



THE WAVE

The latest news and updates from LifeCircles PACE

Happy Holidays from LifeCircles!



by Luke Reynolds
Executive Director

OUR MISSION:

LifeCircles supports vulnerable individuals and their care partners by providing compassionate, comprehensive, team based care that honors their health care preferences and their desire to remain living in the community.

2021 seemed to fly by very quickly, but in other ways it felt long and challenging. After the devastating pandemic started in 2020, many people had feelings of despair by the end of the year. However, 2021 ushered in a renewed sense of hope when the COVID-19 vaccine was launched. Optimism was in the air as the much-anticipated vaccine was approved for emergency use and made widely available to everyone by the springtime. Unfortunately, the pandemic did not go away and far too many people continue to be infected. I know how difficult this has been and I appreciate your grace and flexibility as we respond to all the changing conditions and guidelines.

The Holiday Season is a highly celebrated and sacred time for many. Regardless of your faith or world view, the days between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day traditionally represent a time to celebrate with family & friends, practice gratitude and reflect on our blessings, surprise loved ones with gifts, enjoy good food, and give to those less fortunate. For many children, the holiday season is an especially magical time, and it's those nostalgic childhood memories that bring us comfort. The COVID-19 pandemic cannot take these memories and traditions away from us. It may have changed how and where we celebrate, but it cannot remove the joy or sense of hope that the season brings.

Let's not forget that the holiday season is not a joyful time for many people. There are feelings of loss, hurt, grief or loneliness that individuals experience this time of year. Please be aware of people you

encounter that need some encouragement and extra support during this season. The simple, kind gesture of a listening ear and a heart-felt acknowledgement of their pain will go a long way. If you are someone who struggles during the holidays, please let us know. You are important to us, and we are here for you.

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As the year winds down, I want to share some changes at LifeCircles. Starting in January, I will no longer be the Executive Director. I have accepted a wonderful position within UMRC & Porter Hills, the parent organization of LifeCircles. This new position will allow me to expand PACE and other home-and-community-based-services to older adults throughout Michigan. In my new role, I will serve on the LifeCircles Board of Directors and continue to advocate for more high-quality programs that help older adults remain living in their own homes.

I have spent the last 10 years with LifeCircles and can honestly say that this is the best team I've ever worked with. There have been so many changes throughout my time here, but one thing has remained consistent... The LifeCircles team works to continually improve, take good care of participants and each other, and never lose sight of our mission. It has been an honor and privilege to support this team, and I am grateful for what we have learned and accomplished together. The truth is, I have worked myself out of a job because this team no longer needs me! Rest assured that the mission and values of LifeCircles will continue to guide the team as the program evolves to serve you in new ways.



A LifeCircles Participant wanted a boyfriend for her 103rd birthday. Luke and some of the team treated her to a bouquet of roses.



Luke breaks ground on the Tanglewood Park - LifeCircles expansion in 2014.

I am excited to announce that Heidi Gras has been appointed the Interim Executive Director. She has been with LifeCircles for over 11 years and is a genuine, ethical, smart, innovative and caring leader and team member. You and our team will be in good hands with Heidi's leadership. I will continue to pray for the LifeCircles team and all of you as we move to the next phase of our journey.

To every participant and family member, thank you for being a source of inspiration to me. I wish you all a happy holiday season and a joyful and healthy 2022!

Sincerely,

Luke Reynolds
Executive Director

Luke: Thank you for sharing your vision and spirit with us!



Taking care of yourself and loved ones through the holidays.

The holidays can be both wonderful and stressful, especially if you are caring for a loved one with a changing brain. There are things you can do to reduce stress and improve those meaningful moments. Check out our tips to help the holidays go as smooth as possible!

Quality over Quantity: You don't have to stay the whole time, or approach holiday gatherings like you've done in the past. Consider structuring your visit to include the most enjoyable moments - the conversations, games, activities you value most - and avoid the strain of staying too long. Consider letting family or friends know you may leave early if your loved one or you need a change of scenery.

Prioritize Traditions: Cookies, decorations, gift wrapping - so many things and so little time! Don't feel pressured to do everything! Pick and choose the most meaningful traditions. Focusing on just the most important traditions can help everyone have more fun!

Honor the Past: The holidays can remind us of loved ones lost, and times that came before. Some of those memories can bring sadness or pain. Find ways of honoring those experiences and loved ones - telling a story, lesson learned, or looking at pictures. Honoring our past can help us appreciate where we are now.

Holiday Blues: Though many people think of joy around the holidays, many also experience more complex emotions. Remember it's okay to not be okay. Nurture yourself, develop reasonable expectations, and focus on what you can control. Reach out to others, including your LifeCircles team!

