

Heart to Heart

SHARING PROGRESS WITH OUR FRIENDS



ARDEN WOOD

SUMMER 2021



An unfolding tapestry of good

John W. Mitchell, Executive Director / CEO

Arden Wood is an idea that emanates from God and serves our fellowman.

Our staff has been thinking deeply about what Arden Wood is truly called to do and about the quality of our services. We've asked ourselves how we can encourage and engage younger generations as members of our staff and community. For instance, would it be helpful to create a phone app that connects you to a CS nurse anywhere in the country? Is our facility configured in the best way to meet current and changing needs for a healing haven? Would more housing options appeal to future residents?

These months of sheltering have not changed the mission of Arden Wood—we treasure the devoted study and practice

of Christian Science. As we continue to consider ways to address the future, we invite you to pray with us and to share your ideas. Please feel free to be in touch with us!

In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, we read, "...Truth is demonstrable when understood, and... good is not understood until demonstrated" (323:15-16). The golden thread of God's presence (see Madelon Maupin's Bible talk) is the continuous revealing of good no matter what the human circumstances claim to be. This golden thread is ever weaving a rich tapestry of harmony and healing here at Arden Wood and with our neighbors. Read on to learn more! And thank you for faithfully standing with us! 🌱

"Arden Wood is a haven from worldly noise. It resonates the standards of Christian Science and is a place where Mind meets mind in harmony, hope, and faith." (ML)

Vivid splashes of color, texture and shape fill the heart with gladness!

Enjoy our new Heart to Heart newsletter design!

WHEN MAY YOU VISIT?

We can't wait to welcome you back inside the building!

Please check our website frequently for "re-opening" details. We will update them regularly on our homepage: ardenwood.org



THE NATIONAL FUND FOR CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING

is a wonderful funding resource that covers CS practitioner and CS nursing care for any Christian Scientist receiving care in a facility or at home. To learn more, please visit nfcsn.org

A tender letter of gratitude

Dear Christian Science Nurses,

My mom has loved and supported the healing mission of Arden Wood for as long as I can remember. She volunteered from time to time reading the Bible Lesson to patients, she witnessed many healings of her own patients who were under your care, and she benefited from much-needed weekend rest and study retreats over the years.

But I don't think any of us, my mom included, truly appreciated fully what you dear, sweet people really do, and how well you do it, until my mom required your nursing care herself. She already knew there was nowhere else where she could

have received the professional, practical, gentle care you all provided. And she already knew you would back her demonstration without interference or anxious concern, and that you would shield her mentally and physically from such errors.

But the one thing I don't think she expected was the depth of your heart-felt love toward her. You treated her like she was your own mother. And I cannot tell you enough how much she loved, and still loves, you all for that. You probably already know that you had the privilege of helping a genuine Christian warrior.

Thank you. (written by her son)

My year at Arden Wood

By Nirmela Arsem

Working on the Christian Science nursing floor and observing the CS nurses at work changed my life. They are calm, gentle and go about their work unobtrusively. I observed them talking to patients and guests with tenderness and compassion. One day I saw the Sheltered

Care guests have breakfast. The tables were tastefully set, and the Christian Science nurse serving the food was singing a hymn. Breakfast was not a routine activity but a joyous occasion. Such an exemplary work ethic made me curious about CS nurses training.

Continued on page 8



NEWS! After 15 years as the Director of Christian Science Nursing Services (CSNS) as well as Director of Christian Science Nurses' Training for the last 18 months, **Lesleah De Frisco** is now devoting her full attention to training. CS nurses are needed both here and throughout the Field, and Arden Wood is eager to help train and supply them!

Lebechi Odenyi (*photo to left*), who has been serving as Assistant Director of CSNS, has stepped seamlessly into the Director's role. Lebechi trained at Arden Wood and

has established a strong ministry here through years of providing care, supervising and mentoring.

We are deeply grateful for the grace, skill, heart, and professionalism of both Lebechi and Lesleah as Arden Wood moves forward to meet current and future needs.



The gift of being “just with God”

A Testimonial

I have been very grateful for Arden Wood’s services—they met my needs so lovingly. When I moved to San Francisco as a young adult, I heeded the advice to add Arden Wood’s number to my cell phone in case I ever needed help. Once when I was alone, I had an injury and couldn’t use my hands. I was able to ask my phone to dial Arden Wood and then a practitioner. A Visiting CS nurse (VCSN) came to my home. Her loving, calm thought in a moment that seemed scary and a little overwhelming put me on the right path to work out my healing.

