

Village Vine

Monthly Newsletter of Village Manor



SUPPORT AWARENESS & VILLAGE MANOR RESIDENTS



Village Manor STEPS of SUPPORT

Relay Walk

- Saturday, June 6
- 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Village Manor Walking Trail
705 N Brady St., Abilene

Supporting Awareness For

MS • Alzheimer's/Dementia • Parkinson's • COPD

Registration and Sponsoship

- Participation Fee: \$10
- Event T-Shirt(optional): \$20-22
(T-shirt order will be placed on May 1 - please register by April 30 if you want a t-shirt.)
- Become a sponsor and help support this event.

Scan the code for all event information or visit www.mhsk.org



Event Activities

Several stops along the walk will provide information, yummy treats, and interactive fun:

- COPD ~ MS ~ Parkinson's ~ Alzheimer's
- Goat YOGA
- VM Community Garden
- Buy a Brick Program
- Resident Raffle
- Mental Health Services
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Caregiver and Grievance Support

All Proceeds Benefit
Village Manor Resident Fund

Thank you for your support!



THE COLLMAN'S



DR. MARK SHEERN

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WHY STRESS CAN FEEL HEAVIER AS WE AGE (AND WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS)



Many older adults say the same thing in different ways:

“I don’t handle things like I used to.”

“I feel overwhelmed all the time.”

“Everything feels harder now.”



These feelings are not “just part of getting older.” Stress truly does feel heavier later in life, and there are real physical, emotional, and social reasons why.

Understanding what is happening is the first step toward feeling better.

STRESS CHANGES HOW THE BODY AND BRAIN WORK

Stress is a physical experience as much as it is an emotional one. When we are under stress, our nervous system releases hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. These chemicals help us respond to danger, but when stress becomes ongoing, they begin to wear the body down.

As we age, the body becomes slower at resetting itself after stress. That means a stressful phone call, a medical appointment, or a difficult conversation can linger longer in the system. Sleep may become disrupted. Muscles stay tense. Thoughts race. Fatigue builds.

Over time, this creates a constant state of being “on edge,” even when nothing urgent is happening.

Check out the next page for more.

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LIFE CHANGES ADD INVISIBLE WEIGHT

Later life often comes with changes that subtly increase emotional strain. These can include retirement, health challenges, loss of independence, grief, financial worries, and shifting family roles. Even positive changes can be stressful when they require adjustment.

Many older adults also grew up in a time when emotional struggles were not openly discussed. They learned to push through discomfort rather than talk about it. As a result, stress may go unspoken for years until it shows up as exhaustion, irritability, or sadness. When these pressures build without support, the nervous system never gets a chance to rest.

WHEN STRESS STARTS TO LOOK LIKE DEPRESSION

Chronic stress often looks like low energy, loss of interest, difficulty concentrating, or withdrawing from others. These are also common signs of depression.

Because of this overlap, many older adults are told they are “just tired” or “just slowing down” when they are actually experiencing emotional overload. Without support, stress can quietly turn into depression, anxiety, or a sense of hopelessness. This isn’t something people should have to manage alone.

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

One of the most effective ways to reduce stress in later life is through consistent emotional connection and support. Group therapy offers both.

In a supportive group setting, people have the opportunity to talk, listen, and realize they are not alone in what they are experiencing. Sharing worries, frustrations, and hopes in a safe space helps regulate the nervous system. It reduces isolation and restores perspective.

Over time, this kind of connection helps the brain and body move out of constant alert mode and back into balance.

IT’S NOT TOO LATE TO FEEL BETTER

Feeling overwhelmed does not mean something is wrong with you. It means your system has been carrying too much for too long. With the right support, stress can ease. Energy can return. And life can feel more manageable again.

You don’t have to handle it all by yourself.

WE CAN HELP.

Our hospital-based outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging or a chronic diagnosis. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community consultations.

Call us today at (785) 263-6805

Thank you to Gail Parson for writing this story, published in the Abilene Reflector-Chronicle on April 3, 2026.

