



FELLOWSHIP SQUARE  
HISTORIC MESA

[www.fellowshipsquareseiorliving.org](http://www.fellowshipsquareseiorliving.org)

# The **JOYFUL** **INDEPENDENT**

1ST QUARTER 2022

## *Director's Message:*

### **INDEPENDENCE IS A CHOICE**

Before the headline offends anyone, allow me to explain my view on independence.

Independence is defined as having freedom from outside control or support. While it is true that our community provides support, the types of support we offer enables our independent living residents to remain independent in a number of ways.

Included in this newsletter is a summary of our Independent Living services that explains just how we promote and support independence. So, **what do I mean by independence being a choice?** Well, the choice is whether or not to take advantage of these solutions and that choice is YOURS.

Too often, we see people come to independent living when they really need a higher level of care and can no longer take advantage of all the things that our independent living community can offer. I find that very sad when I have witnessed so many other residents go from "just surviving" to THRIVING.

If you're just researching Independent Living options, I strongly encourage you not to wait. Take a look at our guide on how to choose the best independent living community for you, [click here](#).

I understand that transitions are difficult but they only become more difficult if you wait too long. Join us and feel more independent again. Visit us [here](#) to walk our beautifully landscaped grounds and experience all we have to offer. We're waiting for you!

If you're already a resident, please make sure you're taking advantage of the services available to you and be sure to invite your friends. Independence is even better when enjoyed in the company of friends and don't forget to ask about our resident referral reward!



*Blessings,*

Rena Phillips  
Executive Director  
[See Bio](#)

## *From the Editor*

We hope you enjoy our first issue of The Joyful Independent! Our new quarterly newsletter is for Independent Living residents and others who are interested in learning more about our community as well as important issues facing seniors and their loved ones. Our goal will always be to provide encouragement and solutions to relieve the stress of aging for seniors and those who care for them. If you have any comments or suggestions, I welcome you to email me at [Tracey.Biggerstaff@christiancare.org](mailto:Tracey.Biggerstaff@christiancare.org).

## INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES & SOLUTIONS

- Independence begins with safety and at Fellowship Square Historic Mesa, our residents can feel safe at home. We offer 24/7/365 security, provide a personal emergency alert device and a daily welfare check system. These safety measures and many more are in place so that our residents and their loved ones have greater peace of mind. [Please view our complete safety feature listing on our website.](#)
- Seniors have continued access to essential supplies and important medical appointments.



Many seniors give up driving due to vision loss or a decline in reaction time. That would certainly limit one's ability to go shopping or get to medical appointments. We provide a solution

so that our residents can continue to do these essential things without the dread of burdening busy family members. We offer group transportation for shopping, banking and fun outings. We also offer individual transportation for medical appointments. If a senior quits driving and doesn't have this kind of support, they could literally go without



essential supplies, delay important medical appointments and become isolated and depressed. Worse yet, they could risk driving and end up in an accident.

[See transportation services.](#)

- Seniors don't have to struggle or risk injury by trying to keep up with home maintenance. As we age, keeping up with home maintenance and house work gets to be quite a chore and can sometimes be dangerous, resulting in disabling injuries. We offer support by ensuring that if anything stops working in the resident's home, we will repair it without an unexpected expense for the resident. We even have furnished guest apartments available should we need to temporarily relocate a resident while waiting for air conditioning to be fixed or some other emergency. Also included in the monthly rent is a full cleaning of the apartment by our housekeeping team every other week. [See housekeeping brochure.](#)
- We offer dining services and a complimentary meal plan to relieve the chore of meal preparation and to making dining more enjoyable. Independent living apartments come with fully equipped kitchens so that you can still prepare your favorite meals at home and enjoy your favorite snacks. In addition, our complimentary and diverse meal plan gives seniors the choice to enjoy a complete meal (soup or salad, entrée, 2 sides, dessert and beverage) in the company of their



neighbors who can quickly become friends. We also offer meals to go and for delivery. Check out the wide range of food options on our [weekly menu](#).

- We offer a variety of activities to combat boredom and loneliness. Countless studies have shown that staying active as we age helps maintain physical and emotional health. Our Life Enrichment team works hard to provide a monthly calendar of activities that appeal to a variety of people. These activities include things like painting and crafts, choir, cards, Bingo and other popular games. We even have a model airplane club. We periodically host speakers and presentations on topics of concern or interest to seniors. Everything from growing roses to history lessons to scam safety. If we aren't offering it and you'd like to see us do so, we can usually make it happen. Monthly birthday parties and theme parties are a regular occurrence. Check out photos from some of our popular activities on [Facebook](#).



