



# *NEW YEAR,* *NEW YOU*

BY KELLIE HOUX  
PHOTOS BY MARK BERNDT

It's a new year which means taking a new start to become a better and more fulfilled individual. Most people make resolutions to eat better or exercise. For seniors looking to make some changes, choosing a new home might be on the resolution list.

Mendi Hanna, director of marketing and development at Bishop Spencer Place, says moving into a senior community can meet many New Year's resolutions such as finding socialization such as sharing a meal with someone, taking a physical fitness class like yoga or an art class. "We offer freedom from maintenance and with that, folks find their time is theirs again. You might just find a new

you. A lot of doors will open. There are fun outings and museum to visit. It is a new beginning.”

Valerie Doran Bashaw has been teaching art classes for six years at Bishop Spencer Place. She studied art at the Kansas City Art Institute and University of Michigan. “While I have my own art in mixed media and fiber art, I love to explore art and teach, but I don’t have a set curriculum. I allow each person to work in whatever medium or whatever they want to use. I have folders of landscapes and animal ideas and I have some that enjoy painting still lifes. I have two talented women who are great at figure drawings. I allow them to explore what they want.”

Bashaw’s weekly classes range from five to eight students. “It’s the highlight of my week every week. They have become like family. I take them at wherever they are. Some have dabbled in art and others are reconnecting with their skills. We tell jokes and listen to classic music; I try to create a positive environment.”

She hopes the art class gives residents a focus. “It’s not about me. The residents are my teachers. I like to know that I am part of helping keep their minds active. We laugh a lot and that’s about as good as anything in the class.” Bashaw wants to have an art show in early 2015. “We have had shows off and on and even some solo artists have had fun. I am constantly showing off what the residents create. I am a proud teacher.”

At Lakeview Village in Lenexa, Kan., there are some activities that lend themselves to quieter ventures. Then there are those who go skydiving. Just last year, Lakeview Village residents took up skydiving to raise funds for Lakeview Village’s Good Samaritan Fund, which was established to support residents who can no longer afford the full cost of their care through no fault of their own.

One of the benefits to senior living communities is that most people who move into the communities live longer, which also means they sometimes run short of financial resources. The Lakeview Village community raises money throughout the year to make sure that no one loses their home because they can no longer afford the full cost. There’s no better way to show off their lust for life, and youthful pride in their community than to skydive for the best cause—helping their neighbors.

For those who wanted to keep their feet on the ground, a group took an adventure to Deanna Rose Farmstead. The Deanna Rose Farmstead depicts a turn-of-the-century family farm and features more than 200 animals and birds, flower and vegetable gardens, a one-room country schoolhouse, and an old-time fishing hole. Cedar Lake Village in Olathe, Kan., is another community that has a continuum of care where seniors can live in villas, apartments and then in assisted care. “We have experiences that anyone will enjoy,” explains Kelsie Tryon, marketing director. “We have a photography club that just started in December. There’s the Sew and Sews who



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get together to sew and chat. We have a prayer shawl ministry. Then the health activities such as aquacize and yoga. There's strength and stretching. Residents can even participate in an acting club."

When the weather improves, residents fish or take walks. "They can take day trips and we team with the Johnson County Parks & Recreation to offer even more excursions."

Tryon says that residents also participate within the Good Samaritan Society theme of social accountability. "We can help residents find community service. We have a resident who drives to Gardner to serve as a crossing guard twice a day. ... We have new resident lunches and talk about the community. Community can be about getting involved and they are doing good for someone else. A lot of our activities are resident-generated and led. We want our residents to see that within our community, their life is rich."



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