Since the United Methodist Homes of New Jersey (UMHNJ) board of directors approved the Strategic Plan 2013 - 2017, we have done much and published this progress in the last two annual reports. The theme for our fiscal year 2015 annual report, Share the Magic of UMH, continues to chart that journey.

With Alliance Rehab, Bristol Glen and The Shores at Wesley Manor implemented SeniorFITness, a venture which supports a longstanding priority — improving resident function, quality-of-life and independence. Led by professional exercise physiologists, the multidisciplinary program, designed to be both fun and functional for older adults, improves strength, balance, mobility and mental well-being through a wide assortment of activities. As residents age, improving balance is one of the keys to preventing falls.

A significant step toward the Strategic Plan’s expansion of Home and Community Based Services occurred in June 2015 with the launching of The Arms Café at Wesleyan Arms. They have partnered with Home Helpers of Monmouth County and the Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey to promote living and learning for the area’s older adults. PineRidge of Montclair’s resource hub and meeting place, Senior Space, successfully continues to offer weekly social interaction, physical exercise and lifelong learning at the Montclair Public Library. As both hubs engage into and with their local communities, the varied calendars include: chair yoga or Zumba®, art, technology, reading and book club discussions, meeting new friends, walking groups, finding information, enjoying the company of others, and more. Resource coordinators offer information about elder care to individuals and their families. This allows access to important resources to successfully age in place at home: meals, home care, tele-health, and chore, social and transportation connections.

Our full-service communities continue to transition from a medical model in healthcare to household models, creating environments where residents can live fulfilling, meaningful and self-directed lives. The Shores at Wesley Manor has developed three neighborhoods of approximately 20 residents each. These establish a person-centered model of caring for residents, giving them greater control over their daily routines. We invested almost two years bringing key stakeholders together to learn about and create the model. Conceptual plans of similar scope are in the works for Collingswood, followed by Bristol Glen and then Pitman.

As planned and in harmony with Service Expansion, The Shores at Wesley Manor opened six hospice-dedicated apartments in April 2015. Located in a private assisted living neighborhood, each one-bedroom apartment has been custom designed for individuals facing terminal illness that no longer responds to curative treatment. The expertise of the multi-disciplinary hospice team includes advanced, traditional and alternative therapies; 24-hour nursing oversight; medication management; certified caregivers; emotional and spiritual support; personal services; and palliative care for symptom management and pain control. Welcoming gathering spaces for families and friends complement a nurturing atmosphere.

We refreshed our mission, vision and values statements and celebrated Commissioning Services for our executive directors and housing administrators. This focus on our Wesleyan Christian values segued into Missioning Services for all associates at each community. They honored associates and their call by God to a ministry of caregiving and affirmed the important impact associates make using their unique gifts and embracing our core values of compassion, respect, stewardship and service. Additionally, Spiritual Care Teams and local Mission Teams have been formed to develop creative ideas for celebrating the Homes’ mission and values in the future.
United Methodist Homes concluded fiscal year 2015 with an overall increase in net assets. We completed a refinancing of debt in October which reduced the amount of interest expense that UMHNJ must pay on our outstanding debt and this resulted in a large decrease in interest expense in 2015. Therefore, through this positive stewardship, we are realizing savings and able to retain more of our cash for other ministry purposes. This promotes goals under the Strategic Plan’s mandate to Strength the Financial Position of the Ministry.

Through the analysis of hospital discharge documentation, all of the full-service communities have created a specialty clinical niche within their respective healthcare centers. Bristol Glen offers a pulmonary specialty while The Shores focuses on cardiac rehabilitation. This initiative has effectively aligned us with several hospitals for stronger referrals and consistency of clinical care as people move from hospital to home.

As accountable care organizations and bundled payments have surfaced as key strategies of the federal government to control the cost and quality of healthcare, our ability to reduce hospital readmission rates and track key clinical performance metrics have proved invaluable. This is critically important for our future and will distinguish UMHNJ in the marketplace. We continue conversations with several accountable care organizations and major insurance companies.

To advance the Strategic Plan’s mandate to Strengthen the Organizational Human Capital, considerable time has been devoted to developing foundational human resources policies and best associate relations practices, including the Fair Treatment Process. Consistent with those outcomes, we issued an Associate Resource Guide. The recruitment, hiring and on-boarding of new talent now aligns with the organizational values. Also, within human resources and aligned with Integrating the UMHNJ Mission into the Fabric of the Ministry, we are assimilating our values into the organizational job descriptions and reinventing the performance evaluation process. In order to make decisions consistent with our organizational values, we are creating a Wesleyan decision-making model.

Share the Magic of UMH, a daylong event filled with magic, music, information and inspiration, occurred in May 2015. The day held some very serious purposes: bringing together associates who work in eleven unique locations; affirming and acknowledging organization-wide, local site, and individual accomplishments; giving a status report on the Homes; viewing videos featuring the compassionate relationships between associates and residents; and inspiring and motivating staff. Four associates received awards as determined by nominations through an interdisciplinary Awards Committee.

United Methodist Homes of New Jersey is united by our commitment to a noble mission and common purpose. Collectively, we have moved our mission and agenda forward with your help. We do this work for the love of people and for the ways in which our efforts improve the human condition. We do it for our love of Newton, East Orange, Montclair, Neptune, Plainfield, Red Bank, Ocean Grove, Ocean City, Collingswood, and Pitman. And we do it for the love of residents who have entrusted their housing and care needs to us for over 108 years.

While much work remains toward the Strategic Plan’s initiatives, we will continue to embrace omnipresent change and grow. We thank you for your many demonstrations of love, energy, passion, support, and faithfulness, especially to the Fellowship Fund, the cornerstone of our charitable mission. God bless you and the role you play facilitating United Methodist Homes’ abundant life.

Virginia Samuel Cetuk
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United Methodist Homes

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