

Givens
COMMUNITIES
Winter 2025

Discovery
NEWSLETTER
Creating Community, Empowering Lives



2025: A Year to Celebrate and A Future Filled with Promise

A Message from Kevin Schwab, CEO

As we approach the holiday season and the close of 2025, I want to pause and reflect on what has truly been an extraordinary year for Givens Communities. This has been a year marked by milestone achievements, mission-driven growth, and countless moments that reminded us why our work matters.

Celebrating 50 Years of Service

This year, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Givens Estates, a remarkable milestone that anchors our deep, decades-long commitment to serving older adults of all income levels. From our beginnings with HUD 202 housing in 1975 to becoming a regional leader in senior living, our story has been shaped by the people who built, supported, and believed in this mission across five decades.

Our anniversary gave us the chance to honor our roots, celebrate our progress, and re-commit to the values that have guided us from the start: service, excellence, and the unwavering belief that every older adult deserves purpose, connection, and dignity.

Expanding Our Mission: Affiliation with Givens Aldersgate

Another momentous step in 2025 was our affiliation with Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community in Charlotte, now proudly Givens Aldersgate. This affiliation extends our mission into the Charlotte metro region

and allows us to strengthen our collective impact as a nonprofit leader in senior living.

By bringing together two organizations with deeply aligned values, we broaden our reach, deepen our resources, and open new pathways for innovation, resident experience, and long-term sustainability.

Major Advances in Affordable Housing: HUD Funding Secured

Our commitment to serving older adults across the income spectrum remains central to who we are. In 2025, we reached two significant milestones in affordable housing by partnering with **Webster Village** and **Clinchfield Mill**. Both communities secured competitive HUD 202 funding, enabling us to move forward on developments that will bring much-needed, high-quality affordable housing to older adults in Western North Carolina. These projects reflect not only our mission but also our long-term belief that financial security and accessible housing should be available to seniors regardless of income.

These wins are a testament to the hard work of our Affordable Communities team and reinforce our role as a trusted regional partner in addressing the growing need for senior housing.

National Recognition: Newsweek Rankings

We were also honored this year to once again receive top national recognition from Newsweek for excellence in senior living. These rankings reflect the dedication, professionalism, and compassion that our team members demonstrate every day, and they

highlight the exceptional experience our residents receive across our communities.

Recognition like this is not accidental. It is the result of consistent effort, hard work, and a shared commitment to quality at every level of our organization.

Looking Ahead to 2026

As we turn toward 2026, we see exciting opportunities ahead. Several priorities rise to the forefront:

- **Advancing our Longevity and Brain Health Initiative**, positioning Givens as a leader in proactive aging, cognitive wellness, and whole-person health.
- **Strengthening operations across our multi-campus model**, ensuring consistency, excellence, and alignment across Asheville, Black Mountain, Charlotte, and our affordable communities.
- **Continuing expansion of affordable housing**, building on the momentum of our 2025 HUD awards and beginning the projects.
- **Finalizing and beginning construction on our master plans**, an important next step in shaping the future of our campuses.
- **Deepening resident engagement and team member development**, supporting a culture where people feel seen, valued, and empowered.

The coming year will be shaped by collaboration, innovation, and thoughtful growth. I believe 2026 has the potential to be one of our most meaningful years

yet, and I am grateful to lead an organization poised for such opportunity.

A Holiday Message of Gratitude

As we celebrate this season, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all who make Givens Communities what it is. To our residents, thank you for your vibrancy, insight, and trust. To our team members, thank you for your dedication and compassion. And to our partners, donors, volunteers, and friends, thank you for your belief in our mission and for walking alongside us.

May this holiday season bring joy, rest, and time with the people you love. And may 2026 be a year filled with purpose, progress, and the power of community.

