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At Givens Communities, Earth Day is more than just a date on the calendar—it’s an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to preserving the beautiful landscapes that make our communities so special. As part of our core values to “Do What’s Right” and “Make a Difference,” we take pride in maintaining our environment through sustainable practices and community engagement.

We are surrounded by beautiful landscapes, mature trees, and scenic walking trails that offer a peaceful escape and a close connection to nature. These natural features are not just part of the backdrop—they are integral to our identity. That’s why we take our sustainable efforts so seriously. Over the years with the assistance of very generous gifts we installed solar panels on several of our buildings at Givens Estates and invested in several pieces of battery powered lawn equipment, reducing our carbon footprint and promoting renewable energy sources. These initiatives are just some of the many ways we strive to ensure the future sustainability of our communities. Furthermore, our commitment to the environment is evident in our dedication to preserving natural resources and our buildings. Recently we remodeled and reused materials in the manor, significantly reducing waste and giving new life to existing structures. This approach demonstrates our focus on conservation and resourcefulness, which makes Givens Communities so special. As we celebrate the beauty around us, we invite you to explore our walking trails, admire the trees, and take in the serene landscapes that make Givens Communities a unique place to live. By embracing these natural wonders and supporting sustainable practices, we can all contribute to Making a Difference.

Thank you for being part of our journey toward a more sustainable future. Together, we can make a lasting impact and create a more vibrant environment for everyone.

**Kevin Schwab**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Givens Communities



## Givens Welcomes New Philanthropy Director

Jennifer Soster has been named the new Philanthropy Director. Jennifer is a non-profit professional with more than 25 years of progressive development and leadership experience. She is a highly effective leader driving results through strategic planning, strong relationship building with diverse constituencies, volunteer and community engagement, and operational effectiveness. Prior to joining Givens Communities, Jennifer served as Director of Donor Relations for the University of North Carolina Asheville and Director of Institutional Effectiveness for Warren Wilson College. She and her husband, Fred, reside in Buncombe County and are the proud parents of two children, Erica and Frederick. They are also proud grandparents of Charlie. Her office currently is in the first-floor administration offices at Givens Estates.



## Dot Gosnell Retires Following 40 Rewarding Years With Givens Estates



Dot Gosnell gathers with friends and fellow team members March 13 to celebrate her retirement after 40 years with Givens Estates. Dot is leaving Givens with a lasting impact of her quick wit and charm, as well as her dedication and loyalty to our residents and fellow team members. We will forever be grateful that Dot chose to be here for the decades of service and wish her all the happiness and enjoyment during her retirement.



# Senior Living Publications Group Honors Givens Leadership

Givens Communities is prominently included in this year's McKnight's Senior Living Women of Distinction awards, with three team members – Jessie Bosshard, Christian Grunder and Cheryl Wallen – recognized for outstanding achievements in the senior living field.

Director of Life Ministries was named as a Women of Distinction VIP. “The judges were impressed with the difference these women have been able to make with limited time in long-term care,” said John O’Connor, McKnight’s Editorial Director, Vice President and Associate Publisher. “We’re thrilled to be able to shine a light on their contributions and look forward to honoring them in person.”



Jessie Bosshard



Christian Grunder



Cheryl Wallen

The program is presented by McKnight's Long-Term Care News, McKnight's Senior Living and McKnight's Home Care. The honorees will be feted May 14 as part of the sixth annual McKnight's Women of Distinction awards banquet in Chicago. Jessie, Executive Director of Givens Home First and Christian, Vice President of Human Resources, were selected as Rising Stars while Cheryl,

Kevin Schwab, CEO of Givens Communities, said “We are indeed fortunate to have dedication and talent that Cheryl, Christian and Jessie bring to our team. We are equally proud that they have been recognized and will be honored by McKnight's publications.”

# Pottery Group Provides Key Ingredient for Empty Bowls Program

A fundraising effort that combines skillful craftsmanship with delicious food is getting a soulful boost from a Givens Estates pottery group. Empty Bowls is an international project to fight hunger, personalized by artists and art organizations on a community level, with local efforts directed by MANNA Food Bank of Asheville. The money raised is donated to soup kitchens, food banks and for meals to meet nutritional needs, including school children.