Bridging generations: AMS students find purpose, connection at Village Manor

At Abilene Middle School, a small group of students is learning that leadership doesn't always look like a podium or a spotlight.

Sometimes, it looks like a deck of cards, a set of dominoes, and a willingness to sit down and listen.

Led by sixth-grade social studies teacher Mel Dannefer, the Community Cares Leadership Team is built on a simple idea: bring students and senior citizens together, and let connection do the rest.

Once a month, Dannefer takes a group of eight students in grades 6 through 8 to Village Manor, where they spend time with residents playing games, making crafts, and sharing conversation. The activities vary from Uno and card games like "Garbage" to pumpkin carving in the fall, but the heart of the program remains the same.



AMS sixth grader Kipton Robinson

"My goal is to help students feel comfortable with the older generation," Dannefer said. "I think it is important for generations to interact with each other." That belief was shaped years ago during her time in youth ministry, when a student once admitted, "I really don't like going to nursing homes — old people scare me." The comment stuck with her.

"This truly broke my heart," Dannefer said. "I feel it is important for middle schoolers to see the world as bigger than their own and try to find a way to connect with others."

That connection is exactly what students say they're finding.

For eighth-grader Tessa McConville, the experience has only deepened the values she already holds.

"I appreciate elders for all they do and wanted to show my appreciation," she said, adding that she's never

shared that fear. "I have lots of elders in my family, so I know what they go through."

What stands out most to her are her classmates themselves, "having kind people...that show respect."

Seventh-grader Tylee Asbe admits there can be uncertainty stepping into something new but says the experience quickly changes that. "I love that I got to connect with the elderly," Tylee said. "I love going to learn to play 'Trash' and other new games."

Any hesitation comes more from unfamiliarity than fear: "Maybe because it can be scary to go to a new place."

For sixth-grader Autumn Davis, the motivation is simple: "To help make someone's day better." After visiting Village Manor, she believes that the goal is being met.

"We played card games and talked with them, they looked pretty happy to me," she said.

Despite a personal connection, her grandfather died at the facility, Autumn says she's never been afraid to visit with the elderly.

"I enjoy talking to them," she said, adding that her favorite part is "brightening someone's day either with cards or a game."

Students who returned to the team after one year say the impact it has on them has grown.

Seventh-grader Camdyn Hartwick joined again out of empathy. "I feel bad for older people who don't get visited or get forgotten at nursing homes," Camdyn said. That perspective has sharpened through the experience, shaping they would respond to someone who feels uneasy.

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Piper Twaddell, seventh grade, cleans out a pumpkin to make a Jack-O-Lantern at Village Manor. Piper regularly joins classmates who are on the Community Cares Leadership team, which goes to Village Manor to play games, do crafts, and just have fun with the residents.

"Don't judge them—one day that might be you," Camdyn said. What is valued most are the relationships formed along the way:

"Making friends and memories." The experience, Camdyn added, leaves a feeling of being "great, amazed," and has inspired encouraging others to serve, even outside of a formal group.

For fellow seventh-grader Piper Twaddell, it's the residents' reactions that keep her coming back.

"I love seeing the residents' smiles," she said.

When she first joined, she wasn't sure what to expect, but those uncertainties quickly gave way to meaningful experiences through regular visits and activities.

If someone expressed fear about nursing homes, Piper said she would remind them of a simple truth: "They're still people, they just need a little extra help."

Along the way, she's gained something lasting — an open mind.

Even when they aren't visiting Village Manor, the group continues its mission—creating seasonal cards to deliver to residents, ensuring that connection extends beyond scheduled visits.

For Dannefer, those small acts of kindness are exactly the point.

"I truly try to help kids feel comfortable around older adults and also find a way to serve others," she said.

