

SPRING 2026

SENIOR Living

Kathy's Chronicles

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— Connecting residents, families, employees, and communities. —

Kathy's Chronicles

Where Compassion Takes Wing: Expanding Comfort at Lakewood Care Center

Lakewood Care Center is expanding its end-of-life care offerings with the addition of a new, dedicated comfort suite, made possible through a generous donation to the Lakewood Foundation by Duane and Linda Hendricks, the family of a former resident.

This donation was designated specifically for the end-of-life suite at Lakewood Care Center. With this expansion, the care center will now offer a total of four end-of-life suites designed to provide a peaceful, supportive environment for residents and their loved ones during life's final chapter.

The suites are thoughtfully designed to feel more like home than a clinical setting, offering privacy, comfort, and space for families to be together. Features include calming décor, room for overnight stays, and accommodations that allow loved ones to remain close, fostering meaningful moments and connection during a deeply personal time.

The donation was given in memory of a past resident whose family experienced firsthand the importance of compassionate, dignified end-of-life care. Their gift reflects a desire to ensure other families receive the same level of comfort, respect, and support when it matters most.

At the request of the donor family, each of the four suites will be named after birds in honor of their mother's lifelong love of birds. The names were thoughtfully chosen to reflect themes of comfort, remembrance, and hope:

- Dove Haven: The dove represents comfort and healing, offering reassurance that a loved one is at peace.
- Robin's Nest: Robins are seen as protective spirits and symbols of comfort, especially during difficult times.
- Cardinal Cove: The cardinal symbolizes a loved one visiting or watching over you. "When a cardinal appears, a loved one is near."
- Bluebird Lane: The bluebird symbolizes new beginnings, hope after hardship, emotional renewal, and strong family bonds.

We are deeply grateful to our Foundation and to all who generously support its mission. Your compassion and commitment make a meaningful difference in the lives of our residents and their families, helping us provide comfort, dignity, and peace when it matters most!

With respect and appreciation,
Kathy Dobson, LNHA, LALD, LSW
Vice President of Senior Services



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy Dobson'.

OUR MISSION:
to provide quality, personalized healthcare for a lifetime.

OUR VISION:
to empower health and well-being together.

WE VALUE:
integrity, compassion, accountability, high quality, innovation

Here & There

Emergency Preparedness

Lakewood Health System is committed to providing a work environment that is free from violence, threatening or intimidating conduct. We encourage a work environment free from both verbal and physical violence.

Lakewood has a committee of employees who design and implement preparedness and incident response plans for acts of violence that occur at Lakewood facilities.

All acts of violence must be reported and all occurrences will be investigated by Lakewood's Workplace Violence Prevention Committee. Any findings and action items to be followed up on with an employee are done by department managers.

Violence in healthcare refers to a broad range of behaviors including physical or verbal violence and threats that make employees, visitors, patients, and residents concerned for their personal safety.

Lakewood is committed to providing staff the tools and resources to appropriately deal with these events. Staff are trained on situational awareness, de-escalation, empathy and personal safety techniques. This training is done upon hire and annually thereafter.

Annual security assessments are also completed by the Workplace Violence Prevention Committee to ensure we are taking necessary steps to protect our patients, residents, tenants, visitors and staff.

Foundation Giving: Enhancing Outdoor Spaces for Our Residents

In addition to the wonderful addition of another end-of-life suite (Robin's Nest), the Lakewood Health System Foundation is supporting upgrades to the care center's outdoor areas, creating spaces where residents and their visitors can relax, connect, and enjoy the fresh air.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors—including families, friends, and dedicated Lakewood employees—we are excited to expand and enhance the outdoor experience. Plans are underway to create new, inviting areas at the front entrance as well as in the green space between the end-of-life suites on wings 3 and 4.

These improvements will include shaded areas, additional seating, and thoughtful landscaping, designed to provide comfort, beauty, and tranquility for everyone who visits. Residents, families, and staff alike will soon have more opportunities to enjoy these welcoming spaces.

We're grateful for the support of our Lakewood community and encourage everyone to watch for these enhancements—they're just one more way our Foundation is helping make Lakewood a place of care, comfort, and connection.

