

# LETTERS FROM HOME

FOR THE FRIENDS OF GIANNA HOMES

Serving our community since 1999

## Born to Be Wild:

Julie's story from Harleys to Gladys' Place

My wife Julie was born and raised in Columbia Heights, Minnesota. She was the youngest of five children, with two brothers and two sisters. She graduated high school in Columbia Heights and attended the University of Minnesota.

I first met Julie in the summer of 1992 while boating with mutual friends on Lake Minnetonka. We were an instant match! Her wit, humor, and outstandingly vibrant personality was like no other.

In early 1993, my employer Northwest Airlines offered me a pilot exchange. It gave me the opportunity to fly for the Dutch airline KLM. Julie and I decided to accept the two-year offer and moved to a beautiful canal house in The Netherlands in the city of Haarlem.

Julie traveled with me frequently on the worldwide routes I flew with KLM. We spent two fantastic years visiting the fabulous cities of the world on every continent. When I wasn't flying, Julie and I would jump in our little car and drive all over Europe.

Julie and I got engaged to be married while on a weeklong layover in Hong Kong. We had so much fun ring hunting in the Hong Kong diamond district and celebrating with the KLM crew. We were married at the Calhoun Beach Club in Minneapolis in June 1994. I am so thankful that Julie and I had

this wonderful opportunity to explore the world together. We met many wonderful life-long friends along the way.

Upon return we moved back to the Lake Minnetonka area. Julie picked up her career in commercial real estate and private equity investments. Julie and I continued our fun with frequent and impromptu travel, we enjoyed riding our motorcycles together and our wonderful home life with our families and terrific friends. Julie also continued her frequent painting and love of art.

In mid-2007 I began to notice lapses in Julie's memory. She was just 49 years old. In early 2008 she was unable to continue her employment. She was diagnosed with young onset Alzheimer's disease shortly thereafter. With the help of my wonderful parents, Betty and Duane Walton, we were able to care for Julie at our home for five years.

In early 2013 it became clear that Julie needed more care than what we could provide at home. While learning about and searching for memory care, it didn't take long for Gianna Homes to bubble to the top as the best of the best. I met with Anne Marie on several occasions prior to the opening of Gladys' Place. She could not have been more helpful. Thankfully the stars aligned, and we were able to move Julie into Gladys' Place as the very first resident.

It has been truly difficult to watch this disease progress in this fantastically fun and vivacious girl. I'm very thankful to my wonderful parents and fantastic friends who continue to regularly visit Julie at Gladys' Place. I am constantly grateful for the excellent care Julie receives from all of the staff in the Gianna organization. Thank You!



*Sweet Julie*



*Julie takes a ride in the front seat of the airplane!*

Brent Walton



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## Letter from the Board

### Friends of Gianna-

It's hard to believe we are already turning the corner into another season. The older I get, the quicker the years seem to speed by. The fast pace barely allows one to breathe in the newness of another season before the next one is upon us. I encourage you to stop and breathe in the birth of spring. It truly can make the difference in your daily routine and lighten your step, if not bring on a new perspective.

Mark your calendar for our gala coming up on November 4! This year we have a totally different venue - the brand new U.S. Bank Stadium and future home of the Vikings. I am delighted to have Cory Hepola back as our master of ceremonies, our auctioneer Frank Sullivan who livens up the whole event, and a Minnesota-grown hockey player, Jordan Leopold, who played for the Gophers and Minnesota Wild, will be our keynote speaker.

Having suffered more than eight concussions throughout his career, he knows firsthand the risks of the game he loves and the long-term impact on his brain. Visit our website for more details, unique sponsorship opportunities, and ongoing updates.

This year's gala will explore concussions, dementia, and long-term care. If you follow the news you have likely seen

coverage of the NFL and players who suffer concussions and CTE. If you haven't heard much about this, follow Gianna Homes over the next weeks and months on Facebook and our blog as we bring you current statistics and research on how concussions (even in youth sports) have a direct link to dementia. Those of you who have a loved one currently or have lost a loved one to some type of memory loss know all too well that such a diagnosis leads to care either at home by yourself or a home care agency and finally placement in a long term care center. You alone understand the impact this has on family dynamics and finances. How do we as a community navigate this? What steps can we take today to prevent concussions and their possible effects?

Last year we honored Steve and Mary Mattson at the gala and were all moved by Steve's personal and emotional invitation to each of us to love and support those in our own families and neighborhoods who are in need. We announced the new Steve and Mary Mattson Fund that provides financial aid to residents to help pay for their care. The gala was to be Steve's last outing. He died a few short weeks later. This year our gala will again raise money for the Steve and Mary Mattson Fund to continue the legacy Steve so generously lived out each day of his life.