- We offer spiritual support and worship opportunities. Fellowship Square Historic Mesa is a non-profit Christian Care company whose Mission is as follows: Through Christian love and excellence, we are dedicated to providing a fulfilling lifestyle and promoting independence to those we serve.

While we are a Christian organization, this does not mean that an individual has to be a Christian to live here or work here. To the contrary, we welcome all faiths. What it does mean is that we attract kind, service driven residents and staff which makes our community a very nice place to be! Because a large number of our staff and residents are among the faithful, we employ a full time chaplain and offer a variety of worship and [spiritual support opportunities](#).

## SPIRITUAL SUPPORT Chaplain Kurt Stromberg

It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone! Where does the time go? I can remember my great grandmother always saying that the older one gets, the faster time goes by. How right she was, as days seem like minutes, weeks feel like days, and months click away so fast they seem like weeks.



The New Year always starts out with so much hope, promise, intrigue as well as new goals and or resolutions. Much like our relationship with Jesus, He provides us with peace, contentment and hope for the days to come as we are able to have a new start/beginning each and every day. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3)

So what are we going to do with this new day, this new beginning that we are able to experience every day? Do we take advantage of the blessings/gifts that God has bestowed upon us by serving others? Remember God does not call the equipped, he equips the called. Jesus, the Savior of the world came to planet earth to serve, and NOT to be served. That should be our prayer, that God would put us in situations where we can best use our God-given gifts to serve one another. "But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him." (Jeremiah 17:7)

As we make our way through another new year, new month, new week and of course new day we can have confidence in knowing that he never leaves nor forsakes us. There is so much wisdom in this Scripture from Hebrews, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you."" (Hebrews 13:5) So, may the peace of the Lord be with you and your family as each one of us takes up our cross and follow Jesus.

Make the most of this day as well as the time that we have to spend with family and friends. We should take Jesus' words to heart when he said, "Love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest command. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:36-40)

Words alone cannot express how blessed I feel to be serving you as your Chaplain. I look forward to the upcoming year and getting to know those that I do not already know, and those that I do, as we grow in

Christ together.

A reminder: the Sunday Services held at The Church of Fellowship Square at Historic Mesa (Center Community Room) is gathering from 11:00-12:00 every Sunday.



## RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

The challenges of aging can put a great deal of stress on a marriage as physical, cognitive or financial limitations affect lifestyle. With this in mind, the following tells the story of a long-time Fellowship Square Historic Mesa couple who are successfully navigating these challenges and maintain a deep love for one another.



**Robert "Bob" Richmond** was born August 29, 1922, nearly 100 years ago. His mother was of Norwegian descent, having immigrated to the United States at the age of two. His father was from Ohio. They had 5 children together including Bob who was the youngest. Bob also had a half-brother and half-sister from a previous marriage of his father's.

As a young boy growing up in Sioux

Falls, South Dakota, Bob enjoyed climbing trees, playing tag, baseball, running through the sprinkler and playing “mumbly peg” with his brother-in-law. His brothers and sisters didn’t have much time for a baby brother.

Sadly, Bob lost his mother during grade school. Being in the midst of the Great Depression, his father painted most of the rooms in the hospital to pay his mother’s bill. Shortly after, the older siblings moved away and Bob ended up in a rooming house with his father while he finished school.

In 1940, Bob graduated from high school and joined the National Guard to attend their summer camp. Because of his ability to type, he became a clerk typist. His Regiment was called up to active duty and they were sent to Fort Ord, California in November of 1940.

Bob’s unit embarked for the Philippines in November of 1941 with a stopover in Pearl Harbor. During his 39 months overseas Bob repeatedly escaped mortal danger. He left Pearl Harbor just 7 days before it was bombed by the Japanese. He also cheated death in Darwin Harbor Australia with Japanese bombers, again in New Guinea with a black coral snake, being knocked unconscious by a giant coconut and avoiding a plane crash by being “bumped” from the flight by officers who outranked him.

Following the war and his return to Sioux Falls, Bob married his high school sweetheart, Elaine in 1945. Together they had 2 girls, Suzanne and Linda. After his discharge from the Army in 1945, he attended the University of Iowa taking business courses.

