

ANNUAL IMPACT EDITION

# Messenger

Fall 2020



**A grand celebration  
for people with  
disabilities**

# Message from Mike

Friends,

As you know well, the past several months have been unlike anything that any of us have ever experienced. COVID-19 and the resulting economic downturn have challenged us all tremendously. At Bethesda, we have had to adjust and evolve quickly, doing what we must to ensure we will be here well into the future. With your help, your encouragement and your prayers, we are on our way.

We are looking forward to the future – a time where our innovations and services will impact more people with intellectual and developmental disabilities than ever before. That is what this issue is all about, and as you'll see, in many ways the future is already here.

You will witness how behavioral support, often delivered virtually, is improving outcomes and lives in multiple states. You will learn how our transition and employment support are empowering independence and raising expectations of people supported as well as their families. And you will experience a taste of the “joyful living” now being enjoyed by residents of Bethesda Cornerstone Village, a first-of-its-kind residential community now open in Minnesota – with many more developments to come.

While we are excited about the possibilities of innovation, we are humbled by the responsibility we have to help people with disabilities live their best lives. It is a responsibility we take seriously and I hope we can count on your continued support to realize this amazing vision.

May God bless you,



A handwritten signature of Mike Thirtle in blue ink. The signature is stylized and cursive, written in a dark blue color.

Mike Thirtle, PhD  
**President & CEO Bethesda**

*Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

*– Galatians 6:2 NIV*

# Bethesda

# 2030

Moving **BOLDLY** into the Future



## Homes

**Creating innovative housing options**  
for people with I/DD, including growing our Bethesda Cornerstone Village locations, increasing shared living arrangements and adding small group homes where it makes fiscal sense



## Transition Services

**Increasing transition services**  
for young adults, including education programs, life skills training and support to help people gain experience and confidence to live as independently as possible



## Employment

**Expanding employment services**  
to new markets to provide meaningful work opportunities for more people that aren't currently supported by Bethesda, with a goal to provide a rewarding career paths

## What does Bethesda's future look like?

Our 2030 Vision is to transform Bethesda into the intellectual and developmental disabilities industry innovator, by offering new services and a portfolio of new business ventures that will contribute critical funding to our work.

Together, we can innovate and move quickly to expand our reach and create positive impacts for the 6.5 million people in the U.S. who need our support.



## Behavioral Health

**Launching our behavior support services**  
in new markets will increase the number of people we can provide life-changing applied behavior analysis treatment to, including both adults and children



## Financial Service

**Introducing financial services**  
to ensure benefits are never in danger and people with disabilities have the financial independence and security we all desire



## Retail

**Introducing a new retail brand**  
to attract new generations of consumers and donors to our stores in order to generate revenue to fund our mission



## Faith Support

**Providing faith resources for people with I/DD**  
to ensure every person we support has access to resources that will help them live the faith life they choose for themselves



## Smart Tech

**Expanding the use of smart tech services**  
to help those with disabilities gain more independence by using technology to make everyday life easier, more safe and secure



# Bethesda



# **‘Joyful living’ becomes reality**

## Bethesda Cornerstone Village achieves a momentous milestone

On Thursday, September 24, we celebrated the grand opening of our first Bethesda Cornerstone Village, a new Christian residential community in Victoria, Minnesota. Bethesda Cornerstone Village creates the promise of “joyful living” for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as active adults 55 and greater.



“This beautiful housing community celebrates independence and brings people together in a fulfilling, comfortable lifestyle,” said Tom Campbell, Bethesda’s vice president of real estate. “Both seniors and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities struggle to find high-quality, accessible housing in nice neighborhoods. Bethesda Cornerstone Village-Victoria meets those needs and delivers so much more.”

Bethesda Cornerstone Village Victoria consists of a total of 52 homes: 37 apartment homes and 15 villa homes. Up to 20 percent of the residences will serve people with a disability who live independently. The goal of the new development is to offer accessible, high-quality housing while encouraging independent living and connections among residents. It is the latest example of innovation for which Bethesda is becoming nationally known.

Bethesda intends to expand the inclusive living concept by building additional Cornerstone Village locations in clusters around major U.S. cities, including in the Twin Cities. Each will be tailored to the needs and demographics of its community.