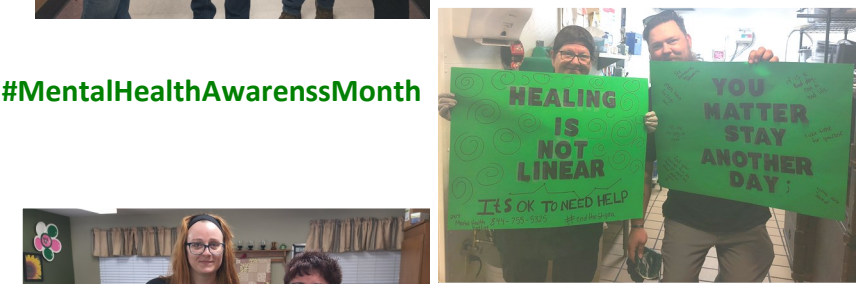
In a world that often feels divided by age, experience, and perspective, the students of Community Cares are discovering something powerful: connection isn't complicated.

Sometimes, it just starts with sitting down at a table, and being willing to play a game.

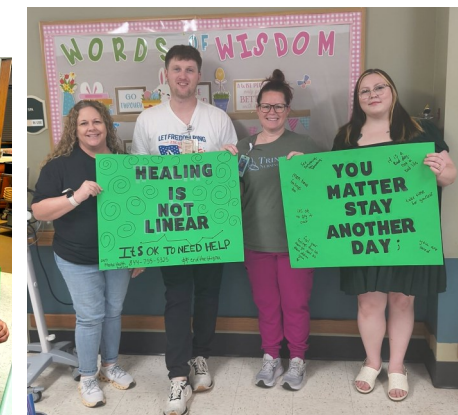
Memorial Health System employees wore green in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month in May, wrote sidewalk chalk messages of encouragement, and incorporated it into the Friday of National Hospital Week! Pictured below are Village Manor employees who were supporting Mental Health Awareness Month.



#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth



#MentalHealthMatters



Welcome New Residents

Norma Ascher
Brenda Blum
Darryl Brown

Welcome New Staff

Tasha Crites
Kimberly Tyler
Lauren Sammons
Amanda Creach
Betty Pipes
Chelsea Luffman
Regina Record
Karry Birney

Resident Birthdays

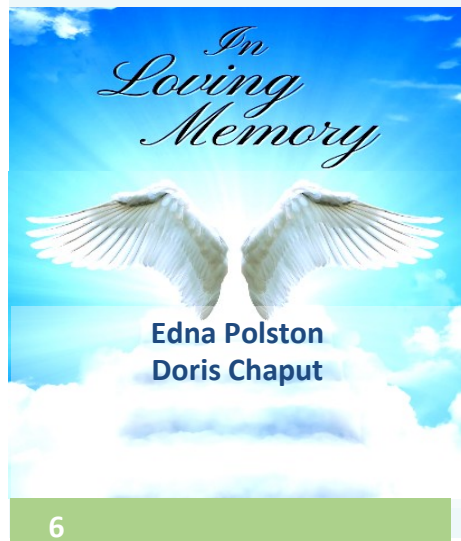
06/01 Phyllis Britt
06/03 Marcia Anderson
06/13 Ramona Overlease
06/14 Norris Marshall
06/20 Rosetta Creach
06/27 Cheryl Owen
06/30 Marvin Steenbock

Staff Birthdays

06/02 Shanell Cooper
06/05 Irene Johnson
06/16 Heather Stewart
06/17 Shauna Best
06/17 Tasha Crites
06/18 Angela Sorrell
06/22 Chelsea Luffman

Discharges

Earl Hayes



You can send a message to a resident of Village Manor directly from our website!
Go to: mhsks.org > MHS Affiliates > Village Manor and look for the "Message a Resident" button.



IMPORTANT REMINDER

Village Manor needs your help to ensure that we can identify any personal items that are brought into the building. When bringing clothing and other items, for your loved one, please leave them at the front office or the housekeeping/laundry office to be labeled.
***Village Manor is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing or other items.**

READ OUR NEWSLETTER ONLINE AT WWW.VILLAGEMANOR.ORG OR CALL 785-263-1431 TO BE ADDED TO OUR E-NEWSLETTER LIST!

Village Manor is seeking volunteers!
785-263-6692

FOLLOW VILLAGE MANOR ON FACEBOOK!