If you have an interest in donating to the Lakewood Foundation, visit the Foundation page at lakewoodhealthsystem.com or scan the below QR code with a smartphone or tablet to be taken directly to the online giving form. For more information about the Foundation, please contact David Jeremiason at 218-894-8711.



Here & There, con't

Expanding the Reach of Home-Based Services

We are excited to share that our home-based services department has officially expanded our service area to include portions of the Sebeka and New York Mills communities! This growth follows the recent closure of a neighboring home care agency, and we are honored to assume the care of more than 30 patients who now depend on our team for continued support and high quality services.

This expansion strengthens our ability to bring compassionate, patient-centered care to more individuals across our region. Our team has worked diligently to ensure a smooth transition for incoming patients, and we remain committed to maintaining the exceptional standards of care our communities expect.

We look forward to building on this momentum as we continue to grow in a way that supports both our patients and our outstanding team.

Family Council

The purpose of Family Council at the assisted living facilities is to strengthen collaboration between families and the facility, promote open communication, and ensure tenants receive quality, person-centered care in accordance with Minnesota Department of Health assisted living regulations. These meetings provide a forum for families and facility leadership to discuss updates, share feedback, and address concerns in a proactive, solution-focused manner.

The council is comprised of tenant family members and facility leadership. Meetings will be held twice per year at both assisted living sites: Lakewood Manor and Lakewood Pines.

At our first meeting in February, we reviewed the most recent satisfaction survey results. The facility received high ratings for staff performance, environmental safety, freedom to practice religion, staff friendliness, and maintaining a welcoming environment. We also shared areas targeted for improvement, including expanded dietary options – such as a newly revamped breakfast menu and an “always available” lunch and supper menu – as well as efforts to increase activity offerings for tenants.

Leadership reviewed emergency preparedness plans, including how various situations are managed and how communication with families is handled during those events. We also discussed upcoming projects for the year, including new carpeting at the Pines and plans to expand the parking lot at the Manor.

Family Council remains an important opportunity for partnership, transparency, and continuous improvement across both communities. We look forward to hearing more from our tenants' families.

From the Medical Director

Death Cleaning (*it's not as bad as it sounds*)

I recently spent the weekend with my mom to do what I thought was some spring cleaning. She told me we were actually death cleaning. It was more fun than I expected. We reminisced, laughed and groaned. I learned more about her and my dad when they were younger. In the end we felt good, accomplished – and dusty.

In a world full of stuff, many people feel buried by their belongings. Closets are packed. Garages are crowded. Drawers barely close. Over time, it becomes stressful to manage everything we own. The term 'death cleaning' comes from Sweden. In Swedish, it is called *döstädning*, which means "death cleaning." The idea is simple: as people grow older, they slowly sort through their belongings and decide what to keep and what to let go. By doing this, they make things easier for their loved ones in the future.

The name might sound sad at first, but this practice is not about focusing on death. It is about taking responsibility for your things while you are still alive and well. Instead of leaving a huge task for family members later, you handle it yourself, step by step.

You do not have to be elderly to begin. Many people start in middle age, and some begin even earlier. Anyone who feels overwhelmed by clutter can benefit. The goal is not to throw away everything. It is to think carefully about what truly matters.

When starting Swedish death cleaning, it helps to move slowly. This is not a weekend project. It may take months or even years. Begin with easier items, such as old clothes, extra dishes, or unused tools. These are often simpler to sort because they do not hold strong emotions.

Later, you may face more personal items like letters, photographs, and keepsakes. These objects carry memories, so they can be harder to let go of. Be patient with yourself. If something feels too difficult, set it aside and return to it later.

Ask yourself simple questions: Do I use this? Do I love this? Would someone else enjoy having it? Depending on your answer, it may be time to donate, recycle, or give it away. Knowing your items will help someone else can make the process easier.

Talking with family members can also help. You can ask if they want certain belongings. Maybe a child or grandchild would treasure a piece of jewelry. Maybe a friend would enjoy your favorite chair. Giving these items away while you are alive allows you to see the joy they bring.

