Secondly, everyone knows that combining infants and/or young children together with older people is wonderful for all. Whether it is making snacks or doing art projects, watching children playing or eating together, having snowball or squirt gun fights, or just visiting – everyone enjoys this quality time. Professionals call this intergenerational programming. Residents and children call it plain old FUN!

Finally, there is a need for additional quality group child care in Sparta. There is a myth that Young at Heart only serves the employees of Morrow Home Community. Young at Heart serves community families also! Fewer than 20% of the children enrolled at Young at Heart are children of our employees. This means the vast majority of the children for whom we care are from community members.

Young at Heart is blessed more than most child care organizations with food delivered from a central kitchen, organizational administrative and financial experts, lower operating costs, maintenance needs met very quickly, and professional nurses just down the hall.

The greatest blessings of Young at Heart are the employees and their wonderful expertise in serving children. Mary Ellen Leis, the Director, has over 25 years of quality child care experience. She leads an experienced group of dedicated employees with compassion and devotion. Mary Ellen’s great team that provides great care are the teachers: Cassie Cunitz, Michelle Hansen, Karla Sullivan, Marla Carlone, and Carly Brandau.

Come join us at our Five Year Anniversary Celebration this May.
Activity Professionals
We do it for the love of the job!

The nursing home recreation therapy department celebrated “National Activity Professionals Week” in January with a bulletin board which describes some of the reasons they love their job.

Christine S. Vian - B.S. RT Director with Nursing Home resident Bernice Whitegull “I love staying connected to my heritage through our residents”

Mark Lakowske - RT Assistant - Certified “I love using my creativity for the enjoyment of others.”

Lena Evins - RT Aide with Nursing Home resident Vern Kast “I love the joy I feel when I am with the residents”

Virginia Larsen - COTA RT Assistant - Certified with Nursing Home resident Jeanne Baumbach “I love working with an age group I respect and enjoy”

Mae Randle - CTRS, RT Assistant Director with Nursing Home residents Ed Fanta, Fern Olson, Bob Schwartz and Helen Webb “I love hanging out with 100 Grandmas and Grandpas”

Tiffany Bloom - RT Assistant with Nursing Home resident Dan Clemmerson “I love bringing smiles to the residents’ faces”

Gary Hanson - RT Assistant - Casual Call with Nursing Home residents Helen Webb and Virginia Muellenberg “I love making a positive difference in the lives of others”
Announcing: Morrow Home 2012 Royalty

We wish to present Morrow Home Community’s 2012 Royalty: Nursing Home King Roger Herberg, Queen Virginia Muellenberg & Adult Living Services Queen Elfriede Bolyard, King Paul Amberson. These residents will represent Morrow Home in Sparta’s June Butterfest Parade here in Sparta and will be presented at the summer Concert in the Park. Our best to each of you!

Delicious Changes in Culinary Services!

On February 1, 2012, Morrow Home Culinary Services began an exciting new program. We now offer an “Always Available Menu” in the main Dining Room. Residents now have four choices for both the dinner and supper meals. These choices are the regular menu, the daily alternate, and now we have added a choice of chef’s salad, tomato soup with grilled cheese sandwich, and meatloaf (a meal at dinner and a sandwich at supper). The three choices can be changed to give more variety and will always be varied when we move from our Fall/Winter menus to our Spring/Summer menus and vice versa. Culinary staff visit with residents in the Dining Room after each meal to obtain the residents’ choices for the next day.

This new change is in addition to the modifications we made in November. Those modifications were regarding stopping tray service and going to a more restaurant-style service where residents can choose their beverages and also have choices of salads and desserts.

Our nursing home residents are embracing this change and enjoying the opportunity to have more input into what they will eat at meals. One of our residents who really likes meatloaf has stated, “Now I can have meatloaf three times a week!”

Culinary Staff have embraced the changes as well, and we are happy that we can offer more Resident Centered Care to our residents.

