



# The Culture Chronicles

...of the Franklin Companies

February 2015

This time of year we frequently hear stories of friends and neighbors battling ailments of various kinds. Whether it is driven by the symptoms that accompany allergic reactions, including the dreaded cedar fever, or the very present and serious threat of the flu, in late winter we are more apt to find ourselves discussing whether or not something is *contagious*. When it comes to germs and threats to our health, we actively seek to eliminate contagion.

*Contagious* is not always a word to be avoided however. When we find ourselves with friends with infectious laughter we want to join in! The roar of a crowd at a football game when the home team is winning sweeps across the stands and envelopes the fans in a contagion of spirit that is irresistible. When a team of people come together to accomplish a common purpose the drive to realize that goal becomes contagious.

At Franklin Companies, we have a culture that is contagious and we are thankful for it! *The Culture Chronicles*, through its monthly collection of stories, serves as a tool to encourage us to actively spread our culture. Another tool that we use to reinforce our culture is our operating mantra which for 2015 is **FOCUS**. As you review the elements of **FOCUS** below, imagine what it would mean for our company and our residents if this year we had an outbreak of **FOCUS** that grew to be a full-blown epidemic. The results would be astonishing!

1. **Freedom** – We are empowered and have the freedom to make decisions that are in the best interests of both our residents and the Franklin Companies.
2. **Ownership** – We need to own the situation with which we are dealing, understanding that our actions and decisions are reflective of our performance as professionals. We do not shirk responsibility as we seek out professional growth.
3. **Commitment** – We are committed to addressing the situation and to communicating our planned course of action with other staff members, as well as our residents' family members. .
4. **Utilize** – Regardless of the concern at hand, we will utilize every measure available to us including monetary resources and staffing responses to rectify the situation. We will do whatever it takes to solve the issue.
5. **Shepherd** – We will take the resident and family member by the hand and walk with them as we go through the problem solving process.

## ***FOCUS is Catching On!***

The monthly arrival of *The Culture Chronicles* is a big event at both Artisan at Salado Creek and Artisan at Salado Falls. **Nathan Payton**, Executive Director, hand-delivers the publication to each and every employee as soon as it arrives. Nathan takes the time with the employees to share the stories that touched him. He also takes that opportunity to encourage everyone to find moments in the course of their daily responsibilities to serve our residents in a manner that lives up to our culture.

Following the State of the Company address, Nathan began to wonder how much of the Franklin Companies' culture flows from the corporate level to the employees at each community. Nathan was pleased to walk into the office the Monday following the address and find the 2015 operating mantra, **FOCUS**, displayed prominently where everyone, employees and residents, would be able to see it. Nathan asked around and learned that **Lalis Flores**, Business Office Manager at Artisan at Salado Creek, had taken it upon herself to make the larger display, as well as personal placards for each employee. Nathan realized at that moment the degree to which the Franklin Companies' culture had been accepted by the staff at both Salado Creek and Salado Falls. When you visit these communities there will be no question what their **FOCUS** is in 2015!

*Nathan and Lalis, thank you both for recognizing the power and importance of culture in all that we do. We would not realize the level of success that we do without individuals such as you on our team. Nathan, your intentionality with your staff is remarkable and we appreciate your sincerity. Lalis, thank you for taking the initiative to embrace **FOCUS** and bring it to life for the community at Salado Creek.*

## ***Learning a New Skill at Artisan at Willow Springs***

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One day during January, **Manuel Martinez**, Manager, and **Laurie Gutierrez**, Business Office Manager, were getting ready to close the leasing office for the day, when they received a call about a pilot light going out on a hot water heater. Due to inclement weather that day, the maintenance crew was delayed coming in so Manuel took the initiative to respond to the call himself. Laurie accompanied him to the resident's apartment. The resident was shocked to see two managers at the door instead of the regular maintenance crew. Laurie happily shared with the resident that both she and Manuel were happy to respond to residents' needs, regardless of the circumstances.

However, even Laurie had her doubts when she joined Manuel on the patio with the hot water heater. He had a puzzled look on his face because he actually was not too sure how to reignite the pilot light. Laurie could not help but giggle a little. The two of them studied the unit for about ten minutes, but had no success in their task. Luckily help was not far away as **Josh Vasquez**, Make-Ready Staff, came to their rescue! Josh explained that they had failed to push the reset button before lighting which had stymied their efforts. The resident appreciated everyone's help, and Manuel and Laurie were pleased to learn a new skill. Now if another pilot light goes out, they will know what to do!

*Thank you to the team at Willow Springs for working together to address this issue! Manuel and Laurie, thank you for **Owning** the situation and stepping out boldly in an area that was unknown to you. Josh, thank you for assisting with grace and sharing your knowledge. The teamwork the three of you showed is just one example of what we can accomplish when we work together as a team and really **FOCUS** in 2015!*

## ***The Power of Community at Work***

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**Barbara Davila** is the Concierge at Franklin Park-Lewisville and in her role she routinely goes above and beyond the call of duty when it comes to caring for the residents. She is known to take a personal interest in residents' lives and even serves as a caretaker or extended family member for some community members. She particularly has a heart for residents who may not have family nearby and for those new residents who are trying to find their place in a new home.

Recently, Barbara came to know a new resident whom we will call "Mr. T" who did not have a close family network for support. Barbara went out of her way to forge a connection with Mr. T. through her role as Concierge. She would make a point to greet him warmly and engage him in conversation. Barbara's efforts yielded fruit as she was able to walk alongside Mr. T during a somewhat difficult time for him. Unfortunately, he was in a minor car accident that put his car out of commission for a while. The coordination of car repairs was very daunting for Mr. T., and Barbara took the time to assist him with the process. She also made the extra effort to ensure that he had alternate transportation for his medical appointments during this time as well. Her outreach to Mr. T. now also includes making sure he makes it to mealtimes and that he is paying attention to his medication reminders as well. Mr. T. now feels even more connected to the Franklin Park-Lewisville community, and he is now a frequent visitor to the clubhouse.

*Barbara, thank you for taking a sincere interest in our residents. Your approach to relationships makes you a wonderful concierge and an even better friend. Your interactions with Mr. T provide an inspirational model of what it means to **Shepherd** someone through a potentially difficult time. Thank you for your leadership!*

## ***An Exceptional Culture Knows No Bounds***

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During January, the team at Artisan at Mission Creek learned just how far the community at Franklin Companies extends. **Marcus Gomez**, Assistant Maintenance, frequently receives positive feedback from residents based on his competence and his kind, attentive demeanor. One Saturday night, he received a compliment that he was not expecting.

Marcus and his family, including his pregnant wife, eight-year-old daughter, and baby girl, were out for dinner at a local restaurant. Because it was the weekend, the restaurant was packed and his family was going to have to wait for over twenty minutes to be seated at a table. It just so happened that the residents from one of the apartments at Mission Creek happened to be eating dinner there that evening. They realized that Marcus and his family had not been seated, and they took it upon themselves to get them a table. They finished their dinner early and specifically gave their table directly to Marcus and his family. The Gomez family was extremely grateful and appreciated this kind gesture from the Mission Creek residents.

*Marcus, thank you for the professionalism and care that you bring to your role at Artisan at Mission Creek. It is obvious from the compliment paid to you and your family that you are making a difference in the lives of our residents. Thank you for your example. We are glad that you are a part of our team!*