

Life LifeTimes

WOODBROOK

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Mission Statement

Woodbrook strives to create a safe, beautiful, and loving home for our residents, one in which they are celebrated and encouraged to thrive in a healthy environment with dignity, respect, and joy.

Adopted by the Board of Directors
December 11, 2013

WOODBROOK

Chemung County's premier assisted living residence

LifeTimes is published biannually by Woodbrook Assisted Living Residence to carry news from our busy world to yours.

WOODBROOK

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Birthdays are a big deal at Woodbrook! Executive Director Laurie Sweeney, left, helped Jan Drake celebrate her 79th birthday on August 27.



Firminia Wilkins recently celebrated her 96th birthday at Woodbrook with a group of friends and former co-workers from the Radiology Department at St. Joseph's Hospital.



Guests honored their dads at a Father's Day Luncheon at Shepard Hills Golf Club in Waverly on June 15.



Alice Trusievtz dressed as Cruella DeVill from the Disney movie "101 Dalmatians."



Happy staff who served lunch at the July 4 picnic were (l-r): Lynette Roberts, cook; Michele Mattison, housekeeping; Cody Blaney, cook; Justin Spicher, cook; and Zabira Burger, cook.

Salutations

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes it's a quiet voice at the end of the day whispering: "I will try again tomorrow." — Mary Ann Radmacher

This quote about courage touches my heart. Sometimes it's the best strategy for processing all the tragic things that have happened recently. Our country suffered hurricanes, flooding, fires and mass shootings that seem overwhelming and senseless. At Woodbrook, we suffered the unexpected loss of five of our staff members, not to mention several beloved residents. As Executive Director, I lead our family with coping and grieving. Now, more than ever, I realize that sometimes courage is simply resilience.

At Woodbrook, our staff and residents are one big family, and we endure by bonding together. We handle sadness with hugs, smiles, conversations, memorial services, displays or just sitting quietly and grieving together. Unity helps us as we struggle not only with the world's complexities, but with the day-to-day individual struggles of aging.

We here at Woodbrook demonstrate courage through perseverance. We provide a safe haven for those we love and care for.

This newsletter's featured *Generations* resident is Rita McGrath, one of the most delightful and positive people you'll ever meet. Rita has endured personal tragedy in her life with an undying faith — losing her mother as a child, and losing her child as a mother. I look at her and see the hope and strength she's lived, and she inspires me. We're blessed to have her — and many more like her — living under the Woodbrook roof.



*Laurie Sweeney, RN, MSN
Executive Director*

Transitions

Woodbrook Welcomes New Board Member

Woodbrook Assisted Living recently announced its Board of Directors for 2017-18.

Board officers include: Michael Hart, president; Michael Collins, vice president; Tammy Pabis, treasurer; and Scott Heffner, secretary.

New to the Board of Directors this year is Angela McNerny, who is the commercial lines operation manager at Swan Morss Insurance and Henry Dunn Incorporated.



Angela McNerny

"I am happy to know I will be a part of an organization which takes great pride in providing high quality living for seniors," said McNerny. "The atmosphere is welcoming to all who enter. That puts a smile on my face."



Woodbrook Assisted Living celebrated National Assisted Living Week in September with group activities honoring staff and residents.

Downstate Irish Widow Loves Her Upstate Woodbrook Home

Woodbrook resident Rita McGrath, 91, is enjoying a long, interesting and blessed life. Even though she's quick to say she's nobody special, her story of enduring family love is epic.

Born in NYC on December 15, 1925 to parents from Ireland, she and her sisters are all first-generation Irish-Americans. Rita was the firstborn, and four other daughters followed. When Rita was only 12, her mother died in childbirth leaving a widower with five little girls ranging in age from 2-12.

All were devastated, especially Rita's father, Charles Duffy, but he was determined to keep the family together. Some encouraged him to put the five girls in an orphanage, but he wouldn't hear of it. He raised them on his own, with help from his wife's brother, Martin, nicknamed Uncle Murt, and — with Rita being the oldest — a lot of responsibility fell on her too.

"He was wonderful, but he was strict," Rita said. "We were a close family, and he kept us all together. He made sure we ate breakfast, went to school, studied and said our prayers. He loved us and we loved him."