On a personal note, I want to thank so many of you who make the work we do in serving our residents here at Gianna Homes possible by either your volunteerism, financial support or prayers. Together we can do beautiful things every day and for that I am truly grateful.

Warmest regards and spring blessings to you and yours!

Anne Marie



90% of most diagnosed concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness.



# A Picture Says a Thousand Words: Storytelling with People with Dementia

Humans are storied creatures. We gather around the campfire and scare each other with ghastly tales. At holidays, we reminisce and repeat the family fables. Stories help us connect with each other.

This remains true for those with dementia. Storytelling is a rich way to engage our residents and helps create social connections, keep their cognitive abilities fresh, promote verbalizations and allow for expressions of emotion and creativity. While dementia can limit these abilities, storytelling provides a safe environment for residents to experiment and play.

Based on the *TimeSlips* program developed by Anne Davis Basting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, residents are shown a photograph or picture – usually something dynamic or funny. The staff then ask questions like “What do you see?” or “Tell me what’s happening here.” If the resident needs more prompting, other open-ended questions are asked to develop the scene.

Here are examples from our fabulous resident storytellers based on the picture to the right!

- “I remember that one. That was beautiful. They’re sliding on a pillow. This is his little brother. Those are about 5 and 10 years old. Just great. Very wholesome. That’s probably 6 inches of snow — very common. I went sliding at Powderhorn Park. We did that many times. It was very nice. I went with the same person every time. I’m not positive but there are two to three boys — young kids, but I don’t remember all their names. I can’t tell you what kind of a sled, but I remember all of us going many times for maybe three to five years. Very exciting.”
- “I don’t even know these kids. They’re skiing. I did that but was never good at it. I just went because the other kids were, but never wanted to keep at it. I did a lot of things that some people never did. I made contact with parents in Europe whose kids were over here. We made connections and I went on short flights to Germany and the Ukraine and parts of Russia — just a quick visit and stayed for lunch and business. My mother was born in the Ukraine and I think could speak more than one language — Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and some other “-anians.” I was in Europe three weeks at the most for Christmas. I learned a lot of things from them and they learned a lot of things from me. They asked me a million questions! The Polish, Slavic, Ukrainian, and other people know each other and will let you stay the night. I spoke



*Ukrainian at home. My visits were never too long but my father would get a job so we’d stay a little longer. Then we’d go to another town. He did everything! At Christmastime, people would hire him — he was a jack-of-all-trades. He used to even make his tools. You learn a lot of languages. We were almost kids — a little bigger than kids. We would play in the snow and shovel. Believe it — especially in Europe. Buffalo, New York, gets about the same as you do here but you get it first and then the wind blows it to Buffalo. We lived off of Lake Erie. There was no time for beaches or swimming. My sisters were twins and we were all treated as a trio. Everybody was poor but everybody shared. It was like an exchange between neighbors.”*

- “Oh yes! I’ve been sledding in the backyard. We had a good size hill not too far from the house. No dangerous hill. My son was always skiing or sledding or something like that. Out on the hills behind the house. Many fun memories.”
- “I like to play in the snow, yeah! That’s for sure!”
- “Are these kids permanent families or just bystanders? I say that’s a real fun family. I would say this is a good one. I would do that but not right now. There’s not a lot of this in Minneapolis. There’s the blah. Our three ads and inventory. Very much large families involved. I did not have a large family — just my wife and I for 25 years then 10 years with another one. Ten beautiful years. I think this is very good. The use of red is not going down yet. Even with heavy advertising. Four pages of all red. That’s something that will come out really big this year. I’m charmed by that. There was a path that led up the hills.”

To learn more about *TimeSlips*, visit [www.timeslips.org](http://www.timeslips.org).

# Sharing the Passion of Reading: Volunteering at Gianna Homes

By Maddy Morrison

When it came to volunteering, my mom frequently told me to “share my passions.” I was never quite sure what she meant. One day, as I sat in the kitchen doing homework, a story came on the news about how reading can positively affect people with Alzheimer’s. I absolutely love reading, so hearing this was like an epiphany. I researched “reading” and “Alzheimer’s” and found a study from the University of Liverpool called “A Literature Based Intervention for Older People Living with Dementia.” It explained how read-aloud activities significantly benefit people living with Alzheimer’s. With a little more research, I found Gianna Homes. This is when my whole journey started.

I began visiting for an hour on Sundays, reading children’s books. I quickly realized reading was not the only reason I wanted to be there. The residents yearn for a place where they feel secure, and I wanted to help them feel that. Reading brings peace to the residents, and I like to believe it reminds them of their childhood. There is a special comfort in reading. Sometimes reading eases everyone’s nerves, even the family members of the residents. I cherish these moments where I see everyone at peace and content.