Swedish death cleaning also encourages honesty. Many people think their children will want everything they own. In reality, younger generations may live in smaller spaces and have different tastes. Accepting this can make it easier to let go.

There are many benefits to this practice. A tidy home feels calmer and easier to manage. You spend less time cleaning and searching for lost items. Many people say they feel lighter and less stressed after decluttering. With fewer possessions, there is more room for experiences, relationships, and simple pleasures.

In the end, Swedish death cleaning is not really about death. It is about living with intention. By keeping only what truly matters, you create a peaceful home and give a thoughtful gift to your loved ones. It is a caring and meaningful way to simplify life.



Dr. Julie Benson
Senior Services Medical Director

Spotlights

Staff Spotlights

Tiffany Sykes, RN: Home-Based Services Admissions

Tiffany joined the home-based services team in September, fulfilling the role of admissions nurse. She joins the team with strong nursing skills and is passionate about providing high quality care to our patients. Her primary responsibilities include conducting comprehensive assessments during home care and hospice admissions, initiating the patient plan of care, and assisting in coordinating the care team to meet patient needs. Outside of work, Tiffany enjoys spending time with her family, which includes her husband, Travis, and their daughter, Nevaeh, and her three dogs. As a family, they enjoy hunting, fishing, and being outdoors.



Rico Lang, Nutrition Services Supervisor

Tell us why you love your job.

RICO: "What I love most about my role is being part of a team that makes a real difference in the lives of our residents. Good food and good care go hand in hand. It's truly rewarding to know the work we do brings comfort and joy to others every day."

What is your favorite meal to prepare at work?

RICO: "My favorite is egg bake because this dish allows me to be as creative as I want. There are so many ways to mix flavors and ingredients, and it's always fun to come up with something new that residents and staff will enjoy."

Do you have a favorite saying or mantra you live by?

RICO: " 'Everything is figure-outable.' I love it because it reminds me that no matter what challenges come my way, there's always a solution if you stay determined and creative."



New CNAs

Congratulations to the newest graduates of Lakewood's CNA class!

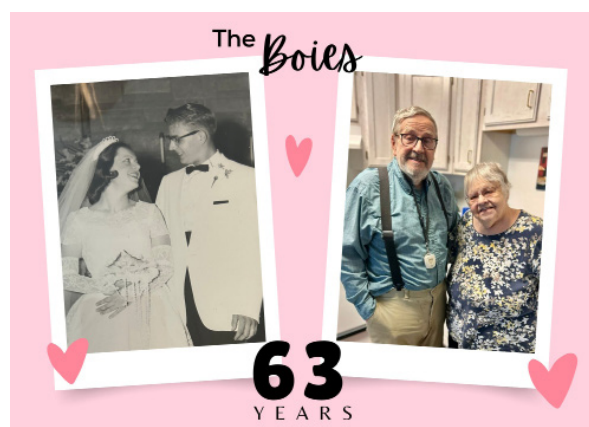
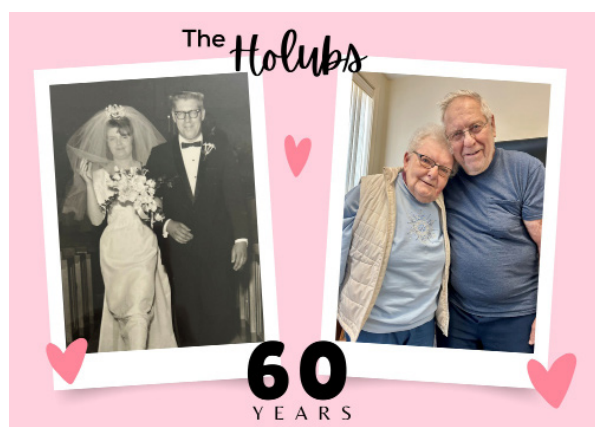
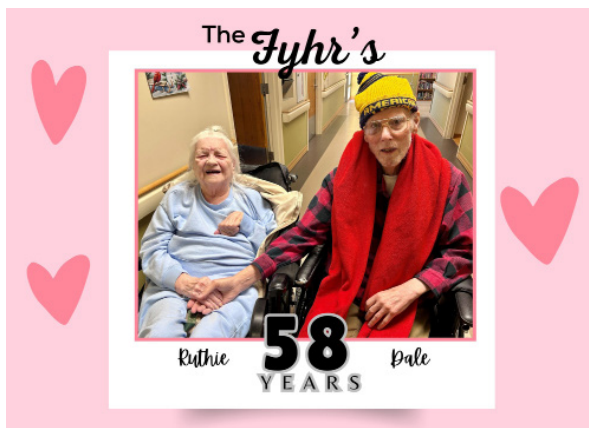
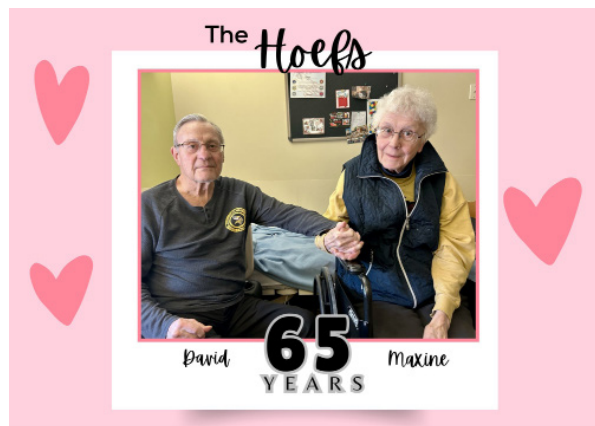
Pictured from left: Ashley Wallgren, RN, Director of Care Center Nursing; Lauren Ruffcorn; Melanie Christensen; Mia Willis; Alyssa Brokaw, all graduates; and Kendra Petersen, RN, Certified Nursing Instructor and Onboarding Coordinator.



