# The Trail MIX

The neighborhood news from Trinity Woods I Issue: July 2026

# Summer School is in Session at Trinity Woods!

**By Bonnie Polak, VP Philanthropy and Community Engagement**

Summer is a season for growth, and at Trinity Woods, learning never takes a vacation. Trinity Woods' Summer School program is celebrating its 10th year of bringing residents together through engaging classes, meaningful conversations, and new experiences.

This year's Summer School features 13 diverse classes, all taught by residents, designed to inspire curiosity and encourage lifelong learning. Topics range from current issues such as Artificial Intelligence and Climate Change to hands-on experiences like Make a Bamboo Flute, Junk Journals, and Gardening with Nature. Residents can also explore history, retirement planning, games, and creative arts through classes including History of Lace, Memories of Route 66, Euchre Card Game, and Sculpted Threads: What & How?

"Summer School is one of the highlights of the year because it gives residents the opportunity to explore new interests and share experiences with one another," said Garrett Lee, Trinity Woods CEO. "The enthusiasm and engagement we see each summer are truly inspiring."

More than just education, Summer School fosters connection among residents. Classes provide opportunities to meet neighbors, exchange ideas, and build friendships in a welcoming environment.

"Learning together creates a sense of community," said Irene Brown, Life Enrichment Coordinator. "Residents come for the classes, but they often leave with new friendships and a renewed sense of purpose."

From understanding the role of a poll worker to exploring ageism, faith, retirement security, and local history, Summer School offers something for everyone. The program supports both intellectual growth and social wellness, helping residents stay engaged, active, and connected.

As Trinity Woods celebrates a decade of Summer School, the program continues to demonstrate that learning is a lifelong adventure—and one best shared with friends.

70TH ANNIVERSARY
Established 1956
Trinity Woods

## In this issue:

**Summer School**

**July Events**
Piano Concert & New Friends from Uganda and More!

**New Neighbors**
Meet Gary and Nancy, Lynn and Pam, and Judy!

By Weldon Tisdale, Chaplain

# A Small Beginning Is Still a Beginning

As Trinity Woods celebrates July and joins the nation in marking America's 250th birthday, it is fitting to remember that great things often begin in quiet, unassuming ways. A nation, a community, a calling, a life of faith, all are shaped by beginnings that may seem small at first glance. Jesus reminds us of that truth in the parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13: 31-32).

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed," He says. In the original Greek, the word *kokkos* refers to a tiny grain, something so small it could easily be overlooked. Yet that little seed carries within it the power of future growth. What looks insignificant is not empty. What appears small is not without promise.

The same is true in our own lives. In biblical thought, a seed is never just a seed. The Hebrew word *zera* carries the sense of offspring, future, and promise. A seed is not only what is planted; it is what is carried forward. Hidden inside the smallest beginning is the possibility of fruit, shelter, and blessing.

Jesus says the mustard seed grows until it becomes large enough for the birds of the air to come and rest in its branches. That image is deliberate. In Scripture, great trees often represent kingdoms and places of refuge. But the mustard seed was not a noble cedar. It was ordinary, fast-growing, and even a little wild. By choosing this image, Jesus teaches us that the Kingdom of God does not always look polished or predictable. It begins quietly, grows unexpectedly, and spreads farther than anyone imagined.

Sometimes we dismiss small things: a kind word, a prayer whispered in the morning, a decision to forgive, a new habit, a fresh commitment, a seed of hope in a difficult season. Yet the parable tells us not to despise small beginnings. What seems minor today may become a place of shelter tomorrow. What appears hidden now may one day bless many.

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday this July, we are reminded that both nations and lives are shaped by beginnings. Small beginnings are still beginnings. Seeds still grow. Prayers still matter. Faithful work still bears fruit. And in God's hands, even the smallest start can become something greater than we ever expected.

So let us honor the past, live faithfully in the present, and trust God with the future. The seed is small, but the promise is not.

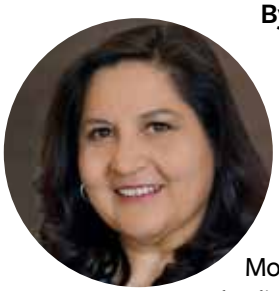
## A BIG TRINITY WOODS WELCOME TO OLIVIA!