2026

JUNE



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Activities are subject to change! Remote Control Cars Available! 1-on-1s done daily!	1 9:30 Reminisce 10:00 Games of Choice 2:45 Snacks 3:00 Bingo 6:30 Coloring	2 9:00 Resident Council 9:30 Resident Meeting 10:00 Cards 1:00 Nails 2:00 Resident Choice 3:00 Computer 6:30 Movie	3 9:00 Games 10:00 Cards 10:00 Impact 2:45 Snacks 6:30 Cards	4 9:00 NDC 9:15 Devotional 9:30 Therapy Dog 11:00 Cards 2:00 Resident Choice 2:45 Snacks 6:30 Color	5 9:00 NDC 9:30 Devotional 10:00 Cards 2:00 Nails 6:30 RC Movies	6 8:00—noon: Steps of Support Relay Walk at Village Manor 6:30 Adult Color
7 10:00 Movies 3:00 Live Church w/ Tom Bishop 6:30 Resident Choice	8 9:00 NDC 9:30 Reminisce 10:00 Cards 2:45 Snacks 3:00 Bingo 6:30 Dominoes	9 9:00 NDC 9:30 Devotional 10:00 Cards 12:00 L&C 2:45 Snacks 6:30 Games	10 9:00 Games 10:00 Cards 10:00 Impact 2:45 Snacks 6:30 Cards	11 9:00 NDC 9:15 Devotional 9:30 Therapy Dog 11:00 Cards 2:00 Resident Choice 2:45 Snacks 6:30 Color	12 9:00 NDC 9:30 Devotional 10:00 Cards 2:00 Dominoes 2:45 Snacks 6:30 Movies	13 10:00 Movies 3:00 Cards 6:30 Checkers
14 9:00 Movies 1:00 Live Church w/ Darin F. 6:30 Coloring FLAG DAY	15 9:30 Reminisce 10:00 Games of Choice 2:45 Snacks 3:00 Bingo 6:30 Puzzles	16 9:00 NDC 9:30 Devotional 10:30 Resident Choice 11:00 Cards 12:00 L&C 2:00 Resident Choice 3:00 Cards 6:30 Games	17 9:00 Games 10:00 Cards 10:00 Impact 2:45 Snacks 6:30 Color	18 7:00-9:30 AM CAFE 9:30 Therapy Dog 10:00 Cards 2:00 Resident Choice 2:45 Snacks 6:30 Resident Choice	19 9:00 NDC 9:30 Devotional 10:00 Cards 1:30 Music 6:30 Puzzles	20 10:00 Movies 3:00 Resident Choice 6:30 Cinema Night
21 10:00 Movies 10:00 Live Church w/ Carswell Flanna FATHER'S DAY	22 9:30 Reminisce 10:00 Games of Choice 2:45 Snacks 3:00 Bingo 6:30 Coloring	23 9:00 NDC 9:30 Devotional 10:00 Cards 12:00 L&C 2:45 Snacks 6:30 Games	24 10:00 Cards 10:00 Impact 2:45 Snacks 3:00 Library 6:30 Resident Choice	25 9:00 NDC 9:15 Devotional 10:00 Memorial Service 11:00 Cards 2:45 Snacks 3:00 Cards 6:30 Movies	26 9:00 NDC 9:30 Devotional 10:00 Cards 1:30 Movies 2:00 Resident Choice 6:30 Cards	27 10:00 Movies 3:00 Puzzle Time 6:30 Cinema Night
28 10:00 Movies NO Live Church	29 9:30 Reminisce 10:00 Games of Choice 2:45 Snacks 3:00 Bingo 6:30 Coloring	30 9:00 NDC 9:30 Devotional 10:00 Cards 12:00 L&C 2:45 Snacks 6:30 Games	Weather permitting, we will be doing daily picnics and outside time. Please ask staff to assist you out if this is something for you.		We are starting to gear up with planting flowers. If this is for you, please let Cheryl know.	
						We also have a Wii gaming station! Xbox is available with eight different games on it.