Years of Love

Love is in the Air

Throughout the month of February, each of the below couples from the care center, Pines or Manor shared their love stories, which have lasted many decades. Congratulations to all on everything you've built together!



Care Center Activities

Coffee Clutch

Melanie Christensen, activities aide, reads a chapter from “Little Town on the Prairie” during a weekly Coffee Clutch, where residents gather to enjoy coffee and a muffin while listening to this timeless classic.



Buon Viaggio!

Care center residents “traveled” to the Carnivale in Venice, Italy as part of their weekly Armchair Travel adventure.



Creating Art

Residents at the care center creating colorful mosaic crosses during their weekly crafting hour. Beautiful AND fun.



Hitting the Right Notes

The Staples Area Men’s Chorus recently filled Lakewood Care Center’s dining room with beautiful hymns and rich, blended vocals – and residents enjoyed every beautiful note!



Generational Success

Staples-Motley eighth graders are continuing their weekly visits with tenants at the Manor, where the two generations connect and enjoy time together playing card games, doing manicures, and just chatting. This is part of a “success class” for students that began last year as a student-led service project.



Be Mine?

Lakewood’s Radiology team handwrote 154 Valentine cards for residents at the care center and tenants at the Pines and Manor. The cards were handmade, with team members cutting, coloring, and creating cards at home with their families. The team looks forward to making these cards to help brighten everyone’s day.



Assisted Living Activities

'Twas the Season

The Central Minnesota Boys Choir, directed by Brian Sterriker, is made up of boys in grades 3-8, and they came to do some Christmas caroling for tenants at the Manor. Meanwhile, tenants at the Pines had a Christmas party complete with family, good food, and bingo. 'Tis the season!



Purrfect Guests

Tyler Davidson, RN, assisted living director in residence/clinical nurse supervisor at the Manor, brought in two special guests to visit Manor tenants. Meow!



Senior Services Activities

CHEERS!

The CHEERS team started the year with some fun and fellowship. In February we offered smoothies (cake batter – lemon, white or strawberry flavored) to all staff who were working that day. To celebrate Valentine's Day, we hosted a coffee and cookie bar. We hope to continue having opportunities for staff to get together and build strong foundations.



