

Letters from Home

for the friends of Gianna Homes

SPRING/SUMMER 2015

Serving our community since 1999

HONORING LAURINA:

A MEMORIAL DAY STORY OF ONE VETERAN

Written by her nephews, Frank and Jerry Reiff



Laurina enjoying a January thaw in the neighborhood near Gladys' Place.



Ever the artist, Laurina took over the pumpkin carving at Gladys' Place and thought to use the insides as "hair."



Like her brother, Laurina learned Hawaiian guitar back on the farm.



very active with the Minnesota chapter of WAC veterans until it closed. She was likely one of the oldest WAC veterans in the United States. Laurina was proud of her WAC service and still had her uniform in the small chest in her bedroom at Gladys' Place.

After the war, Laurina worked as a civilian in Germany for about five years. She very much enjoyed her time in post-war Germany and revisited Europe with her sister Tillie years later. Laurina referred to that time as the best she would ever have in life.

Laurina returned from Germany in 1953 at age 41. She started classes at the University of Minnesota. This was unusual for reasons of both age and gender. At the time, few women attended college. Society expected them to marry and have children. Laurina was ahead of her time. She was the only member of her immediate family to attend or graduate from college. She spent her career doing laboratory work, mostly from the state of Minnesota.

Laurina also traveled to Russia and China by herself in the middle of the Cold War. Russia and China were enemies of the United States and travel to those countries was unusual for anyone, let alone a single female. It would be a bit like traveling to North Korea today.



Headed to work, lunch in hand, in 1942

By 1931, Laurina's sister, Tillie, had married and was living on a farm nearby. Laurina worked for Tillie and her husband, Hank, until 1935. In Laurina's words from the family history she compiled and wrote: *"I worked for Tillie and Hank until 1935 and then at various other farm places until I worked for Joseph Altman in St. George. He was an insurance man. I did housekeeping, office work, garden work there and also took care of his chickens."*

While living in New Ulm, Laurina learned to fly with Ray Lochner. When World War II broke out, she borrowed money from Irene to learn aircraft building. She moved to California to work for Consolidated Aircraft Corporation. A year later, Laurina joined the US Army. She served from June 1, 1943, to December 26, 1946. At the time, female members of the army were called WACs, short for Women's Army Corps. Today, there are chapters of WAC veterans throughout the United States, though many chapters, including Minnesota's, have closed as members pass away. Laurina was

Honoring Laurina,
continued on page 7

Mission statement
Providing memory care with a
loving kindness that respects
the dignity of each resident.
Welcome Home!

Gianna Homes' Board of Directors

Officers:

Anne Marie Hansen
Patricia Henjum
Terrence Kopp
David Orlady

Advisory Board Members:

Jayna Locke
Paul R. Mooty

Our Wish List!

Follow the links below to see items we need for residents at both homes. Ideas include:

- Garden flowers
- Activity materials
- Piano tuning
- Garden tools
- Silly hats
- Picture books

Wish Lists can be found on amazon.com. Click "Find a Wish List or Registry" then type "Gianna Homes" or "Gladys' Home" in the search bar.

amazon.com



Gianna Homes



Gladys' Home

Letter from the Board - Paul Mooty

It was in the fall of 2007 when it became clear that my family had to find a place to care for my dad. My mother, Sally, and my sister, Mary, and I began exploring what options were available. We visited a number of facilities and were having a very hard time seeing Dad in any of them. By good fortune, I happened to know a fellow Rotarian involved with the Alzheimer's Association.

I discussed our situation with her and inquired as to the best possible place to care for my dad. The names she gave me was Gianna Homes and Anne Marie Hansen. I have never in my life been given a better recommendation than one my fellow Rotarian gave me that day. I will never forget my initial visit to Gianna Homes and meeting Anne Marie. As difficult as it was to think of moving Dad from home, our visit to Gianna Homes and meeting Anne Marie was a gift from heaven. The love and attention given to each and every resident was so evident, and we knew Dad would be in best place possible.

My dad lived at Gianna Homes for just over 4 years. He could not have received better care and love than he did there, and Gianna Homes' care and love extended to our entire family. It is not just the resident who is loved and cared for, but the entire family. As a family, we could not be more grateful for each and every member of the Gianna Homes staff. They are all angels, always greeting us with a smile and treating my dad with the greatest dignity and love possible. I am not sure it is possible for any of them to know what they meant to my dad and our family or for us to properly thank them. Anne Marie and her team have given so much to so many families. Gianna Homes' mission is to serve those with memory care needs and their families, and those served are truly blessed by this special group of people. Though my dad passed away in 2012, our family will always support Gianna Homes in continuing to expand its mission and good works in the community.

