

SAMARITAN'S CHRONICLE



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In July, I joined a Carriage outing where the team leader offered a devotion for the volunteers. She read this promise, "Nothing can separate me from Your Love, Jesus." She then spoke of the loneliness that we all feel at times. We then pondered the lives of the guests who would soon enter the carriage. Did they feel loneliness? Isolation? Lack of connection with the world? The homes the Carriage visits are nice but most of them lack a way to bring their residents out beyond the walls of their facility.

Twenty-one years ago, Samaritan's Carriage was organized with the goal of alleviating loneliness for members of our community, and this goal remains the reason we continue our monthly outings. This goal was confirmed in a 2023 report titled *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation* which states, "Social connection is a fundamental human need, as essential to survival as food, water, and shelter. We human beings are biologically wired for social connection. Our brains have adapted to expect proximity to others."

God promises, "I will never leave you or forsake you! My Presence watches over you continually. I have engraved you on the palms of My hands." On a recent outing, we savored a 97-year-old guest's first encounter with Lake Michigan and were reminded that as we take our guests to places and adventures of joy and fellowship, we seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus in fulfilling God's promises. Read her reaction on page 2, it's precious!

Our carriage is now 21 years old, and we rejoice that it is still running well! As we look to the future, however, we are concerned that the lack of replacement parts for our vehicle will cause a disruption in our ministry. Our desire is to be proactive in addressing this concern and begin a **Carriage Campaign** now. We currently have a small amount saved, and a group of Samaritan's Carriage supporters are working to add an additional \$85,000 or more to our existing savings. This would allow us to purchase a new carriage. If you would like to participate or know of someone interested in funding a new carriage, please contact board President Bill Botts, or myself. We move forward with these words of David in Psalm 41. "Blessed is he who has regard for the weak."

Article written by Sara Buchholz

Samaritan's Carriage Logo

We're moving forward, stepping towards the future. Our original 21-year-old bus needs to be replaced.

The **Carriage Campaign** begins now!
Along with the campaign come a new logo.



Volunteer Kay VanderWeele with Jean at Dollar Tree. A little independence to pick out a few items goes a long way in alleviating loneliness and isolation.

Prayer Requests:

- **Volunteers** – a few of our volunteers have health situations that are preventing them from serving right now. Pray for complete recovery for them and for some of their family members also experiencing health concerns.
- **Guests** of Samaritan's Carriage and the **Homes** where they reside.
- **Carriage Campaign** – generous donations to facilitate the purchase of a new vehicle next year.
- **New volunteers** are needed so we can add a new home to the 9 homes we currently serve (Jenison area). There are more homes inquiring.

Board Members

Bill Botts – President 616-893-4518
Abbie Holt
Barry Meerman – Secretary
Ruth Schoon
Doug Sieplinga – Treasurer
Mary VanWingerden
Karen Weaver
Sara Buchholz – Executive Director
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2431 Paris Ave SE
Grand Rapids MI 49507



Are you looking for an opportunity to **bring joy** and **experience joy** yourself? Please call Sara Buchholz, 616-633-9548. There are other homes wanting to join. **You too can be a volunteer!**



Donations to Samaritan's Carriage Annual Fund and **Carriage Campaign** can be mailed to:
Samaritan's Carriage C/O Sara Buchholz
2431 Paris Ave SE, Grand Rapids MI 494507
or you may give via the website at www.samaritanscarriage.org
Monthly donors and Legacy gifts are deeply appreciated.
Charitable Giving Number: 30-0065870

Isabelle's Adventure to Ottawa Beach

On a Wednesday morning, Marilyn, Lloyd, Donna, Dena and myself went on an outing with Samaritan's Carriage. Sheldon Meadows goes out every month, on the second Wednesday of the month, to a different place. This time it was to Ottawa Beach in Holland. I had never been to that beach, so I was happy to be invited to go along. It was a beautiful summer day, ideal for going to the beach. Everything was of interest to me as this was the first time I was ever there. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw countless people in lawn chairs sitting along the shore watching the lake.

We walked the boardwalk being pushed by volunteers. We watched boats slowly passing along, I observed everything I could, taking it all in. Some walkways were hard to push the wheelchairs through as the wind had blown sand across them. There was a small museum on the boardwalk that we went through. My biggest laugh was when we saw two mirrors on a wall where we could see ourselves, the one made us so tiny we looked shrunken, the other one just as we were, dressed in our caps and sunglasses. Both just as laughable.

We even had lunch under the pavilion where tables and benches were set up. The volunteers opened containers of food. We had sub sandwiches cut in individual pieces, a variety of chips, watermelon cut in pieces and bottled water. The bus driver offered prayer before we ate a very tasty lunch.

After lunch we were pushed down another boardwalk toward the water. As we were sitting there looking out at the water, I had a sudden surprise. My dear and precious youngest granddaughter, and 3 great granddaughters very unexpectedly, came walking up to me. She gave me a hug and kiss, what a joyful reunion. It was the highlight of my outing!

Thank you, Samaritan's Carriage for a wonderful day.

Story written by Isabelle Jeurink

When asked if any of our guests or volunteers had jumped off the Holland pier?



Answer:
1 guest
3 volunteers

Go Donna!

What is it about Samaritan's Carriage that the Homes we visit love?

Hey Friends! Can I take just a few minutes of your time to share my heart about Samaritan's Carriage? Let me first introduce myself. I am Joni Klaasen. I serve as the Activity Coordinator at Rest Haven Homes on 1424 Union Ave NE, Grand Rapids. I have been at Rest Haven Homes for 15 years. Our home provides loving care for Independent, Assisted Living and Memory Care residents. Samaritan's Carriage has been a vital part of our life here at Rest Haven Homes for almost 20 years, providing the opportunity for our residents to get out in the community and experience fellowship, fun, freedom and food. Our home does not own a wheelchair accessible vehicle, so without Samaritan's Carriage, our wheelchair bound residents would be limited to in-house events. Samaritan's Carriage has provided trips to Lake Michigan, the public museums, downtown markets, Meijer Gardens, fall color tours, and more with a delicious lunch after each event. What a privilege for our residents! These experiences are available to all residents at no cost.



Things I love about Samaritan's Carriage:

- It is so well organized. Sara, the director is doing a great job providing all the information needed to plan each event.
- It is Christ centered. The volunteers have devotions and prayer before each event. They also sing and pray with the residents.
- The volunteers truly love our residents. They develop relationships that are long lasting.
- The residents eagerly anticipate each monthly event.
- The residents experience adventure as they step out of their comfort zone and try new things.
- As the residents return from each trip their joy is evident.

- Pictures are taken at each event and sent with a thank you note for each resident to have as a memory.
- Family members are comforted knowing that their loved one is having a positive interactive experience.
- Residents feel independent going on an adventure that their family has not arranged.

God's Word tells us to "take care" of the orphans and the widows. Acts 20:35 says "In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must "help the weak" and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

Samaritan's Carriage is in need of a new bus in order to keep this ministry alive and safe. Would you please consider today, "helping the weak" to be able to "finish well" as they experience the love that Samaritan's Carriage offers each month?



Ps. 71:9 "Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent."

Article written by Joni Klaasen,