I am so grateful for all of the residents. I have loved getting to know them over the past year. I like hearing their stories, and getting to know each of their personalities. I keep coming back because all of the residents have a special place in my heart. The residents have taught me so much, from patience to love. My grandparents all live in Rhode Island, so I feel as if the residents are almost a second family to me.

The residents do not know who I am, but this is not important. I can tell they know I am a safe person to be around when they hold my hand or smile at me. Nothing is more gratifying. I do not want remembrance; I want to make them feel loved, respected, welcome, and normal. I want them to know they are not alone.



*Maddy shares a book with Sylvester.*



**Maddy** has been volunteering at Gianna Homes since December 2014. She is a senior at Wayzata High School with plans to attend Wheaton College next year. Though she has not decided on a major, she is now considering a focus in neuroscience or a business degree that provides skills to manage healthcare or nonprofit organizations because of her experience at Gianna Homes.

What started as a small idea has blossomed into something that has changed my life forever. Inspired by my work with Gianna Homes, I am now considering a major in healthcare or neuroscience. Volunteering at Gianna Homes is one of the best experiences I have had in my lifetime. I am forever grateful for all of the work and love put into Gianna and Gladys’ Place. Everyone does such a wonderful job, and I am so incredibly proud to be a part of an organization so beautiful. I thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for all they do. No matter what, volunteering with Alzheimer’s patients is a passion I will continue to share. I believe that is what the residents would want.



*Not only does Maddy help with the reading program, she leads other engaging activities with the residents as well.*





The management team at the Meeting of the Minds.



Our handouts were a hit!

## Meeting of the Minds

The Gianna Homes management team recently spent the day at the Meeting of the Minds Dementia Conference at the RiverCentre in St. Paul. For years, the Mayo Clinic and Alzheimer's Association have organized this annual conference to bring together those living with Alzheimer's and other types of dementia and professionals in the field.

At this year's conference, Gianna Homes met many new contacts at their exhibit booth. We handed out lightbulbs full of sunflower seeds with the message "Gianna Homes: Memory care that BRIGHTENS every moment!" They were a hit!

The management team attended sessions throughout the day to learn more about current research and approaches to bring back to Gianna. It was a great day of learning and connecting!

## Caregiver Corner

Everyone who has been on the journey with a loved one with Alzheimer's knows that it cannot be done alone. It is essential to have a network of support for yourself that cares for you as you give care to others. We call these supporters Trusted Friends.

How do you know who can be a Trusted Friend? Here is a list of traits that describe a true partner in your caregiving journey:

- Does not shock easily, but accepts feelings for what they are – feelings
- Is not embarrassed by tears
- Does not give unwanted advice
- Is warm, affectionate, and compassionate
- Reminds the person of their strengths that may be forgotten
- Recognizes growth and change
- Treats each person like an individual who can make decisions
- Trusts in a person's ability to survive difficult times
- Acknowledges and shares their own humanity
- Is not afraid to question you directly concerning feelings and loss
- Respects your courage and self-determination
- Understands that grief is not a disease and is unique to each person
- Has been through troublesome times and shares this appropriately
- Tries to listen and understand what feelings mean to you, even though it may be uncomfortable or different for him or her
- Tells you honestly when he or she is unable to be with you
- Is faithful to commitments and promise
- Avoids clichés
- Does not wait to be contacted but contacts you
- Never says "I know just how you feel"
- Offers practical help without being asked

We hope you build yourself a strong and sturdy support system!

## Wish Lists

for Gianna and Gladys

On Amazon, search for "Gianna Homes" or "Gladys' Place" to find our wish lists of activity supplies for each home!

**amazon.com**

Gianna Homes



Gladys' Place





*An adorable birthday cake thanks to Nothing Bundt Cakes!*

## Thank You!

We want to say THANK YOU to Minnetonka Nothing Bundt Cakes on Ridgedale Drive for generously providing birthday cakes to each of our residents this year! These bundt cakes are delicious and bring a special smile to our residents!



**33%** of all sports concussions happen at practice.

**39%** is the percentage by which cumulative concussions increase catastrophic head injury, leading to permanent neurologic disability.

**1 in 5** high school athletes will sustain a sports concussion during the season.

## Finding Dementia-Friendly Communities

Recently, the Alzheimer's Association has helped communities in Minnesota learn more about how to provide dementia-friendly services to their neighbors. As a caregiver, having community members, emergency responders, clergy, and business owners who know how to address and respond to people with dementia can be a big help!