With appreciation,



Kevin Schwab
Chief Executive Officer
Givens Communities

Noteworthy News

Innovative Longevity and Brain Health Initiative

Givens Communities announced Givens Longevity and Brain Health Program, a major new initiative designed to advance whole-person wellness. By addressing the various factors that influence brain health, the program empowers participants to take proactive steps toward a healthier, more vibrant future. This exciting new offering of ongoing dementia and brain health education will be available to all Givens Life Plan Communities, affordable housing, Givens Life Ministries, and members of Givens Home First, Givens Choice, in addition to team members.

Functional Pathways Now at Givens Aldersgate

Functional Pathways, one of the nation's leading and fastest-growing contract therapy companies, has partnered with Givens Aldersgate assisted living and skilled nursing facilities to provide physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech/language therapy. They will also provide support for independent living residents through therapy and a variety of wellness programs and educational opportunities.

Functional Pathways has been providing comprehensive therapy solutions to Givens Estates and Givens Highland Farms since 2023.

HUD Funding Boost to Repurpose Mill

The Givens Clinchfield Mill project in Marion has been awarded \$11 million

in HUD Section 202 funding which will help us convert the historic structure into 141 affordable apartments for older adults.



The project will not only preserve and repurpose a historic landmark, but it will also help meet a critical and growing need for safe and affordable senior housing. Givens purchased the McDowell County mill with a \$3 million grant from Dogwood Health Trust in 2022 and in 2024 the site was added to the National Register of Historic Places, which qualifies it for other state and federal funding.

Awards: We Earned a Bunch in 2025

When Newsweek published its third annual rankings of continuing care retirement communities (CCRC), once again the Givens Communities Life Plan campuses are among the very best. There are 60 CCRCs in North Carolina and over 1,900 across the nation.



Givens Estates – Number 1 in North Carolina and number six in the country!

Givens Highland Farms – Number 6 in North Carolina, 44 in the country!

Givens Aldersgate – Number 15 in North Carolina, 198 in the country!

The Newsweek rankings are widely recognized as a trusted benchmark for quality that serves as an important resource for seniors to make informed decisions when choosing a retirement community. Most importantly, this recognition reflects the unwavering dedication of our team members, the satisfaction of our residents, and the relentless pursuit of each team member to sustain vibrant, supportive environments where everyone can thrive. Other Honors and Recognition:

- Givens Aldersgate was recognized by the Charlotte Observer in its “Best of 2025” awards, Gold in Skilled Nursing Facility and Memory Care; Silver in Independent Living, Assisted Living and Place to Work; Bronze Award in Home Care.

- Givens Estates won two gold models for best retirement community and best assisted living in this year’s “Best of Asheville” contest by Asheville Media group. This marks seven golds and two silvers earned by Givens Estates in the past five years, a remarkable achievement.

- “Givens Communities Day in Asheville” was proclaimed Aug. 21 by Mayor Esther Manheimer for compassion, vision, and a steadfast commitment to older adults for 50 years, enhancing the lives of thousands through innovative senior living, housing, and life enrichment programs.

- Thelma Sullivan, director of Environmental Services at Givens Estates, received the Excellence in Leadership Award by LeadingAge NC, while the Training and Development

Team of Justin Upright, Rob Dirscherl and Keith Robinette, got the Workplace Excellence Award for promoting a healthy workplace culture that promotes the recruitment, retention and development of staff at all levels.



L-R Keith Robinette, Justin Upton, Thelma Sullivan, Rob Dirscherl

- Givens Communities was rated A- by Fitch Ratings, one of the major credit ratings agencies globally.

- U.S. News & World Report designated Givens Estates Health Center as a best short-term rehabilitation facility for excellence at providing highly satisfactory services and making residents feel safe and well cared for.

- Cindy McCurry, a Certified Nursing Assistant at Givens Home First, was the recipient of the Georgia Crump Certified Nursing Assistant Recognition Award from Memory Care for demonstrating exceptional compassion, dedication, and excellence in caring for older adults.



Cindy McCurry with Givens Home First

- Teresa Stephens and Nicole Allen of Givens Affordable Communities were honored by Terpsicorps Theatre of Dance as Hurricane Helene heroes for inspiring hope, unity and staying on-site 24/7 during the Hurricane Helene disaster.



