

CHARLES HOUSE ASSOCIATION

Helping people age the way they have lived

NEWSLETTER

2023

The happiest singalong this side of the Mississippi!



Daniel and his sister Sarah McCombie. She is half of the duo Chatham Rabbits

For 12 years, Daniel Ayers has been delighting Charles House with his guitar playing and “Campfire” singalongs. “You know, if you go out to the woods with some buddies, have a few beers, and think of fun songs that we can all sing.”

When he was 16, he was into country and folk music. He start-

and Sally Freeman’s son played fiddle with him and told him about Charles House. Paul and Sally invited him to come and play there.

His experience with elders in nursing homes led him to believe that it would be a somber environment, “but darned if it wasn’t the happiest singalong this side of the Mississippi!”

(cont. on p. 7)

Charles House participants grow some of the food they eat, such as sweet potatoes, lettuce, tomatoes and watermelon. They also grow hibiscus to make tea.



Bradley Program in Learning & Service



Bradley field placement student Owen Kendrick leads a brisk game of Penny Ante

The Bradley Program in Learning and Service was established in 2016 to support the growing involvement of students in Charles House programs. Michael Bradley made a donation in memory of his wife, Rebecca “Becky” Bradley, who had been a long-time volunteer at the original Charles House on Hillcrest Avenue in Carrboro. Michael was a professor at Duke University in both law and business. The Bradley Program continues as a legacy to Michael’s commitment to learning and Becky’s commitment to service.

Students have come to Charles House from many educational institutions--UNC, Duke, Central, NC State, Durham Tech, and schools farther away offering online courses to local students. Many of the “Bradley students” come to Charles House as undergraduates fulfilling a service-learning component of coursework; some continue to volunteer after their course requirement has been completed. Others experience Charles House as a field placement. Some have included Charles House experience in a gap-year prior to graduate school. Undergraduate students have come from courses in sociology, psychology of aging and dying, health care, and even public relations. Various professional programs incorporate Charles House, including social work, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and geriatrics.

The Bradley Program has grown significantly since establishing the Center for Community Eldercare. For instance, the year before the pandemic closure, Bradley students banked 5000 hours of service learning experience at Charles House. Since the pandemic, educational programs have been re-establishing connections with Charles House.

(cont. on p. 5)

A Message from the Charles House Board of Directors

This past summer marked the thirty-third anniversary of the opening of Charles House in the Carrboro millhouse on Hillcrest Avenue. The family and friends of Charles Jones had worked for several years to bring a place like Charles House into existence. The day program, which started with four participants and four staff members, has grown to serve over a hundred caregiving families a year. Our partnership with Carol Woods Retirement Community continues into its ninth year housing our Center for Community Eldercare.

Charles House has pioneered the Eldercare Home model for residential care. This innovative approach to assisted living carries the vision of elders continuing to be part of our neighborhoods, even to the end of their lives.

The Bradley Program in Learning & Service brings valuable experience working with elders to students from many educational programs. Charles House can create a lasting impact with these students, raising their awareness of the positive aspects of aging, even when facing periods of physical and cognitive challenges.

We are grateful that our Charles House caregiving families entrust us with the care of their elders, and they, in turn, express their appreciation through our annual survey. Here are a few of their comments:

"He's happier. He looks forward to the days he spends at Charles House. The program gives him more to do and more people to relate to."

"It gave him a chance to be independent of me three days a week and to receive stimulation during the days he attended Charles House. It gave me a chance to have time to myself and to be able to leave our apartment knowing that he was safe and in a good environment."

"Charles House demonstrates the best in caring for the aging. They meet you where you are and are flexible in dealing with the changes that occur with aging. The program is a beauty and gift to those who get to go."

In addition to growing to serve more caregiving families, Charles House Association has also grown as a community employer. The Board of Directors is committed to Charles House participating in the Orange County Living Wage (OCLW) program, which began in 2015 to establish a local living wage and to encourage area employers to offer it to their employees. Currently, OCLW sets the Orange County living wage at \$16.60 per hour. The program also acknowledges employers offering health insurance.

Since being certified as an OCLW employer, Charles House has steadily increased pay rates to assure a living wage, and more, for our staff members. Ten years ago, when the Affordable Care Act was passed, we started offering employees Charles House-sponsored health insurance plans.

Our ability to fulfill these commitments to our staff and offer Scholarship support for participant families is because of you, the friends of Charles House, and your generosity. With 2023 nearing an end, all of us at Charles House Association are grateful for the collaborations and support that make Charles House a positive, hopeful place in our community. As you think about your year-end giving, we ask you to consider a gift to help bring the magic of Charles House to elders and their caregiving families.