Tune into your Senses: There can be too much of a good thing! The holidays can be full of lights, sounds, smells - and all of this can easily get overwhelming, especially for people living with brain change. Consider arranging for a quieter location with less stimulation for your loved one to rest. Consider a place to visit with just a few people instead of a larger group.

Holiday Tips Continued:

Setting Healthy Boundaries: Remember it's okay to tune into what you need and set boundaries that make sense for you. It can be helpful to communicate these ahead of time. For example, "we will visit, but need to leave before 3pm" or "Dad will do best to visit when the kids are playing quieter games".

Connecting From a Distance Some of us cannot be together over the holidays, either because of distance or circumstances such as pandemic visitor restrictions. Consider technology to help you connect, or getting creative with window visits with caroling (cell phone speakers can help with volume).

Preparation: Delegate shopping or consider online purchases and gifting experiences/memberships instead of things. Need support with resources? Consider calling 2-1-1 to access local resources and help during the holidays.

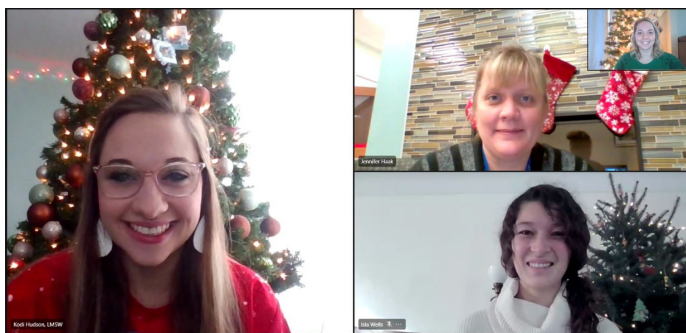
LifeCircles is grateful for the work you do and the sacrifices you make to care for those you love. We hope you find moments of joy this holiday. We encourage you to ask for help when you are not feeling okay.

Want more support for a loved one living with brain chance? Consider participating in our **Caregiver Classes, starting in January 2022**. To learn more reach out to your social worker.

Need more great tips on surviving the holidays?

LifeCircles created a short video full of reassurance and helpful advice **FOR YOU** as we move through the holiday season! You can watch our video by visiting our blog:

LifeCircles-
pace.org/surviving-the-holidays/



Scan the QR code with your phone to watch the video.

The talk of the town!

Did you catch all of the coverage that PACE and LifeCircles has been getting? We've been featured in an online journal about the State of Health in Michigan. A website that covers how to help anyone age well at home featured thoughts from Betsy Gibbs, an Occupational Therapist with LifeCircles. Dr. Alison Ilem, our Director of Behavioral Health, visited with WZZM 13 to discuss ways to support caregivers. PACE programs were also featured in The New York Times, and Time Magazine as great options to help seniors age at home across the nation. Find links to these articles on our website: LifeCircles-PACE.org/events-news/



Little-known Michigan programs provide all-inclusive support for older adults to age at home

SHARE

ESTELLE SLOOTMAKER | THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2021
The PACE model provides comprehensive medical and social services at low or no cost to older adults who live at home.



**SENIORS
MATTER.**

**WZZM
13
abc**



Betsy Gibbs, OTR/L, MS



Dr. Allison Ilem

The New York Times

OPINION
LETTERS

At-Home Care for the Elderly



Your rights are important!

LifeCircles partners with you to provide care and supports that honor your preferences and goals as you age. We are your health home. We respect and appreciate you. As a participant in our program you have certain rights. You received a copy of your Participant Bill of Rights when you enrolled in the program. You can also get another copy from your social worker at any time, or by visiting our website.

LifeCircles-pace.org/current-participant-caregiver-questions/

We are growing!

Do you have family or friends that work in health care? Are they joyful, compassionate and fun? We are looking for skilled and thoughtful individuals to join us on our Holland and Muskegon teams. Tell those you know to visit our website to learn about our openings, and the wonderful benefits we offer our team members!



LifeCircles Participant via Facebook

Celebrating National PACE Month!



Muskegon Team Members



Holland Team Members

In September we celebrated National PACE Month. The original PACE program that started it all celebrated 50 years of service. FIFTY YEARS of helping older adults live life on their own terms, in their own homes and in their own community! Though we couldn't all celebrate in our usual way, we hope that you enjoyed the gift bag we sent home to you! After all - we wouldn't be here if not for you!



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Stay in touch!

LifeCircles PACE



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As a member of the LifeCircles health plan, all services authorized by the team are covered. If you see a provider without prior authorization, you may be fully liable for the costs of these visits with the exception of emergency care.

DID YOU KNOW?

95% of PACE participants are able to live at home with the services PACE provides



Thank you for brightening our days! It is our privilege to care for you.

