

# SAMARITAN'S CHRONICLE



**SAMARITAN'S  
CARRIAGE**



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## Our Mission

As an expression of God's love, Samaritan's Carriage tailors experiences and personal encounters that affirm, bless, and bring joy into the lives of persons having limited mobility.

## Executive Director's Note:

I am pleased to report that the first few months of outings have been fantastic. The month of April, when Samaritan's Carriage went back on the road, I decided to go on each outing to see the nine homes and to meet the Life Enrichment Coordinators. Each home is different, some are in heart of neighborhoods, one is on a river, another on the top of a hill.

When we arrive at a home, the guests are thrilled to see the carriage pull up. They are waiting at the door ready to go! Some of them have been on a ride with Samaritan's Carriage and are eager to tell us how happy they are that the rides have started up again. Others have no idea what they are getting into and by the end of the outing they just can't say enough, how happy they were to be along for the ride.

The stories begin already in the carriage on the ride to a location. We hear about their families, some have children near by and they are eager to talk about their grandchildren. Then there are those that have no one close by to come and break up the day or to take them out. We hear about where they grew up and what they did during their working years. One woman was born in Mississippi, another one fished down in the Keys for a few years, there's a gentleman musician still playing Irish ballads. The list goes on and on, every outing brings out more stories. They want to talk, share and live!

In April we took the guests to Meijer Gardens. The butterfly exhibit was well received, one of the outing days was gorgeous and we were able to walk a bit outside, that was a thrill for the guests as well as the volunteers.

In May the outing location was Countryside Greenhouse. The carriage was driving through Allendale and some of the guests were telling us where they went to school in Allendale and as we continued down the road, Isabelle says, "That's my house, I lived there 67 years." She was so excited to see her home and farm and to let us know that's a part of her history. Imagine the memories that flooded through her mind. We were all excited for her and I was so happy that we could give her the gift of seeing her home, allowing her the chance to share what it was like to live there and farm the land and to raise her family there.

That is what Samaritan's Carriage is all about. Our mission is to bring joy into the lives of those who are mobility challenged. We glimpse the joy coming out of their hearts and spreading it into the hearts of the volunteers. We are all extremely blessed on every outing. Thanks be to God for his immeasurable gifts.

*Article written by Sara Buchholz*

## What is it like to be a new volunteer with Samaritan's Carriage?

In April, the Neland TREKKER group was invited by Sara Buchholz to board the Samaritan's Carriage, providing transportation, camaraderie, and adventure to residents of Bishop Hills Assisted Living in Rockford. Five TREKKERS assisted 5 residents of Bishop Hills into the Carriage, and we rolled together through Meijer Gardens—through the butterflies, cacti, children's garden, and trails surrounded by seasonal foliage and sculpture. Each of us became the companion of one of the residents, many of whom had never been to Meijer Gardens.

All of us had felt a bit of uncertainty as to how our roles would emerge as the adventure unfolded, and were a bit unprepared for the immense blessing that each of us felt. Our companions shared fascinating life stories and faith journeys. They eagerly interacted with the beauty of the gardens, and they rejoiced in the simple joys of sunshine, flowers, laughing children, and stunning bird calls. We were so engaged that none of us were eager to board the bus to return.

However, our second leg of our outing was full of delicious surprises for all! We drove to Golden Corral Buffet and loaded up individual plates from their sumptuous buffets. Our companions, used to institutional meals, were delighted with having total free choice, including homemade pies and puddings. We had our own room together and laughed, ate, went back for seconds, and praised God for this time together.

The final bus ride back to Bishop Hills was the best as we laughed, shared stories, and sang songs. We were friends. We were fellow adventurers. We were all eager for our next outing. We surely had built a mutual blessing that day. Thank you, Lord!

*Article written by Karen Weaver*



TREKKERS from Neland with guests from Bishop Hills, strolling through Meijer gardens.



### Time for another community event.

Samaritan's Carriage is hosting a fundraiser on **Tuesday, June 28 from 4:00-9:00 pm at Applebees in Grandville**, 4488 Potomac Ave., across from Rivertown Mall.