Dan Lehman, President



*Paul Klever,
Executive Director*

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Outside Agency Funding

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The Friends of Charles House Giving Society

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In Memory of Gary Phillips
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Rochelle Ragusa Eldercare Home Household Team Appreciation Fund

Rochelle Ragusa (1946-2022) became one of the first residents in Charles House's pioneering Eldercare Home, Charles House-Yorktown, in 2011. For more than ten years, Rochelle contributed her bright spirit and positive acceptance of life to the household family.

Rochelle's family remained very involved in her life, appreciating the support and care she received from the many direct-care workers who were part of the household team over the years. Rochelle's daughter, Christine Lathren, made the inaugural donation to the Appreciation Fund as a memorial to her mother.

The Household Team Appreciation Fund honors the life of Rochelle Ragusa and her contributions to establishing Eldercare Home as a new way creating a home for elders needing care. The Fund also brings attention to the individuals

(cont. on p.5)

Donors to the Annual Fund and Scholarship Fund

The family of Maryellen Back
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But what do they DO at Charles House?



*Administrative Director
 Suzanne with Bill*

The beat of different drummers



*Bigfoot!
 Yeti visits Charles House*

Relaxing on the patio



Donations in Honor of

Valerie Addo
 Fenaba Addo
 Rena Monk
 Jacklyn Monk
 Anthony Porter
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 Michele & Jim Schaefer
Charles House Staff
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Marvin (Eddie) Swindol
 Old Peak Finance
Becky & John Trangenstein
 David & Bonnie Custer
 Michael Custer

From Helsinki to Charles House



Pirkko, Jouko and Red Only

Jouko and Pirkko Halme came to the U.S. so he could pursue medical research with a colleague FOR ONE YEAR, he promised Pirkko. 40 years later, they're still here. They settled in St. Louis. When a job opening at UNC OB/GYN came up, they had to buy a map to figure out where North Carolina was!

Pirkko creates her art while caring for Jouko at home; he spends 3 days a week at Charles House. She appreciates the breaks. After the weekend, she's happy to bring him to Charles House on Monday.

Pirkko's amazing art has been on display at Charles House, after a show at the UNC Botanical Garden. One of her works, *Red Only*, is hanging in the lobby.

Their daughter Anna researched resources for dementia and was afraid Charles House would be stuffy like some other places she had visited.. After she and Pirkko visited and met with Paul, she proclaimed "It's not stuffy at all!"

Although Jouko may not remember how he spends his days at Charles House, he comes home in a good mood, and has retained his sense of humor. When Pirkko comes to pick up Jouko at the end of the day, she chats with other caregivers, mostly women, about life, not necessarily about their husbands. Pirkko really loves Charles House, and wonders how they find such wonderful people to work here!

(Bradley, cont.)

Not only do students involved in the Bradley Program gain a depth of experience, Charles House programs and participants are invigorated by the involvement of students. The Bradley Program is an investment in the future--young people having positive interactions with elders, including elders with challenges of aging, expand their understanding of aging, including their own aging, and with more hope and optimism. These students will become leaders in their communities, some will take up careers in aging services, but all will have a changed perspective of being elders because of Charles House.

Owen Kendrick is an MSW student at NC State who hails from Cary. He didn't know much about working with elders or folks with memory impairment before he started his field placement at Charles House last semester. He has certainly learned a lot during his time here. In the beginning, he made some mistakes, such as using his dark sense of humor, which participants did not find funny. With gentle guidance from staff, he has learned to re-direct participants without being patronizing, to treat them with respect even when their executive functions may not be working, and to pause the instinct to jump up and help someone.

He is extremely grateful for his experience at Charles House, which has pushed him outside his comfort zone, "But nobody makes fun of you for dancing bad," he states. He especially enjoys "This Day in History," and says the food is really good. He'll be juggling in the talent show, in which everyone participates. There is an intentionality to not dividing caregivers from recipients of care. People all have their own styles and all bring different things to the mix.

In his past work with mental health, he mostly saw patients with financial resources to spend on treatment. At Charles House, there are wealthy people who could go anywhere, but choose to come to Charles House, along with those who may receive financial assistance. This speaks to the efficacy of the Charles House method.

He hadn't expected to form strong connections with participants, or to have so much fun with them. He looks forward to coming to Charles House - it doesn't feel like work. "I didn't know that clinical care could look like community engagement."

(Ragusa, cont.)



Rochelle enjoying the deck at Yorktown

who give so much of themselves in caring for the residents and creating "family" in the Charles House Elder-care Home.

As other resident families continue contributing to the Rochelle Ragusa Household Appreciation Fund, ongoing events, gifts and support to the individual team members will acknowledge that their caring spirits are truly appreciated by the residents and their families.