“Our focus is assisting, through donating our clay bowls, the food securities of the area,” said Blake Salmon, the group’s leader. “We make no claims to any special artistic talent” though looking at the examples here, some in the group truly have it. As MANNA Food Bank describes it, “Empty Bowls serves as a poignant reminder that, while art has the power to uplift and inspire, it can also serve as a platform for raising awareness about the very real problem of hunger across our mountains. Guests select a bowl handmade by local artisans and take with them a seasonal meal of delicious soups, breads, and dessert. The souvenir bowl that guests take home reminds them of the many Western North Carolina neighbors who are currently struggling to afford groceries.”



Front row left to right Cindy Strom, Marsha McEvoy and Debbie Lewallen  
Middle row left to right Liz Propst and Tracy Salmon  
Back row left to right, Dan Jones, John Propst and Blake Salmon



A community grant provided funding for the Givens Estates pottery group to purchase clay. Inspiration for an eclectic array of shapes, designs, colors and ornamentation comes from individual and collective thinking. Previous work sent about 70 bowls to Beacon of Hope in Marshall. This helped Beacon of Hope raise more than \$7,000, more than triple what they raised last year.

“This all came about when resident Dan Jones said his daughter, who works at Beacon of Hope, needed bowls for their event.” Blake said. “Dan Jones and I said ‘hell, we can do it’.”



Next up for the Givens Estates pottery group is diligent work to supply bowls for the seventh annual Empty Bowls Fundraiser on May 19, a community meal benefiting the Flat Rock Backpack Program. They needed 100 bowls to fill a void left when a local potter retired. More than 100 bowls were delivered on April 12 in support of their event, which will take place inside the Parish Hall at the Episcopal Church of St. John in the Wilderness on May 19. The Backpack program works to combat childhood hunger by providing supplemental food for children on the free and reduced lunch program so that they don't go hungry on weekends during the school year. Each child is given enough for three dinners, two lunches, two breakfasts, and two snacks on a regular weekend.



## Estates Author Has Work Included in London Book Fair

Martha Rowlett, a Givens Estates resident, Methodist minister and author, and was selected by Readers Digest for inclusion of her book, "Weaving Prayer Into the Tapestry of Life" to be featured at the 2024 London Book Fair.



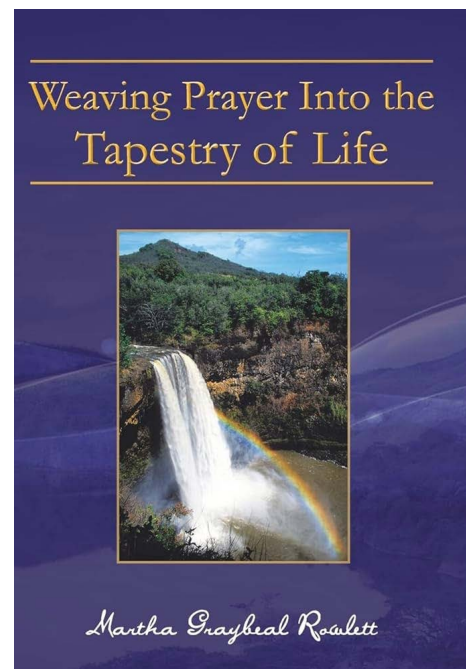
The international book publishing trade event saw some 1,000 exhibitors and an estimated 30,000 visitors this year. A video presentation allowed Martha to virtually attend the March 12-14 event. See the video by going to YouTube and type in "Martha Rowlett" in the search box.

This book is a third edition of Martha's adaptation for laypeople of her doctoral project. She wrote this manuscript after she moved to Givens Estates. It is dedicated to the team members of Givens Estates.

"Weaving Prayer Into the Tapestry of Life" is an adaptable handbook for the personal practice of prayer. There are nine collections of prayer prompts for a framework for personal prayer, suitable for continual use and application to life changes.