Another time I was a patient at Arden Wood for several weeks. I wasn’t able to walk, and I was very concerned with the seeming intensity of the situation. But every single CS nurse who walked into my room saw ME—not *invalid* me, but God’s image and likeness. And I felt that! I was so grateful for all the different ways my needs were met—one CS nurse brought in her guitar and sang to me; I was often rolled out to the lovely garden, where I felt uplifted and inspired. I needed to have a cast put on, and I felt quite discouraged, but the CS nurses reminded me I was never without God.

What a difference I noticed between the loving care of medical people and CS nurses who anticipated and met my needs in specific, practical ways. In one instance, a doctor had no way to move someone (me) who couldn’t use either leg. But the CS nurse had a special sheet that I sat on as she pulled me to the right spot. Such a very practical need as well as the spiritual need were met calmly and confidently. It was such a gift to spend those weeks at Arden Wood just with God. All the outside

influences, claims and distractions were pushed aside so that I could focus on spiritual growth and healing.

When I became a mom, I learned I could reach out to Arden Wood with care questions for my son. One day, I called a VCSN for my preschooler. Knowing I could do that instead of calling a pediatrician was very helpful. My son had fallen at school, but his teacher didn’t notice that he’d wounded his lower lip. I was fearful. The VCSN brought a teddy bear and cookies for my son! It turned out there wasn’t much for her to do for my son; instead, she was ministering to *my* thought. And I was able to tell the school a CS nurse saw my son, so they were satisfied. It was a lovely experience.

More recently, I again sought care at Arden Wood because I didn’t want the challenging situation to concern my young children or to complicate my husband’s care for them, and I needed a quiet and healing environment to pray and study. Plus, my husband had no time to take me to appointments to set a bone. Instead, the VCS nurse took me—and with so much love! There was such value in having an uplifted, spiritual thought with me at those appointments.

I’m deeply thankful for the various ways the Arden Wood community has blessed me and my family. Being in a place where everyone, from the trustees to the housekeepers, has an expectation of healing has power to it, and I’ve certainly felt that power! 🌿

WATCH OUR NEW VIDEO!

Vanessa Campbell shares her delightful story of becoming a CS nurse and CSNA instructor:

ardenwood.org/services/christian-science-nursing-arts-training

“(ardenwood.org) is one of my most important websites. Thank you!” (RN)



Residential Services

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Last summer, Executive Director John Mitchell challenged the residents to submit an article, poem or testimony for publication in the Christian Science periodicals. Nearly all of them did—and five were accepted! The residents are a treasure trove of spiritual insights and healing experiences to share—and they plan to keep sharing them! Published to date:

- Sept 14, 2020, *Christian Science Sentinel (CSS)*, Nancy MacCoon
- Oct. 26, 2020, *CSS*, Nancy Stiner, C.S.
- March 23, 2021, *Daily Lift*, Mary Ann Cahill, C.S.
- May 3, 2021, *CSS*, Betty Ames, C.S.



We are delighted to introduce **Stephanie Boyman** (*photo to left*) as our new Director. Stephanie has been at The Principia School in St. Louis for several years and at our sister facility, Peace Haven, before that. She is already contributing her wonderful residential and development experience and fresh perspective. We are delighted that she has joined our family! 🌿

What's been happening *inside* while the *outside* has been locked out?



Our residents have been giving new meaning to the word, *active!*

One resident has been our regular pianist for innumerable *hymn sings* and testimony meetings. Another is a *tireless gardener*, weeding, planting and watering, growing vegetables for our kitchen, and creating delightful bouquets for our dining room tables. Each resident had the opportunity to Zoom with loved ones on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Several residents have become regular *Readers* for our Wednesday testimony meetings. A handful of residents *have tea, talk, and play word games* with Sheltered Care guests every Friday afternoon. And all our residents are *devoted metaphysicians*, supporting Arden Wood, our community and the world through their daily study and prayers. Together, they make Arden Wood sing! 🌿

AWE-some examples abound!

The essence of Arden Wood is the qualities it radiates day in and day out. Our building is beautiful. The grounds are lovely. The location is prime. The staff is stellar. And the residents are truly ageless. Together, these qualities inspire endless moments of **AWE—an Arden Wood Experience** that is felt deeply by all who work here, live here, or come here for care. Sweet examples abound:

- **Our Christian Science nurses have not been able to take a real vacation** (more than a long weekend) in more than a year due to limited staff. Throughout the pandemic, they have expressed an extraordinary commitment to the ministry of Christian Science nursing and to Arden

Wood, working double shifts and supporting other CS facilities in the area as well. They are AWE-inspiring! Gratefully, one-by-one, they can now take extended vacations to see far-away families.