Recognition & Appreciation

Thank You

My brother looks great, he is glowing and looks so healthy. I just want to thank you all for the great care you are giving to him and am so pleased to see him looking healthy and happy!

We want to share our sincere appreciation for the excellent care our mother received. We are especially grateful for how well her pain was managed and the comfort she experienced in her final days. Both of our parents had experiences in other senior care settings, and the quality of care and quality of life shown at Lakewood Care Center went above and beyond anything we have seen elsewhere. We are so thankful our mother was able to spend her final days here.

Thank you and the entire care team for such outstanding care and support from both the care center and hospice teams. Quite remarkable.

This has been a great place. If this next place doesn't work out, I want to come back here. Thank you to everyone for the great care!

Thank you for the compassionate care our mother received while in the care center rehabilitation wing.

Thank you for how wonderful care has been since I arrival. I've had experience with several local care centers through other family members and my experience here has been, by far, the best. From nursing to nutrition services to activities—every interaction has been positive and I feel genuinely well cared for.

STAR Awards: Service & Teamwork Award Recognition

The STAR program recognizes Lakewood Health System employees for outstanding performance in the delivery of service to internal and external customers. Employees are nominated by patients or staff members, and voted on by a group of employees who have been designated by their respective department.



Carol Longworth, HHA
Home-Based Services



Darlys Horn, CNA/TMA
Care Center



Dr. Michael Hudalla
Physician



Ashleigh Reilly, RN
Care Center

News & FYIs

WELCOME!

We would like to welcome all the new residents and tenants who have joined us at Lakewood Health System Care Center and assisted living! We look forward to getting to know you, and hope to see you participating in our daily activities.

IN MEMORY

We remember your loved ones who have been part of the Lakewood family. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to get to know your loved one. They touched our hearts, and will be remembered.

NEWSLETTER ONLINE

All Senior Living newsletters can be found on our website: lakewoodhealthsystem.com. Under the **Senior Living** tab, click on **View Documents** to download current and past editions of the newsletter.

100 CLUB

- Jeanette Olson
- Aletha Deyonge

our team

Chief Executive Officer

Lisa Bjerga

Vice President of Senior Services

Kathy Dobson

Senior Services Medical Director

Julie Benson, MD

Senior Services Advanced Practice Clinician

Amber Rasinski, FNP

Chief Medical Officer

Christine Albrecht, MD

Chief Finance Officer

Joe Reycraft

Lakewood Manor

Tyler Davidson, RN - Assisted Living Director
in Residence/Clinical Nurse Supervisor

Lakewood Pines

Alexis Close, RN, ALDIR - Business
Operations/Clinical Nurse Supervisor

Home-Based Services

Deb Toth, RN - Director

Care Center Nursing

Ashley Wallgren, RN - Director

Quality Improvement

Taylor Senden - Coordinator

Social Services

Lindsay Kirk, MSW
Madeline Revering, LSW

Resident Services

Amy Dumpprope, LPN - RS Coordinator
Barb Trantina, LPN - RS Coordinator

Spiritual Health

Paul Johnson - Chaplain

Activities Supervisor

Robert Laughery

Business Office - Resident Accounts

Tracy Brand Esler
Michelle Lundquist

Nutrition Services

Bobbijo Rinas - Manager

Maintenance

Alan Schmidt - Senior campus manager

Environmental Services

Chris O'Brien - Director



monthly activities - the pines

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
11am Catholic Mass 2pm Ice Cream Social 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack 3pm Bingo 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 11am Daily Chronicle 1pm Corn Hole 2pm Snack 3pm Chapel 7pm Snack	8am Breakfast Club 1045am Exercise 1pm Tenant Council 2pm Snack 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack 3pm Fancy Nails 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 11am Daily Chronicle 1pm Bingo 2pm Snack 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack 7pm Snack
11am Catholic Mass 2pm Ice Cream Social 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack 3pm Bingo 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 11am Daily Chronicle 1pm Brain Games 2pm Snack 3pm Chapel 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack Activity 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack 3pm Fancy Nails 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 11am Daily Chronicle 1pm Bingo 2pm Snack 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack 7pm Snack
11am Catholic Mass 2pm Ice Cream Social 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack 3pm Bingo 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 11am Daily Chronicle 1pm Corn Hole 2pm Snack 3pm Chapel 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack Activity 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack 3pm Fancy Nails 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 11am Daily Chronicle 1pm Bingo 2pm Snack 7pm Snack	1045am Exercise 2pm Snack 7pm Snack