"This is a good bedside book," Martha said. "It began as my thesis in 1983, and now there is a French translation, and it is being published in both France and Switzerland.

"You have to be recommended for the Book Fair. Readers Digest chose my book and are my sponsor, saying they 'found the concept and potential for the book captivating and believe that it aligns perfectly with their vision.'"



## Senior Housing Trends Column – Food for Thought

Senior living communities have long recognized that dining venues not only meet dietary and nutritional needs, but also provide a relaxed social setting for conversation and fellowship.

Dining facilities and food quality are also a deciding aspect in selection of a continuing care retirement residence.

Enjoying a good meal is enhanced by good company, with excellent service, is more than satisfaction – it is sustaining.

And a good meal in itself isn't enough.

Givens Communities knows many factors influence resident dining satisfaction. Cooking concepts, culinary inspiration and special themes are elements for dining experiences that we recognize as essential.

We are a leader in "Farm to Table" and organics, even utilizing herbs grown in community garden space at Givens Estates. We have long recognized the importance for seniors and their families knowing that their meal preparation includes locally sourced ingredients with as many fresh options as possible.

The ways a kitchen works besides food preparation and service is equally important, with matters such as reducing food waste, composting and support of food pantries and helping feed the hungry.

## Givens Signs AARP Workplace Pledge

Givens Communities has signed the AARP Employer Pledge, further demonstrating a commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce.

"We celebrate differences and believe that together we are a stronger, more united organization because of it," said Christian Grunder, Human Resources Vice President. "We recognize the value of experienced team members and a commitment to hiring an age-diverse workforce. Contributions to our community success are enhanced, not limited by, age."

The AARP Employer Pledge Program is a nationwide effort for employers to recruit across diverse age groups and consider all applicants on an equal basis, regardless of age; and understand that 50+ workers should have a level playing field in their ability to compete and obtain jobs.



# Affordable Communities Update on Projects and Progress

Andrew Crosson, Project Development Director with Givens Affordable Communities, provides this update for everyone on projects across the region that have been in the news recently:

- The Clinchfield Mill in Marion is on track to be added to the National Historic Registry, as approved by the State Historic Preservation Office. This is a big step as it unlocks access to federal and state tax credits. The project includes Western North Carolina Community Health Services building a large flagship medical facility to serve low-income families and the Gateway Foundation constructing single-family workforce houses.

- The Webster Village project in Jackson County continues with Western Carolina University and Mountain Projects, with Givens to provide 120 total apartments serving seniors. WCU will be building market rate multifamily rental housing and Mountain Projects will be building single-family workforce homes.

- The Azalea Ridge proposal in Mars Hill saw the town planning and zoning board vote against rezoning the selected site. An appeal to town aldermen in January was also voted down. The seller has decided not to extend the

purchase contract; therefore, this effort has ended. However, the Town of Marshall and Madison County continue to express desire for a Givens Affordable Community.

- The West Haywood Street development is a 41-apartment project in downtown Asheville and a partnership between Givens and Haywood Street Community Development, which is associated with Haywood Street Church. We are working to finalize the property management agreement and construction is set to begin in the coming months. Givens will be directly involved with property management, responsible for hiring staff, lease up, and ongoing operations. The long-term goal is for HSCD to assume control of the property management in time.

- The Apple Ridge project in Hendersonville will have 60 units of workforce multifamily housing. Givens is working with Housing Assistance Corporation, which was awarded 9% tax credits in 2023. In addition to helping support a local nonprofit develop affordable housing, this opportunity also allows us to retain our developer status with the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, who administers, and awards North Carolina's allotment of low-income housing tax credits received from the federal government. Note that Givens will not be operating this project; we are strictly co-developing.



## Magazine Rates Givens Estates as ‘The Best’

Givens Estates has been honored by Assisted Living Magazine as being “Best in Senior Living” and “Best in Skilled Nursing” after successfully completing a 4-step vetting process conducted by the online resource. The selection reflects an outstanding standard of care and service, evaluated through online reviews, publications, and industry standards. Assisted Living Magazine is funded by partners and participating senior communities and offers seniors and their families free assistance in connecting with a preferred care provider or transitioning into a senior living community by providing expert advice and other services.