The project features state-of-the-art smart home technology. All the rooms have universal design concepts, such as low-threshold showers, bathroom grab bars, larger units for wheelchairs and large pocket door handles for those with dexterity issues. In addition, Bethesda installed numerous safety and security measures, including a robust common area camera system, access control and smart unit deadbolts.

Residences are built to accommodate evolving needs as residents age, and offer maximum accessibility with features including walk-in showers, pocket doors and wide doorways to easily accommodate walkers and wheelchairs. The villa homes have attached one- or two-car garages and the apartment home building features an underground parking garage for easy access in any weather.

Leisure activities at Bethesda Cornerstone Village Victoria are made easy with a beautiful community center that features lots of natural light, plenty of space to gather with friends and organized learning sessions like cooking classes, Bible studies, fitness activities, and wellness activities.

### **A grand celebration**

After years of hard work, we were thrilled to be able to celebrate the grand opening with our staff, members of the community and—of course—the residents of our first Cornerstone Village.

Throughout the course of two events, both of which were livestreamed and attended by hundreds of supporters, we heard from incredible partners like Tom Funk, Mayor of the City

of Victoria; Jonathan Weinhagen, President & CEO of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce; and Troy Hudson, Chaplain for the Minnesota Timberwolves.

“Bringing joyful living and independence to people with disabilities is a godsend,” said Hudson. Funk also spoke about his excitement for Cornerstone Village and having it be part of his community.

“This project truly demonstrates inclusiveness,” he said, “which makes Cornerstone a perfect fit for the City of Victoria.”

“Cornerstone Village is a blessing to me from God,” said Hanna, one of Cornerstone’s first residents. “My goal is to be more independent and I feel like this is just a really great opportunity for me to do that.”

Lauren, Hanna’s best friend and roommate, agrees. “My future has more opportunities now that I have this apartment, this place to live, and this community of people around me,” she said.



Visit [bethesdacornerstonevillage.org](https://bethesdacornerstonevillage.org) for more details about Bethesda Cornerstone Village.





# Enhancing lives one step Behavior Analysis

At Bethesda, our goal is to help people live fulfilling, meaningful lives. But when a person is engaging in problem behaviors or lacking in specific skills, it can have a negative effect not only on their life, but on the lives of those around them.

That's why, as part of our 2030 vision, we're proud to offer behavior supports, a highly customizable and positive approach to promoting behavior change, from reducing problem behaviors to promoting skill-building.

What's more, we're broadening our reach by expanding this offering to include children. Children with autism in particular have shown to benefit greatly from this kind of support, and Bethesda is in a unique position to provide these critical supports—not just today, but throughout a child's life.

## What is Applied Behavior Analysis?

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a scientific field of study that addresses socially significant behaviors that impact a person's daily life. It aims to understand the meaning or purpose behind those behaviors in order to promote positive behavior change.

Using this science, our experts work one-on-one with each individual to understand what's at the root of the behavior, identify goals, and ultimately enhance the independence and wellbeing of everyone involved.

## Here's how it works:

- A Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) will conduct an evaluation, which includes interviews and assessments with the individual or child, as well as interviews with the family.
- Using data gathered, the BCBA will create a customized plan designed to promote positive behavior changes.
- Under supervision of the BCBA, a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) will work with you and your loved one to implement the plan. This includes doing regular sessions, either in person or virtually, as well as training for the family.
- The team tracks progress and uses ongoing data analysis to ensure the plan is continuously tailored to maximize effectiveness.



