

Prime of LIFE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021

HARLAN NEWSPAPERS SPECIAL SECTION

Peace Haven Senior Living Community

A Wonderful Alternative

Independent living for those 55 and older offered in Walnut

By Molly Blanco, Reporter

WALNUT -- Sharon Embree models all of her work at Peace Haven Senior Living Community after the quote she has printed on her business cards: "Everything you do... do it like you're doing it for your mom."

The advice was given to her by Peace Haven's first administrator, Orris Drake, who ran the facility for 28 years.

Her approach at Peace Haven is simple: she runs it so it would be good enough for her own mother.

Embree has devoted herself to Peace Haven and puts in countless hours to help the facility be the best it can for its residents. She began working at Peace Haven as the administrator in 2015.

Peace Haven is a nonprofit independent living facility located in Walnut for residents age 55 and older. Although it is technically a retirement home, Embree avoids the term because she feels it carries a stigma.



Peace Haven resident Jeff Hansen enjoys a cup of coffee during lunch in the dining room.



Administrator Sharon Embree and staff outside the Peace Haven facility in Walnut. Pictured L to R -- Peace Haven Senior Living (Full-Time and Permanent Part-Time Staff) Suzanne Larsen, Steve Thomas, Amy Weihs, Bonnie Brandt, Sharon Embree, Emily Rousch, Amy Thomas, and Kris Finnell. (Photos contributed and by Molly Blanco)

"[Peace Haven] is that wonderful alternative if you either prefer or are unable to maintain a home. This is that perfect choice as opposed to going to assisted living or a nursing facility," Embree said.

Since it opened in 1964, Peace Haven has undergone tremendous reno-

vations and improvements.

Peace Haven currently houses 34 residents and consists of 43 individual apartments. Each of the units is unique and caters to a variety of needs. From luxurious two bedroom, two bathroom suites to modest studio apartments, Peace Haven has something for every-

one.

Embree has endeavored to make Peace Haven feel like home for its residents, regardless of income.

When Peace Haven opened, the facility consisted of 80 tiny studio apart-

Peace *please see next page*

Independent living for those 55 and older

Peace *from front page*

ments, each outfitted with a small tile bathroom. The apartments were never fully occupied.

Embree saw an opportunity to utilize the space differently and improve the facility, so she renovated until an apartment was created to suit any resident's needs. The facility even has larger apartments made for couples, siblings or friends to live together.

Depending on the size of the apartment and the number of rooms, rent can range from \$500 to \$1,600 a month. However, Peace Haven also participates in the United States Housing and Urban Development Program that provides rental assistance based on income. Therefore, residents only pay what they can afford for housing and the government covers the remainder of their rent.

Embree plans to retire soon, but her work at Peace Haven is not complete. She still has several projects that she is working tirelessly to finish, many of which she has funded out of pocket.

"I have probably donated, in the six years that I've been here, about \$60,000," Embree said.

Embree did not want Peace Haven to be a place that seniors dreaded. She wanted Peace Haven to be an alternative that seniors would enjoy and that would feel like home.

Their motto, "Gracious senior living," embodies Embree's attitude toward senior life. She believes seniors deserve to live with dignity and independence whenever possible.

"It is my mission in life to help people live their lives a different way. To live it with more dignity," Embree said.

Peace Haven strives to be the middle ground between living at home and living in a nursing home or assisted living. Often, the cost of assisted living is not realistic for seniors in retirement. However, maintaining a household can become exhausting and expensive as well, especially for seniors who live alone.

"Nursing homes and assisted living do serve a valid purpose, but when the time comes, you have to go," Embree said. "Peace Haven is a choice. People choose to come here, so we have a different atmosphere."

Embree described Peace Haven as

providing all of the amenities and freedom of living at home with none of the chores.

"To move from [home] to anywhere is a huge step. We are trying to make that step as small as possible, so they have all the amenities of home and none of the chores," Embree said.

Peace Haven provides weekly housekeeping, towels and washcloths (all laundered by staff), cable TV, weekly Chapel services, furnished bed linens, two meals per day and numerous activities and entertainment.

Peace Haven serves two hot meals a day, along with coffee throughout the day. All meals are served family style and guests are welcome to join. Residents have flexibility with meals and are able to request their favorite foods to be put on the menu.

