

CONNECTIONS

at the RESIDENTIAL LIVING CENTER

JULY 2026



BJC
Health™

Saint Luke's
Anderson County Hospital

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Contact Us

Want to learn more about living in our Residential Living Center? Call us at 785-204-7115 to schedule a private tour for yourself or a loved one.



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A Few Words from Samantha

Samantha Young, RN, Senior Manager, Residential Living Center



We strive to plan a wide variety of engaging activities for our residents here at the RLC. This includes both individual and group activities on site, as well as getting residents out into the surrounding communities. Visiting with others, doing things, going places, and simply being present can trigger good memories that bring joy.

For residents who aren’t able to participate fully, we know they can still find deep joy in being part of the group and watching others do the things they used to enjoy. This is known as passive engagement, and it’s a powerful way for residents to stay connected to lifelong passions, even when physical or cognitive limitations make it hard to participate actively.

Why just watching can still bring joy

It sparks great memories. Even as people age, the feelings tied to favorite hobbies don’t go away. Watching someone play music, decorate a cake, or even kids just being kids can bring back warm memories and a real sense of comfort.

It’s enjoyable for the senses. There’s something soothing and uplifting about simple sights and sounds—watching birds visit a feeder, the hum of a lawnmower, or laughter during a card game.

There’s no pressure to perform. Sometimes participating can feel tiring or frustrating, especially with changes in energy or memory. Watching lets people enjoy all the fun without any stress.

It helps people feel connected. Being able to watch others—friends, staff, or visiting family—helps residents feel like they’re still part of the action. It often leads to smiles, conversations, and laughter, which are so important for well-being.

We learned that a few of our residents once participated in bowling leagues, so this month we’re heading to the bowling alley in Ottawa. Even if they’re not throwing strikes, residents are sure to enjoy hearing that familiar sound of crashing pins.

We’ve also got plans to celebrate our nation’s birthday, get creative with paint, play bingo and cornhole, watch classic movies, feed the birds, sip on lemonade, and visit the local bookstore.

Whether residents are actively participating, or watching and listening from the sidelines, we hope they find joy and comfort in their days with us here at the RLC.

Culinary Corner



James Hemings is credited with popularizing mac and cheese in the United States. He was an enslaved African-American man in Thomas Jefferson’s household who, in the 1780s, became the first American to train as a chef in France. He made the dish for Jefferson, who loved it and requested it be served at the White House.

The earliest American recipe for baked macaroni and cheese comes from Mary Randolph’s 1824 cookbook, *The Virginia Housewife*.

Mary Randolph’s Original 1824 Recipe

Boil as much macaroni as will fill your dish, in milk and water, till quite tender; drain it on a sieve, sprinkle a little salt over it, put a layer in your dish, then cheese and butter as in the polenta, and bake it in the same manner.

1800s Macaroni and Cheese

To make this historic dish at home, use this adapted version of Mary Randolph’s original recipe.

Ingredients

12 ounces elbow macaroni (or straight tubular pasta)	4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
3 cups whole milk	6 ounces (about 1½ cups) freshly grated Parmesan cheese,
3 cups water	Gruyère, or sharp cheddar*
½ teaspoon salt	

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large pot, bring milk and water to a boil. Add macaroni, stir well, and return to a boil. Reduce the heat and cook pasta until tender (about 8 minutes), stirring occasionally.
2. Drain the pasta but reserve about ½ cup of the cooking liquid. Add the salt to the pasta and blend well.
3. Butter a 1½-quart casserole dish. Place one-third of the macaroni in the dish and top with one-third of the butter pieces and one-third of the cheese. Pour one-third of the reserved cooking liquid over the top. Repeat with two more layers of macaroni topped with butter and cheese, drizzling cooking liquid over each layer.
4. Bake casserole, uncovered, for about 20 minutes, until golden brown. Serve warm.

**Note: 18th-century Americans favored imported Parmesan or sharp English cheeses.*



Yankee Doodle Dandy

In the song “Yankee Doodle,” sticking a feather in a cap and calling it macaroni is an 18th-century insult about fashion. It mocks Yankees (American colonists) as country bumpkins who thought putting a simple feather in their hat made them look like European dandies.

In the 1760s, a macaroni was a fashionable British dandy known for extravagant clothing and European-inspired style. The term comes from the Macaroni Club, a group of wealthy young men who traveled through Europe and returned with new fashions and tastes, including a fondness for pasta. A doodle was slang for a fool or simpleton.

