

MONARCH

VOLUME SIX | EDITION ONE | SUMMER 2025

The Flowers of Scotland

HEARTS OF GIVING BLOOM IN EVERY SEASON

IN THIS ISSUE

Creativity Knows No Boundaries

Boosting Performances, One Note at a Time

Celebrating Five New Awards



*Scottish bagpiper tribute
at the Memorial Service for Mary Forester*



Exemplary living for generations.

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NICHOLAS J. LYNN
BOARD CHAIR



JAY BIERE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Board Chair and CEO Welcome

At Monarch, we're proud to be more than just a magazine. We're a reflection of the generosity, spirit, and heart that make the Plymouth Place community so special. Each issue highlights the stories of individuals, families, and projects that are shaping our future, not only through their contributions but also through the values they embody and pass on to others.

This edition focuses on legacy, not just what we leave behind, but how we live out our purpose each day. At Plymouth Place, this purpose is clear: to create a welcoming environment where people can grow, connect, and live their best lives. We believe that legacy is built through small, yet meaningful moments in the lives we impact each day, the traditions we uphold, and the creativity we encourage.

You'll learn about the lives and generosity of two historically significant Plymouth Place residents, whose transformational gifts are shaping our community in meaningful ways. Their support reflects a profound commitment to our mission and a desire to create something lasting for others to enjoy. It's a reminder that legacy isn't only about history, it's about the intentional desire to partner with those places that hold true to the

values and principles they were founded on in serving others.

We're also humbled to share that Plymouth Place recently received five awards recognizing excellence in wellness, design, innovation, and community leadership. It's an honor, truly. But while awards are wonderful, they're not why we do this. We do it because we believe in people. We believe in showing up with compassion. We believe in doing the right thing, even when no one's watching. We just believe.

When values align, great things happen. Recognition is nice. But service excellence is who we are.

As you flip through this issue, we invite you to think about what legacy means to you. Whether it's through philanthropy, creativity, or simply being there for someone else, your values have the power to shape the future in meaningful ways.

So we ask: What will your legacy be?

Respectfully,
Nick Lynn, Board Chair, and Jay Biere, CEO



DON AHLM
RESIDENTS' COUNCIL PRESIDENT

LETTER FROM RESIDENTS' COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Plymouth Place has a rich history of providing intrinsic value through service and care for others.

This can be seen within our community, where residents give their time and expertise to benefit others by serving on committees that benefit us all.

Our team members serve us daily, offering compassion and a smile, contributing to our legacy.

The housekeepers, servers, and all those working behind the scenes keep Plymouth Place running smoothly and efficiently.

The security team ensures our safety, while

the maintenance team ensures everything works properly.

The food service team provides meals and caters for various special events.

The grounds crew creates an inviting natural environment with seasonal landscaping and an opportunity to enjoy a pleasant walk around the pond.

These are the legacies we enjoy each day.

If we can enhance these legacies with intrinsic value, there is no better cause.

We are assured that whether we choose to volunteer our time or make a monetary gift, it adds to the legacy of Plymouth Place. ●



Plymouth Place team members consistently deliver exemplary service!

L TO R: **Rajaa Shabazz**, WELLNESS & FITNESS COORDINATOR; **Audrey McDonough**, RESIDENT ENRICHMENT SPECIALIST; **Maria Sharabaika**, THIRTY NORTH DINING ROOM MANAGER; **Michelle Siegfried**, EXECUTIVE MANAGER; **Cheri Boublis**, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF HOSPITALITY; **Russell Fletcher**, CONCIERGE MANAGER



It take a village to make an impact. L - R: Resident Alice Chin; Kathleen Jurek, COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT; John Gould, CREATIVE ARTS SPECIALIST; Connor O'Malley, GROUNDS.

LeadingAge®

COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD HONOR

Plymouth Place is the 2025 winner of the **Community Impact Award** from **LeadingAge Illinois** highlighting how residents, employees, and community partners live out our mission to *Thrive Together!* It's a win for all of us, proving, once again, that it truly takes a village.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Plymouth Place established its **Enrichment Academy** enhancing services for residents, team members, and the broader community. From launching the **Certified Nursing Assistant Academy** and expanding the resident-led scholarship and English as a Second Language programs to building partnerships with area nonprofits and churches, the impact is felt far beyond our campus.