Teresa Stephens and
Nicole Allen

- Both Givens Highland Farms and Givens Estates were named “Best of Western North Carolina” as assisted living communities in the annual Mountain Xpress readers’ poll.

Innovative Meadowmont Phase 4 Coming

Givens Highland Farms is expanding! The Meadowmont complex of apartments and cottages at Givens Highland Farms will be added to townhouse-style duplex units as part of its Phase 4 stage, expected to begin in the coming months.

Similar to the popular floor plans of the newest homes in Meadowmont, these comfortable homes have garage spaces separating individual living spaces, so there are no shared residential walls. Standard features will include laundry room, attached one-car garage and the lush surroundings that have made Meadowmont bungalows and apartments so desirable.



Home Care Expands to Charlotte

Givens Choice, the innovative Continuing Care at Home program, is expanding services to include the Metro Charlotte area. Research shows that 85% of adults hope to stay in their own home as they age for as long as possible. With Givens Choice, that possibility becomes reality with a membership plan that merges the security and familiarity of staying in your own home with the robust long-term support found in Life Plan Communities. This blend provides independent, healthy and active seniors the assurance that their future needs will be met—without sacrificing independence or lifestyle.



People & Places

New Director of Life Ministries

Joey Abel has taken the helm of Givens Life Ministries, the outreach division of Givens Communities, which serves vulnerable and at-risk populations with health and wellness programs, free nutritious meals, medical attention and basic childhood necessities. He previously was an Independent Living Social Work Navigator at Givens Highland Farms, where he had worked since 2021. Joey will lead and direct program expansion into the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area as a part of Givens Aldersgate community engagement. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree from Louisiana State University. He has been serving older adults in Western North Carolina since 2011.



Meet the Director of Brain Health Initiative

Taryn Tindall is the director of the newly launched Givens Longevity and Brain Health Program, bringing more than 15 years of progressive leadership experience. She is a Registered Nurse, Certified Dementia Practitioner, and licensed Nursing Home Administrator and serves on the Age-Friendly Buncombe County Advisory Committee. Most recently, she served as director of Wellbeing Services at Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community. We are delighted to have Taryn join us as we start this important new initiative.

Givens Philanthropy in 2025: A Demonstration of Compassion & Support

Givens Communities has a proud tradition of giving, supported through our community benefit program and the generosity of donors who contribute to Givens Philanthropy. The year 2025 brought challenges for many, and we are proud to share that our Givens family was there to lend a helping hand when it mattered most.

We are highlighting a few of the many moments when Givens worked to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who needed it most. Every act of generosity, whether large or small, creates a lasting impact, and we are deeply grateful for your commitment to making our communities and the world a better place.

As we leave the challenges of 2025 behind, Givens Communities is honored to share examples of how Givens Philanthropy helped change lives for the better.

Hurricane Helene Assistance

In late 2024, Hurricane Helene swept through Western North Carolina, leaving a trail of devastation that deeply affected our Givens community — including team members, families, friends, and residents alike. The storm tested our resilience, but it also revealed the extraordinary strength of our shared compassion.

In the wake of Helene, the Team Member Assistance Ministry became

a vital source of hope and healing. Through the generosity of donors and the unwavering support of our community, we raised over \$300,000 to help those impacted by the storm. These funds provided emergency relief for housing, food, transportation, and other urgent needs, ensuring that our team members could begin to rebuild their lives with dignity and support. Funds raised during the storm also supported the drilling of wells on Givens Estates and Givens Highland Farms campuses, ensuring access to water during times of crisis.



Givens team member Christopher with a group of Hurricane Helene volunteers.

The stories of recovery and gratitude who received assistance are a testament to the heart of our mission. A few courageously shared their experiences during the storm about how the Team Member Assistance Ministry provided true support in their time of need.