New To Our Home

We welcome the following people who have joined our senior living family between the dates of December 1, 2011 & March 24, 2012:

PARKVIEW INDEPENDENT LIVING APARTMENTS
Lucy Kowaliski
Carol Holcomb

HOMESTEAD INDEPENDENT & ASSISTED LIVING APARTMENTS
Robert and Lorraine Manke (from Nursing Home)

MARYCREST ASSISTED LIVING APARTMENTS
Janice Cole (from Nursing Home)

BRIDGEPATH ADVANCED ASSISTED LIVING & MEMORY CARE
Kenneth Smith (from Nursing Home)
Mildred Adkins (from MaryCrest)
Clark Maher
Luell (Muffy) Dwyer (from Nursing Home)
Lois Jandt

We also welcome the following people who have become a part of our nursing home facility between the dates of December 1, 2011 & March 24, 2012:

Shirley Baumel (from BridgePath)
Rhoda “Brandi” Pecher
Joy Reisinger
Francis “Bud” Ruedy
Carrol Sipes
Lloyd Stiehl
Norm Thurow (from BridgePath)
Cecil Tremblay
Gilbert VanDinter
Marie Whitehead
Virginia Zietlow

Dorothy Kronberg

PROUD TO HAVE PROVIDED SERVICE

We are proud to have been able to provide service to the following people who have returned home or to another setting between the dates of December 1, 2011 & March 24, 2012:

James Beron
Richard Marx
Willard Brueggen
Ralph Matthews
Janice Cole (to MaryCrest)
Fern Olsen (to Homestead)
Debbie Conrad
Dale Osley
Robert Crook
Charles Palmer
Luell “Muffy” Dwyer (to BridgePath)
Betty Preuss
( to BridgePath)
Ara Pugh
Joseph Ebert
Dennis Scripture
Kenneth Jacobsen
Doris Seekamp
Douglas Kowitz
Kenneth Smith (to BridgePath)
George Loeffelholz
Beatrice Stratton
Rodney Loging
Michael Weber
Lorraine Manke (to Homestead)
Carrol “Laura” Zaragoza
Robert Manke (to Homestead)
Thelma Zimmerman
( to BridgePath)
A tasty Pancake Breakfast is served once a month to Morrow Home Community residents. Homestead residents Fern Olsen and Helen Meyer chat over hot coffee and delicious food.

A Happy New Year was celebrated by residents in Assisted Living. Above are MaryCrest Residents Eleanor Mull and Lawrence Isensee.

Gifts are given to all residents at Christmas, thanks to the generosity of Mary Morrow’s Attic. MaryCrest Housekeeper Deb Miller assists with handing out gifts to Homestead resident Helen Helgesen.

A special Golden ’90s celebration is held each year in the nursing home and assisted living. MaryCrest resident, Nina Rhodenhizer, center, receives this recognition with friend Bev Laufenberg, left and daughter Eileen Gajewsky.

St. Patrick’s Day is a fun time of games and snacks. Here are BridgePath residents MaryJane Hem and Louise Kiefer sharing laughs and listening to Irish stories.
Growing Up With Young at Heart Child Care

On May 21, 2012 Young at Heart Child Care will celebrate our fifth year anniversary!

Young at Heart is a ministry of Morrow Home Community. The center was just a twinkle in Executive Director Michael Bonello’s eye when he came to Morrow Home in 2000. When MaryCrest opened its doors and physical therapy relocated to that building, it led to more sparks in Michael’s dream of opening a quality child care center. The room that was used for physical therapy could become a classroom for children ages two and up. Anne Snell’s health information office could become an infant/toddler room. A room that merely stored blueprints for the facility would be a “great” Child Care Director’s office. An outdoor patio that was seldom used by residents could be a playground.

Prior to this, a gal who taught three and four year olds for nineteen years in area child care centers had decided to make a change in her career and start an in-home day care center. Shortly after making this change, she received a call from Michael asking if she would be interested in helping to develop a child care center at Morrow Home. After speaking with Michael and running the idea past her husband, family, and best friend, the gal decided to take on the challenge and opportunity.

That gal is me – Mary Ellen Leis.

Now, five years later, I am extremely proud to be celebrating our anniversary with the outstanding staff with whom I closely work as well as the entire Morrow Home Community. I am amazed at the connection the children and the residents make through the activities we do with one another. We are so fortunate to have food prepared by another department. Registered nurses are also just down the hall. I am humbled by the support of my fellow department heads, nursing home staff, assisted living staff, and the Board of Directors. But truly, the enjoyment of seeing children grow and change before our very eyes is the true reward in choosing the child care field.

