

# PACE

of southwest michigan

Surrounding you with the care  
you need to remain in the  
home you love.

# Newsletter

## Fall/Winter 2017



## Happy Anniversary!

In September PACE of SW MI celebrated our 5th anniversary! When we opened our doors in September 2012 we started with 2 participants and 18 staff. These two

participants continue in our program today. Since 2012 we have served close to 300 participants and now employ over 50 staff.

Over the years we have said goodbye to some participants and we have welcomed many new ones. We have also said goodbye to staff who have moved on to new positions and we have added new staff members. One recent staff addition is Dr. Erika Nearpass who joined us in July as Medical Director. She has a solid understanding of the PACE model and from day one has worked diligently with the team to enhance care, increase community understanding of our service model and support process improvements that will ensure an even higher quality of care while also ensuring thoughtful stewardship of our resources.

As we look forward to the next 5 years, our PACE Board of Directors and Operations Team have developed and implemented our 2017-2020 Strategic Plan. This plan includes four focus areas:

- Quality of Service
- Organizational Longevity
- Participant Recruitment and Retention
- Employee Recruitment and Retention

In line with these focus areas we recently completed a Participant Satisfaction Survey for our participants and caregivers to provide feedback. We also completed a Culture Survey, asking our employees for feedback. Plus, we initiated a Contract Provider Survey asking

our contract facilities for feedback on our partnership. This feedback is valuable as it helps us identify many areas of strength that we can be proud of and maintain. It also identifies areas of opportunity to improve that will increase satisfaction and organizational excellence. You will be hearing updates on goal achievement related to these focus areas on a regular basis.

Thanks to all who helped us reach our 5th anniversary. We look forward to the next five years! Thank you to our wonderful staff who are dedicated to our mission and vision on a daily basis. Thank you to our fantastic participants and families for allowing us to serve you.

*Peace,*

*Therese Saggau, Executive Director*



## Participant Education Series

Starting in October, PACE started a Participant Education Series designed to help participants be more aware of their own health and how to best prevent health issues from arising. The first education sessions in early October, given by Dr. Erika Nearpass, PACE Medical Director and Sherry Simpson, NP, centered on education about heart failure. Other sessions will cover smoking cessation, and sleep education.

### *ALSO INSIDE:*

**Riding the Disney Express  
New Medical Director at PACE  
Field Trip to the Carousel**



*Meg and John D. at the Halloween party*

## **Meg Killips, Ray of Sunshine!**

PACE Activities Coordinator Meg Killips had started down a career path when first studying at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids where she was majoring in Sports Management. But after working a summer job as Activities Assistant at Jordan’s Nursing Home in Bridgman, she changed her major and received her B.S. degree in Health and Recreation. “I fell in love with it,” Meg said. “I found my passion for helping people in this hands-on way.”

“Meg has been here at PACE since we opened our doors in 2012. She is always full of energy and ideas about engaging our participants in activities,” says Therese Saggau, Executive Director. Our goal at PACE is to engage our participants in a meaningful way along their

cognitive and functional continuum. Meg collaborates with our therapy staff, aid staff and activity coordinator staff to achieve this goal. Her caring and gregarious personality is appreciated daily by our participants”

When first enrolling in PACE, participants will talk with Meg about what they like to do with their time. She also asks what hobbies and interests they may have enjoyed in the past but haven’t been doing in recent years. “One participant told me she used to love to quilt,” Meg relates. “But she had lost the confidence to finish a quilt. I encouraged her to bring it with her to PACE. She finished it here and gave it to her son.”

In many cases staff members are rekindling our participants’ past leisure time interests, while broadening recreation horizons. “She pushes me a little bit,” participant Lois Smith said about Meg’s gentle prodding to take part in activities. “I never did anything at home. Now I do all the activities. My kids think it’s great. I’ve never made anything in my life. Now I’m making Christmas presents for my family. They’re gonna get a kick out of them!”

“Being able to complete a task can give a participant a great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction,” Meg says. “For all of us, recreational therapies strengthen spirit, mind and body.” While participants create an art project, put a jigsaw puzzle together, build a bird house or play games, they have the opportunity to socialize. “That’s so important for those who’ve been isolated at home,” Meg points out. “When I see them enjoying activities with others, I know it’s decreasing stress and decreasing anxiety. It helps them to focus on the positives in their lives.” (continued on next page)



*Meg and Mary H.*



*Meg and Ruth L.*



*George S, Bob S, Meg, Alana K, Eugene H, Johnny V.*

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“She keeps you going,” participant Judy Adam said of Meg. “She’s a sweetheart — always smiling! I wish I had her spirit.” Meg was the first staff member Judy met with when she came to PACE for her enrollment assessment. “It was so nice to come in and meet someone so bubbly who makes life fun,” Judy said.