Thank you to all who have supported Gianna Homes and its mission with your financial donations and by volunteering your time. I encourage all of you to continue your support and to spread the good word about Gianna Homes. Your resources could not be more wisely invested.



Paul Mooty
Gianna Homes Board Member

Mark your calendars

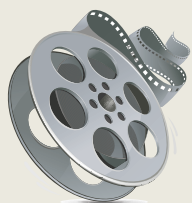
Annual Gianna Homes Gala Celebrating 16 years

Friday, November 6 at the Metropolitan Ballroom

5:30 p.m. Cocktail reception
6:30 p.m. Doors open
to the main club room

- Featuring the delicious foods of D'amico catering
- The Sevilles will provide swinging live music
- Live and Silent Auction and a Fund-a-Need





AT THE MOVIES: "STILL ALICE" REVIEW

by Claire M Klein, Program Director

On a cold Friday night in February, the Gianna Homes management team saw the movie *Still Alice*. Based on the novel by Lisa Genova, the film portrays the journey of a Columbia University linguistics professor, Alice Howard, after she is diagnosed with young-onset Alzheimer's disease. She struggles to redefine her identity that had been strongly connected to her work and intellect, as well as maintain the bonds with her family. Academy Award-winning actress Julianne Moore stunningly depicts the emotional roller coaster of receiving this diagnosis. Equally moving were the performances by each of the actors playing Alice's family: Alec Baldwin as her husband, and Kristen Stewart, Kate Bosworth, and Hunter Parrish as her children. As in real life, each family member's reaction to the news and how they handled the situation was different, ranging from curiosity and horror to pragmatism and distance. I was also struck by the small, simple gestures and expressions Moore gave Alice as her disease progressed, particularly a scene when she snuggled in to her husband's shoulder as they ordered ice cream, a sign of the love and affection that people with Alzheimer's disease often seek. In an address to the Alzheimer's Association, Alice traces the words with a highlighter to keep her place, "I am not suffering. I'm struggling. Struggling to be a part of things. To stay connected to who I once was. So 'live in the moment,' I tell myself. It's all I really can do. Live in the moment." This eloquent reminder of the people behind the disease, who have come so far before even getting to Gianna Homes, brought tears to my eyes. Lots of tears. I reflect on all the residents I have been privileged to serve as well as their families and the punch-in-the-gut feeling they must have felt realizing the rest of their lives will not be going the way they had planned. I am, more than ever, honored to "live in the moment" with each of them.



A teary eyed but still smiling management team (especially Claire!) after seeing *Still Alice*.

"Bring tissues and a good friend; while tough to watch, it's a beautiful story of love and family."
- Emily, RN

"Julianne Moore did a beautiful job of portraying the losses, the joys, and the challenges of young-onset Alzheimer's. Watching the movie, I saw the many faces and stories of those I've been honored to care for these past many years. The real suffering is heartbreaking to watch, and I think this movie shows this to the world."
- Anne Marie, CEO/ Founder

"It was very moving and touching."
- Denise, Home Director



Our very own Alice at Gianna Homes, celebrating her birthday with her daughter.

"Honey, I couldn't be better off."
-Alice, a Gianna Homes resident



THANK YOU Providence Academy baseball team for generously donating part of your proceeds from your fundraiser at Dobos Café on Sunday, April 19, to Gladys' Place. We so appreciate your thoughtfulness!

A SEASON OF GROWTH AND LEARNING: CONTINUING EDUCATION AT GIANNA HOMES

Education and continued learning has been on our minds this spring at Gianna Homes. From management to day-to-day staff, we have each grown, been inspired, and connected with new data in the past few months.

Each year, caregivers who work with people with Alzheimer's and other dementias are required to earn at least two hours of training in dementia. Each year, Gianna Homes has gone above and beyond that figure to ensure our staff members are competent and confident when working with residents.

Management staff, including Gianna Homes founder and CEO Anne Marie Hansen, Director of Nursing Sharann Zembycki, Home Director Denise Budde, and Program Director Claire Klein attended the LeadingAge conference. Each attended breakout sessions specific to their job duties, but they were all inspired by the keynote speaker, Dr. J Bryan Sexton. He spoke on preventing burnout and presented the idea of "keeping the positive light switch on" for other people in our lives so we can all maintain a positive energy. He also shared research out of Duke University on "Three Good Things." This is the practice of naming three good things that happened in the day and the positive feelings these events brought up before going to bed. His dynamic and humorous address put a smile on the management team for the remainder of the day.