- **Longtime volunteer Arden Wood gardener John Lasley is sharing his wealth of gardening knowledge** with our residents and staff by holding monthly workshops in different garden locations around our property. Drawing on his career as a master gardener for the Japanese Gardens in Golden Gate Park, John offers a unique opportunity to learn by doing and to share a shared passion. 🌿



NEWS! Director of Residential Programs **Diane Speer** retired at the end of March, concluding five years of outstanding service. We miss her, but we fully support her next steps of progress.

We are delighted to introduce **Stephanie Boyman** (*photo to left*) as our new Director. Stephanie has been at The Principia School in St. Louis for several years and at our



COME FOR LUNCH!

Our food service vendor, Epicurean Group, has been thrilling our residents with their monthly food demonstrations (such as knife-handling), sample tastings (sweets and savories), and cooking workshops (making fresh pasta and gingerbread houses). Breakfast, lunch and dinner feature farm-to-table meals. If you scan the QR code below, you'll see a photo gallery of their culinary creativity! Please call the Front Desk to make a reservation: (415) 618-5500.



Photos, from top left to bottom: Diane Speer and her guitar accompany the residents in singing hymns.

The whole family called in on Zoom from around the USA and abroad to be together with their mom, resident Betty Ames, on Thanksgiving Day.

Master gardener John Lasley (white shirt) teaches pruning techniques.



THANK YOU

to the 500 who have responded to our email survey about how you want to receive our mailings. Please keep them coming! Every reply adds a golden thread to the tapestry of Arden Wood's service to you. Here's what we've learned so far:

- Most of you prefer us to be on a first name basis
- 62% want to hear from us by email only
- Some of you have reported duplicate or outdated mailing addresses
- Many have requested more webinars on relevant topics—stay tuned!

If you'd like to change your name or address, please email info@ardenwood.org. 🌿

A perfect setting for Shakespeare

All winter and spring, Arden Wood's back gardens and ravine have been the stage for a Shakespeare play, **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, performed by a troupe of 21 students who attend the Waldorf High School (WHS), situated on the far side of the ravine. The ravine has also been used by WHS for classes in Environmental Studies, poetry, and music. We love our connection with the school!

Several AW residents are retired drama and English teachers, so they were eager to see the production. And they raved about the students—how well they captured the Shakespearian spirit through their lines and actions and, of course, how much fun it was to see Arden Wood in a new light!

Last year's WHS musical was canceled just before Opening Night—the students had nothing to show for their hard work. So, when it came time to choose a production for this school year, the drama teacher, Kelly Lacey, decided to make a movie (it wouldn't be canceled) of

a Shakespeare play (the tradition is to trade-off between a musical and a play each year), "A Midsummer Night's Dream," which could be rehearsed in small groups outdoors (in a Covid-safe environment).

But, Kelly had to explain the project to the students over Zoom, without seeing any of their faces. She had no idea what they thought of the idea, and two days before video auditions were due, she had received none! Two days later, she had 21 videos—perfectly matching the 21 parts in the play. The troupe was formed!

The play lent itself to small group rehearsals, so Kelly broke the students into four groups and rehearsed each group just once a week. Meeting separately made it very hard to create a cohesive relationship among the 21 cast members! But the students persisted. And by mid-spring, they were ready to shoot the movie at Arden Wood. It took five days over several weeks to get it all done. A movie cannot do justice to long Shakespearian monologues, so the play is heavily edited. But according to Kelly, the setting in Arden Wood's ravine was truly magical—complete with butterflies, blossoms, and natural light—making the play all the more "alive."

Once the Covid restrictions are lifted this fall, our residents are eager to support other WHS activities, like basketball games and definitely more plays and musicals. We are very happy with our backyard neighbors, and they are very happy to share their skills and talents with us! 🌿

WHS student actors perform in our ravine—a perfect setting!



A view transformed: from fear to understanding

*Based on conversations
with Janet Kessler*

A family of coyotes has recently moved its den to our ravine from elsewhere in the community. An alpha dad, an alpha mom, two yearlings, and three newborn pups feel safe among our eucalyptus trees and dense undergrowth. It's a sweet image, isn't it?

Yet, these are wild animals, not pets. At night they roam and hunt in the local neighborhoods (their self-determined territory is about 2 square miles). When they respond to local sirens with an orchestra of eerie howls, they can generate a ripple of fear and dread... and a lot of emails and phone calls to City authorities and to Arden Wood pleading to remove or relocate them. However, it's illegal to take any action against them. And so, for several months now, we have been praying diligently to demonstrate the fact that "all of God's creatures, moving in the harmony of Science, are harmless, useful, indestructible" (SH, 514:28–30).