Peace Haven also makes finances easier by including all of the residents' living expenses in the monthly rent. Housekeeping, cable TV, utilities, laundering and activities are all included in the monthly fee. Prepared meals are an additional charge because residents can opt out of dining services, but the meal service does not exceed \$430 a month per person.

The facility offers its residents a dining room, party room, exercise room, library, chapel, beauty salon/barber shop, convenience store and laundry facilities. Room rental is month-to-month with no long-term lease.

Peace Haven allows residents the level of freedom they want and need. Many residents still drive a vehicle, and garages are available for them to rent. Guest rooms are even available for visiting friends or family members.

Each Peace Haven living unit provides a private bath/shower, walk-in closet and a seasonal view of Walnut countryside or courtyards. Apartments can come fully furnished, or residents can bring their own furniture and decor.

Flexibility and independence are key at Peace Haven. They provide assistance when needed, but they do not impede the freedom of their residents.

"There isn't anything I haven't done for a resident," Embree said. "I've helped them change their fancy pants, I've helped them search the room for their hearing aid, I've walked their dog for them."

Even throughout the COVID-19



Karen Dant, Ken Fox and Larry Anderson socialize and enjoy lunch together in the Peace Haven dining room. (Photos contributed)



Administrative assistant Amy Thomas helps resident Ken Fox make a purchase at the Peace Haven convenience store.

pandemic, residents were free to leave and visit relatives if they desired. Visitors were required to wear masks inside the facility, but all COVID restrictions have now been lifted.

Residents are now dining together and socializing, which was a well-missed perk of Peace Haven. Many residents enjoy visiting with one another and socializing during meals.

When the dining room was shut down, Peace Haven brought meals to each apartment.

"We could nurture their stomachs, but they missed each other. We couldn't nurture their souls," Embree said. "Once we opened up the dining room again, there were tears."

Peace Haven suffered one death from COVID-19, but avoided community spread. Three total cases have been

recorded so far.

Peace Haven has housed a variety of residents with ages ranging from 55 to 105 and all levels of independence.

"Our rates are probably half to a third of what assisted living is," Embree said.

Overall, Embree feels Peace Haven is the perfect option for seniors looking for an alternative between nursing facilities and maintaining a home.

After witnessing her own mother's experience living in a nursing home, Embree can confidently say that Peace Haven would have been a better option.

"If I had known about Peace Haven when my mom was alive, I would have brought her here," Embree said. "She would have thrived."

Make a bucket list a reality

REGIONAL -- A bucket list is a plan for living life to its fullest and prioritizing opportunities to engage in all sorts of activities. A bucket list can be made at any point in life and is not exclusive to individuals facing their own mortality. Here are some tips for putting bucket list plans into action.

- Stop and think about what you really want to experience in your lifetime. Leave factors like money or proximity out of it. No ideas are off-limits. This is your opportunity to brainstorm, and nothing is too crazy or silly.

- Write the bucket list in a comfortable or inspiring place, which may help ideas flow more freely. The place might be a cozy nook at a bookstore or a quiet spot on the beach.

- Choose things that are meaningful to you as well as ideas that are frivolous and fun. Make your list a mix of each, and don't take yourself too seriously.

- Divide the bucket list by time. Are there items you can check off in a particular season, such as skiing the Alps? If your bucket list involves moving to a bustling city, determine if you'd like to do that after your children have reached adulthood or if you want to expose them to city life as youngsters. Categorizing the list by periods of your life can make it easier to prioritize certain activities over others.

- Determine if each bucket list activity will be a solitary or joint pursuit. Various activities are more enjoyable when shared with others, but some you might be more inclined to do alone.

- Set aside a budget for funding bucket list activities. Bucket lists may include some costly activities, so start saving now so money does not stand in your way. Open a savings account specifically for funding bucket list excursions and set up automatic deposits.

Bucket lists can encourage people to live life to the fullest and it's never too early to get started on a list of your own.

