

Celebrating Twenty Years: Little Things Mean A Lot

They always come around, Monday mornings. Are you perhaps reading this at your desk? What about reading this at a coffee shop with soy skinny chai latte in hand? Maybe you've come from dropping the kids off at school and have just this minute returned home. Wherever you might find yourself each of us know that surrounding ourselves with routines, people, and little things we love is something pleasurable, something comforting. It is universal truth that we all understand.

For residents at Douglas County Health Center, their lives center on little things they love too: Participating in resident-focused activities, sharing mealtimes with other residents in their neighborhoods, working on crafts or spending time in the garden or watching TV, attending worship services in the chapel. All of these strive to make the health center feel more like home and fostering that feeling in a long-term care environment is vital.

Our foundation helps DCHC feel more of a home by providing many additional little things that we hope mean a lot. A Welcome Basket for all residents upon their admission; subscriptions to the Omaha World-Herald for all neighborhoods; home decor pieces that bring color and cheeriness; digital clocks for each resident's bedside; a Comfort Cart for families and loved one's use when a resident is nearing their end of life journey. Particularly notable are two more project-based little things.

The first is a beautiful three-tiered fountain the foundation purchased that is situated in the Cavanaugh Care Center gardens where Douglas County Master Gardeners do such a wonderful job of keeping everything so lovely and in bloom all season long. Residents enjoy this space daily and it is important to keep one's senses connected to sights, smells, and sounds of a garden and the outdoors.

The second was suggested to us because a resident who still took ownership and pride in doing her own personal laundry (clothing items) was leaving her neighborhood to walk clear across the building to another neighborhood in order to get her week's washing done. Using memorial donations received after the death of one of our founding board directors, the foundation identified a suitable space on her neighborhood and installed a washer and dryer for all this neighborhood's residents personal use. When the director's widow was told how his memorial donations were used she commented that it was a wonderful tribute though she teasingly added that she thought he had never done a load of laundry in his life.

We have said before and will say it again: These little things might seem small in scope however they absolutely do make a large and important difference to our residents and to their lives.