"We nourish our neighbors through ongoing food outreach efforts, including monthly hot meal deliveries to local pantries, meal kits assembled by **Memory Care** residents, and community garden collaborations with local churches to grow fresh produce for those in need," advised **Cheri Boublis**, *Senior Director of Hospitality*.

Plymouth Place also brings inclusive cultural programming to our broader community through the **Artist in Residence** program and partnerships with the **Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra** and

City Lights Orchestra. Meanwhile, the resident-led **P2H2** outreach committee distributes books to the children of staff and area nonprofits, reinforcing its commitment to education and mentorship.

Environmental stewardship is another core value. As an **ArbNet Certified Arboretum**, our grounds serve as a shared community resource, hosting public forums on topics such as tree care, pond management, and native landscaping. Resident volunteers grow vegetables and herbs and even raise honey, with produce going to families in need.

In 2025, Plymouth Place will launch its **Gather for the Good** symposium to unite local nonprofits for idea sharing and solutions. "We believe this symposium will be a catalyst for positive change in our community," said Boublis confidently. She continued, "Winning this award affirms that vibrant adult living can be a force for good, driven by empathy, empowered by community, and sustained by a shared purpose to make a lasting difference." ●



◀ **Scan QR code to see a video of how Plymouth Place makes an impact in the community!**



THE FLOWERS OF SCOTLAND

Hearts Of Giving Bloom In Every Season

IN THE 1930s, **CLAIRE FORESTER** AND HER DAUGHTER **MARY** LIVED IN LA GRANGE, Illinois, with Mary's maternal grandparents, the Mavors, in a setting reminiscent of *Downton Abbey*—though without the luxuries. Born on September 19, 1932, Mary moved with her mother into the Mavor family home in 1937, where her grandmother, Jessie Mavor, played a key role in raising her while Claire returned to full-time work at Marshall Field's in Chicago, where she remained for 30 years.

"John and Jessie Mavor, Claire's parents, were among the first families to settle in La Grange during the population spike of the 1880s-1890s," advised Katherine Padgett, *Executive Director of the La Grange Area Historical Society*. "Their historic family home, built by them in 1893, was cherished for over 60 years and held a special place as Mary's second home."

The Mavor Family were devout members of the First Congregational Church of La Grange, one of the founding congregations of Plymouth Place. Their religious devotion and community life were evident in their active roles on church board committees, participation in the choir, and service as a trustee.

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Claire Forester (LEFT)
with her daughter Mary.

Thistle Closeup with Monarch Butterfly | © Sylvana Rega | Dreamstime.com



Mary Forester



A collage of Mary Forester's treasured memories, including travel tags, family photographs, and newspaper clippings, all that help tell the story of a woman who cherished adventure, loved deeply, and lived with purpose.

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At age 10, Mary and her mother moved to Chicago's South Side, where she attended the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools and experienced a distinctive academic environment. Five years later, they returned to La Grange, living in the family home while her grandfather built a new one on South Kensington Avenue. Mary graduated from Lyons Township High School in 1950, attended Lyons Township Junior College for two years, and then transferred to Miami University in Ohio, where she joined the Chi Omega sorority like her mother. She graduated in 1955 with a Bachelor of Arts and went on to enjoy a respected 30-year career in the Trust Department at Northern Trust Bank, where she was known for her intellect and warmth.

"Claire was a true daughter of La Grange," said Bev Figge, who, along with her late husband Fred, were fellow church members and closely associated with Plymouth Place. "Claire was a real hoot," laughs Bev. "She knew how to win over church elders and area business owners to

support worthwhile causes of the church. We often laughed at those times together."

Mary and Claire's lives were deeply rooted in La Grange, where they lived most of their lives together. They were avid travelers, particularly enjoying cruises that took them worldwide to various ports. Given John Mavor's Scottish heritage, they often visited family in Scotland, fostering their cherished connections across the Atlantic.