I especially think of four special youngsters when I reflect on the children for whom I have cared. When I started in-home care, I was scared to death that I wouldn’t find children to care for. My fears were quickly put to rest. I was chosen by three families to care for their children. Walker Woodworth, son of Mary and Robert Woodworth; Elle Erickson, daughter of Dave and Jenny Erickson, and Serena Swanson, daughter of Dan and Wendy Swanson entered my life and my heart. Later, I would care for Charlie Anderson, son of Sara and Andy Anderson, on a part-time schedule. When I announced to the parents that I would be taking on the director’s position at a new child care center at the Morrow Home, they were supportive of my decision and allowed the children to follow me to a new setting!

The children then were between the ages of thirteen months to two years old. The boys started out in our multi-age room and the girls in our infant/toddler room. I watched the kids grow from these sweet little babes into preschoolers and then school agers. The boys were the first to leave as the parents no longer needed child care services. Those were difficult goodbyes and it was strange to all of us not to have Walker and Charlie around, especially when we needed some comic relief!

Today, we still care for Serena and Elle after school; the duo started kindergarten last fall. As their teachers, we were with the girls and their parents through learning to sit up, crawl and walk; getting rid of the baby bottle and the pacifier; potty training; temper tantrums (yep, they could throw some good ones); watching them get on the bus to go to preschool and welcoming them off the bus after their first day of kindergarten. It was so exciting to hear about their first day! We have watched them grow from toddlers learning to talk and play together to each of them developing respect, manners, and politeness to their friends and teachers.

I think what has really amazed me about Serena and Elle is the kindness that they show the residents of Morrow Home. They do not shy away from someone in a wheelchair or using a walker; they are used to seeing this. I believe the girls realize that they can cheer someone up by giving a smile or a hug to a resident. I believe that these girls will be better people by “growing up at Young at Heart”. I know I am a better person for having chosen Morrow Home as a place to work. It goes to show that things happen for a reason.

Visit Us!
Young at Heart
OPEN HOUSE
In May

For more information, Call Mary Ellen Leis at 608-366-6280
Mary Ellen began watching our daughter Elle, in her first year, before she opened the Young at Heart daycare at the Morrow Home. We wanted to keep Elle with someone we trusted and have been nothing but pleased with the care she has received from Mary Ellen and all the caregivers over the years. It has truly been a second home for Elle; she adores the staff as though they are her own family. Not only are we impressed with the care, but the programming is also such an asset. Elle learned so much to prepare for preschool, at times she would come home and we’d ask, “how do you know that?” She actually would call it “school” rather than day care. She looked forward to going to “school” each day. In addition to learning so much, Elle has been exposed to priceless intergenerational opportunities on a regular basis, to which we are grateful. From projects to Easter egg hunts, Elle fondly recalls these special times with her extended grandparents – she’s termed, “my residents.” We recall one particular day prior to Elle’s birthday she was picked up early. Elle began to sob because she was looking so forward to the afternoon birthday celebration she would share with residents celebrating their birthdays. We rearranged our plans and waited for this special event. From just learning to walk to now in Kindergarten and getting off the bus at day care, we know Mary Ellen and the staff at Young at Heart are looking out for our daughter like she is their own. As parents, nothing is more important than our children, so having this peace of mind to know Elle is in good care is priceless.

Jenny and Dave Erickson

My daughter Serena has been at Young at Heart since opening day. Prior to coming to Young at Heart, we were receiving home care from Mary Ellen Leis. Serena has been with her since she was just over 3 months old. When Mary Ellen was offered the opportunity to run Young at Heart, she generously offered to take Serena with her. It has been the best experience we could have asked for! Serena has been with Mary Ellen, Marla, and Karla since she started there 4 years ago. What a wonderful staff! Serena loves daycare, and can’t wait to get there to see the staff and all of her friends. She goes to Kindergarten now, but always gets excited when they have a day off school and she gets to spend the entire day at Young at Heart. I can’t express how much it means to us to have such a wonderful place for our daughter to go when we can’t be with her, and to know that she’s receiving the best care we could hope to find.

The interaction she gets to have with the Morrow Home residents is one very special thing that sets Young at Heart apart from other daycare centers. They have activities with the residents on a fairly regular basis. They get to sing for them, go trick or treating with them, and make special projects. Serena has learned a lot from them, and I think it’s great that they get to interact with another generation and have all of those surrogate grandparents! What a special treat for both the kids and the residents!

Thanks Young at Heart staff for taking such good care of my little girl! We look forward to many more years together!

Wendy Swanson