monthly activities – the manor

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
11am Catholic Mass 2pm Ice Cream Social 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 11amDaily Chronicle 1pm Bingo 2pm Snack 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 2pm Snack 230pm Corn Hole 4pm Chapel 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 2pm Snack 6pm Dirty Bingo 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 11amDaily Chronicle 1pm Fancy Nails 2pm Snack 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 2pm Snack 3pm Bingo 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 2pm Snack 530pm Movie & Popcorn (Tenant's Choice)
11am Catholic Mass 2pm Ice Cream Social 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 11amDaily Chronicle 1pm Bingo 2pm Snack 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 2pm Snack 230pm Brain Games 4pm Chapel 7pm Snack	8am Breakfast Club 1030am Exercise 1230pm Council 2pm Snack 6pm Dirty Bingo 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 11amDaily Chronicle 1pm Fancy Nails 2pm Snack 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 2pm Snack 3pm Bingo 7pm Snack	1030 Exercise Manor Birthday Party! “Friendsgiving” 1pm-3pm 530pm Movie & Popcorn (Tenant's Choice)
11am Catholic Mass 2pm Ice Cream Social 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 11amDaily Chronicle 1pm Bingo 2pm Snack 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 2pm Snack 230pm Corn Hole 4pm Chapel 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 2pm Snack 6pm Dirty Bingo 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 11amDaily Chronicle 1pm Fancy Nails 2pm Snack 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 2pm Snack 3pm Bingo 7pm Snack	1030am Exercise 2pm Snack 530pm Movie & Popcorn (Tenant's Choice)
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monthly activities – care center

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Exercise @ 9:00 Visiting Church @ 2:00 Games and happy hour @ 3:00 Card or Dice @ 4:00	Exercise @ 9:00 Catholic Communion with Jan @ 9:30 Nail Care @ 10:15 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Bingo @ 1:30 Cards or Dice @ 4:00	Exercise @ 9:00 Men's Group @ 10:00 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Church @ 2:00 Cards or Dice @ 4:00 Brain Games @ 6:30 Square dancers @ 7:00	Exercise @ 9:00 Activity @ 10:00 Golf cart rides @ 11:00 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Patio time @ 2:00 Cards or Dice @ 4:00	Exercise @ 9:00 Bible study @ 10:00 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Bingo @ 1:30 Cards or Dice @ 4:00 Brain games @ 6:30	Exercise @ 9:00 Story Time @ 10:00 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Social/music @ 2:00 Cards or Dice @ 4:00	Exercise @ 9:00 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Trivia @ 1:30 Movie @ 2:00 Cards or Dice @ 4:00
Exercise @ 9:00 Visiting Church @ 2:00 Games and happy hour @ 3:00 Card or Dice @ 4:00	Exercise @ 9:00 Catholic Communion with Jan @ 9:30 Nail Care @ 10:15 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Bingo @ 1:30 Cards or Dice @ 4:00	Exercise @ 9:00 Men's Group @ 10:00 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Church @ 2:00 Cards or Dice @ 4:00 Brain Games @ 6:30 Square dancers @ 7:00	Exercise @ 9:00 Activity @ 10:00 Golf cart rides @ 11:00 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Patio time @ 2:00 Cards or Dice @ 4:00	Exercise @ 9:00 Bible study @ 10:00 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Bingo @ 1:30 Cards or Dice @ 4:00 Brain games @ 6:30	Exercise @ 9:00 Story Time @ 10:00 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Social/music @ 2:00 Cards or Dice @ 4:00	Exercise @ 9:00 Mail Delivery @ 12:30 Trivia @ 1:30 Movie @ 2:00 Cards or Dice @ 4:00
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