Gladys' Place and Gianna Homes home coordinators EJ McKonnen, Alice Atem, and long-time nursing assistant Emily Badio-Meh joined the management team at the Alzheimer's Association conference, the Meeting of the Minds. This conference included sessions for professional caregivers, family members, and those living with the disease. The team came away with new ideas as well as many new connections in the community thanks to their exhibit booth.

The entire Gianna Homes staff participated in the annual Gianna Homes Education Day in April. The day included presentations from both management staff and guest speakers on a range of topics to expand our knowledge



The whole team at the Meeting of the Minds in front of the Gianna Homes booth.



Helen, a Gianna Homes CNA, works on a project to learn about the use of essential oils at the staff Education Day.



Claire presented to her music therapy colleagues at the Great Lakes Regional music therapy conference hosted in Minneapolis.

and skill set as we work with our residents. The day included information on the use of essential oils, kindness and empathy, hospice care, and the latest dementia facts and figures.



In addition to learning new things, program director Claire Klein also gave her own presentation on music therapy techniques and approaches for those with dementia for the University of Minnesota graduate medical music therapy class as well as at the Great Lakes Regional American Music Therapy Association conference. This conference included board-certified music therapists from the six-state region near the Great Lakes. The presentation was well-received and Klein spent the remainder of the weekend soaking up new knowledge to bring back to residents.

Gianna Homes has always believed in having a highly educated staff. "Equipping our staff with the knowledge, deeper understanding, and ability to use this to better serve our residents is the key to having nursing aides who feel confident in their ability to meet the residents' ever changing needs" explains Gianna Homes Founder Anne Marie Hansen. We will continue to grow and develop our staff with new knowledge and inspiration!



Claire, Denise, Sharann, and Anne Marie at the LeadingAge Conference.

ART AND AGING:

COMPAS COMMUNITY ARTISTS AT GIANNA HOMES AND GLADYS' PLACE

In February and March, COMPAS, a community arts organization, helped Gianna Homes and Gladys' Place host two artists as part of their Artful Aging program. This program provides artists in many art forms to help older adults explore creative expression in meaningful ways. Their artists are highly trained and skilled in working with older people, from independent individuals to people with limited abilities. Pat Samples, the Artful Aging program director, shared, "we're excited at COMPAS to help ignite the creative spark of residents at Gianna Homes and Gladys Place. Research shows that regular participation in professionally led arts learning programs improves the physical, social, and mental health of people in their older years. Cognitive abilities can even show improvement."

Rachel Mortiz, a working poet and writer, visited both homes and led a multi-sensory poetry program focusing on birds. Residents heard bird calls and words about birds by Tennyson and others, saw pictures and nests, held stuffed birds in their hands, and had the opportunity to write their own work. Moritz shared that this lesson plan has proved very rich for prompted call-and-response conversation. In speaking about her work, she explained, "one of my core beliefs is that art matters—to everyone—during our whole life journey. You don't have to be a self-described artist. Music, dance and movement, visual art, story-telling, poetry: It doesn't matter any less to an older adult than to my four-year-old son. Art helps us be present in the moments of our life. Art-making is a way to learn new skills and explore new arenas, at any point in a lifeline. And for older adults with memory loss/dementia, the process of call-and-response poetry recitation is a little like singing; it can awaken the mind and jumpstart the body and spirit."

Gianna Homes residents also experienced the visual art talents of Anne Krocak, a nationally recognized artist, for her contributions to vulnerable populations through watercolors and silk scarf painting. Not only did the residents paint, but they also had time to look at each other's work, make comments, and interact with each other. The particular projects she chose allowed for adaptation to specific resident needs and were engaging on as many levels as possible. She says, "there are very few things in my life that I am more passionate about than bringing high-quality art opportunities to older adults and people with special needs." As a person who has lived through a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis at age 17, she has found the importance of art in her own life. "I found artistic creation helped me deal with the frustration of living with chronic illness. Because of my experiences with art, I deeply believe in the value and many benefits of artistic creation for older adults and their need to continue to express themselves, make choices, and connect with others while having fun and learning new skills."

Indeed, throughout each of these experiences, smiles were shared, laughter was heard, and community was built. Though the creations may not be Monet, each participant benefited from the social interaction, a sense of purpose and wellbeing, triggers of memories and emotions, thinking ahead, movement, planning....the arts provide a whole brain response. We are so thankful for these opportunities for our residents.



Artists Anne Krocak and Dick look over paintings before beginning their own watercolor piece.



Sylvester, a Gianna Homes resident, painted a scene with the help of COMPAS artist Anne Krocak.