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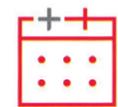


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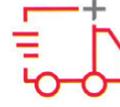


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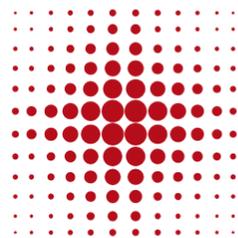
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Life in the Asphalt Industry

Lemons retires from Western Engineering after 69 years

By Molly Blanco, Reporter

HARLAN -- Bill Lemons, 86, has worked at Western Engineering in Harlan for 69 years. When he retired this fall, he said it will felt like "losing a friend."

Western Engineering is an asphalt contracting company located in Harlan.

Lemons started his career at the company in 1952 at the age of 18. He started working a seasonal position at Western after graduating high school.

"I started as low as you could, just as a laborer. I liked it and I worked a couple of seasons," Lemons said.

Lemons eventually decided that he wanted to stay with the company long term.

"About the third year, they wanted me to stay. So I stayed, and I've been here ever since," he said.

Over time, he worked his way up to president and was able to purchase the company in 1988.

Lemons is extremely dedicated to his work, which might explain why he has continued to work well past the typical retirement age.

"I thought about [retirement] when I was about 65 years old, and the closer I got to that the more I didn't want it because I didn't know what the heck I was going to do!" Lemons said. "I wasn't ready to hang it up."

His son took over as president of Western Engineering in 2000. Lemons retired August 13 from his current position as the chairman of the board.

Retirement

Lemons said he is not sure what he will do in retirement because his work is so much of his life.

"If somebody wants to come in here and talk about asphalt, I can talk to them all day. But anything else, I'm kind of a blank because all I do is work," Lemons said.

Lemons stayed with Western Engineering all these years because he simply enjoys what he does.

"I liked what I was doing and I never thought of anything that I would



Bill Lemons retired in August after 69 years with Western Engineering in Harlan. He has been very dedicated to the company he has served for decades. (Photo by Molly Blanco)

rather do," Lemons said.

Although many people might become tired of a job after nearly 70 years, Lemons said it has always kept him on his toes.

"It's never been boring because it's the kind of business where you might think you know everything, and then every day something different happens," Lemons said.

Lemons' dedication to the company and the asphalt industry has paid off over the years. He estimated that Western Engineering has tripled in size under his leadership. However, he worked hard to reach the level of success and growth the company has attained today.

"It has never been easy. It was hard work when I was working my way up

and it was hard work after I bought it," Lemons said. "It's kind of a 24/7 job, and that is all I know."

Organizations

Lemons has also participated in a number of different organizations within his field. He was inducted into the Iowa Hot Mix Asphalt Hall of Fame in 2008 for his dedicated work in the asphalt industry.

He also worked closely with the Quality Management of Asphalt project that greatly improved the asphalt industry in Iowa.

He served as a board member for the National Asphalt Pavement Association and was involved with NCAT, the National Center for Asphalt Technology.

"I think the best thing that ever happened was the quality control of asphalt mixes and I have really felt good about being a part of that," Lemons said.

Lemons follows a simple guide as a boss and as a person. His goal is to be patient, appreciative and encouraging to his employees and others.

"I've had a lot of good people work for me through the years who I think the world of," Lemons said.

Since he worked his way up from the bottom, he knows firsthand the value of hard work and tries to reward that in others.

"It is a lot easier to criticize someone than it is to praise them for doing a good job, and that is a mistake," Lemons said.

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Avoiding clutter around the home, removing loose rugs and keeping electrical cords out of areas where you walk are key ways to help prevent falls that can cause injuries. (Photo contributed)

Make your home safer to prevent injuries from falls

REGIONAL -- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), deaths resulting from a fall have increased 30% since 2007 and if rates continue to rise at the current pace, the U.S. can anticipate seven deaths from falls every hour by 2030. In Iowa, falls are the second leading cause of injury deaths and the leading cause of injury hospitalizations and emergency room visits.

September was Falls Prevention Month. EveryStep Home Care registered nurse Ethel Picado assists individuals and families in making their homes safer.

Picado says the most common trip and fall hazards she sees in the homes she visits are largely preventable. These hazards include clutter, carelessness, not using assisting devices correctly, dehydration, medication side effects like low blood pressure, urinary tract infections, and sleeping on a couch and rolling off.

"It's important to let the patient know you care," says Picado. "You need to be frank and explain things in layman's terms, so the patient better understands and adopts suggested changes." She says she tries to eliminate fall hazards in the homes she visits by being direct, kind and non-judgmental, allowing the individual to participate and make decisions about

the suggested changes.