## Givens Gains Membership in International Council on Active Aging

Givens Communities has successfully applied for and been granted membership in the International Council on Active Aging, an association that leads, connects and defines the active-aging industry, supports organizations and professionals that develop wellness environments and services for adults over 50. Among the services provided is an industry-leading publication, the Journal on Active Aging. The Council offers online education-certificate courses, webinars, virtual summits, career development tools, as well as industry and scientific research, and white papers. The Council has two major campaigns to promote the mission of encouraging active aging as a solution to improving the quality of life for older adults: Active Aging Week and Changing the Way We Age. Both campaigns align with Givens mission and core values. Active Aging Week is held during the last week of September as an opportunity to promote and publicize the efforts of motivated organizations to reach older adults with the key messages of staying active, healthy, and engaged. The Changing the Way We Age Campaign helps spread the message from a public stage through volunteers who help transform the active-aging concept into reality.

# Former Givens Gerber Park Pickup Keeps On Trucking

Working Wheels, a locally based non-profit that provides affordable, reliable transportation for Western North Carolina families in need, celebrated its 300th program sale, with help from Givens Communities.

Joanna Bragg purchased her refurbished Ford F-150 for a subsidized price on March 27. When asked about the potential impact of this vehicle, she stated, “They changed our lives in one day, and how big of a blessing and impact this truck is really to me and my children... It’s huge.”



Originally, a Givens Estates resident had donated the pickup to Givens Gerber Park for their MANNA Food Bank delivery. A Golden LEAF Foundation grant provided funding for a new van to replace it. But the 1997 workhorse still had plenty to offer and was in turn donated to Working Wheels.

Working Wheels Executive Director Jamie Beasley stated, “We’re happy for Joanna and her family. It makes a huge difference to have access to a

dependable car. We are also thrilled to be here today to celebrate 300 Purchase Program participants. We are picking up the pace and looking ahead at the next 300.”

Joanna will use the truck for daily transportation, as well as for her side business of landscaping and odd jobs. “The donation of this pickup truck is all about neighbors helping neighbors and reflects the core values of Givens Communities,” said Geoffrey Cantrell, Public Relations Director for Givens Communities. “We want to be a part of the good things that Working Wheels is doing for this place we call home, and we are very excited that this truck will continue to be of use.”

Working Wheels is celebrating 10 years of work in 2024 and hopes to provide 50 affordable purchases and 375 discounted repairs through its programs this year. Working Wheels collaborates with 17 regional partners to identify the program participants who are given the opportunity to purchase vehicles for \$610. Vehicle donations to Working Wheels are tax deductible. The process is simple, and the impact is real. To read more about Working Wheels, please visit [www.workingwheelswnc.org](http://www.workingwheelswnc.org).





## University to Bestow Honorary Degree to Estates Resident

The University of North Carolina Asheville will present an honorary degree to Oscar Wong, a Givens Estates resident and founder of Highland Brewing Company, during the 2024 Commencement event, to be held May 11.

The son of Chinese immigrants, born and raised on the island of Jamaica, Wong came to the U.S. in 1959 to study engineering at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, where he earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in both civil and structural engineering.



He began his career in San Francisco and moved to the Asheville area in 1992 with plans to retire.

At first, Wong pursued brewing just as a hobby, then in 1994 he launched Highland Brewing Company, Asheville's first craft brewery since prohibition. Several decades later, Asheville became known as "Beer City, USA" and Wong was dubbed the "Godfather of Asheville craft beer." He received the Brewer's Association 2020 Recognition Award. Now retired for a second time, Wong has kept Highland Brewing a family-owned business, which is run by his daughter, Leah Wong Ashburn, who serves as president.

In addition to earning every major recognition in his field, Wong received the highest civilian honor in North Carolina in 2023. The Order of the Long Leaf Pine was awarded by Gov. Roy Cooper for Wong's extraordinary service to the state.