GIFT PLANNING FOR THEIR FUTURE

Knowing her deep personal connections in the community, in 1995, Claire established a **Charitable Remainder Trust** to provide life income for her daughter while also benefiting local nonprofit pillars in her community that best represented her values. Plymouth Place was lucky to be named as one of the beneficiaries, a testament to Mary and Claire's personal connections with the community.

"A Charitable Remainder Trust is essentially an irrevocable trust that allows you to donate assets to a charity while receiving income for a life or fixed period, with the remaining assets

ultimately going to a charity," comments **Mary Pat Flaherty, Estate Planning Attorney**, based in Western Springs and current *Board Member of Plymouth Place*. "Creating thoughtful, tax-efficient gift planning vehicles provides a life income for a designated beneficiary. They can be crafted to reflect the actual values of the creator of this trust."

Mary moved to Plymouth Place in 2014, participating in barbell exercises, bingo, Mexican train dominoes, bridge, the Knitters Club, and the Residents' Council, showcasing her spirit and talent for making connections.

"Mary was at every donor appreciation Legacy Tea," commented **Paddy Homan, Vice President of Philanthropy & Community Affairs**. "She saw the impact Plymouth was having on the lives of others and embraced our mission, particularly our scholarship program."

Homan sees the dramatic evolution of the Plymouth Place scholarship program, which now includes the new CNA School.

"Mary, raised by her mother and grandmother,

understood how education can improve the lives of staff and recognized the vital role not-for-profits play as a safety net for families," Homan adds.

"Plymouth was added as a majority beneficiary for her IRA and a portion of her trust," Homan added.

On Mary's passing, the **Charitable Remainder Trust** established by her mother 28 years ago matured. "This, combined with Mary's estate provisions will make a transformational impact in our mission for years to come," Homan said.

"Mary believed in the journey we're on," said **Jay Biere, CEO/President of Plymouth Place**, reflecting on her legacy gift. "She was an extraordinary woman who embraced our mission every day. It's clear that both Mary and Claire, made lasting contributions to Plymouth Place — the apple didn't fall far from the tree!"

Biere added, "Mary and Claire Forester embodied the deep trust so many place in this community. We honor that trust as a sacred responsibility, guiding our efforts to uphold their legacy and our shared vision." ●



An idea for the Plymouth Place kitchen redesign.

MASTERPIECE IN PROGRESS

The Upgrades of Plymouth Place

In line with their ongoing commitment to investing in community, Plymouth Place is moving forward with care and confidence. Their commitment to the people who call it home remains unwavering, and these intentional steps to upgrade reflect their belief in a strong, connected community—today, tomorrow, and for years to come.

A TOAST TO THE PUB

The Pub is undergoing a thoughtful renovation, including a new name, **Mimi's**, in memory of former resident **Mimi Luker Grimes**. The redesign is intended to enhance its performance capabilities while maintaining its inviting, intimate feel. Plans include improved acoustics, upgraded infrastructure, and an additional wine bar to support the growing demand for high-quality programming.

Construction has been strategically timed to minimize disruption, with performances temporarily shifting to the Fiore outdoor space during the coming months. “Our goal is to create a beautiful, flexible venue with great sound integrity to support jazz performances,” said **Cheri Boublis**, *Senior Director of Hospitality*. “This is about honoring what people already love while opening it up to even more possibilities.”

The design team has worked closely with leadership to ensure that the updates support both current needs and long-term programming potential. With these upgrades underway, Mimi's is poised to become an even more vibrant cornerstone of community life.

REIMAGINING THE SARAH TUDOR DINING EXPERIENCE

The upcoming \$2.2M kitchen redesign project will enhance efficiency and functionality, ensuring that residents and guests continue to enjoy top-tier dining experiences. “Kitchens have a lifespan, and as they age, repair costs can rise, and efficiency may decrease,” explained Boublis. “Although renovating is a major undertaking, we felt it was the right time to invest in this project.”

In addition to improving service, the renovation will also create a more supportive, efficient environment for the **Culinary Team**. “We're so excited for what this new kitchen

means for our staff,” encouraged **Lily Corpus**, *Executive Chef*. “Having a fresh, thoughtfully designed space will boost energy, creativity, and teamwork. It's going to make coming to work each day even more enjoyable, and that translates to an even better experience for residents throughout all levels of care.”