"Every patient is different and approaches life's circumstances in different ways," says Picado. The suggestions she shares with her patients are good advice for anyone.

Avoid clutter around and in pathways of the home.

Remove or secure loose rugs.

Keep electrical cords out areas where you walk.

Be aware of pets, as they tend to cling or require attention, and often get in the way.

If so directed, always use a cane or walker, take breaks when tired, and avoid stairs if possible.

Stay hydrated and take medications as prescribed.

"Ultimately it comes down to reminders, reminders, reminders to ensure they make the most of the comfort of their preferred home places by following safe practices," says Picado.

A nurse with EveryStep since 2014, Picado says she feels successful when she can see a patient is safer in their home.

"When the patient has no complaints about getting around, has gotten used to a cane or walker for own safety, has realized drinking fluids, not coffee, is important, and has had no falls for months or years at a time, then I and the patient can smile," she said.



Learning for Life named Blue Ribbon Affiliate

HMS Endorsed Sites Demonstrate High-Quality Implementation of Evidence-Based Home Visiting

REGIONAL -- Myrtue Medical Center/HMS Learning for Life has earned a prestigious endorsement from the Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., (PATNC) as a Blue Ribbon Affiliate, making it one of the top-performing home visiting affiliates within the PATNC's international network. The official designation was made on July 1, 2021.

Being named a Blue Ribbon Affiliate affirms that Myrtue Medical Center/HMS Learning for Life is a high-quality member of the home visiting field, implementing the evidence-based Parents as Teachers model with fidelity. Families in the Harrison/Monona/Shelby communities are positively impacted by the services delivered by this program.

The program includes home visits, group connections, child screening, and connections to community resources. It equips parents with knowledge and resources to prepare their children for a stronger start in life and greater success in school.

"To earn the Blue Ribbon Affiliate status, we underwent a rigorous self-study and review process from the National Center. The process confirms that we are meeting Parents as Teachers' standards of fidelity and quality," said Lori Hoch, director of Myrtue Medical Center Public Health-HMS Learning for Life. "Blue Ribbon Affiliates are exemplary programs, delivering highest quality services to children and families."

Implementation with quality and fidelity is vital in home-visiting programs as it determines a program's effectiveness in accomplishing its original goals and intended outcomes Elizabeth Anderson, HMS Quality Supervisor said. It also verifies that a program is being implemented as designed. Parents as Teachers' rigorous endorsement process demonstrates an affiliate's accountability and credibility to the community, its funders, elected officials, and the partner organizations with which they work.

Shelby County Public Health staff working on the Learning for Life program include L to R -- Rhonda Anderson, Elizabeth Anderson, Lori Hoch, Karla Berndt and Cara Cacy. (Photo contributed)

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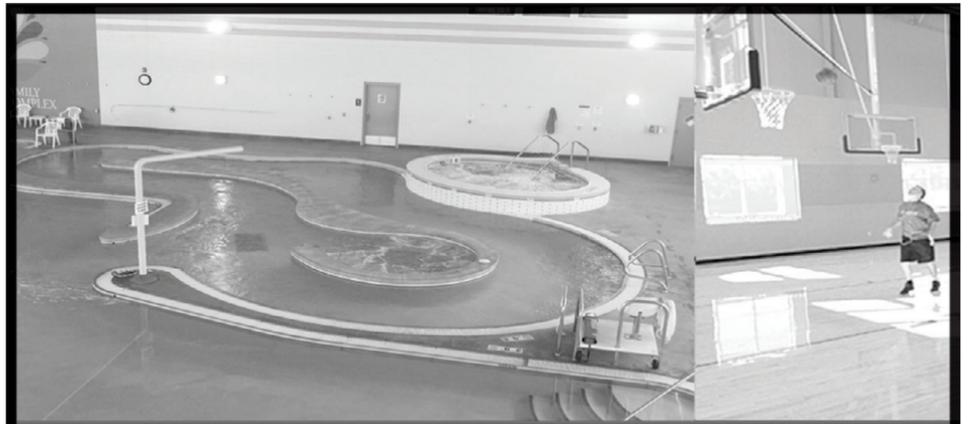
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