Bob went on to become a life insurance

salesman. He completed the Life Underwriters Training courses (LUTC), obtained his CLU (Chartered Life Underwriter designation) and later received his Chartered Financial Consultant’s designation (CHFC). In addition to this, he taught LUTC for 16 years.

After their children were married, Bob and Elaine became “snowbirds”, dividing their time between Sioux Falls and Arizona to enjoy the best of both climates. They enjoyed 47 years of marriage together before Elaine passed away after a long illness in 1991.



Born in Apollo, Pennsylvania on July 9, 1936, **Charlotte (Dodie) Mrasz** was the daughter of Czechoslovakian parents who were strict and valued education. Dodie had 4 sisters and 2 brothers. Her dad had a 6th grade education because he needed to work and care for his family but he was well read and worked in a steel mill. Dodie remembers that her mother was a go-getter who wanted to be a writer so she baked donuts and cakes to sell to the local grocer to pay for writing classes. Her determination paid off and she later worked on the local newspaper.

From the time she was 7 years old, Dodie always worked in restaurants and cleaning to contribute to the family. In high school, Dodie thought she wanted to be a nun but when the Priest asked her if she was ready to take her vows, she informed him that she had decided to join the Navy. Dodie saw the Navy as a way out of her small town and a chance to get an education, not to mention a spiffy uniform.

Dodie joined the Navy in 1954 right after high school. After receiving her basic training, she was stationed at a decommissioning base and got to work in disbursing. Accompanied by an armed guard, she would go aboard ships with huge amounts of cash. She would tell the crew how much they had earned while they were out (no direct deposit in those days) and pay them accordingly. Dodie found it very exciting as she got to go onboard everything from destroyers to submarines. As an added bonus, she could wear slacks on the ships, since going down a ladder in a skirt could present a problem.

Dodie got married while serving in the Navy. Her first husband (Bob #1) was a medic and corpsman. Together they had two boys – Thomas and Gregory. Thomas served with the Mesa Police Department for approximately 30 years before retiring. He volunteers as a Hostage Negotiator with the Swat team. Gregory served for 40 years in the Army and is now retired, living in North Phoenix

Bob #1 was stationed at Williams Air Force Base in Chandler and Dodie became the office manager for Chrysler Plymouth dealership. After leaving the Air Force, Bob #1 became a licensed optician. They were married 25 years when he passed away.

After his death, Dodie focused on furthering her education. She received her

EA designation in 1981 and specialized in doing tax work for corporations, partnerships and individuals. She opened Gussie Enterprises in 1986 and continued her successful tax and financial services business.

It was during this time that Dodie joined a local singles group and became their Treasurer. Shortly after, God's plan for the two to meet began to unfold...



Not long after losing his wife, Bob Richmond (Bob #2) was having dinner in Mesa at a golf club with a fellow widowed friend, Charlie. Nearby, a group of sixteen were having dinner. It turns out that it was a singles club function. Bob had never heard of any such group. Charlie spotted an attractive red head and asked her to dance. Afterwards, he asked her to meet his friend, Bob. Dodie thought Bob looked very distinguished and had the most beautiful gray hair. Dodie mentioned that she would have someone give Bob some information on the group. Later, Dodie called to Bob to see if he had received the material and to invite him to her church singles meeting. Bob had forgotten about the material and curtly told her he was getting ready to go to church. Bob wasn't ready to get involved with anyone but decided to attend anyway

Charlie had other plans so wasn't able to attend the meeting so Bob went on his own. Bob and Dodie managed to break the ice and decided to have a coffee following the meeting. Coffee lasted for over two hours during which Bob confessed that his beautiful gray hair was actually a toupee. Bob and Dodie haven't stopped talking since.

As their relationship progressed, the pair were spending a huge amount of money on phone calls and air travel. One day, Bob said "We will save a lot of money when we get married." Dodie's response? "Can I call my sister with the news?" The two were married at Central Christian Church in Mesa on January 2nd 1993 and have lived at Fellowship Square Historic Mesa since 2012.



### What has kept them together through the challenges of life and aging?

Dodie truly believes that the Holy Spirit brought them together and from the day they were married, nearly 30 years ago, they have always put the Lord first, followed by their marriage and then all else.

Dodie recommends that we do not judge a book by its cover. Before she married Bob Richmond, she always dated wealthy, handsome men but found that they were shallow. Dodie says Bob is handsome and wealthy inside, where it counts – he is kind, gentle and spiritual. When the going has gotten tough, she has seen him as a child of God and loves him as such.