THE PERFORMING ARTS TAKE CENTER STAGE

Dole Hall will undergo targeted design and audiovisual updates, including new seating to increase capacity to 200, stage refinements for better visibility, and a revamped sound system for large-scale programming. The redesign strikes a balance between heritage and function, enabling the space to support evolving resident needs while maintaining its role as a central gathering place. “We're excited to update the space in a way that's both beautiful and highly functional,” said **Katie Freese**, *Senior Director of Support Services*.

These upgrades reflect a future of creativity and connection inviting the surrounding community to enjoy Plymouth Place. **Jay Biere**, shared, “With careful planning and a clear vision, these spaces will enhance daily life and open new doors for connection, welcoming friends, neighbors, and partners into a thriving, engaged community for years to come.” ●

LEFT: Rendering of Mimi's, the reimagined and renamed Pub and future redesign.

RIGHT: Guest artist Leslie Goddard, performing as Lucille Ball in Dole Hall, has been a beloved part of Plymouth Place's programming for years, witnessing its growth and evolution firsthand.



Kitchen preview photography | © Andrea Rugg



HONORING EXCELLENCE

Four New Awards for Plymouth Place

Each year, industry groups in architecture, construction, real estate, and senior living host awards to honor exceptional design, showcasing projects that enhance communities and improve lives.

“Jurors look for innovation, user experience, aesthetics, and how well a project integrates into the community, focusing on real impact and overall well-being,” said **Laura Weyrauch**, former *Plymouth Place Board Member*, whose background is in architecture, design, and construction. “It’s about raising the bar for what great design can achieve.”

“Plymouth Place stands out and has garnered recognition not just for our beautiful design but also for our strong commitment and collaboration that was fostered throughout the entire process,” said **Jay Biere**, CEO.

You can see how this engagement shaped the outcome and contributed to Plymouth Place’s market success. For instance, jury members at the **Environments for Aging (EFA) Design Showcase** praised the thoughtful master planning, project phasing, as well as wellness features such as the rooftop garden. They also highlighted the well-considered density and scale of the Arboretum Villas, along with the spacious and beautifully designed units.

“It has been a pleasure to work with a provider so committed to the process,” said **Eric Harrmann**, *Chief Design Officer of AG Architecture*. “The award recognition is an exclamation point on a project that has been well-received by the people it serves.”

THE CURRENT LIST OF AWARDS FOR THE PROJECT

EFA DESIGN SHOWCASE FINALIST

EFA celebrates the best design and architecture in senior living environments.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS COMPETITION – SILVER AWARD WINNER FOR 55+ APARTMENT OR INDEPENDENT LIVING COMMUNITY

A national award honoring excellence in 55+ housing.

SENIOR HOUSING NEWS 1ST PLACE IN RENOVATION/ REPOSITION (CAMPUS)

The esteemed annual awards program recognizes cutting-edge design, excellence, and innovation in senior living, as well as unique projects and companies that are improving the lives of seniors.

ILLINOIS REAL ESTATE JOURNAL COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AWARDS 2025 – SENIOR HOUSING

This celebrates the achievements, successes, and highlights from all commercial real estate industry sectors.

OPPOSITE TOP: **The Arboretum Villa green rooftop features a putting green and overlooks Central Park and the Landing building.**

CENTER LEFT: **A peek inside a fully-furnished Arboretum Villa residence.**

CENTER RIGHT: **One of four Arboretum Villa buildings, which sits along the paved road.**

BOTTOM: **The rooftop patio of the Arboretum Villas.**



ART WITHOUT LIMITS

Creativity for All Abilities

At Plymouth Place, creativity has no limits. “Our mission is to ensure that all residents can engage with the arts in meaningful ways,” said **Kathleen Riley**, *Director of Life Enrichment*. Through innovative programming and adaptive approaches, residents with low vision, hearing impairments, memory care needs, or mobility challenges are encouraged to explore their creative potential and experience the joy of artistic expression.

Rebecca Schuster and her mother, Mary Will, work together on an artistic woodworking project with resident volunteers Bob Denny and Kathy Gearhart in Plymouth Place’s Memory Care neighborhood.