“We encourage participants to engage in activities that cater to their needs and abilities so they’ll feel successful,” says Meg. Participant Gene Heyn is working to be a better reader. When he’s not playing rummy with his new friends, Johnny and George, he’s often seen concentrating on a word search puzzle. “It helps me learn words,” he says.

“She’s a special lady,” participant John Dvorak said of Meg. “She’s very outgoing. She really motivates us.” John enjoys painting, colored pencil drawing, and woodworking at PACE.

What is Meg’s favorite activity to share with participants? “Our reminiscence discussion groups are so interesting,” she said. “I love to hear them talk about the way things were in their youth. Those are history lessons for me.” And Meg knows that the discussions groups, and just about every activity, stimulate the brain – hers, too! “We use our cognitive skills daily to keep our minds healthy as we age,” she said.

“Bringing sunshine to someone’s day — that’s what makes my job enjoyable,” Meg says. “When I see the smiles, cheerful faces, and hear laughter — that makes every day a success.”

The PACE of Southwest Michigan activity calendar can be viewed at [paceswmi.org](http://paceswmi.org).



*Meg dancing with Ada B.*

## Hang On Tight!



*Alys B. and Meg riding the Carousel*

Whether delighting in a first-time experience or reliving a joy of their childhood – five participants had a jolly summertime ride on the Silver Beach Carousel. The old-fashioned fun prompted some reminiscing. Helen Briggs remembers the Silver Beach amusement park that operated from 1891 to 1971. “It was real nice back in the day,” she said. “They had rides and everything.” No matter where the participants had spent their youth, memories were evoked by the festive atmosphere and carousel music.

The carousel is accessible so that participants in wheelchairs remain in their chairs for the ride. The ambulatory participants sat on the carousel benches. This was the fourth year that the carousel was a PACE field trip destination. After the ride, the participants enjoyed a picnic lunch.

“I was feeling like a kid again,” said participant John Dvorak of his carousel ride. “I told everyone that was the best day of my life. That’s what I was feeling at the time. Life is good.” The carousel operator saw the PACE participants having such a good time so they were treated to a few extra spins!

## Riding the Disney Express

When she was 13, Peggy Nannay traveled by automobile from Michigan's Upper Peninsula to California, and visited Disneyland. She never did ride a bicycle as a child on the family farm. But now she rides the exercise bike in the PACE therapy gym. Peggy joined about a hundred other PACE participants who ride the exercise bikes and had a virtual "trip" to Disneyland.

They "traveled" the 4,182 miles to California and back by the strength of their muscles. Pedaling 1,584 times on the exercise bike equals one virtual mile. Since Peggy has been taking a spin on the exercise bike when she attends PACE twice weekly, she's feeling an improvement in her legs. "I was having a lot of cramps in my legs" she said. "And I was falling a lot. That's why they wanted to strengthen my legs. They're stronger now," Peggy said.

The participants made it to their PACE finish line – with ears on – in time for a Disney Halloween celebration. PACE therapy staff members congratulated them wearing Minnie Mouse, Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck costumes. "We're so proud of the progress they've made," said Tricia Fage, Physical Therapist Assistant. "The NuStep machine increases overall physical well-being and we have a lot of fun together in the process!"



*Peggy logging miles on the exercise bike.*

Paul Hendricks picks a seat in the PACE lunch room close to the therapy gym and watches for Tricia to come back from her lunch. He gives her a questioning thumbs up, in hopes that it's time for his turn to take a spin. "He looks forward to it," Tricia says. "Overall, his endurance is better. When he started he did 15 or 20 minutes. He's up to about 45 now." Paul's shoulder, neck and arms were "kind

of sore," he said. Now that he's exercising a few times a week: "I'm stronger. I like it very much," he said. Paul visited Disneyland "a long time ago," he recalls. Disneyland opened in Anaheim, California, in 1955.

Throughout the challenge, PACE participants have enjoyed Disney films and related activities projects. "We've been sharing the story and magic behind the Disney theme parks," said Sindy McCord, PACE occupational therapist.

Activities Coordinator Meg Killips played Disney Pictionary, Disney Clue

and Disney Jeopardy with

participants. Together they crafted Rapunzel paper towers, Nemo clay fish, Disney beaded bracelets and painted Chitty Chitty Bang Bang wooden model cars.