British soldiers used the song to mock American colonists. The joke was that a simple feather in a hat would not magically make someone fashionable or sophisticated.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, the American militia embraced the catchy tune and proudly sang it back to the British troops as an anthem of defiance and pride.



John Trumbull (American, 1756–1843). *Surrender of Lord Cornwallis* (detail), 1820.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
10 a.m. Devotional Group (Daily) 10 a.m. Hydration Station & 2 p.m. (M-F) Activities are subject to change.			1 10:30 a.m. Activity Council 2 p.m. Happy Hour 4:15 p.m. Bible Study Josh	2 10:30 a.m. Go Bowling & Out to Eat in Ottawa 1:30 p.m. Patio Chat	3 10:30 a.m. USA Bingo 1:30 p.m. Make Dirty Shirley Drinks	Independence Day 4 Individual Activities Coloring Fun
5 3:15 p.m. Beacon House of Worship Service	6 10:30 a.m. Group Exercises 1:30 p.m. Karaoke Richard	World Chocolate Day 7 10:30 a.m. Painting Craft 1:30 p.m. Chocolate Tasting	8 10:30 a.m. Food Committee 2 p.m. Happy Hour 4:15 p.m. Bible Study Josh	9 10:30 a.m. Take a Drive 1:30 p.m. Make Mug Cakes	10 10:30 a.m. Bingo 1:30 p.m. Play Phase 10	11 Individual Activities Manicures & Music
12 3:15 p.m. Holy Angels Catholic Church Service	13 10:30 a.m. Group Exercises 1:30 p.m. Craft Activity (Resident Choice)	National Mac and Cheese Day 14 10:30 a.m. Shopping Trip 1:30 p.m. Movie & Snack	15 10:30 a.m. Resident Council 2 p.m. Happy Hour 4:15 p.m. Bible Study Josh	16 10:30 a.m. Make Homemade Ice Cream 1:30 p.m. Play Noodle Ball	17 10:30 a.m. Bingo 1:30 p.m. Trivia	18 Individual Activities Coloring Fun
19 3:15 p.m. Dunkard Brethren Church Service	20 10:30 a.m. Group Exercises 1:30 p.m. Milkshake Monday	21 10:30 a.m. Bingo Auction 1:30 p.m. Lemonade on the Patio	22 10:30 a.m. Wii Games 2 p.m. Happy Hour 4:15 p.m. Bible Study Josh	23 10:30 a.m. Fun with Beads 1:30 p.m. Watermelon Social	24 10:30 a.m. Bingo 1:30 p.m. Let's Make S'mores	25 Individual Activities Manicures & Music
26 3:15 p.m. First Baptist Church Service	27 10:30 a.m. Group Exercises 1:30 p.m. Trip to the Bookstore	28 10:30 a.m. Coloring & Music 1:30 p.m. Cheese Ball Toss	29 10:30 a.m. Play Cornhole 2 p.m. Happy Hour 4:15 p.m. Bible Study Josh	30 10:30 a.m. Bowling Game 1:30 p.m. Make Slushes	31 10:30 a.m. Bingo 1:30 p.m. Build Your Own Banana Split	



Staying ACTIVE

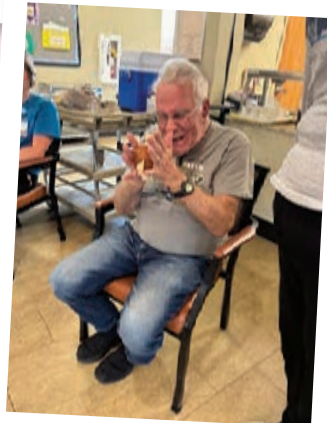
Throw Puck

Have you ever played throw puck?

Our activity coordinator, Melissa, made a big grid on the floor using tape and put a prize in each square. Residents took turns tossing a beanbag and trying to land on a prize they wanted.

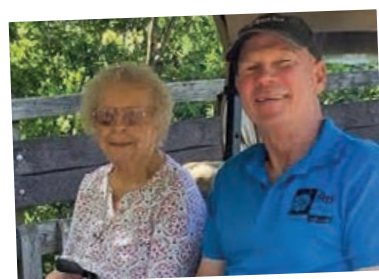
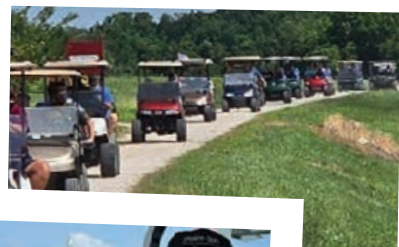
“Each round, they won a prize, which made it really fun,” says Melissa. “They are a prize-motivated bunch.”

