

April 2024

## The rewards of gratitude

In the golden years of life, we often reflect on things we have experienced and achieved. Now, more than ever, we understand the importance of physical and spiritual well-being and ways to best care for ourselves. Through challenges and joys, one simple practice can make a surprising difference: gratitude. Did you know gratitude is key to unlocking a treasure trove of physical benefits?

Countless studies have shown that practicing gratitude can lead to improved physical health, especially as we age. From reduced symptoms of illness to enhanced immune function, the effects of gratitude are truly remarkable. Physiologically, the act of giving thanks has been shown to lower blood pressure, reduce inflammation, and promote better sleep—all essential components of a strong and healthy body.

While King David may not have understood the physical benefits of gratefulness, he certainly encouraged this practice. For example, Psalm 107:1 tells us to "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." Surely David understood that gratitude fosters the kind of resilience that helps us navigate life's ups and downs – and do so with grace and strength.

This verse also reminds us of God's enduring goodness, even amidst challenges or difficult circumstances. When we cultivate a heart of gratitude, despite what is facing us, we not only honor God but also nurture our own well-being.

Let us embrace the practice of wholeheartedly giving thanks for the blessings that surround us. Whether it's through appreciating the freshness of springtime, greeting a neighbor or thanking someone for their kindness, we can cultivate a spirit of gratitude each day.

In this season of life, we are thankful that you are a vital part of this community, as we journey together. May you, too, find a blessing today and reap the rewards of gratitude.



# Johanna Shores Spotlight

## April brain challenges

**O**ur brains have circuits that are designed to learn and grow new connections. Repetitive practice and trying new activities causes these circuits to grow and get stronger. This being the month of “April Fools,” I thought it appropriate to challenge our brains a little. If you are right handed, try these activities with your left hand. If you are left handed, try these activities with your right hand.

- Comb your hair
- Brush your teeth
- Use a Spoon
- Deal Cards
- Write your name
- Button or zip a coat
- Turn a door knob
- Pull out a chair
- Use the TV remote
- Turn the pages of a book
- Hold a glass
- Dial a phone
- Adjust your glasses
- Think of a few on your own!



As you try these, remember that laughter is also great for your overall wellness!

Happy Spring!

Wellness Team

## Starting conversations about advanced care planning

### National Healthcare Decisions Day, April 16

Who would speak for you about your health care options if you are unable speak for yourself? How do you open a conversation about what matters to you and have a say in your health care? These are the questions for April 16 — National Healthcare Decisions Day, designated by the “Conversation Project” of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

Presbyterian Homes & Services (PHS) is lifting up this day to encourage you and the people most important to you, especially those who may be called upon to care for you.

In an era of increasingly complex medical care, we can't afford to ignore life's end, or to separate our medical decisions from our spiritual values. PHS is dedicated to helping you open this conversation about your wishes for care with your chosen family, health care providers and with us. Our approach, “Honoring Choices,” offers encouragement and guidance for you to create a health care directive.

A health care directive is a document that informs others of your health care wishes. It allows you to name a person (“agent”) who will assure that your choices are honored or decide for you if you are unable to decide for yourself. This document has legal authority. Physicians, health care providers and hospital staff are bound by law to follow your directives.

Honoring Choices helps you and your loved ones navigate these conversations focusing on your health goals, spirituality, and what it means to live fully while remaining realistic about the end of life. Talking with the important people in our life can bring us closer together. It also helps us create the foundation of a care plan that's right for us — a plan that will be available when the need arises.

Reach out to your campus pastors who can help you take it step by step and get the conversation started.

You are loved!  
PK (Pastor Kurt)

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Presbyterian Homes & Services is a nonprofit organization and an equal opportunity employer serving older adults through community services, housing, and health care.

## Thank you, volunteers for making a difference every day

**S**t. Francis of Assisi famously said, “Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing you have received – only what you have given.” At Presbyterian Homes & Services (PHS), our vital corps of volunteers understands this better than most.

Although National Volunteer week is celebrated in the third week of April, PHS community recognition events are held from early April through May. Each of our campuses hosts tea, luncheon or other events to give a gracious thanks to those who serve year-round.

Volunteerism is one of the hallmarks of PHS. From the very beginning, local church members, children, service clubs, neighbors, resident family members and staff have volunteered in every

one of our communities. We are blessed to have a wide diversity of volunteers, some who are here once a year, and some who are with us every day, including our own residents.

These volunteers complete a variety of tasks — reading to residents, assisting with activities, tending gardens, delivering mail, running errands and helping with office projects. Our volunteers lighten the work of the staff and brighten the days of our residents.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact [volunteering@preshomes.org](mailto:volunteering@preshomes.org).

Please take time to thank a volunteer today!