Riley continued, “Art has the power to connect, heal, and inspire, and we bring it to all levels of care. Residents enjoy programs tailored to their interests, needs, and abilities, ensuring no one is left out of the creative process.”

One such program is **Drum Circle**, a hands-on musical experience that is not only a joyful, communal activity but also one that fosters coordination, cognitive engagement, and social connection. **Christine Irvine**, *Senior Director of Rehab & Wellness*, explained, “The rhythmic beats create a sense of unity, allowing residents to express themselves in a way that transcends words.”

For those who find solace in the visual arts, Plymouth Place offers inclusive spaces for residents to explore their creativity. Led by skilled instructors, sessions are thoughtfully adapted to ensure accessibility and encourage self-expression through painting, sculpting, weaving, and mixed-media projects, all at a pace that supports each resident’s unique artistic journey.

Jim Chin enjoys participating in tactile art. He said, “Art brings together my determination to persevere by allowing me to create something filled with hope, rather than letting my disability define me through despair.”

Music plays a vital role in Plymouth Place’s inclusive art engagement. **The Singing Sages**, a resident-led volunteer choir, has brought friendship and joy to the **Health Care Center**, **Assisted Living**, and **Memory Care** neighborhoods. A new partnership with nonprofit **Songs by Heart** brings more music for resident connection.

Music has been shown to enhance memory recall and emotional well-being, making this program especially meaningful

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Sai-Kit Chan and Alex Bart enjoy participating in Drum Circle, using various percussion instruments.

“As residents contribute their talents, share stories, and engage with the arts, they collectively build a legacy of creativity, compassion, and connection.”

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for those in memory care. Stevens continued, “Whether singing, listening, or simply feeling the vibrations of a song, participants, including those with hearing impairments or cognitive challenges, find comfort and joy in familiar melodies.”

At Plymouth Place, inclusiveness in the arts is not just a goal but a way of life. Vice President of Philanthropy & Community Affairs, **Paddy Homan** explained, “The artistic programs are part of a greater mission of philanthropy and legacy-building, reflecting their values-based commitment. As residents contribute their talents, share stories, and engage with the arts, they collectively build a legacy of creativity, compassion, and connection.”

The arts serve as a bridge, uniting individuals in a shared experience that transcends limitations and enriches lives, leaving an enduring impact. ●



Holly Zeinfeld finds peace in the Loom Studio at Plymouth Place.



Maria Corral, Life Enrichment team member (CENTER), with Janet Guelfi (LEFT) and Jack Thomas (RIGHT), during a Mardi Gras celebration in Plymouth Place's Assisted Living neighborhood.

WEAVING THREADS OF CREATIVITY

The rhythmic click of a loom, the soft glide of yarn between fingers, and the slow, steady formation of a pattern — these are the sounds and sensations filling the **Loom Studio** at Plymouth Place. Designed as a welcoming space for creativity and connection, the studio brings the art of weaving to residents.

“Whether a seasoned weaver or a novice, we are here to help use the tools,” said **Eleanor Frick**, Art Instructor at Plymouth Place. “In our Introduction to **Weaving Class**, participants learn the basic mechanics of the loom, traditional tapestry techniques, and how to work with color, all in a manageable, beginner-friendly format.”

Weaving has long been a practice of patience, artistry, and utility. Its history dates back thousands of years, spanning cultures and civilizations. From intricate tapestries to simple, functional cloth, weaving has always been a way to tell stories, express identity, and bring people together. The benefits extend beyond creativity. Weaving

improves dexterity, sharpens cognitive function, and provides a soothing, meditative experience.

“The process is so calming,” shares **Holly Zeinfeld**. “There’s something about the repetitive motion that helps clear the mind. Seeing your progress row by row is really rewarding.”

Beyond individual enrichment, the Loom Studio is quickly becoming a hub for social connection. Residents gather to share ideas, swap materials, and admire each other’s creations.

“Watching residents discover a new passion is the best part,” Frick proudly said. “Some have never touched a loom before, and now they’re weaving beautiful patterns. It’s inspiring to see their confidence grow.”

As the threads come together on the loom, so, too, does the community within this special space. The Plymouth Place Loom Studio isn’t just about making textiles. It’s about weaving stories, friendships, and a shared love for lifelong creativity. ●



The stage isn't the only place for performance in Dole Hall. Musicians can perform right in the middle of cocktail hour!