On Disney Day the participants who logged the most miles received certificates of achievement and gifts.

PACE "bikers" never stop traveling! Disneyland was their fourth virtual "trip" exercise challenge. Participants "traveled" to the Mackinaw Bridge. They followed Monarch butterflies on their migration route to Mexico. And they journeyed down memory lane on Route 66.

Where to next? Sindy is planning yet another adventure via exercise bikes: PACE in Space! "We're going to orbit Earth with the Space Station."

Far out!

***"We're so proud of the progress they've made."***

*~ Tricia Fage, Physical Therapist Assistant*

## PACE Welcomes New Medical Director, Erika Nearpass, D.O.



In July, PACE welcomed new Medical Director, Erika Nearpass, D.O. “Dr. Nearpass’ strong passion for caring for the geriatric population is certain to make positive contributions to the care of our participants,” said Therese Saggau, Executive Director of PACE of Southwest Michigan.

Said Dr. Nearpass, “I will be a part of every aspect of the care our participants receive. I am impressed with the multidisciplinary model of PACE and how it helps to prevent areas of missed opportunities to improve the patient’s overall health and quality of life.”

Dr. Nearpass received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry from Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. She then received her Doctorate in Osteopathic Medicine from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg, West Virginia and went on to complete her Internal Medicine Residency at Lakeland Regional Hospital, St. Joseph, Michigan.

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# New Faces *at PACE!* plus promotions

We are excited to welcome new staff members to PACE since our last newsletter. New staff members are Leah Doyle, Clinic RN; Tiffanie Wertenberger who was hired as a Clinic RN and has been promoted to Clinic Lead; De’Anna Adams, CNA; Crystal Keaton, CNA; Sonja Churchill, Medical Records Coordinator; Paula Bogart, Intake Coordinator RN; Brandi Adams, CNA: and Junie Modlin, CNA.

Congratulations to staff members who have taken new positions and received promotions! Matt Skornog was promoted to Quality Manager, Dana Milner is now the PACE Application Support Specialist and Jessica Sims has been promoted to Nurse Supervisor.



*Leah Doyle,  
Clinic RN*



*Tiffanie  
Wertenberger,  
Clinic Lead*



*De’Anna Adams,  
CNA*



*Cyrstal Keaton,  
CNA*



*Sonja Churchill,  
Medical Records  
Coordinator*



*Paula Bogart,  
Intake  
Coordinator RN*



*Brandi Abrams,  
CNA*



*Junie Modlin,  
CNA*



*Matt Skornog,  
Quality  
Manager*



*Dana Milner,  
App.Support  
Specialist*



*Jessica Sims,  
Nurse Supervisor*

## Spiritual Care at PACE

Talking with people from all walks of life is a favorite part of Preston Stell's job. "I love meeting folks from different faith backgrounds," says the Spiritual Care Coordinator for PACE of Southwest Michigan. "I enjoy speaking with participants who don't have a religious affiliation or consider themselves to have a spiritual life."

"It is sometimes said that everyone has 'spirituality.' But for the folks that don't believe they are 'spiritual,' hearing something like that will turn them away pretty quickly," Preston said. "I like to get an idea of what a person's background is, since that often shapes them into who they are today. If someone says they do not have a spiritual life, I simply accept that and ask them about any religious background — or more importantly how they view our world. You hear some very interesting things!"

After getting to know a participant, Preston decides how he can best serve that individual. "I create a spiritual assessment for participants, which includes whether they are actively involved in a church community, what their particular beliefs are, and whether they feel well supported. It's very encouraging that most participants believe they are well supported by their clergy or religious community," Preston said. Since participants might confide in any one of the PACE staff, they refer Preston to a participant who might benefit from his caring ear.

"It's so obvious that Preston has a big heart," said participant Frieda Atkinson. "He's wonderful with people. They light up when he talks to them — because he cares. He's not real preachy. He's more like family." Frieda plays gospel hymns on the piano at PACE. "Preston will come by and encourage me. St. Paul said: 'Encourage one

another and build each other up.' That's what Preston does for me and many others."

A family member appreciates that Preston visits with her sister who is a participant. "He is someone who comes across as very caring and interested in who she is as a person. She likes it when Preston visits with her and — as a family member — I'm glad she has someone outside of the family who is so open to talking with her, whether it's light conversation or more serious dialogue. She has someone to share her thoughts and feelings with."