Protect their wildness

Our prayers led directly to Janet Kessler, a woman we affectionately call "the Coyote Lady." Janet studies coyotes. She knows them by face and has named most of them—more than 80 of them!—in the 49 square miles that make up San Francisco. We met Janet walking the Arden Wood road with her dog, looking for coyote scat. Since that meeting, she has placed track cameras in our ravine to record the coyotes' behavior, and she comes almost every day to study them. Why is Janet so interested in these animals? In her words, "My end is to



increase the understanding of coyotes and their behavior and their intense family lives—to get it out to the public so we all cohabit peacefully and preserve existing wildlife habitat." Janet has been tracking these creatures for 14 years and shares her research with the University of California at Davis. She knows them all, but she has befriended none. They are wild animals, and she wants all of us to keep it that way—to protect the natural safety barriers between wild animals and mankind.

If we were to remove the coyotes, they would instinctively repopulate for self-preservation, and their absence would throw off the ecological balance of neighborhood gophers, voles and squirrels. If we let them be, they will continue to hold early evening family meetings, they'll sing in response to sirens, they will clean up the environment by eating carrion, and they'll keep their own population in check by preventing newcomers from entering their territory. And so, we now think of our coyotes as Hunter and Mouse, Filipa, Bent-tail, and the pups. But, we keep our distance!

Fun fact: Coyotes did NOT walk across the Golden Gate Bridge to reach San Francisco! They arrived in the bed of a pick-up truck! 🌿

This beautiful, 6-month-old coyote pup is "one of God's creatures"—part of the ecological balance surrounding mankind.

Photo courtesy of Janet Kessler.



ARDEN WOOD

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Summer 2021 \$100,000 matching challenge!

All contributions made between June 15 and September 30 will count twice!

Every dollar is a strand of genuine gold in the tapestry of Arden Wood, adding vibrancy and strength to the fabric. Altogether, your donations sustain our CSN training program, provide onsite housing for our CSNs, and ensure that there is always a haven where you are welcome to come for renewal,

refreshment, care and healing. Our gratitude to the two generous donors who are sponsoring this matching challenge and to each and every contributor is unbounded! Your golden threads provide brilliant sparkle and shine!

You can make a donation any time on our website (ardenwood.org), by phone or by mail. Thank you! 

My year at Arden Wood *(cont'd from page 2)*

A little bit of training

I decided to audit an introductory Christian Science Nursing Arts class that was just starting, and it proved to be the most significant and unique event of my time at Arden Wood. I learned about the metaphysical approach as well as the practical skills needed for Christian Science nursing. It deepened my understanding of CS nursing and, proportionally, my appreciation for the work. Even today when I make my own bed, I hear the CSNA instructor's voice encouraging us to go about our work with grace.

Learning to live Christian Science

Many lessons were learned as an AW employee. Early on at the Front Desk, I received a call from a resident's son asking a question I couldn't answer. The individual who could answer was inaccessible. In desperation, I called my manager at home. The first thing she said was, "Let's think about who is in charge." This impressed me immensely. I had always felt a personal responsibility to make sure things happened the way I thought they should. Here was a demonstration of reliance on God,

a better way—in fact, an easier way—to conduct my life.

While working on the CSN floor, I was dealing with a technician who was uncooperative and inefficient. I was discouraged and losing confidence in him. My manager said, "Think of him as a child of God wanting to do his best." The situation turned around very quickly, and this technician became my solid support in a big upgrade project.

God-centered work

I like working—that is my nature—and doing my best is second nature. However, the joy I felt during this year surprised me—and that is due purely to Arden Wood.

"One's human occupation is merely an opportunity through which one expresses joyously and confidently the qualities and intelligence of divine Mind."

So writes Milton Simon in his article, "Right Promotion," in the *Christian Science Sentinel* (June 21, 1958). Before working at Arden Wood, this idea seemed nice but impractical in the 'real world'. Arden Wood made it a present reality for me. 

Save The Dates

- Sunday, Sept 19, 2:00 PM
"The Julian Alco Story"
World Premiere
documentary from the
Effulgence Foundation
- Once-a-month, July - Dec
**Webinars on Estate
Planning and
Charitable Giving**
*Watch for an email
invitation to register!*
- Sunday, Dec 5, 2:00 PM
Christmas Celebration