Bob recommends that we remain honest and trustworthy. He stays focused on his love for God and for Dodie. He says he loves everything about her – especially because she loves him enough to take care of him day and night. In fact, Bob credits Dodie for keeping him alive for so long. She's my sweetheart, my lover and everything to me."

## PET OWNERSHIP HAS NUMEROUS BENEFITS FOR SENIORS



Did you know that it's "LOVE YOUR PET DAY" on February 20th? With that in mind, we thought this would be the perfect time to honor our four-legged friends by discussing all the wonderful gifts they give us. It's no secret that pets can bring joy into one's life at any stage. Their constant companionship, cute quirks and inability to judge (they don't care if whether one has something in their teeth or snores at night!) makes them nearly impossible not to love. But beyond having something cuddly to cozy up to at night, there are many benefits of pet ownership for seniors in particular. Let's take a look:

The most obvious benefit of pet ownership for seniors might be **fending off loneliness**. And having a pet can help create structure and routine for seniors as well as encourage them to increase their physical activity through daily dog walks, for example. The physical benefits of a daily walk have been touted again and again, but there is a lot of science that points to additional mental and overall health benefits of owning a pet.

An article on the Mayo Clinic website states that regular brisk walking can improve cardiovascular fitness, increase energy levels, strengthen bones and muscles, reduce stress and tension, improve mood, cognition, memory and sleep, and prevent or manage various conditions including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, cancer and type 2 diabetes. The benefits of having a pet to encourage a daily walking habit in the name of better health is summed up right there! But it goes beyond that as pet ownership benefits exist even without the daily walk (but don't tell Fido that, he loves those walks!).



An article on CNN.com quotes psychologist Harold Herzog, who studies the human-animal connection, regarding science-backed benefits of pet ownership including: "Higher survival rates, fewer heart attacks, less loneliness, better blood pressure, better psychological well-being, lower rates of depression and stress levels, fewer doctor visits, increased self-esteem, better sleep and more physical activity."

Dogs in particular have been found to help reduce death by any cause. That same article touts results of an analysis of almost four million people around the world. Findings stated dog ownership was associated with a 24 percent reduction in "dying from any cause." Furthermore, "If the person had already suffered a heart attack or stroke, having a dog was even more beneficial; they were 31 percent less likely to die from cardiovascular disease."

An article on Forbes.com literally titled "Pets Are Crucial for Older Adults," reports that senior pet owners think so highly of

their four-legged companions that they take their pets into consideration when making major life decisions such as moving into a senior living facility. In a survey, senior pet owners reported "unconditional love" to be the most important benefit they receive from pet ownership while other responses included "gives a sense of purpose" and "gives me someone to talk to."

Further still, an article on the John Hopkins Medicine website shares additional perks of pet ownership. Once again, reduced stress is noted. The article refers to study results: "84 percent of post-traumatic stress disorder patients paired with a service dog reported a significant reduction in symptoms, and 40 percent were able to decrease their medications." In the article Jeremy Barron, M.D., medical director of the Beacham Center for Geriatric Medicine at Johns Hopkins also states that petting an animal can help lower blood pressure, lower cortisol and boost oxytocin levels, adding, "It's relaxing and transcendental."

Despite the astounding number of studies and research pointing to the tangible benefits of pet ownership, it's important for seniors to be ready to tackle the challenge of pet parenting! Owning a pet requires daily responsibility... but it's evident that the effort comes back 10-fold in both health benefits for mind and body. For these reasons and more, Fellowship Square Historic Mesa is pleased to be a pet-friendly community.





# FOUR SURPRISINGLY EASY WAYS TO BREAK YOUR HEART



Researched and Written by  
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Many of us have been there; I know I have. Standing alone like a wallflower at the high school Valentine dance, longing for a secret note from a clandestine crush, or mooning over someone who doesn't even know you exist. The iconic symbol of a broken heart doodled all over your angsty teen journal. Ah! The joys of Valentine's Day as an emotional adolescent who thinks she's powerless to mend her shattered feelings.

Young hearts broken over love are often easily mended, but when it comes to your physical heart health, there are four surprisingly easy ways to break your heart and cause irreparable damage.



## Eat Too Much Sugar

Valentine's Day is synonymous with copious quantities of confectionary delights, each one sweeter than the next, and it's not the only holiday to line the pockets of the sugar corporations. In the USA, we consume about 180lbs of sugar per person annually, which is 168lbs too many.