One participant credits Preston with helping her get beyond a life crisis. "He actually sat down and started talking to me right when I was going



*Preston visiting with Maralyn H.*

through some personal things," she said. "I felt comfortable talking to him right away. He's got this way about him — a way to help people without being preachy. I always go to Preston for advice now. He's soft-spoken and he's funny."

Preston is a supportive presence to participants and family members

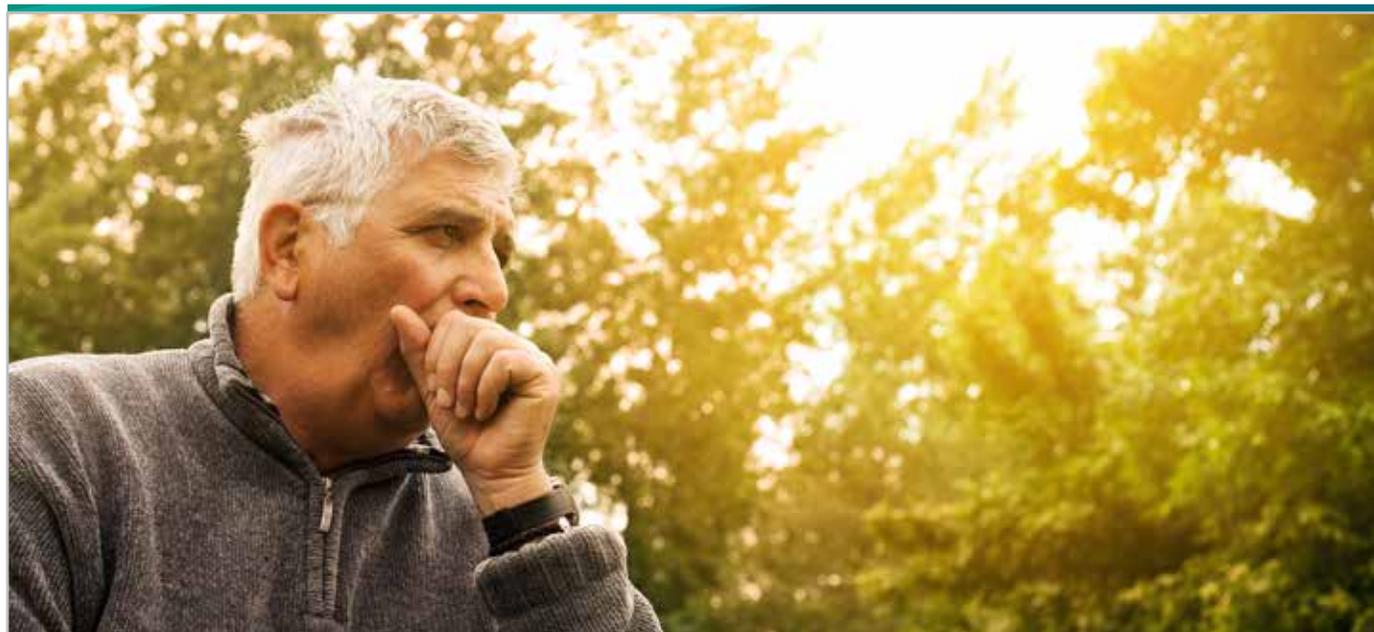
during times of crisis. He keeps updated when participants transition to a care facility or are admitted to the hospital. "I like to visit folks there as it can be a discouraging place to be," he said. He is also spiritual care coordinator for Caring Circle hospice services. Preston earned a Bachelor's Degree in the Biblical Language of Greek from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He also holds a Master of Divinity Degree, with a focus on Pastoral Studies, from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary.

Preston communicates the death of a participant to PACE staff and other participants. He works in conjunction with the Bereavement Care Coordinators at Caring Circle, and the staff at Lory's Place, a community bereavement center that provides peer support group sessions for children and adults. (continued on next page)

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A monthly grieving support group at PACE has been in place for two years, led by counselors Jaime Hoover and D. J. Hosbein of Caring Circle/Lory's Place. "I encourage participants to go who would benefit from this service," Preston said.

In the PACE Day Center, Preston tends to kneel down next to a seated participant in order to be at their level while speaking. "Then he prays with them," participant Marilyn Hope observes. "He's marvelous."



## Flu Season is Here

It's that time of year again. Cold and flu season is upon us. You may be asking, "What can I do to protect myself?" We want everyone to stay healthy this cold and flu season. The single most important thing you can do to prevent colds and flu is frequent, **GOOD HAND WASHING**. Preventing the spread of germs will greatly decrease your chance of catching a cold or the flu and hand washing is your greatest source of prevention. Hand sanitizers are a good substitute if hand washing is not available.

