

August 2018 Newsletter

Dear Friends & Family,

It has been an amazing summer with warm temperatures all of June and July. This has allowed our residents the opportunity to be outside for fresh air. Many of our sites have held their summer BBQ's and the participation has been wonderful. It is always great to see so many family and friends gather every year at our sites for this. We realize the summers are busy, but it is nice to host an event that doesn't require driving through the snow to get to the event. Hence, you must pick a summer month.

We are excited to have our new website up and launched. This new website has a new look and is mobile friendly so it is easier to navigate when opening from your phone. It has been fun to freshen things up, and several of you have submitted testimonials of what you love about Diamond Willow. If you did, thank you, we are putting them all on the website. This is very meaningful for those who really want to hear firsthand from those who have experienced our setting. Please visit our website at www.diamondassistedliving.com

Our Facebook pages are now up and running too for all of our sites, and we encourage all of you to like our pages and share our pages with those you know in your circle of friends and family. They, too may want to know more about what assisted living is all about. **The reality is we all learn from each other. It is how we all make decisions. We ask those we trust and love and we trust their opinion.**

Our Facebook pages are site specific, so you will find a Facebook page for Diamond Willow of Baxter, Diamond Willow of Alexandria, Diamond Willow of Cloquet, Diamond Willow of Mountain Iron, Diamond Willow Duluth-Lester Park, Diamond Willow of Proctor, Diamond Willow of Park Rapids, Diamond Willow of Detroit Lakes, Diamond Willow of Baxter, Diamond Willow of Little Falls, and Diamond Willow of Grand Rapids.

In the past month I have attended several funerals. Each funeral was an opportunity to pause and pay tribute to a life well lived. Some were taken much sooner than any of us would have hoped for. In these situations, it was harder to feel like celebrating their life. I had been to funerals before where the focus was on celebrating, but in these situations the individual was usually in their 80-90+ years of age. So, I struggled with my emotions when the funeral involved a 14 year old or a 48 year old. But, as I listened to the speakers, and the pastor, I soon realized they lived full lives too, and indeed their lives should be celebrated for the fullness they had so shortly lived. We were lucky to know them on this journey we were on. Even though our journey was cut short, it was still an amazing journey, where our lives were both enriched so much. I realized, that life just can't be taken for granted ever. Perhaps, I just got accustomed to thinking we all die at 85-100+ after a life time of caring for this age bracket. It was a real reality check. Now, I had to face the reality of life. **There are no guarantees. We must embrace every day. Every opportunity.**

We get to enjoy this day. The last funeral I attended was of a 94 year old man. This man had the opportunity to touch so many lives, that it was fun to hear the tributes at his celebration. As a child my Aunt and Uncle drove me to Duluth to babysit their kids while they went out with friends' years ago. **I sat at this funeral thinking my first experience in Duluth was throwing rocks in Lake Superior from the**

shores of Sandy Lewis's home. Since I was naïve and young, I eagerly ran into the lake for a swim, and I can still remember the chuckle on Sandy's face as he knew my idea of a lake swim was NOT Lake Superior. I think that was my last Lake Superior swim.

Life seems to run Full Circle, as I ended up living in Duluth, marrying a man from Duluth, and having Sandy Lewis's daughter Rebecca Lewis as the architect who designed Diamond Willow Assisted Living. How blessed I was to have first met this man as a young girl. Now at 51, I got to hear endless stories of a kind, patient and giving man that gave to so many.

So many stated how he listened well, generously gave and so silently looked to help in many ways. He was always seeking to learn. A true gift. So, for his memorial, he asked that we give kindness to someone in need, and that is what I will do. He certainly knew how to keep his own values without judging others, and maintained the art of being a gentleman at all times. What an amazing gift. **I can only hope to have half of his qualities as a woman, leader, mother, wife, and citizen.**

Let us all remember to enjoy the day, and to be a gift to someone in need, and to inspire those we can, when we can.

Sincerely,

Natalie Zeleznikar, CEO