Everyone had a great time and enjoyed cheering for each other. Throw puck for the win!



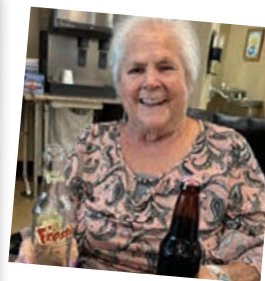
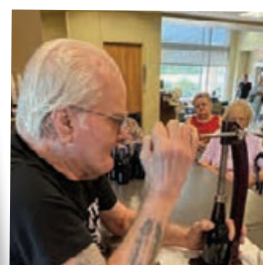
A Big Prairie Spirit Thank You

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Friends of the Prairie Spirit Trail, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, and all the volunteers who provide special access to the Prairie Spirit Trail each year. Because of your dedication, passion, and commitment, residents were able to experience the incredible natural beauty that stretches along the trail.



Three Cheers for Root Beers!

We had a blast celebrating National Root Beer Day in June. Not only did residents get to try a variety of root beers, they also got to make their own while learning about this truly American treat.



Resident Spotlight: Tom Dieker



We first featured Tom Dieker in our November 2023 issue of the Connections newsletter—but his story is just too good not to share again.

Tom was born on a farm near Westphalia, Kansas, a place he’s called home for nearly his entire life. He moved into the house when he was 6 months old, grew up there, and later raised his own family on that same farm.

Back then, everyone called him “Tommy.” He went to school in Westphalia, graduating with the class of 1958. One of his favorite memories was piling into a car with friends in 1957 and heading to Lawrence to watch a KU basketball game. Wilt Chamberlain was playing, and that experience turned Tom into a lifelong Jayhawks fan.

In high school, Tom started dating Donna, and the two quickly became inseparable. They married on July 4, 1960, and will celebrate their 66th wedding anniversary this month. Together, they raised five kids—two boys and three girls. Their family grew to include ten grandchildren, four step-grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren. With so many family members nearby, they follow a weekly schedule for visits, so Tom has visitors nearly every day.

After high school, Tom gave college a try at Emporia State University, but after one semester, he realized his heart was back on the farm. He returned home where he belonged. They raised Limousin cattle, planted a variety of crops, and kept swine and chickens for a time.

When asked if anything exciting ever happened on the farm, Tom casually says: “Well, we got held up in an armed robbery one time.” On Oct. 17, 1977, Tom and Donna went to the bank in Blue Mound to talk about a loan to expand their farm. While they were sitting in a back office, a robber entered the bank. He held everyone at gunpoint and gathered the employees and customers into the vault. Before closing the door, the robber even said, “God bless you.”

Thankfully, no one was hurt. The vault door didn’t quite latch, so after a few minutes, they pushed it open and called for help. The robber made off with about \$17,000 that day. But Tom says he and Donna “left with a lot more,” since they were approved for the loan.

These days, his son Doug runs the 1,400-acre operation, along with grandson Drake. His other son, Jeff, also helps on the farm and makes sure Tom feels connected. Jeff takes Tom for drives out to the farm so he can check on the land and cattle—something he still loves.

Tom remains deeply thankful—for his life on the farm, for his family, and for the love and support that surrounds him every single day.



This year we celebrate the 250th anniversary of American independence. Did you know these fun facts about Independence Day?

- Although July 4, 1776, was the day the Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence—and the day the document is dated—John Adams staunchly believed July 2 was the correct date to celebrate American independence, since July 2, 1776, was the day the Second Continental Congress voted to approve independence from Britain. Adams reportedly turned down invitations to appear at July 4th events in protest.
- On July 4, 1778, George Washington, while still at war, celebrated Independence Day by treating his soldiers to a double ration of rum and a cannon salute.
- Thomas Jefferson was the first to hold a 4th of July celebration at the White House, on July 4, 1801.
- John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. James Monroe died five years later, on July 4, 1831.
- Because of its crack, the Liberty Bell is never rung, but each year on Independence Day, young descendants of Declaration signers tap the bell 13 times in honor of the original 13 colonies.



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& PHOTOS
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