Alice, a resident at Gianna Homes, displays her bird collection while engaging with poet Rachel Moritz.

OUR POEM!

The birds that eat the seeds
live in the trees

That's far-fetched!
I bet!

Cock-a-doodle-doo!
The sun's out today
and the birds are out, too.

Who gets all the seeds?
Do they just scatter them around?

That's a new kind of bird.
No place to land!

I'd fly over the north,
the trees and the lakes,
that would be great.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: YOUNG CHAMPIONS

alzheimer's association®

Minnesota-North Dakota Chapter



Galen leads the residents at Gianna Homes in a game of Bingo!

Gianna Homes and Gladys' Place has been blessed with the presence and participation of the Young Champions group of the Alzheimer's Association. Steph Gefroh and Galen Sjostrom come regularly to visit our residents, but here they are in their own words in conversation with volunteer coordinator, Claire Klein!

Tell us about the Young Champions group:

Steph - The Young Champions are a group of young professionals who are dedicated to changing the face of Alzheimer's disease. Most, if not all of us, have been affected by this disease in some way. We do various activities throughout the year geared towards advocating, educating, and volunteering. We are all driven to find a cure for this disease. I currently serve as the Fundraising Chair for the Executive Board and I've loved every minute of it so far! This group has become one big support group for me and I couldn't be more grateful for that.

How did the Young Champions decide to volunteer at Gianna Homes?

Galen - Through personal connections. One of our Advocacy Committee members had a close relative living at one of the Gianna homes in the past, and thanks to that Young Champion's high praise for Gianna Homes, we felt very comfortable seeking it out as a volunteer destination for our members.

What do you do when you volunteer?

Steph - When I volunteer at Gladys' Place, I visit with all of the residents. Sometimes, we play catch with a balloon or a beach ball.

Other days, I go on adventures with [a resident] to find whatever he's looking for. I also help Julie with dinner when I'm there.



Julie and Steph having dinner at Gladys' Place.

Galen - Most frequently I play music on my saxophone. Currently, I'm working on finding a more indoor-friendly instrument and building out a song list more familiar to the residents. I also like to read aloud to them. Most recently,

I've read one of my favorite classics, the beautifully-illustrated version of *Wind in the Willows*. I've played bingo with the residents in the past, and am looking forward to exploring other games and puzzles they enjoy.

What inspires you to volunteer at Gianna Homes and Gladys' Place?

Galen - When I was young, my father's side of the family lost their father, Grandpa Bob, to Alzheimer's, and only a few years ago my mother's family had to say goodbye to Grandma Loretto for the same reason. During both those times (and also during my last few years as a Young Champion), I came to appreciate just how much of a difference community, family, and friendship can mean to sufferers of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. Aside from my involvement with the Young Champions' education and advocacy activities, I also wanted to honor my grandma's and grandpa's memories by trying to make what small differences I can to individuals suffering from the disease today.

Steph - My mother was diagnosed with young-onset Alzheimer's at the young age of 52. Seeing what this disease has done to her has changed my outlook on life. Ever since her diagnosis, I've devoted much of my time to advocating for the disease, participating in fundraisers and volunteering at various events as well as at Gladys' Place. I love volunteering at Gladys' Place. The employees are great and the residents are so much fun to be around. If the day ever comes when we need to place my mother in a home, I hope we'll be fortunate enough to find one just like Gladys' Place.

We at both homes are so grateful for Steph and Galen's presence in our homes. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and loving care are a great gift to our residents and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the Young Champions.



Galen struts his stuff as a Young Champions volunteer at the Walk to End Alzheimer's last fall.

CAREGIVER CORNER

In April, Gianna Homes music therapist Claire Klein led the Lewy Body Dementia Support Group in a songwriting exercise to frame a discussion about the importance of self care. According to a 2014 report from the Alzheimer's Association, 60% of family caregivers rate emotional stress as high or very high. Many go on to experience their own health issues, including anxiety, depression, memory problems, phobias, mood swings, and feelings of isolation. Taking time for oneself and getting the support one needs is essential for maintaining health and relationships.

Did you know Claire has published on this songwriting method? Check it out!

Klein, C., & Silverman, M. J. (2012). With love from me to me: Using songwriting to teach coping skills to caregivers of those with Alzheimer's and other dementias. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 7(2), 153-164.

WITH LOVE FROM ME TO ME

(to the tune of "With Love from Me to You" by the Beatles)

Written by the members of the Gianna Homes Lewy Body Dementia Support Group

Da da da da da dum dum da
Da da da da da dum dum da

If the demands are impossible
If she won't get out of the chair
Just take deep breaths and leave it to God
You can't really do anymore.