THE SOUND OF INNOVATION

At Plymouth Place, the performing arts are entering an exciting new era. With enhanced sound, lighting, and thoughtfully designed spaces, the community is a premier venue for music, theater, and film. From the elegance of classical concerts in Dole Hall to the intimate jazz nights in The Pub, each space has been carefully reimagined to elevate performances and enrich the audience's experience.

DOLE HALL: The Heart of Classical and Orchestral Music

For years, **Dole Hall** has been the cornerstone of Plymouth Place's performing arts scene, hosting large-scale performances, including the popular *Dole Hall Presents* series and, more recently, with the gift of the Steinway Spirio® piano. With upcoming enhancements to acoustics,

seating, and staging, the venue is poised to become an even more impressive setting for classical music.

"We wanted to create a space where residents could truly immerse themselves in the music," explained **Cheri Boublis**, *Senior Director of Hospitality*. "With improved sound and sightlines, every performance will feel like a front-row experience."

MIMI'S: A Live Music Lover's Dream

The Pub has long been a resident favorite for its cozy, club-style ambiance and unforgettable live performances. Now, this beloved venue enters a new chapter as **Mimi's**, renamed in tribute to former resident, **Mimi Luker Grimes**, whose love of music left a lasting impression on the community. A group of Mimi's friends came together to reimagine the space with her legacy in mind, infusing it with both sentiment and sound.

Thanks to guidance from **Ray Quinn**, *owner of Chicago music venue Martyrs'*, Mimi's is being elevated with upgraded sound technology, custom speaker placement, and stage curtains designed to enhance acoustics. "Live music thrives in an intimate setting," shared **Jim DeWan**, *musician, chef, food critic, and writer*. "Refining the sound dynamics ensures every note is crisp, clear, and deeply felt."

Jazz Tuesdays, held monthly, remain a beloved

tradition, drawing loyal fans who gather to enjoy great music, good wine, and warm community. Among the featured vocalists is resident **Sue Petterson**, who brings charisma and artistry to every set. Collaborations with the Old Town School of Folk Music and the addition of a second wine bar underscore Mimi's evolution from a cozy pub to a true home for live music.

THIRTY NORTH: A Piano Bar Experience

With its warm ambiance and impressive donor-funded sound system, **Thirty North** is set to become the ultimate piano bar. World-class musicians will bring the space to life, making it a premier destination for casual entertainment and high-caliber performances. "Thirty North has a fantastic sound system already," notes DeWan, "but with a few enhancements, we'll create an even more immersive listening environment."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

From intimate jazz sessions to grand orchestral performances, the future of performing arts at Plymouth Place is bright, bold, and beautifully orchestrated. "We're not just building a stage. We're setting the scene for connection, creativity, and community." Added DeWan, "Everyone who loves the arts has a seat here." ●



LEFT-RIGHT: Blues musicians Tony Wittrock, Kenny Smith, Donna Herula, and Marc Edelstein on the Dole Hall stage; Pianist Pete Benson entertains at Thirty North's Piano Bar; Dole Hall Presents brought Debra Ann Miller as Beatrix Potter.



CULINARY AS AN ART FORM

A Taste of Creativity

Cheri Boublis, Senior Director of Hospitality at Plymouth Place said “Nothing defines the sense of community more than a meal with friends and family.” Whether through the carefully curated **Laudable Lunches**, the elevated dining of **Thirty North**, or the immersive Sunday theme dinners, every meal is an opportunity to engage the senses and celebrate creativity.

For **Chef Mark Sabbe**, the culinary experience extends beyond flavor. “A great meal isn’t just about the food,” he explained. “It’s the company, the service, the ambiance—it’s about creating moments.”

His passion for food as a shared experience is evident in the intimate, small-plate format at Thirty North, where residents can savor a variety of contemporary American dishes with global influences. The restaurant’s collaborations with local culinary students and its robust wine program add to the depth of the experience, making it a true centerpiece of Plymouth Place’s dining scene.