In the metro area, these neighborhoods have done the work to be Action Communities!

- Anoka
- Centro
- CLUES
- Edina
- Forest Lake
- MN Council of Churches
- North Minneapolis
- Roseville
- St. Louis Park
- St. Paul African American Faith Community
- St. Paul
- St. Paul North East
- Stillwater Area
- Twin Cities Jewish Community

Learn more about their toolkits, trainings, and resources at [actonalz.org](http://actonalz.org)



*Team Gianna!*



*Join Anne Marie and the rest of the team this year!*

## Lace Up Your Shoes for the **Walk to End Alzheimer's!**

Join Team Gianna to raise funds for the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's at Target Field on the morning of Saturday, September 17.

- If you are interested in joining our team, follow the link: [act.alz.org/goto/TeamGianna](http://act.alz.org/goto/TeamGianna)
- Click the yellow "Join Our Team" button on the left hand side.
- Fill out the online form
- Share your story and start fundraising!





# Help with Special Summer Programming!

Your donation can make these engaging opportunities available to our residents!

## Polka Band

Get the residents' toes tapping to authentic German polkas. \$125

## Minnesota Zoomobile

A neighborhood event to visit with our furry friends from the Minnesota Zoo. \$325

## Arboretum

### Membership Pass

Residents enjoy a ride through the gardens at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. \$100

## Mneme Therapy Sessions

One-on-one painting sessions to create masterworks and improve whole brain stimulation. \$125



3,800,000 concussions reported in 2012, double the number reported in 2002.

## Mark Your Calendar!

### Family and Resident Events

- **Monday, May 23** – COMPAS community art program
- **Thursday, May 26** – Mneme therapy painting with Suzy
- **Friday, May 27** – Accordin' to Pete (GH-SC only)
- **Monday, May 30** – Memorial service for veterans
- **Wednesday, June 1** – Zoomobile visit (GH-SC only)
- **Saturday, July 2** – Jim Shaw piano (GH-SC only)
- **Monday, July 4** – Picnic and fireworks
- **Tuesday, July 5** – Polka band! (Gladys' Place only)
- **Thursday, July 28** – Mneme therapy painting with Suzy
- **Monday, August 8** – Accordin' to Pete (Gladys' Place only)
- **Wednesday, August 10** – Polka band! (GH-SC only)
- **Friday, August 12** – Mneme therapy painting with Suzy
- **Friday, August 26** – Zoomobile visit (Gladys' Place only)
- **Tuesdays (GH-SC) and Wednesdays (Gladys' Place)** – Massages with Wendy
- **Communion services** in our chapel throughout the month
- **Hair appointments** with Lang every 6 weeks

### Volunteers

**Volunteer trainings and staff orientations** offered regularly. Contact the office (952-988-0953) for more details.

- **Monday, May 16** – Flower planting at Gianna Homes. Volunteers needed!
- **Tuesday, May 17** – Staff education day

### Lewy Body Dementia Support Group

- **Support group meetings** every second Monday of the month. Light lunch served.



### Reflections from a resident:

"When you are happy, you heal. It affects your whole health: physical and spiritual." — Corky

Gladys' Place



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

## Gala **Save the Date** | Friday, November 4, 2016

Join the Gianna Homes family for our annual gala as we raise monies for the Steve and Mary Mattson Fund and tackle a leading cause of dementia in our community. This year's event will include a plated dinner in the Hyundai Club room at the new U.S. Bank Vikings Stadium with view of the field.

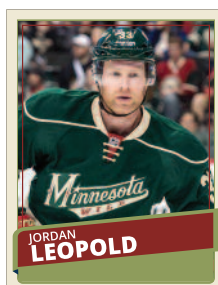
Featuring:



**CORY HEPOLA**  
Our commentator for the evening:  
Cory Hepola,  
KARE11 news anchor



**ARNE FOGEL**  
Halftime entertainment:  
Arne Fogel  
Productions, renowned jazz musician



**JORDAN LEOPOLD**  
Keynote speaker:  
Jordan Leopold, a Minnesota native who sustained more than eight concussions playing in the NHL.



**FRANK SULLIVAN**  
Auctioneer:  
Frank Sullivan, a Gianna Gala team veteran!



**EVENT LOCATION**

**usbank stadium**

For updates,  
visit [www.giannahomes.org](http://www.giannahomes.org) or call 952-443-6100



## Dear Friends,

*With Letters from Home, we hope to share with you, our friends and family, a little bit of what life is like here at Gianna Homes.*

*Each stage of life brings its own changes. At Gianna Homes, we create a place where our residents can feel at home and where they will find care, companionship, and dignity.*

—Anne Marie Hansen, Founder & President