

# PROGRESS REPORT

## From surviving to thriving: How access to care and community saved Gary Ann's life



When Gary Ann Williams moved to Hoover Cottages in 2015, she did so intending to die. She'd spent the last four years suffering through more health issues than one person should deal with in a lifetime—including one that left her blind—and had convinced herself she was dying.

If you met Gary Ann today, you wouldn't see someone preparing for the end of her life; you'd see someone enjoying it to the fullest. Her bright and welcoming smile, her feisty personality, her contagious inner glow that nearly radiates like an aura around her—those are the things you'd notice first.

But Gary Ann's life looked very different in 2015. You might remember her from our Summer 2016 newsletter where we chronicled her multi-year journey from one hospital to another. As difficult as those hospital visits were, the most difficult challenge for her was something most of us don't even think about: leaving the house.

For someone with limited mobility, the inability to get in and out of a home isn't just an inconvenience, it's a health hazard. Just 20 stairs—7 steps up to get to the front door, 13 steps down to get to the sidewalk—stood between Gary Ann and doctor's appointments, trips

*(continued on page 2)*



### St. Mary hosts Second Annual Business of Aging

This year's Business of Aging panel will discuss social determinants of health and seniors, including housing, transportation, food access, healthcare services and the impact of technology on seniors.

Thursday, October 3, 2019

7:30 AM – 9:30 AM

The Steam Plant  
617 E 3rd Street  
Dayton OH 45402

You can learn more and register at:  
**[www.StMaryDevelopment.org](http://www.StMaryDevelopment.org)**

Thanks to our sponsors:





### Our Mission

St. Mary Development Corporation is a faith-based non-profit organization, called by God to improve the quality of life of seniors by creating sustainable affordable housing for those in need and connecting seniors to healthcare and other services. We work toward the day when all seniors—especially the economically disadvantaged—have a decent, affordable place to live with access to services and become part of a community.

### President:

Tim Bete  
P: 937-277-8149, ext. 210  
Email: tbete@smdcd.org

### Director of Philanthropy:

Cathy Campbell  
P: 937-277-8149, ext. 208  
Email: ccampbell@smdcd.org

### Make a gift

***We depend on donors like you to help our low-income seniors continue to live independently. Your donation supports our St. Mary Connect program of service coordination. St. Mary Development Corporation is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization; your charitable donation is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.***

### Please make checks payable to:

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Attn: Cathy Campbell  
Director of Philanthropy  
2160 E. Fifth Street  
Dayton, OH 45403

### Make a secure online donation at:

**[www.StMaryDevelopment.org](http://www.StMaryDevelopment.org)**

Questions? Call Cathy Campbell at 937-277-8149, ext. 208.



### Gary Ann continued from page 1...

to the grocery store to get healthy food, and visits with friends and family. These are the things that make a life full, and these are the things Gary Ann couldn't have.

At St. Mary, we know true health is holistic. Our approach takes into account the social determinants of health, an emerging field of research that's proven in order for people to be well, their entire life has to be healthy; when your basic needs for healthcare, support, safety, and community aren't met, it has a domino effect.

Before Gary Ann found Hoover Cottages, her basic needs weren't met. She was living in a garage and sleeping on a sofa bed. And those disheartening, sometimes immobilizing 20 steps prevented her from truly experiencing and enjoying her life.

So Gary Ann asked God for help, and he brought her to Hoover Cottages.

Gary Ann's life looks a lot different now. You can see it in her home: postcards from loved ones on the fridge; a red, gold, and green paper family tree she made at Lyons Place I (a nearby St. Mary apartment community), with a leaf for each loved one; the Braille typewriter on her desk—a symbol of both her latest hobby and her acknowledging that death is much farther away than she thought.

Gary Ann isn't just medically healthy; she's holistically well. That's how we approach senior care, because it isn't enough to provide housing if the life that happens inside that home isn't worth living.

The social determinants of health are the ideas we'll be exploring at this year's Business of Aging event on October 3. We hope you'll be able to join us as we discuss improving the lives of seniors with our impressive panel of housing, community, and health experts.

## 2019 Business of Aging focuses on social determinants of health

Positive social determinants of health (SDOH) are the social, economic and environmental conditions that help older adults maintain their health and well-being. In the Dayton area, there is a significant difference in life expectancy based on the zip code in which you live, with some zip codes predicting a life expectancy 20 years greater than others. This difference is largely due to SDOH, including food access, safe housing, affordable transportation and ability to navigate healthcare services. This year's panel will discuss the impact of SDOH in our communities as well as the opportunities to improve SDOH in the future.

At this year's Business of Aging senior summit a moderator will lead a panel of experts on senior trends in housing, technology, healthcare and the social determinants of health, as we explore the Business of Aging in the Miami Valley. During the summit, attendees will hear directly from the people who are change leaders in the senior sector. Information on a new research study conducted by St. Mary on seniors and technology will also be presented to attendees.

To register, please visit [www.StMaryDevelopment.org](http://www.StMaryDevelopment.org).



Photos are from the 2018 Business of Aging event

## Panelists for the Business of Aging

**Amy Riegel**  
Director of Housing at CareSource

**Maddy Shea**  
Principal at Health Management Associates Community Strategies

**Melissa Butler, MD**  
Medical Director of Years Ahead Health Center, Kettering Health Network

**Natalynne Baker**  
Director of St. Mary Connect at St. Mary Development Corporation





*We featured Patrick Steineman, a veteran and Lyons Place II resident, in our last issue. We regret that Patrick recently passed away. Patrick loved living at Lyons Place II and will be missed by his fellow residents.*

## What's inside...

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**We work toward the day  
when all residents of southwest  
Ohio—especially the economically  
disadvantaged—have a decent,  
affordable place to live and  
become part of a community.**



In this newsletter's cover story about Gary Ann, you'll read about how the steps in her former apartment kept her socially isolated. Being connected to others is important to both emotional and physical health. In fact, studies have shown that loneliness and isolation can increase the risk of death and chronic illness in seniors.

An AARP research study I recently read stated that "More than one in five older adults were frequently or often lonely (21.6%). Low-income older adults and those aged 50 to 59 were the most likely to experience loneliness. Low-income older adults were almost twice as likely as higher income adults to report relationship dissatisfaction (29.4% versus 15.6%)."

Often loneliness is affected by social determinants of health such as how accessible an apartment is and how many steps a senior has to navigate. We once had a senior resident who was isolated and lonely because she couldn't afford the adult diapers she needed and was embarrassed to go out.

By providing affordable apartments and service coordination to connect our seniors to the services they need, we're able to address negative social determinants of health and improve the quality of life of residents. Gary Ann is a great example of that and it's an honor and a blessing for us to have her with us.

God bless,

Tim Bete  
President



Thank You  
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TIM BETE  
PRESIDENT  
ST MARY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
2160 E 5TH ST  
DAYTON OH 45403-2445





Your gift supports our St. Mary Connect program,  
helping to connect St. Mary senior residents to the critical services  
they need – such as, furniture, food, utility assistance,  
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