The commitment to culinary excellence is seen throughout the community. **Michelle Fruzyna**, Culinary Director, describes how they offer residents options to enjoy inventive, high-quality meals in vibrant spaces. “We focus on fresh, often locally sourced ingredients and inspired menus that

bring joy to residents and their guests,” she added. “It’s about making every meal special.”

Theme dinners at Thirty North on Sundays showcase the culinary team’s innovation. These events transport residents to different regions and cultures through cuisine, from a Tuscan Italian feast to a classic French bistro experience.

Maria Sharabaika, *Thirty North Dining Room Manager*, is crucial in bringing ideas to life. “Food tells a story.” She explained, “Our themed dinners allow residents to travel through taste, experiencing new flavors and traditions from around the world.”

The dining experience at Thirty North is also deeply tied to sustainability and farm-to-table principles. Through partnerships with the on-site Horticulture Committee, fresh herbs, microgreens, and exotic mushrooms make their way from the gardens to residents’ plates. This connection to fresh, homegrown ingredients enhances the flavors of each dish and fosters a greater appreciation for the artistry behind every meal.

At Plymouth Place, food plays a central role in daily life. It brings joy, fosters community, and showcases diverse food culture. Whether dining at the Bistro, enjoying a wine-paired meal at Thirty North, or listening to music with friends, residents experience creativity through culinary expertise. ●



TOP: **The Culinary Team** carefully plans wine pairings for their menus.

BOTTOM LEFT: **Residents Pat and Henry Allen** enjoy a special lunch experience at **Thirty North** served by **Debra Puccinelli**.

BOTTOM RIGHT: **Chef Mark Sabbe** inspects mushrooms grown at **Plymouth Place** for serving at **Thirty North**.





MARY HELEN

A Trailblazer in Women's Philanthropy

Mary Helen Robertson was a force of nature—sharp, independent, and deeply committed to meaningful causes. A woman of conviction and generosity, she embodied women's philanthropy long before the term became popular.

Her decision to donate her entrance fee refund to Plymouth Place was just one example of her commitment to giving back. "It was seamless and easy—no need to update estate plans," **Linda Robertson**, her daughter, shared.

"This action was practical and meaningful, showing her belief that women can shape and support the institutions they care about," said **Paddy Homan**, *Vice President of Philanthropy & Community Outreach*, thankfully.

A LIFE STEEPED IN SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

Mary Helen spent 16 years at Plymouth Place, actively participating in its philanthropic efforts. She served on the **Philanthropy Council** and

“...**Women’s voices will, as a minimum, enliven the discussion and, as women assume more leadership roles, they will have the ability to influence the future direction of philanthropy.**”

EXCERPT FROM “Women as Philanthropists” by Mary Helen Robertson • National Civic Review, 2002

was key in the **75th Anniversary Committee**. A lifelong lover of the arts and music, she was also a dedicated supporter of Music of the Baroque, serving as a board member and vice chairman for development. Her leadership helped turn financial deficits into surpluses, ensuring the organization's continued success.

Before moving to Plymouth Place, Mary Helen and her husband of 61 years, **Raymond**, lived in Hinsdale, Illinois. She was an active member of the First Congregational Church of Western Springs. During this time, her passion for activism and involvement in public policy began. She served with the **League of Women Voters of Hinsdale** and later became the **President of the League of Women Voters of Illinois** from 1967 to 1971. Mary Helen even published an article in the **National Civic Review** about the role of women voters during the **Constitutional Convention**. “She helped shape policies that impacted generations,” said **Linda Robertson**, Mary Helen's daughter.

AN UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

Mary Helen's dedication to legal and policy work led her to pursue a law degree at **Northwestern University**, where she specialized in estate planning, trust law, and charitable giving.

Her 1943 commencement speech at **LaSalle-Peru-Oglesby Junior College** foreshadowed her lifelong dedication to service: “No man can

be free unless every man is free. I am not free until my neighbor has an equal chance to grow, develop, and lead the life he chooses.”

“This belief in collective responsibility guided her philanthropy and legal career, as well as her personal choices,” Linda added.

A WOMAN WHO LED BY EXAMPLE

Mary Helen's family and friends describe her as fiercely independent, highly organized, and unwavering in her convictions. “She believed in taking action rather than waiting for change to happen,” Linda said of her mother.

