with curriculum creator, Donna Cutting of Red Carpet Learning on November 14, 2023 (Bottom Left) MSS Leadership Team Members from around the state convened in Tupelo November 15-16, 2023. (Top Right) We are so thankful for Dottie Hudson and Dottie Estes of the Traceway Campus. They led the Thursday morning devotional at the MSS Leadership Summit and poured so much into the team. They are always willing to share God's word and we were all blessed by their message. They are pictured here with Christie Vance, MSS VP of Operations/COO. (Bottom Right) Sales/Marketing Team Members met September 12-13, 2023 at McCain Ranch to learn new innovative approaches to assisting elders with their service selections.