Another important step is getting your flu shot. The flu vaccination can keep you from getting sick with flu. Recent studies show that the flu vaccination reduces the risk of flu illness up to 60% among the overall population during the flu season. Flu vaccination can reduce the risk of flu-associated hospitalization, especially among older adults or those with chronic health conditions. Most of our participants have already received the flu vaccine, protecting themselves and their loved ones.

So how do you tell if you have the common cold or

the flu? Symptoms can be similar but there are some differences to watch for: With a cold, symptoms develop gradually over a few days, you rarely have a fever, you feel sick mostly in your head and nose and you may or may not feel tired and weak. With the flu, symptoms come on quickly and severely, you almost always have a fever, your entire body feels sick, and tiredness and weakness are common. Remember, the flu can result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations and there is a vaccine available to help protect you from the flu. There is no vaccine for the cold.

We at PACE take the flu seriously. So much so, that all staff members, including our bus drivers, are required to get the flu vaccine to protect our participants and loved ones. Those who opt out of the vaccine are required to wear a mask for the duration of flu season.

If you are a participant and are experiencing symptoms of either a cold or the flu, please call the Clinic for advice at (269) 408-4500.



**Evelyn Swanhild Halvorsen** was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1936. Her parents were Norwegian immigrants: her father a ship builder; her mother a cook. She liked to say she was: “made in America with 100 percent Norwegian parts.” She had one older sister, May. Both girls were given an American name and a Norwegian name. Evelyn was nicknamed Swanny. The Halvorsen sisters grew up on Long Island. Swanny was a spirited, independent girl. Full of fun and practical jokes, she created friendships that have lasted a lifetime.

Following in her older sister’s footsteps, after high school graduation Swanny enrolled in nursing training at a Brooklyn hospital where she soon fell in love with the cute new Mexican doctor, Jorge Monges.

Swanny and Jorge had two sons and a daughter, whom they raised on Long Island. Jorge worked as an ER physician at Good Samaritan Hospital for 30 years while mom was busy with the children, and caring for her father who lived with the family.

Swanny volunteered for her church. She had the gift of hospitality and her family home was always full of missionaries, church singers, guests and people who just needed a place to live for a while. She had a heart for people in need and was always helping however she was able. It was a joyous life — very rich with close bonds of friendship and laughter.

In 2009, Swanny held the hand of her sister, May, as she passed away, succumbing to Lewy Body Disease.

It was hard for Swanny to watch her sister’s decline, especially knowing that she, too, was beginning to show the same symptoms.

Swanny’s journey with Lewy Body Disease started with occasional confusion and a notable change in her gait. She was shuffling and tripping, and didn’t trust her feet. In 2009, she was diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease. Her confusion increased, and she could no longer manage finances. Most disturbing, she began hallucinating. She had great, loving support from her husband, loyal friends and wonderful neighbors, but the time came when Jorge could no longer manage her alone. In 2011, they moved to Michigan to live with their daughter, Cyndi.

At that point, Swanny didn’t recognize Cyndi as her daughter, though she showed appreciation for her help. Her hallucinations and delusions became frightening, causing much fear and agitation. As her limbs stiffened, falls happened more frequently. While hospitalized for paranoia, Swanny was prescribed medications that managed her symptoms —much to everyone’s relief. During follow-up home care, Swanny’s family learned about the PACE program.

“PACE was life changing for us,” Cyndi says. “They brought some order to the chaos. I now had a whole team of professionals to help me manage Mom. She starting going to the Day Center a few times a week, giving my dad and me some much needed time off and encircling my mom with friendly faces that knew her name in a comfortable social environment. She received physical therapy and medical care as well as fun social activities. As her disease progressed, PACE gently helped us transition her into assisted living. I couldn’t have made that decision alone and really appreciated the love and support they gave us during that time.”

Swanny remains in assisted living. Jorge and Cyndi are still a part of her everyday life and she continues to go to the PACE center twice a week. “Life is peaceful for Mom,” Cyndi says. “She sits comfortably in her big, fancy reclining wheelchair that PACE picked out for her. Mom and I have a mantra to live life one day at a time, counting the blessings in each day. PACE is one of those blessings.”

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*Participants may be fully and personally responsible for the costs of unauthorized or out-of-PACE program agreement services.*  
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