



# THE VISIONEER

*A Project Update for Our New Vision Campaign Partners  
Summer 2015*

## Mutual Learning and Support; A Willow Ridge Story

The Spring 2015 issue of *The Visioneer* featured an article about Phil Kingsley and the benefits he received from his speech generation computer. Phil had a diagnoses of ALS or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. ALS, known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. Phil entered Frieda House in December of 2014. He passed away at Willow Ridge on May 22, 2015.

Phil and his wife, Judy, worked closely with the ALS Association to learn about the disease and discover ways to keep Phil active and involved with the hobbies and activities he enjoyed. The speech-generating computer was one of those ways. Phil was given the nickname "Fast-Talker Kingsley," as he patiently typed his words by winking at the computer screen.

Following his death, several of Phil's caregivers decided to support the ALS Association in his honor. They held a bake-sale on July 18 and raised nearly \$300 for the ALS Association. They, and members of Phil's family, are also participating in the *Walk to Defeat ALS* in Columbus on September 27th under the team name Fast-Talker Kingsley. You can find out more information about the walk at [alsohio.org](http://alsohio.org).

At a memorial service held for Phil at Willow Ridge, there was much appreciation expressed by both family members and staff. Phil's illness created challenges that stretched Phil's caregivers in many ways. As retired college professors, both Phil and Judy were able to continue their vocation, educating the staff about ALS and Phil's needs. And the staff were able to share their expertise and experience with Phil and Judy. This mutual relationship of teaching and learning represents the Green House® core value of "real home." Just as in a home, parents, children, extended family members and friends share their experiences and expertise as they learn from one another. This mutual learning also takes place at Willow Ridge.



MHCO is committed to providing health education to the community. In a partnership with Northwest Physical Therapy and the Parkinson's Foundation, MHCO is offering *Delay the Disease* for those with Parkinson's Disease and their caregivers.

## Question of the month?

*Is the Green House® model catching on?*

The first Green House homes in the US were opened in 2004. Today there are more than 330 homes in 28 states open or under development. MHCO receives regular inquiries regarding how Willow Ridge is working for us. We have given several tours to others interested in learning more about the model. Our staff serve on panels, present at webinars and provide regular feedback to the national Green House organization.

"Yes!" The model is catching on!

## Meaningful Life

One of the three core values of the Green House® model is “meaningful life.” Meaningful life is a core value because it is at the center of who we are as individuals. Sometimes the activities and values that give us meaning change over time. Often they remain the same.

One of the goals of the Shahbazim and other care-team members is to discover what provides meaning for each of the elders living at Willow Ridge. The following words were shared by a Shahbaz during the memorial service of one of the elders who recently passed away.

*When Frieda (not her real name) would eat at the supper table she was always mindful that there was enough food for everyone before she would begin eating. When she was able she always wanted to help with daily chores; laundry, wiping the table off, even doing dishes. From time to time she would help us pick out recipes, most of which were pie recipes which seemed to be her favorite to make.*

*You could see the love and compassion she had for family, and for others as well. Frieda did not like to set still. She liked to stay moving. She needed to feel like she was doing something to be useful. Even folding a few towels would make her smile.*

At the first Green House orientation I attended in Michigan I was asked, “What one thing would you not want to give up if you could no longer live independently.” The question not only made me think of my own values and lifestyle, it reinforced the understanding that each person has their own unique answer to this question. “Meaningful life” takes this reality seriously and we seek to honor this value for those living at Willow Ridge.

Thank you for the part you played in making Willow Ridge a place where “meaningful life” continues. -Doug Luginbill

*We did the best we could  
with what we knew.*

*And when we knew better,  
we did better.*

*-Maya Angelou*

Local artist, Anita Lehman, recently displayed a series of her art pieces on the third floor of Mennonite Memorial Home. In describing her work she states,

*These works attempt to  
address the changing  
worlds of those living  
through cognitive loss  
and the changing  
worlds of their families  
and friends.*

About the picture on the bottom left she asks,

*If we were raised on the grid...  
how will we find our way  
when the markers change?*

About the second pictures she reflects,

*Notes are muddied and fading,  
can the song still be found?*