We hosted a community event in Grand Rapids last March and had a very nice turn out. I'm hopeful the Hudsonville, Grandville, Jenison, Zeeland communities might also be able to turn out a nice big crowd. Please tell all your family members, church friends, and neighbors to come eat at Applebees on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June and support Samaritan's Carriage. Look for information on the Samaritan's Carriage Facebook page or Sara J Buchholz Facebook page or check out the website. [samaritanscarriage.org](http://samaritanscarriage.org) or <https://www.groupraise.com/events/227413> COME!!!!



*Guests and volunteers from St Ann's Home along with Sara Buchholz, Executive Director of Samaritan's Carriage*

### **Musings from Pat and Mike Jennings who volunteer on the St Ann's outings.**

I have been involved with Samaritan Carriage close to the beginning. It was founded by Gary Ruiter in 2002. My mother was a resident of St. Ann's from 1999 and passed away in 2006. Before she passed away it gave me the opportunity to spend time with her and volunteer. After she passed away, I continued to volunteer until the present time.

I so admire Gary and Eileen in their retirement to purchase the bus and start this wonderful ministry. He was excited when he found out I was Catholic. He said in a note to me that we see each other as brothers and sisters, united. His words were "together we try to bring a little Hope where there is despair, a little light where there is darkness and a little joy where there is sadness." I have met so many wonderful volunteers and enjoy their company.

The residents are so appreciative and happy to get away and have lunch out. They are so full of wisdom and so much fun. They fill my heart with joy.  
Pat

Mike: For many years I drove our church bus for the school to places in town and out of town. I enjoyed that so much. Now after my first time as a driver for Samaritan Carriage, it's not a whole lot different. Older residents are just as much fun as the children. I know that I am going to enjoy my new volunteer experience.

*Article written by Pat and Mike Jennings*

### **Prayer requests:**

- Gary Ruiter – strength and perseverance
- Drivers to be alert to the traffic
- Gentleness of spirit for the guests
- Energy and supportive attitudes for volunteers
- Weather conducive to outdoor adventures
- Successful Fundraiser and generous donors

### **THANK YOU DONORS**

Without your generosity, Samaritan's Carriage would not have been able to start up again. The JOY that the volunteers bring into the lives of those with limited mobility has been so much fun for me to experience. To see their eyes light up at the butterflies or seeing the spring flowers, it's magical.

Our trip costs have risen recently and it now costs approximately \$3500 each month to run Samaritan's Carriage. Would you consider sponsoring an outing for \$150 or \$200? Or maybe just gas or lunches, any amount helps. The bus has needed some well-deserved, tender loving care, but that also comes at a cost.

How else can you help out Samaritan's Carriage? **Leave a Legacy Gift!** You can invest in the future of Samaritan's Carriage by designating Samaritan's Carriage in your will or estate plan. By doing that you will provide adventures and happiness for individuals who live their lives in wheelchairs, confined to a home, for years into the future.

Samaritan's Carriage suggests you contact your financial advisor for assistance setting up a legacy gift. Our charitable registration number is 30-0065870. Thank you for considering leaving a legacy to share God's love with persons with limited mobility.

**Samaritan's Carriage is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization funded solely by donors.**

**Donations can be mailed to:**  
**Samaritan's Carriage c/o Sara Buchholz**  
**2431 Paris Ave SE, Grand Rapids MI 49507**  
**or you may give via the website at**  
**[www.samaritanscarriage.org](http://www.samaritanscarriage.org)**



## SAMARITAN'S CARRIAGE

2431 Paris Ave. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

The first outings for Samaritan's Carriage in April, when the carriage came out of storage, were to Meijer Gardens. Each outing we saw beautiful butterflies. One of the guests had one land in her beautiful white hair.



In May we went to Countryside Greenhouse.

We were overwhelmed by the color and fragrances.

In June we are heading to the Rockford Dam. Watch the website for more pictures.