We are excited to welcome Olivia Lazar to the Trinity Woods Team as our new Community Engagement Assistant. Originally from Edmond, Oklahoma, Olivia recently graduated from Oklahoma State University with degrees in Marketing and International Business as well as a minor in Spanish. In her role, Olivia will help share the stories that make Trinity Woods such a special community - through social media platforms, community outreach, and assisting the Sales Team.

"I've always loved connecting with people and finding creative ways to tell their stories," said Lazar. "This role gives me the opportunity to do both. I'm excited to get to know the residents, families, and Trinity Woods team. I look forward to helping showcase everything that makes this community so special."

As a Tulsa newcomer, Olivia is excited to explore the city and become part of the community. In her spare time, Olivia enjoys reading, collecting vinyl records, and spending time with friends and family. She is excited to begin this new chapter and become part of the Trinity Woods family.

By Lupina Fry, Wellness Nurse



# The Health Benefits of TIME OUTDOORS

Most of us know that sunlight helps our bodies make Vitamin D, lowers stress, and keeps your sleep cycle on track. But being in nature can provide even more benefits. The National Institute of Health (NIH) reports that spending just 10 to 20 minutes outside can lift your mood, improve focus, enhance memory, lower blood pressure, and help you sleep better. Studies also show that time outdoors can lower your risk of major illnesses like heart disease and diabetes, boost your immune system, and ease anxiety and depression. Getting outside each day, even briefly, can make a real difference for both body and mind.

Many experts suggest that a short 20-minute session outdoors each day can lower heart rate and sharpen focus. This is a general guideline. Individual needs may vary based on age, current health, and even the season. It's a good idea to adjust your routine to fit your own circumstances.

If you're concerned about full sun exposure, try early-morning sunrises and late-evening sunsets. They may be beautiful experiences, but they also do your body some good. Stepping outside early in the day lets natural light hit your circadian rhythm's master clock. This tells you to be alert, awake, and energized. Sunset's warm, amber tones prepare your body for sleep. Try enjoying your morning coffee outside or watching the sunset in the evening.

The practice of Shinrin-yoku, a Japanese term for forest bathing, involves consciously immersing all your senses in nature. Unplugging from technology to absorb the environment through sight, sound, smell, and touch. Sit on a bench, feel the wind, listen to the birds, or take off your shoes to feel the cool grass. That's Shinrin-yoku.

One study used smartphones with assessment applications and found positive associations with feeling happy, restored, and relaxed within 10 minutes in nature! It doesn't take much time or effort to make an impact. In this study, participants sat on benches, strolled in parks, or took brief walks outdoors.

At Trinity Woods, we recognize that nature and beautiful surroundings are part of environmental wellness. Places like little Woodard Park (outside of Crestwood), Owens Park, and the numerous walking trails make it easy and safe to get outside. So why not take a moment today to step outdoors and experience these benefits for yourself? The return on investment is truly positive!

## July Birthdays at Trinity Woods

Lou Felts....4
Sally Ryser....6
Kathy Moellenberndt....6
Jan Steffensen....6
Shirley Frizzell....8
Bernie Skinner....8
Barb Taruscio....9
Judy Thomas....9
Phil Brinlee....10
June Brown....11
Peggy Ziglar....11
Susan Dillingham....12
Kay Brown....13
Carson Jackson....14
Gerry Pittenger....15
Jill Tenzythoff....15
John Berry....16
Jim Bush....17
Peggy Hanna....17
Dick Koger....17
Lynn Mattson....19
Jerry Ehlers....20
Mary Lynn Gilbert....20
Mary Kevin McNamara....20
Joyce Saunders....21
Marilyn Nunneley....23
Dorothy VanFossen....24
Julie Gustafson....25
Joan Raczkowski....25
Mary Ziegler....25
Elizabeth Bartlett....26
Judy Moore....26
Ruth Weston....26
Jo Ellen Culver....27
Tom Reed....28
Carolyn Shumaker....29
Chuck Uerling....29
Bud Ellis....31
Glenna Hertzler....31

## July Anniversaries

Bill and Susan Holloway....7/15/1994
Ken and Judy Bailey....7/23/1982
Dwight and Judy Thomas....7/30/1966

## In Memory of

Betty Coleman....6/7/2026

For more information on classes see the 2026 Class Booklet or check out the Trinity Woods Neighborhood App. Don't forget Summer School continues in August. Watch for more information in the next issue on those exciting classes.