Givens Highland Farms team member Rita experienced the devastating loss of her home due to flooding. Despite facing this personal crisis, Rita remained committed to caring for residents at Highland Farms while her family stepped up to volunteer in the community. Thanks to the Team Member Assistance

Ministry, Rita received help with the deposit and rent for a new apartment as well as donated furniture and decorations to help furnish her new space and meals during the storm's aftermath. Reflecting on the experience, Rita shared:

"I don't know what I would have done without the support of everyone around me and especially Givens for taking care of my family and me."

Givens Estates team member Christopher also lost his home in the storm. In the face of this unimaginable loss, Christopher remained dedicated, working tirelessly each day to flush toilets, provide water to residents and team members, and coordinate volunteers to serve the community.

With assistance from the Team Member Assistance Ministry, Christopher felt supported during this challenging time. As his home is being rebuilt, he reflected with deep gratitude on the care and generosity shown by the Givens community.

"The financial support and the continued emotional support from team members and residents was a great resource to me following Helene. This support exemplifies our community values and is why I am proud to call Givens home."

Support for those with food insecurity during the loss of SNAP benefits

Recently Givens Philanthropy supported residents at Givens Gerber Park (GGP) and Givens Great Laurels (GGL) who had uncertainty with their SNAP benefits, the Supplemental

Nutrition Assistance Program that helps low-income individuals and families afford groceries. When these benefits became uncertain, many residents faced added stress about



Givens Gerber Park team members hold grocery gift cards that were distributed to residents facing SNAP uncertainties.

Through the Resident Assistance Ministry Fund, Givens Philanthropy provided Publix gift cards to help ease the burden of grocery expenses during this challenging time. Teresa Stephens, Vice President of Affordable Communities, alerted Philanthropy to the urgent need among residents in our affordable housing communities. BeLoved Asheville, a local nonprofit, provided additional grocery store gift cards to residents impacted by the delays in SNAP benefits. The leadership of Teresa coupled with the generosity of Givens Communities residents and BeLoved remind us of the importance of compassion and solidarity.

Givens residents expressed heartfelt gratitude for this assistance, sharing words of appreciation and even tears of relief: "I began to tear up when I received the financial support as things have been very stressful with finances. Receiving these grocery gift cards was a huge blessing, especially since the holidays are coming up."

The Charlie Cart Project: Bringing Healthy Cooking to Life at Givens Gerber Park

An inventive new project at Givens Gerber Park allows residents to learn about healthy eating firsthand. The Charlie Cart Project is a mobile teaching kitchen that's transforming the way our community approaches food. This innovative cart is used for live cooking demonstrations, showing residents how to prepare nutritious, budget-friendly meals right at home.

What makes the Charlie Cart truly special is its mobility. It goes door to door, bringing the experience directly to residents. Our team members demonstrate how to use the cart and share practical tips for cooking with everyday ingredients. It's more than a kitchen on wheels; it's a tool for empowerment, helping residents gain confidence in creating meals that are both healthy and affordable. The Charlie Cart became a reality thanks to the generosity of donors and the support of the Givens Philanthropy Department. Over \$15,000 was raised to purchase this well-engineered mobile kitchen, proving the incredible impact philanthropy has on community outreach and resident well-being.



Lisa Rogers, Givens LifeMinistries Supportive Services Manager

Partnerships make this project even stronger. Givens Affordable Communities collaborates with MANNA FoodBank to provide fresh ingredients for demonstrations. These ingredients are then used to teach residents how to turn pantry staples into delicious meals such as spaghetti, tofu tacos, and so much more.

Throughout 2025, numerous acts of kindness, compassion and generosity occurred within Givens Communities and the broader community, far exceeding what we can detail here.



Gerber Park residents take a healthy cooking class.



This past year has been a powerful reminder of what we can accomplish together. As the year draws to a close, we want to honor not only the resilience of our community but also the enduring legacy of generosity that continues to flourish. Philanthropy remains at the heart of supporting Givens Communities during times of need — providing vital resources and inspiring hope when it's needed most. Thank you to everyone who gave, advocated, and stood beside the Givens community during some challenging times. Your kindness has made a lasting impact, and your commitment continues to inspire.