Deeply committed to community service, in addition to serving two terms on the UNC Asheville Board of Trustees, Wong was president of the Asheville Rotary Club and Board chair for Arc of Buncombe County, which serves children and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities.



## Team Members Receive Commendations

A Performance Commendation is intended for team members who are consistent in meeting the requirements of their position, are in good standing and who go above and beyond in providing quality and exceptional service.

Nominated individuals have, through their actions, demonstrated our four core values of People Passionate, Make a Difference, Power of Community, and Do What's Right. This recognition is an indication of how Givens Communities achieves our vision of Endless Possibilities, Vibrant Aging and a mission of Creating Community, Empowering Lives. Three recent commendations have been recently awarded:

- Jacob Shaw, IT End User Support Specialist, for making sure work was getting handled – and handled well – without oversight while the work group was short-staffed.



- Latisha Pickens, Environmental Service, who has been very helpful in getting new team members trained and really taking the time to make sure they are doing what is right, not what is easiest. Latisha dedicates herself to trying to exceed resident satisfaction and supporting team members.



- Emma Stroup, Admin Assistant for Givens Communities, who made a positive difference in a colleague's day with an offer to help jump start her car when its battery died, demonstrating the core value of People Passionate.





## Team Member Anniversaries

Givens Communities celebrates the work anniversaries of everyone who joined our team during the months of April, May and June and combined have contributed more than 500 years of service.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Campus</b>	<b>Service</b>
SULLIVAN, THELMA	Environmental Services	The Givens Estates	24 years
GLENN, ROBIN A	Maintenance	Givens Highland Farms	22 years
KRAMER, KEN	Administration	Givens Highland Farms	19 years
CASE, DANNY S	Maintenance	The Givens Estates	19 years
STEPHENS, TERESA L	GAC Development	Givens Communities	19 years
RAY, JESSE L	Maintenance	Givens Highland Farms	17 years
OWENSBY, BRENDA L	Environmental Services	Givens Highland Farms	17 years
FLEMING, ALICIA D	Assisted Living	The Givens Estates	16 years
ROTENBERRY, DANIEL	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	12 years
BARRETO, AUREA TAYLOR	Environmental Services	The Givens Estates	8 years
CAMPBELL, BECKEY H	General Nursing	The Givens Estates	6 years
STEELE, AMY L	General Nursing	Givens Highland Farms	6 years
BRENNAN, ALLY	Financial Operations	Givens Communities	4 years
STAFFORD, WANDA C	Assisted Living	The Givens Estates	3 years
BREEDEN, DAVID E	Food Service	The Givens Estates	3 years
ROY, LAUREN	Food Service	The Givens Estates	2 years
MELANDER, BRYANA M	General Nursing	The Givens Estates	2 years
CHRISTIE, SCOTT	Food Service	The Givens Estates	2 years
HOWIE, SHAND K	General Nursing	The Givens Estates	2 years
CONSTANTINE, LISA	Home First	Givens Communities	1 year
UNDERWOOD, ROBERT E	Administration	The Givens Estates	1 year
KOLESNYK, HANNA	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	1 year
HARTMAN, TYLER C	IT	Givens Communities	1 year
SHINKLE, JANELLE	Environmental Services	Givens Highland Farms	1 year
POWELL, DAKOTA	Grounds	Givens Highland Farms	1 year