**Be Aware! You are Being Exposed to Nature**
**Wednesday, July 8 at 2:30 p.m. Fleming Center**
**Instructor: Dwight Thomas, Retired Biologist, U.S. Dept. of Interior and 17-year docent at the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve**

As you live from day to day, you are being exposed to Earth's natural environment in almost every activity. This course is designed to encourage you to pay attention to the beauty and the interesting sights of nature that parade before you and to encourage you to enjoy and learn from what you see, smell, feel, and experience.

**Make a Bamboo Flute!**
**Thursday, July 9 at 8 a.m. Little Woodward Park (northwest corner of Crestwood, in gazebo)**
**Instructor: Kathy Bradshaw, has shared primitive flute making skills with several groups including Gilcrease Museum docents, and participants in Cherokee County, North Carolina.**

All supplies are provided. Activities include drilling, sanding, wood burning, torching, stringing beads, adding feathers and other fine motor skills.

**Sculpted Threads**
**Friday, July 10 at 1 p.m. Crestwood Theatre**
**Instructor: Janet Hawks, retired Occupational Therapist, learned to knit at 6, started weaving at 13 and taught sewing classes at "Stretch and Sew" for a couple of years.**

Sculpted threads is a "fiber" artform that Jan created in the early 2000's. It is created on a home sewing machine using thread and water-soluble stabilizer. In this class Jan will explain and demonstrate the techniques involved in creating different types of forms as well as share the adventure of writing a "how-to" book.

**Euchre Card Game**
**3 sessions: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, July 15-17 at 1 p.m. in the Community Life Center: Trudy Plowman Classroom**
**Instructor: Susan Crum enjoys cards and helping people have fun!**

Learn and practice the card game of Euchre, which is very popular in the Midwest and Canada. Euchre is a fast paced, trick-taking card game for four players, divided into two partnerships. Using a 24-card deck (9 through Ace,) the goal is to win the majority of the five tricks in each hand.

**Food & Wine Pairings**
**Monday, July 20 at 2 p.m. Crestwood Theatre.**
**Instructor: Toni Dickson, as a native Californian, visited vineyards throughout the state. She enjoyed the tastings each vineyard offered as she developed her palate.**

This class comes directly from the Beringer Vineyards outside Santa Rosa, California. Through a guided tasting of several varieties of wine with various food tastes, Toni will demonstrate how the dominant taste in food changes the taste of wine and what flavors pair best with which wines. Cost of this class is $14.

**Lift High the Cross**
**2 sessions: Wednesday and Friday, July 22 and 24 at 1 p.m. Fleming Center**
**Leader: Dr. Robert Mansfield, Emeritus Professor, Oral Roberts University**

Christians believe and agree that the Cross of Jesus is at the center of the Gospel and Christian faith. But understanding and explaining the meaning of the Cross is more difficult. We shall examine references to the cross in the Bible with the goal of each person coming to a fuller understanding of the meaning of the Cross.

**Climate Change, An Update - Carbon Capture, A Solution?**
**Monday, July 27 at 2 p.m. Fleming Center**
**Instructor: Dr. Marcia Bates, former OSU professor and a Licensed Professional Engineer in Oklahoma and Texas.**

We are all aware of the occurrence of climate change. It is a worldwide phenomenon and manifests itself in droughts, wildfires, higher sea levels, flooding, intense snowstorms, and more frequent and severe hurricanes among other side effects. This presentation will explore where we stand as a world with respect to climate change, and what has been accomplished to mitigate or decrease some of the outcomes.

**Gardening with Nature**
**2 sessions: Wednesday, July 29 at 1 p.m. in Crestwood Theatre and Thursday, July 30, guided tours of the Hertzlers' backyard between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.**
**Instructor: Don Hertzler, Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at Southwestern Oklahoma State University**

Learn about the interesting ways nature balances itself when you grow primarily native plants in the garden. Meet some "decoy" plants that help create a balanced microecology. The second session will be a guided visit to the Hertzlers' back yard to show the microecology at work.

# More July Events!

**Building Friendships Across the World**
**Monday, July 13 at 2 p.m.**
**Community Life Center, Westervelt Hall**

Join Petra Otee-Mangesho, Founder/Executive Director, and Steve Wright, Chair of the PKM USA Board, for a special presentation sharing Petra's inspiring story and introducing PKM's new Compassion Connections program.

This unique initiative creates opportunities for YOU to build meaningful friendships with students in Uganda through letters, photos, shared stories, and encouragement. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of another culture, enjoy intergenerational connections, and experience the joy of making a positive impact on a young person's life. Come learn how simple acts of friendship can foster hope, understanding, and lasting relationships across continents. Petra Kids Ministries is a nonprofit organization serving more than 800 children and youth annually in Northern Uganda through education, mentorship, skills training, and community development programs.