Memorial Donations

Lucille Ancona Michele & Jim Schaefer	US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA)	Eileen Hoban Rose Hoban	Joe & Sis Goben Donna Phillips Rex & Norma Pratt
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*The mission of Charles House Association:
Enriching the lives of seniors
Supporting families caring for aging family members
Representing the community's commitment to its elders*

(Singalong, cont.)

Going to be with his friends at Charles House is an effective anti-depressant. He had read about the therapeutic benefits of music for Alzheimer's and dementia, and he loves seeing people light up – sometimes they dance, sometimes they sing, and sometimes they just sit and tap their toes. The energy that he brings comes right back to him. "It's such a virtuous cycle," he says.

When he was teaching music at Hawbridge School, he would bring his students to sing at Charles House. They came away understanding how unique Charles House is and wanting to come back.

Daniel has told friends and family about Charles House, and some have become participants. It's a gift to people in his life that they can be in this loving environment.

Over the past 12 years, Charles House has seen Daniel grow and mature as a musician, and he has watched Charles House grow from the small, homey facility in Carrboro to to serve more elders and their families.

If you get the chance, come join the happiest singalong this side of the Mississippi!

Household Team makes Winmore a Home

Some Winmore residents go to the Daytime Eldercare program, but there's plenty going on at Winmore, from "This Day in History" to music and dancing, to cooking. They have "Show and Tell" when residents show pictures or souvenirs from a trip or family event. Families are frequent visitors to Winmore, coming for a Thanksgiving meal with residents. On Halloween, trick-or-treaters were welcomed to come in and get their goodies.

Marla praises the Household Team for supporting each other. When she had some challenges in her personal life, they stepped in without question or hesitation and they made her life much easier.

Since 1990, Charles House Association has been a nonprofit leader in community eldercare.

In 2015, Charles House established the Center for Community Eldercare in Chapel Hill, which houses the Daytime Eldercare Program, the Bradley Program in Learning & Service, and CORE--Caregiver Orientation, Resources & Education.



Beginning in 2011, Charles House has been pioneering a new model of residential care in neighborhood Eldercare Homes where six residents live as part of a caring household. Eldercare Homes are nonprofit licensed facilities integrated into the fabric of their neighborhoods.

IN MEMORIAM 2023

Rochelle Ragusa – January 4, 1946 -- November 28, 2022
Ruth Weygand – March 23, 1929 – February 11, 2023
Lilyan Rampone – July 4, 1929 – February 15, 2023
Lynette Russell – January 16, 1938 – February 15, 2023
Sallie Montgomery – June 17, 1925 – February 22, 2023
Bill Wilson – June 4, 1934 – April 18, 2023
Flora Landwehr – April 30, 1929 – April 20, 2023
Arnold Gelderman – November 1, 1937 – May 13, 2023
Carol Elliott – February 14, 1940 – June 24, 2023
Janice Udry -- June 14, 1928 – May 12, 2023
Don Collins – July 14, 1931 – October 15, 2023
Charles Herron – July 23, 1937 – November 9, 2023
Judy Cox-- January 12, 1946 - November 27, 2023

We remember all of our Charles House friends and offer condolences to their loving families

Charles House Community Advisory Council

Many community leaders lend their expertise and advice to assist Charles House Association. Charles House is grateful for the consultation of these Council members. You can find them listed on the Charles House website:

<https://charleshouse.org/board-of-directors/>

Charles House Association
7511 Sunrise Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(919) 967-7570

Paul Klever, Executive Director
paul@charleshouse.org
www.charleshouse.org

Certifications: Charles House Daytime Eldercare Program is certified by the State of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult Services, to operate as an Adult Day Care Program. Charles House Eldercare Homes are licensed as Family Care Homes by the State of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Services Regulation.

Enrollment: Families interested in exploring Charles House are encouraged to call the office to arrange a visit. After an initial assessment and a trial period, enrollment is completed when it is determined that the participant is appropriate for the program. Participants are scheduled for regular attendance, based upon family needs and program availability.

Limited scholarships are available for families in need. Financial Assistance is made possible by community donors.

Charles House Association publishes an annual newsletter.

Editor: Susan Siegel. Photos by Charles House staff and families unless credited. For newsletter information or suggestions, call Charles House or email: communications@charleshouse.org

CHARLES HOUSE ASSOCIATION

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CHARLES HOUSE ASSOCIATION

Helping people age the way they have lived

NEWSLETTER 2023

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(919) 967-7570

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CHARLES HOUSE
CENTER FOR
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CHARLES HOUSE -
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