# at a time with Applied

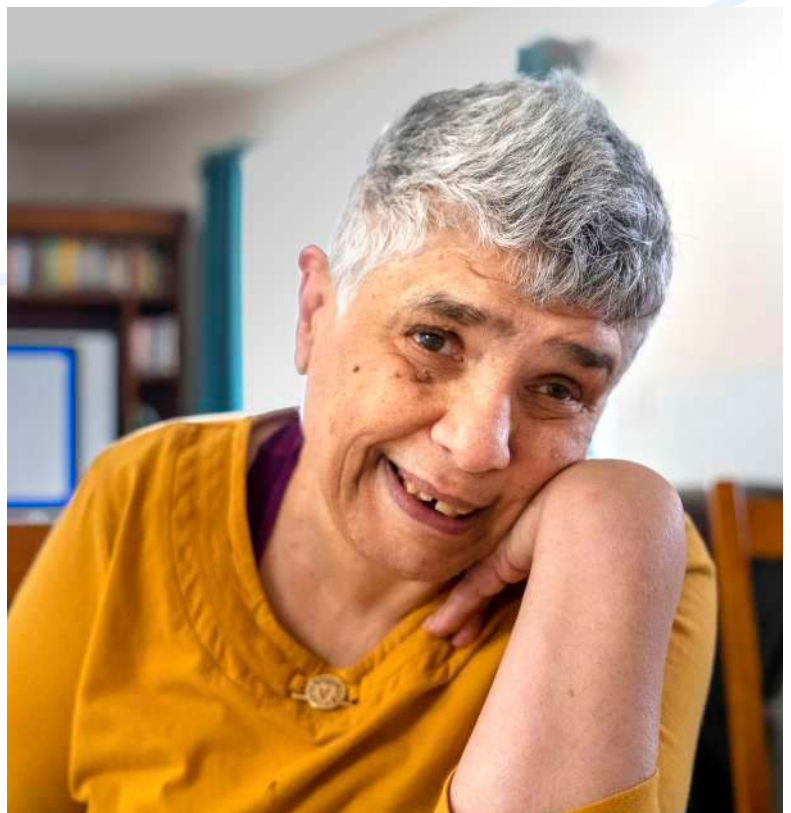
For adults with developmental disabilities, it's more common that the support will be designed to reduce problem behaviors; with children, supports are more often designed to promote skill-building.

## **What does this look like in practice?**

A host home provider in Colorado reached out for help because the person she was supporting, Hollie, was refusing to get out of bed. Through assessments with Hollie and her host home provider, the BCBA determined attention was important to Hollie, and by refusing to get out of bed, Hollie was getting a lot of attention from her host home provider. The host home provider changed her response to Hollie and, instead of giving her extra attention for staying in bed, began lavishing her with praise when she did get up. Soon, Hollie learned staying in bed wasn't producing her desired result, so the behavior faded away.

## **Supporting Bethesda's future**

Behavior supports not only help the people who receive them—it's also an important offering that will ensure a strong future for Bethesda. By expanding to include children in addition to adults, we're able to help more people than ever before, not just today, but throughout their lifetime. And because behavior supports can be provided virtually as well as in person, this is a flexible, accessible option that makes it easy for us to help people live their best lives possible.



# Employment supports: the key to a successful career

Having a job you love can be an important part of living a full, happy life. It fosters independence. It promotes personal growth. And the sense of satisfaction from a job well done is good for the mind, body and spirit.

At Bethesda, we believe everyone deserves the opportunity to find meaningful employment. And we know some people just need a little extra support. That's where we come in.

## Not just a job—the right job.

At Bethesda, we don't just help people find jobs. We help them find careers. By working one-on-one with the people we support, we aim to not only help them find their dream job, but succeed at it.

The first thing we do is work to understand each person's goals and desires. Do you want to work with kids? We'll help you explore that. Interested in cars? We'll connect you with a local mechanic. Not sure what you want to do? Let's check out different options to help you discover a career that excites you.

And that's just the beginning. Because we also help with interviewing skills. Resume development. Proper work attire. Transportation. Anything a person needs support with—we're there for them.

We also work with each person to determine their unique needs, as well as learning and communication styles. If sensory issues are a problem, we'll know to keep them out noisy work environments. If a person excels at visual learning, we'll provide diagrams they can easily reference to stay on task.

And our support doesn't end once a person lands a job. Our job coaches will be on hand as long as needed to help ensure each person succeeds, whether that means doing the job together or simply being available to answer questions or provide prompts. The ultimate goal is for each person to do their job independently, with less and less support as they gain proficiency in their new role.

## Their future. Our future.

Helping people find careers they love is an important part of Bethesda's mission. Not only are we setting people up for long-term success and fulfillment, but we're paving the way for a more inclusive future—a future where people of all abilities are seen as valued members of the workforce and of the community at large.

**Emelie wanted a rewarding career. She cut her teeth as a working woman at a chain department store—a job that helped her gain critical skills, but didn't give her the opportunity to help people, which was important to her.**



**With the help of Bethesda staff, Emelie began exploring other career opportunities—and eventually found the perfect fit for her. Today, she's a para in a local school helping kids with disabilities.**