**American Tapestry of Music**
**Thursday, July 16 at 7 p.m.**
**Community Life Center, Westervelt Hall**

Wade Daniel will be here to share, through piano and voice, selections in celebration of our country's 250th birthday. In addition to patriotic music, there will be selections by Scott Joplin, Lennon & McCartney, Joni Mitchell and more. Wade has been active as a pianist, vocalist, music teacher, and music minister for over 35 years. He holds Master of Church Music and Master of Music degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and has served at First Baptist Church, Bartlesville since 2009. Wade has performed nationally and internationally and has produced 10 recordings.

**Aria Extravaganza**
**Friday, July 31 at 6:30 p.m.**
**Community Life Center, Westervelt Hall**
**Ticket required.***

Catch a rising star when Spotlight on Opera at Tulsa Opera returns to Trinity Woods for the Aria Extravaganza Concert! Aspiring opera artists from across the US will serenade with excerpts from The Marriage of Figaro, La bohème, Rigoletto, Die Fledermaus, and more. Please join us immediately after the concert for a reception. Trinity Woods is delighted to partner again with Tulsa Opera for this exciting event. ***Non-residents and guests may purchase tickets by calling Tulsa Opera's box office at 918- 582-3133.**

# Welcome to the Woods!

## Gary and Nancy Bracken – Villa

Gary and Nancy Bracken
Villa

Gary and Nancy are excited to be settling into the neighborhood and their villa. The Brackens met when they were in high school in El Dorado, Kansas. Their friendship led to love and a marriage that has lasted for 62 years.

Gary was born and raised in Kansas. Gary won a scholarship and attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology after graduating high school, earning a degree in civil engineering. Out of college he accepted a position with Williams Bros Company in Tulsa. Early in his career Gary was given an assignment and the family relocated to North Africa. While Gary worked in a desert camp in Benghazi, Nancy spent much of her time raising their three sons in what they considered "the ultimate sandbox."

They had many years abroad with Gary working in Tripoli, Algeria, and England. The family took advantage of travel throughout Europe, which enabled Nancy, a true art lover, to visit a great many museums.

Nancy was born in Oklahoma but raised in Kansas. Her true passion is art. Nancy has been part of many studio groups for over 30 years where she enjoys oil painting and charcoals.

They are excited to be at Trinity Woods and are looking forward to all that campus life has to offer.

## Lynn and Pam Mattson – Patio Home

Lynn and Pam Mattson
Patio Home

When Lynn and Pam Mattson decided it was time to make a move, they weren't looking for a place to slow down—they were looking for a community. After raising a family, building successful careers, and enjoying retirement, they recently chose Trinity Woods as the next chapter in a life already filled with adventure and accomplishment.

Pam grew up in Hutchinson, Kansas, and earned her degree in English Education from the University of Kansas before completing law school. Her career included work in tax and pension law, raising three children, earning her CPA credentials, and later teaching accounting at Tulsa Community College for 13 years. She describes teaching as one of the most rewarding chapters of her professional life.

Lynn was raised in Rochester, Minnesota, and studied economics and history at the University of Minnesota before attending law school at SMU. He moved to Tulsa nearly five decades ago and built a long career practicing labor and employment law. In retirement, he enjoys woodworking and has created countless pieces of furniture and household projects over the years.

The couple met on a blind date arranged through mutual friends and will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary this August. Together they have three children and three grandchildren, with family spread across the Pacific Northwest.

These days, Pam enjoys reading, puzzles, games, and Mahjong, while Lynn continues to tinker in his workshop whenever he can. Both have quickly embraced life at Trinity Woods, appreciating the welcoming community, opportunities to stay active, and, as they enthusiastically noted, the surprisingly excellent food.

## Judy Moore– Crestwood

Judy Moore
Crestwood

When Judy Moore talks about her life, the stories come easily. One minute she's describing teaching kindergarteners Spanish through song, and the next she's recalling sailing through the Caribbean, snow skiing in the Rockies, or meeting the man she would marry. It's a life filled with adventure, family, and a genuine love of people.

Although Judy was born in Lebanon, Tennessee, she considers herself a lifelong Tulsan. After attending both Central and Edison High Schools, she met her late husband Doug Moore, the musician who would become her husband of 60 years. Their relationship began as a blind date in high school and continued through their years at the University of Arkansas, where Judy earned a degree in elementary education.