Whether leading philanthropic initiatives, advocating for constitutional reforms, or shaping the arts landscape, she embodied the persistence, intelligence, and grace required to make a lasting impact.

“Mary Helen's story serves as an inspiring testament to the power of women's philanthropy,” remarked Homan. “She made thoughtful choices based on values that last beyond her lifetime.” Homan continued, “By giving back to Plymouth Place and countless other organizations, Mary Helen ensured that her legacy would continue to shape and support the nonprofits she cherished.”

“Mary Helen's contributions remind us that philanthropy is not just about giving money,” Homan noted. “It's about investing in the future, in people, and in institutions that hold meaning. And in that, Mary Helen Robertson's influence will be felt for generations to come.” ●

SNAPSHOTS *of* PHILANTHROPY



Volunteer helpers from **First Presbyterian Church of La Grange's Grace Garden** who worked with the **Plymouth Place Horticultural Committee**.



Songs by Heart bring the joy of music to **Memory Care** residents weekly!



Fr. Bill Tkachuk of St. Francis Xavier retired from ministry in June 2025, and **Plymouth Place** is thankful for his service to our community.



Congratulations to newest **Plymouth Place CNA Academy Graduates**, whose education is funded through scholarship gifts!
FRONT, L TO R: **Zeanna Clark, Tiaria Wideman, Maria Casimiro, Kyiah Johnson, Irika Senger.**
BACK: **Dymond McClain, Mara Rodriguez**



CEO Jay Biere thanks **P2H2** volunteers **Sue Gelderman, Sue Johnston** and **Meribeth Tooke** for their work distributing donated books to staff's children.

The **Wellness** program **Rock Steady Boxing** is open to both **Plymouth Place** residents and members of the broader community. Westchester resident **Lucille Hilger** enjoys the workout.



With the support of a **Plymouth Place Scholarship**, recipient **Aza Wahid** is earning her doctoral degree in internal medicine.



PADDY HOMAN
VICE PRESIDENT OF PHILANTHROPY
& COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM PADDY HOMAN

There can be no doubt that we do live in uncertain times. Reflecting on the powerful stories of the female philanthropists featured in this edition of **Monarch**, it is inspiring to acknowledge that they also lived through uncertain times; yet persevered in their unwavering belief in the causes they supported. Their faith in *their* ability to make an impact truly made all the difference! Plymouth Place sees this daily through our incredible volunteers and the community partners we are honored to serve and support.

The foundation of our home is rooted in values based legacy impact investing. This journey continues today as we pass the baton to the next generation, encouraging them to advocate for and serve others while fostering community connections. As Plymouth Place stretches its arms to be there for others, we do so with the trust of those who have put their faith in our mission. We carry their shared values

further, for such are the circles of trust that exist in life, and with the principles of philanthropy front and center. Your trust is vital to our mission, and we value it deeply.

I leave you with an excerpt from **Mary Helen Robertson's** 2002 article, **"Women as Philanthropists."**

"Although philanthropy is an act of caring and giving, it is also an act of leadership. The qualities that women bring to philanthropy — wanting to make a difference, focusing on building relationships within an organization, being part of a collaborative process, seeking new and creative ways to use their money, and developing a personal interest in the results of their giving — are qualities that should be added to the voices around the philanthropy table. Women's voices will, as a minimum, enliven the discussion and, as women assume more leadership roles, they will have the ability to influence the future direction of philanthropy." ●

WAYS TO GIVE

You can support Plymouth Place in various ways, such as making an outright unrestricted cash gift or by designating your donation to one of our many programs, initiatives, or funds.

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WELLNESS • **BENEVOLENT SUPPORT**
LEGACY FUND • **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE VISIT plymouthplacegiving.org



The Hulda and Lucille Garden, located in our Memory Care neighborhood.

MISSION STATEMENT

At **PLYMOUTH PLACE**, a nonprofit life plan community, our mission is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that inspires individuals to grow, connect, and live their best lives. We empower residents, team members, and partners to cultivate independence, wellness, and spirituality, while fostering meaningful relationships and a deep sense of belonging.



Fred & Ginger, the beloved swans of Plymouth Place, grace our back pond made possible by Honoring Aging.



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