Sugar raises blood pressure, increases triglycerides (fats formed from sugars), and inflammation. Harvard Health reported on a study published in JAMA Internal Medicine showing that if you eat 25% or more of your daily calories from sugar, you are twice as likely to die from heart disease as those whose diets included less than 10% added sugars.

Sticking to less than 2 tsp (16g or 1/2 ounce) of added sugars daily (honey, corn syrup, sugar, maple syrup, etc.) is the smarter choice you can bet your sweet life on!

## Drink Alcohol

Just this week, the World Heart Federation announced that "drinking can lead to loss of healthy life." Previous health studies and publications had encouraged a glass of red wine a day largely for the antioxidant anthocyanins and blood pressure lowering resveratrol. However, studies have shown that "even small amounts of alcohol can increase a person's risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, heart failure, hypertensive heart disease, cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation, and aneurysm." (World Heart Federation, 2022)



Anthocyanin's antioxidants are in red, purple, and blue colored foods such as berries, currants, grapes, and some tropical fruits. Grapes, peanuts, cocoa, blueberries, bilberries, and cranberries contain

resveratrol. Skip the alcohol and prevent your heart from skipping a beat.

## Forget to Brush Your Teeth

If you're getting ready to go on a hot date for Valentine's Day, I'm sure you would brush your teeth before you stepped out the door. Your significant other is not the only one who's grateful for your oral hygiene. Periodontitis has been associated with an increased risk of heart disease.



The bacteria that build up in your mouth around your teeth and gums "increase your risk of a bacterial infection in your blood stream, which can affect your heart valves." (Mayo Clinic, 2020)

To protect your teeth and your heart, clean your teeth with fluoride-free toothpaste and fill your cavities with mercury-free fillings. Floss daily and use a Water-Pik. And don't forget your dental checkup every six months. Avoid harsh dental products that destroy the good bacteria in your mouth. To avoid a cardiac diagnosis, be sure to get rid of your halitosis!

## Lie Around All Day

The last time I checked, the only one who benefited from lying around, waiting for her prince to come, was Snow White. Physical inactivity is extraordinarily detrimental to heart health.

If you don't move your body much, you're not alone. According to the CDC, "roughly 60% of U.S. adults do not engage

in the recommended amount of activity, and approximately 25% of U.S. adults are not active at all."

Regular, vigorous, and sustained movement is very good for your heart, preventing not only cardiovascular disease but the other CVD risk factors like high blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels, insulin resistance, and diabetes.

This Valentine's Day, work up a sweat doing something fun with the ones you love. Go dancing, take a walk, go swimming, play frisbee, tennis, or ping pong! It's good for your heart in more ways than one!

## Mend Your Broken Heart

Heart disease is still the leading cause of death in the United States. As of 2018, 30.3 million U.S. adults were diagnosed with heart disease, and every year, about 647,000



Americans die from it. But according to the World Health Organization, chronic conditions like heart disease are avoidable 80% of the time by making dietary and lifestyle changes.

Show your heart a little love this Valentine's and all year long. Reduce your sugar intake, enjoy lots of blue or purple fruits and vegetables, take care of your teeth, and move your body. When it comes down to it, I'd choose these four surprisingly easy ways to prevent heartbreak in a heartbeat.

## KINDNESS IN ACTION

Our senior residents are very appreciative of what our staff does all year long. Since we do not allow our staff to accept gratuities, we created an employee fund that residents may donate to. At the end of each year, the balance is distributed to non-management staff to show the residents' appreciation during the holiday season. Here are a few comments residents made as they contributed.

"My sincerest gratitude for your cheerful, polite, dedicated and excellent service."

"We are so thankful for your service, friendliness and the blessings you all are."

"Thank you for all your hard work to give me such a great life!"

"Thank you for your service and taking such good care of me. I enjoy living at Fellowship Square Historic Mesa."

Now, if you ask our staff what they love most about their jobs at Fellowship Square Historic Mesa, they will tell you again and again that it is the amazing residents and the chance to make a difference each and every day.

February 17th is Random Acts of Kindness Day! It's wonderful to have a day where everyone makes it a point to be kind but at Fellowship Square Historic Mesa, we make it a point to be kind each and every day.



Looking for more than just a job but an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of seniors? Check out our [job opportunities](#).