Teaching became Judy's lifelong calling. Over a career spanning nearly 40 years, she taught students from sixth grade through preschool, including 10 years as a kindergarten teacher and another 15 years teaching Spanish through music and movement to preschoolers.

Since moving to Trinity Woods, Judy has quickly embraced community life. She enjoys exercise classes, card games, lectures, and meeting new neighbors. An avid walker and talented cook, she appreciates both the beautiful campus and the welcoming spirit she has found here. With her warmth, adventurous spirit, and gift for connecting with others, Judy is already making herself right at home at Trinity Woods.

# July STARS Employee of the Month

## Ryan Fernandez – Dining Team

- **Start Date:** March 2015
- **Born:** Puerto Rico
- **Raised:** Tulsa, OK
- **Enjoy most about their job:** Making the Residents Smile
- **Favorite thing about working with residents:** Hearing Their Stories
- **Described by Coworkers:** Kind-Hearted
- **Favorite Hobbies/Activities:** Photography and Cooking
- **Something People Don't Know:** Writes Poetry
- **Dream Trip/Vacation:** Going to Korea
- **Learning a New Skill, what would it be:** Play the Guitar
- **Favorite Restaurant:** Sisserou's Caribbean Restaurant
- **Favorite TV Show:** Dong Yi
- **Best Advice Ever Received:** "There is no can't, there is I will."
- **Biggest Influence:** Grandfather – Angel Leonidis Fernandez de Toro
- **Most Proud of:** Being a Published Poet
- **Dinner with any Person:** Pedro Albizu Campos
- **Three Things Can't Live Without:** Peanut Butter, Music, and Friends
- **On Their Bucket List:** Own His Own Business
- **Favorite Saying:** Ay Bendito (oh bless you)
- **Quote from Supervisor:** "Ryan strives to provide excellent service to the residents. His ability to assist with other aspects of the dining operation makes him invaluable!" - LaTasha Grundy, Dining Supervisor

## Michael Pigeon – Dining Team

- **Start Date:** June 2007
- **Grew Up:** Turley, Oklahoma
- **Enjoy most about their job:** Cooking
- **Favorite thing about working with residents:** Their Appreciation
- **Described by Coworkers:** Dependable
- **Favorite Hobbies/Activities:** Gaming
- **Something People Don't Know:** Native American
- **Dream Trip/Vacation:** Staying Home
- **Learning a New Skill, what would it be:** Electrician
- **Favorite Restaurant:** Mi Pueblo
- **Favorite TV Show:** Yellowstone
- **Best Advice Ever Received:** "Don't let it define you."
- **Biggest Influence:** Mom
- **Dinner with any Person:** Grandmother
- **Three Things Can't Live Without:** Games, Pizza, and Dr. Pepper
- **Favorite Saying:** "See you starside."
- **Supervisor Says:** "Michael is an integral part of the everyday operations in the Charter Oak kitchen. He has really become a leader for the team and does a great job!" - Kelsey Knouse, Executive Chef

## Trinity Woods Service Awards

**10**

**Years of Service**

Melissa Dimanochie, CMA
Memory Care Assisted Living

### Trinity Woods Leadership Team

**Garrett Lee**
Chief Executive Officer

**Crystal Creekmore**
VP of Human Resources

**Emilie Creswell**
VP of Health Services

**Dennis Graham**
Chief Operating Officer

**Bonnie J. Polak**
VP of Philanthropy and Community Engagement and Editor

**Jerome Steele**
CFO

**Weldon Tisdale**
VP of Wellness and Chaplain

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# Celebrating Dennis Graham's Retirement!

## Fearless Leader and Faithful Friend

After years of dedicated service and leadership, we extend our deepest gratitude to Dennis Graham, Chief Operating Officer, and congratulate him on his retirement from Trinity Woods.

Through unwavering commitment, thoughtful stewardship, and a passion for excellence, Dennis helped shape our community into a place where residents, families, and team members feel valued, supported, and secure. His vision, hard work, and steady guidance have left a lasting impact on Trinity Woods.

While we will miss his daily presence on campus, we celebrate this well-earned new chapter and wish Dennis and his family happiness, fulfillment, and many wonderful adventures in the years ahead. Dennis's legacy will remain an enduring part of Trinity Woods for generations to come.

**Join us for a Retirement Reception**
**Friday, July 10th at 10:30 a.m.**
**Trinity Woods Community Life Center**