<b>Name</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Campus</b>	<b>Service</b>
TRENT, JENNIFER L	Life Enrichment	Givens Highland Farms	32 years
SMITH, NIKEYA L	General Nursing	The Givens Estates	22 years
POWELL, JOHANNA R	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	18 years
WEAVER, JONATHAN T	IT	Givens Communities	17 years
GAMBRELL, CHRISTINE L	General Nursing	The Givens Estates	17 years
WOODS, JOYCE A	Food Service	The Givens Estates	16 years
SNYDER, CHRISTOPHER	Administration	The Givens Estates	15 years
STOUT, SHEILAH S	General Nursing	The Givens Estates	12 years
BOYER, JAMES D	Maintenance	Givens Highland Farms	11 years
BAYANI, FELISA B	General Nursing	The Givens Estates	10 years
CHICAS DIAZ, MODESTO I	Food Service	The Givens Estates	10 years
KING, ASHLEY T	Marketing	Givens Communities	6 years
OSWALD, HOLLAND C	Maintenance	The Givens Estates	6 years
TURPIN, DENISE	Assisted Living	The Givens Estates	6 years
HARRIS, STEPHANIE M	Env. Services	Givens Highland Farms	4 years
MADDEN, ARTHUR C	Life Enrichment	The Givens Estates	4 years
RIVERS, ANA S	Env. Services	The Givens Estates	4 years
WALZ, SEAN	Env. Services	The Givens Estates	4 years
LITTLEJOHN, LEA	Assisted Living	The Givens Estates	3 years
KIDD, BRITTANY	Maintenance	Givens Highland Farms	3 years
LAPLANTE, BRITTANY B	Home First	Givens Communities	3 years
SULLINS, TONYA J	Food Service	Givens Affordable Comm.	2 years
DELGADO, MARCELLA C	Food Service	The Givens Estates	2 years
SALOMON, DANNY	General Nursing	Givens Highland Farms	2 years
WALKER, JESSICA D	Food Service	The Givens Estates	2 years
WEBER, CHRISTOPHER L	Maintenance	Givens Highland Farms	2 years
SWANSON, LORIEN K	Food Service	The Givens Estates	2 years
STYLES, CADE M	Grounds	The Givens Estates	2 years



<b>Name</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Campus</b>	<b>Service</b>
AIELLO, TINA	Grounds	Givens Highland Farms	3 years
YOST, OLIVIA L	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	3 years
BALZER, AMELIA R	Human Resources	Givens Communities	2 years
MCDONALD, AMBER L	General Nursing	The Givens Estates	2 years
BURNETT, TANNER	Grounds	The Givens Estates	2 years
HALE, ISABELLE A	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	2 years
MELVILLE, MAKAYLA L	General Nursing	Givens Highland Farms	2 years
BUXEDA, MIGUEL E	Maintenance	Givens Highland Farms	2 years
SAUNDERS, MADISYN P	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	2 years
HANEY, ASHLEY	Marketing	Givens Communities	2 years
ANGELES, REGINA A	Env. Services	The Givens Estates	2 years
BEACON, JUDITH A	Env. Services	The Givens Estates	2 years
CRUZ, DELILA Y	Food Service	The Givens Estates	2 years
FOREMAN, TERESA	Assisted Living	The Givens Estates	2 years
FRADY, NANCY	Food Service	The Givens Estates	2 years
BADGERO, MELISSA L	Env. Services	The Givens Estates	2 years
FORD, ERIN	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	2 years
WELLBORN, DAVID	Food Service	The Givens Estates	1 year
WELLBORN, NANCY L	Food Service	The Givens Estates	1 year
CHAPMAN, TEMPEST	Assisted Living	The Givens Estates	1 year
DUNHAM, EMMA	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	1 year
BUCHANAN, AMANDA	General Nursing	Givens Highland Farms	1 year
MORGAN, DEB	IT	Givens Communities	1 year
TATE, RAE	Food Service	The Givens Estates	1 year
THOMAS, MATTHEW	General Nursing	The Givens Estates	1 year
VILLATORO, MARY	General Nursing	Givens Highland Farms	1 year
WARD, BECKY	General Nursing	Givens Highland Farms	1 year
SHOMAKER, KIMBERLY L	Home First	Givens Communities	1 year
BATTLE, JAVON	Food Service	The Givens Estates	1 year
OLDENBURG, EVAN	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	1 year
STAUDT, RYSSA S	Food Service	The Givens Estates	1 year
MULLINIX, KELLI	Administration	The Givens Estates	1 year
BARNES, JOSHUA	Food Service	The Givens Estates	1 year
BELL, ALEXIS	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	1 year
KRAMER, JESSE A	Food Service	Givens Highland Farms	1 year
PREUSSER, MASON	Corporate Admin.	Givens Communities	1 year
SICINA, KINSLEY	Food Service	The Givens Estates	1 year