

THE MASONICARE ANNUAL APPEAL NEWS

The Masonic
Charity Foundation 
of Connecticut

Spring 2010

Bro. Charles Curtiss: Confidence in the Masonicare Mission



Bro. Charles Curtiss

Bro. Charles Curtiss and his wife, Nancy, decided to show their appreciation for the care that Nancy's parents received from Masonicare by supporting the Masonicare Annual Appeal.

Donations to The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut help improve the lives of so many, especially Connecticut's seniors. As a not-for-profit, Masonicare relies on the generosity of donors like the Curtisses, whose gifts not only support Masonicare's high-quality healthcare programs and services, but also help ensure that other families will have as positive an experience as theirs did.

"My wife was thrilled," Charles said. "Masonicare was so far beyond her expectations. Certainly, that has revved up our desire to support The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut."

Nancy's parents were both in their 80s and living in Suffield, CT when they began to seriously examine their living situation. Her father, John (Jack) Greene,

was disabled and confined to a wheelchair. When Jack's wife, Edna, could no longer provide Jack with the level of care he needed, Nancy and Charles stepped in to help the couple find a skilled nursing care facility.

"We looked into a number of facilities," Charles recalled, "including places near our home in Avon. But it just didn't seem like they were going to offer my wife's parents what they needed. In so many of these places, the living space was detached from the medical unit. So not only did we not know about the quality of care my father-in-law would receive,

but also there was no continuum. We were very concerned about that. What would happen if he fell and broke something? Would he have to go to another location to receive medical care? And if that happens, how would my mother-in-law get to see him? Would she need to arrange for transportation? We faced all of these kinds of questions."

As a 35-year Mason, Charles had some awareness of the services offered by Masonicare, so he suggested they check out Masonicare Health Center (MHC) in Wallingford.

"The first and overwhelming impression I had of Masonicare Health Center was a sense of peace and confidence," Charles recalled. "There was never a doubt in my mind that the job of caring for my father-in-law would not only be done well, but it would be done with integrity and compassion and always with the goal of improving his quality of life. It's not just a business at Masonicare. It's their *mission*."

In 2004, Jack Greene moved

See Curtiss - Continued on Page 4

Sisters Share Home, Admiration For Masonicare



Margaret Porter (left) and Barbara Colby.

Margaret Porter and Barbara Colby are thankful for their good health and comfortable living conditions, but recognize that others may need a little extra help.

That's why the sisters, who share an apartment at Masonicare at Ashlar Village, are proud to be counted among the growing number of people who support the Masonicare Annual Appeal.

"You see the generosity of people who have the means to do special things for others," Barbara says of her fellow donors, "and it's been remarkable to watch Masonicare grow as a result. The company's vision and planning for the future is very, very good."

"Masonicare is always thinking ahead," Margaret adds, "instead of playing catch-up."

The sisters also expressed confidence that their many gifts to The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut have been -- and will continue to be -- well managed.

"They show financial prudence," Barbara says. "They're not spending money willy-nilly. Everything is very carefully planned, and that's the way we were brought up."

Margaret and Barbara grew up on the first floor of a three-family house in the North End of Hartford and graduated from Weaver High School. Their father was a process engineer for Hartford-Empire, a company that produced glass-making machines.

By the early 1990s, both sisters were living in Bloomfield, although in different residences. Margaret cared for their mother, Mary, at home, but it became too difficult a task for one person to manage. Mary needed to be in a facility where she would have easy access to healthcare.

Having often visited the Mas-

onicare campus in Wallingford to have lunch with an aunt who lived at the former Walker Dorm and then the Wright Residence, they decided to check out Ashlar Village. It offered the amenities they were looking for, and a welcoming atmosphere.

In 1993, Margaret and her mother moved to Ashlar Village. Margaret remained the primary caregiver until Mary's health declined and she required more specialized care at Masonicare Health Center. Mary lived at the Health Center for about two and half years before passing away in 2002.

Barbara, meanwhile, had been widowed for several years. In 2000, she decided to join Margaret at Ashlar Village. They've been together ever since.

"Still," Margaret says, "we each do our own thing. I like to sew and knit."

"I can't sew or knit," Barbara adds. "I prefer writing. My grandmother, God bless her, tried to teach me how to knit and embroider, but it didn't take." ☆

The Masonicare Annual Appeal: Your Dollars At Work

Across the Masonicare continuum, residents and patients are benefiting from the generosity of Annual Appeal donors. Here are just a few examples:

Power Chairs

Power chairs and scooters provide important advantages to Masonicare

Health Center (MHC) residents with mobility issues. They may lack stamina or have a medical condition that limits their ability to walk.

Donations to the Annual Appeal have made it possible for Masonicare to provide residents like Diane Brown (opposite page, above left) with replacement batteries for these devices. Most scooters require two

batteries, which can range in cost from about \$90 to as much as \$370 each.