Road to Affiliation to Create Givens Aldersgate

While the process began quite earlier, for all intent and purposes the real beginning of the affiliation of Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community and Givens Communities came in April 2025 with a formal letter of intent. Things were official.

Fast-forward to October and the Charlotte life plan community was renamed Givens Aldersgate. The new name clearly affiliates this beautiful 230-acre campus with the Givens brand established in western North Carolina over the past 50 years. The two senior living organizations came together through a membership substitution which ensures long-term stability and mission-driven growth for both organizations. On October 15 a celebration for residents, staff and invited guests was held.

“Rest assured that we remain steadfast in our commitment to putting residents and families first,” said Kevin Schwab, President & CEO of Givens Communities. “The familiar faces, the same caring team members, and beloved traditions that define all our campuses will remain at the heart of our work. We are excited to explore opportunities for improved services and community enrichment.”

Highlights of the affiliation include a variety of expanded resources. For example, residents and staff will benefit from a broader range of services, wellness programs, and innovative

initiatives. The partnership provides enhanced stability and a stronger foundation for long-term growth, ensuring continued excellence and security for all Givens campuses and programs. And perhaps most importantly, this affiliation allows for shared expertise for the very best practices in senior living, healthcare, and community engagement.

To ensure a smooth transition of culture and services, Ken Kramer, who has served the Givens organization well as executive director of Givens Highland Farms, was chosen to transition to the same role at Givens Aldersgate. Brooke Hodge, who has been with the team in Charlotte for 14 years, was elevated to associate director and now has oversight of health services.



Ken Kramer



Brooke Hodge

2025 Yearbook



Givens Aldersgate



Givens Communities residents and teammates enjoy Asheville Symphony in the Park.



An increasingly popular game being enjoyed at Givens Estates is Mahjong, with players enjoying a mix of strategy and skill, a little luck, and a lively crowd of players - who say there's always room for more.



With a big thanks to the dining services team, Givens Highland Farms served 173 guests at the Father's Day Buffet, a chance to celebrate fathers, families, and friends with great food and even better company.



On October 24, the inaugural Givens Aldersgate RC Race buzzed to life with three five-lap races, and afterward, the track opened to any residents eager to take a spin. The brainchild of resident Richard Havelka, who worked with Life Enrichment and Security helped to set the date and prepare the course.



Art comes to life at Givens Aldersgate, as molten glass transforms into stunning figurines during a live demo by Magpie Glass.



The specialty for Givens Gerber Park “chefs” was tofu tacos in an August cooking class led by summer intern Janaki and our Supportive Service Manager, Lisa. Their hands-on demo made it easy and fun for everyone to try something new.



In October, Givens Estates resident Gerry Meyer joined future resident Rich Gibson, and fellow swimmer David Bishop in Raleigh at the North Carolina Senior Games Swim Meet, with excellent individual results and overall, earning 8th place out of 24 teams.



A special social gathering at Givens Highland Farms was a Mother’s Day Tea Party, spent with our Independent Living and Health Care Center residents and their loved ones.



Julie Moses with Givens Home First is all smiles at one of many, many public events Givens Communities supported throughout the year.



Givens Estates residents learned firsthand about the Haywood Street Fresco in October, a powerful work of art that honors the stories and people of Asheville.



Givens Great Laurels residents had a fantastic time celebrating St. Patrick's Day with delicious Reuben sandwiches, hearty potato soup, and all the fixings, and a festive spirit in full swing with wonderful company and lots of laughter.



All Together Art Class kicked off the year for Givens Gerber Park residents with new skills and techniques and later sharing the amazing creations that come out of this class.



Givens Great Laurels had the pleasure of hosting the Radio Hill Gang, a local group of music aficionados from Lake Junaluska, who generously donate their time and talents to enrich the lives of elder members of our community through music.



A group of Givens Estates residents in October volunteered at MANNA FoodBank, spending their afternoon packaging food for individuals and families facing food insecurity across Western North Carolina.