Rita married the man from next door on Pacific Street in Brooklyn, William McGrath, after he returned from WWII. She called him "Chiefy," and together they had two children: Rita Marie, whom they called Marie; and William McGrath Junior.

Chiefy had a long career working in NYC for the US Post Office, retiring as a postal inspector. Rita worked for AT&T in dining services.

Starting with Rita's marriage, each younger sister became the Maid of



Rita McGrath holds a photo of her mother and uncle, who were sister and brother. Behind her are other beloved photos, including one of her late son, Lt. Col. Bill McGrath.

Honor in the older sister's wedding. This tradition held true for the marriage for all five Duffy daughters down to the youngest, and at her wedding, Rita was the Matron of Honor. Their dad lived to see all married, and enjoy his many grandchildren. They all knew him and loved him, and went home for his holiday turkey dinners for decades.

Rita lost her beloved son Bill at age 60 to stomach cancer. He was a career US Air Force officer. At his passing he was a lieutenant colonel and is buried with honors at the USAF Academy, his *alma mater*, in Colorado Springs. His military photo is one of many on the wall of her room.

Marie married Tom Finnerty in Brooklyn and moved to Elmira in 1984 with their children — Tom Jr., Margaret, Bill and Peter. Tom Jr. now

lives in Canton, NY, and Margaret lives in Charlottesville, VA, each with their families. Bill and Peter live in Elmira with their families. Five of Rita's nine great-grandchildren are also here.

After her retirement from AT&T, Rita bought a house in Elmira in 1993. One evening, her grandson Peter dropped by for a visit and found her on the floor. Rita had suffered a cerebral bleed. As part of her recovery, she went to Woodbrook to continue her rehab and grow stronger. Rita was quick to make friends, loved playing games like Bingo, and decided to make Woodbrook her home permanently.

Rita is a beacon of love and optimism, and gets frequent visits from family, including great-grandsons who play sports at nearby Notre Dame High School and a great-granddaughter who plays sports at Horseheads High School.

"I have a candy drawer in my room for when they stop to see me," said Rita with a huge smile. "They visit me after tennis or soccer practice, and they bring their friends, too."

She won't eat the candy because of her diabetes, but she loves having a stash to offer to visitors.

On Rita's 90th birthday, 78 members of her family came from all over the country to Bernie Murray's in Elmira to honor her. The love that knits this family together is evident in the photos, cards and gifts that fill her room and etched in the smile wrinkles of her beautiful face.

"I love Woodbrook," said Rita. "They're so good to me. They help keep my blood sugar in check, and I'm living longer because they take such good care of me. At first I didn't want to come here, but as soon as I got here, I loved it."

Woodbrook Mourns Five Staff Members

This year has brought a special level of sadness to the Woodbrook family as we've had the unusual circumstance of the loss of five beloved staff members. Their spirits will always be here, and they are deeply missed.

Shawn Blandford • Al Fitzwater
Bonnie Malone • Polly Robert • Marilyn Treat

Massage Therapy

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at Woodbrook

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Contact Laurie Sweeney
for details

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*The dedicated staff members
and management at Woodbrook
Assisted Living are thrilled
that the community voted our
facility Best Senior Care
in the Twin Tiers!*



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Seasonal Celebrations

November

Veterans Day Celebration
Step On It Destination Party
Thanksgiving Day Social
Woodbrook Bus in Holiday Parade

December

Holiday Celebrations
Christmas Carolers from Community
New Year's Eve Party

January

Happy New Year!
Winter Wonderland Party
Casino Night

February

Valentine's Day Party
Creative Crafts

March

St. Patrick's Day Party
Easter Party

Executive Staff

Laurie Sweeney, RN, MSN
Executive Director
Judy A. Kennedy, BA
Human Resources Director
Bonnie Hart
Administrative Assistant
Fred Maloney, BSBA
Finance Director
Ruth McDonough, RN, BS
Case Manager
Denise Moonschein, BS
Activities Director
Michael VanWert
Buildings and Grounds Director
Gary R. Durfee
Dietary Director
Lori J. Jamelski, LPN
RCA Director/Case Manager

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