"I'm all over the place in my chair," said Diane, a four-year resident of the Health Center who came to MHC from Pond Ridge Assisted Living. "I love it. It's wonderfully easy to use. I do still walk somewhat, and could probably

The Masonicare Annual Appeal: Your Dollars At Work



walk the full length of the hallway, but I get very tired about halfway.”

Diane’s power chair has not only given her greater freedom of mobility, it’s also allowed her to stay connected with good friends.

“I have friends here and I try to visit them as much as possible,” she said. “They may have lived here for many years, and perhaps they don’t get as many visitors as they used to. It’s fun and they appreciate it.”

Wii Video Game System

Thanks to contributions to the Annual Appeal, The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut was able to fund the purchase of a Wii (pronounced “wee”) home video game system for the residents and patients of Masonicare at Newtown.

With available games like bowling and tennis, the Wii has become a useful recreational tool for seniors who are not only improving their physical fitness

status, but also flexing their mental muscles, socializing, and having fun.

In the photo below, recreation therapist Lynn D’Angelo teaches a Masonicare at Newtown resident how to bowl using the Wii’s wireless controller.

“The game benefits our short-term rehabilitation patients and long-term care residents as well,” Lynn explained. “Age is never a factor. I have a 100-year-old woman who faithfully shows up for Wii bowling every Friday and continues to improve her scores. I’ve noticed that when residents have a worried mind or an achy body, the Wii helps them escape from their troubles to focus on a more fun-filled social activity in a supportive environment. They forget how tired or down they were feeling.”

Pulse Oximeters

Annual Appeal dollars have also made possible the purchase of pulse oximeters for Masonicare Home Health & Hospice (MHH). A pulse oximeter (demonstrated by Clinical Supervisor Sandra Pascoe in

the photo below) is a portable medical device that measures the oxygen saturation of a patient’s blood. It is small enough to be worn on the finger and delivers a reading in seconds.

“The ultimate goal is to make the patient more comfortable and less fatigued,” said Joan Piteo,

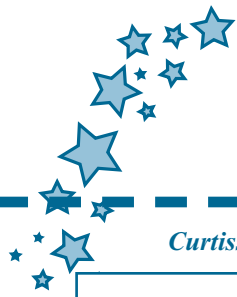


Director of Quality Management and Performance Improvement at MHH. “If a patient suffering from congenital heart failure or recovering from a pulmonary infection like pneumonia is short of breath, we can get their oxygen saturation adjusted. It might mean fewer trips



to the hospital if the problem is something we can manage at home with the pulse oximeter. We want to keep the patient home and let them continue their daily activities as much as possible.” ☆

If you would prefer not to receive any future fundraising communications from The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut, please write to us at MCF of CT, P.O. Box 70, Wallingford, CT 06492. Please provide your full name and street address. Please note that it may take six to eight weeks to make your request fully effective.



Curtiss - Continued from Page 1

into a private room in the long-term care unit at Masonicare Health Center. A short time later, Edna fell and injured herself. Fortunately, she was able to do her rehabilitation right upstairs from Jack’s room at MHC, allowing them to share meals with each other almost daily.

After completing rehab, Edna moved into the Johnson Apartments, an independent living residence located on Masonicare’s Wallingford campus. It was an ideal arrangement for the couple, since Edna still didn’t have to go outside to visit her husband. They were together even as Jack’s health declined and he received hospice care at MHC.

In October 2005, Jack passed away at Masonicare Health Center, leaving Edna alone for the first time.

For family members who worried about her emotional well-being, there was a sense of relief when

Edna found companionship with a widowed resident named Chet.

Together, Edna and Chet eventually transitioned to the Pond Ridge assisted living facility, part of Masonicare at Ashlar Village on the Wallingford campus. They enjoyed Pond Ridge together until Edna developed a chronic illness and was hospitalized at MHC. Yet, Chet could take the bus provided by Masonicare Transportation Services down the hill to visit Edna as much as he wanted.

Edna passed away at MHC in October 2008 while under Masonicare’s hospice program, but her family takes comfort in knowing that she and her companion shared what Charles calls “a delightful sunset in their lives.”

He concludes, “You couldn’t write a better ending to a story.” ☆

The Foundation’s Bequest Language

The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut deeply appreciates gifts of all kinds. Should you wish to remember The Foundation in your Will, we encourage you to provide the following bequest language to your attorney:

“I give, devise, and bequeath all the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, or _____% (percentage) of my estate, or \$_____ (sum of money) to The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut, Inc., located in Wallingford, CT.”

Bequests provide important revenue in support of the mission of Masonicare, enabling us to provide the highest quality healthcare programs and services to our residents and patients regardless of their ability to pay. If you wish to discuss a bequest to The Foundation, please contact Jennifer King, President of The Foundation, at 203-679-5555.