Take time to read a book
Or get out with your friends for lunch
Just give your thanks for the things
that you've got
This is for better or for worse.

I got family and grandkids
To watch them grow and play
I got friends and neighbors who drop in
And see me day to day. Ooh!

I will make a list of things to do
And make sure they all get done.
As this all goes on, I find what works for me
And I can still have fun!

HONORING LAURINA, *continued from page 1*

Before the town became surrounded by the city, Laurina settled in Eden Prairie on a lot with five acres. She kept four pet sheep on her property. Eventually, after much pressure from developers, she moved to Chanhassen. It was her last address before Gladys' Place. Because she hated wasting anything, Laurina had her home in Eden Prairie moved to a new foundation and sold.

Laurina enjoyed painting and fine art and took drawing classes. She kept many of her drawings in her closet. She was an avid gardener and learned to make wine, which she shared with her neighbors in Chanhassen, the Kinkles. She also saved and invested intelligently throughout her life. This habit has served her well throughout her life.

Gladys' Place was Laurina's home for her final six months. There, she enjoyed paging through her scrapbooks and looking at old photographs of her army days. Her spunk and tenacity shone through and inspired us.

Gianna Homes is honored to be a part of the lives of all the veterans who have lived out their last years with us.



Laurina in uniform with her brother Urban and mother Susan

Excerpts and quotes from Laurina's diary at age 18 in 1931.

Compiled by her nephew, Frank Reiff

Saturday, April 4 "One good thing about it is that I don't feel the depression - In fact, I am more than broke - I'm in debt - I owe Irene one dollar and I've got about 8 cents on hand. But the world has lots of money and all you have to do is get some." - reflecting on the state of the Depression

Sunday, April 5 (Easter) "My Easter happiness doesn't seem complete today. I guess I didn't do enough penance during Lent."

Saturday, April 11 "Regarding 'fiddle' music: I don't see how anyone can like such music. I don't think there is much music to it. It's principally a drumming or keeping time. The accompaniment is louder than the melody. Might as well listen to a drum." - speaking of a music that her father Matt loved

Friday, April 17 "Sister Cordelia called me out of church... she talked to me for a while about becoming a nun. I told her among other things that I thought the convent was not the place for me."



SAVE THE DATE SAVE THE DATE SAVE THE DATE SAVE THE DATE SAVE THE DATE

Volunteers

- New volunteer orientations are given throughout the year and as needed. Contact claire@giannahomes.org for more information!

Lewy Body Dementia Support Group

- **Second Monday of the month**, noon – 2:00pm.
A light lunch is always served.

All Gianna Friends

- **Tuesday, May 19**, 9:30am – Garden planting at Gianna Homes
- **Friday, May 22**, 9:30am – Garden planting at Gladys' Place
- **Saturday, September 26** – Walking the Walk to End Alzheimer's – Join our team or make a donation!
- **Friday, November 6** – Gianna Homes "Sweet 16" Gala

Resident activities are always variable and subject to change in the moment according to residents' needs.

Gianna Homes – Sursum Corda

- **Saturday, May 16** – COMPAS art project with Anne, 3:15pm
- **Monday, May 25** – Memorial Day celebration, 2:00pm
- **Saturday, July 4** – Picnic, noon and fireworks, 4:00pm
- **Saturday, July 11** – COMPAS art project with Anne, 3:15pm
- **Tuesday, July 14** – Mneme therapy painting with Suzy, 10:00am
- **Saturday, August 1** – Jim Shaw piano performance, 10:30am
- **Monday, September 7** – Labor Day reminiscing, 2:00pm
- Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month – **Sing along with Bob and Linda**
- Every third Tuesday of the month – **Crafts with Sonja**
- Every first and fourth Thursday of the month – **Communion service with Deacon Francis**, 10:30 am
- Every second Thursday of the month – **Communion service with Pastor Marge**, 10:45am
- Every Friday – **Activities with the Phillips**, 4:00pm

Gladys' Place

- **Saturday, May 16** – COMPAS art project with Anne, 1:30pm
- **Monday, May 25** – Memorial Day celebration, 2:00pm
- **Saturday, July 4** – Picnic, noon and fireworks, 4:00pm
- **Tuesday, July 14** – Mneme therapy painting with Suzy, 1:00pm
- **Saturday, August 8** – Jim Shaw piano performance, 10:30am
- **Monday, September 7** – Labor Day reminiscing, 2:00pm
- Every Sunday – **Von Dohlen piano performance**, 2:00pm
- Every second Thursday of the month – **Communion service with Pastor Marge**, 10:00am

