



# The Culture Chronicles

...of the Franklin Companies

November 2015

## Something to Consider...

*Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu.* No, we did not let a toddler sit down and begin typing this month's reflection. While unintelligible to English speakers, the words "Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu" hold within them an entire Zulu philosophy from Africa. This nuanced phrase means, "***A person is a person because of other people.***"

Retired South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu has spoken extensively about this concept and the importance of recognizing the relationship between how we live our lives in connection with others and the quality of life that is not only experienced by us but also by those around us. In his teachings he has shared the following:

*"I am human because I belong...A person [who acknowledges the importance of others] is welcoming, hospitable, warm, and generous, willing to share. Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole."*

This is a wonderful time of year to consider how we relate to one another as people. We are truly people only because of other people. Our humanity, our love and our care can only be exercised in the course of our relationships with others. Every interaction, every kind word, every small gesture of hospitality or support brings us that much closer to catching a glimpse of what we were created to do in the world.

Think about the smile of an elderly resident as they were helped during meal time. Think about the tears of joy of family members as they see their loved ones interacting with friends in a new community. Think about the laughter of children in an after-school program or working in the community garden. All of these examples and many more are the ways that we can affirm in our residents that they are people of worth; people worthy of love, dignity and respect.

As the holidays approach, remember our purpose and rejoice that we have the opportunity to bring joy and love into the lives of our residents each and every day. The beautiful promise of "Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu" is that not only will those around us be blessed, but we, too, will find treasure for ourselves as we realize that ***we are all only people because of other people.***

## Furnishing a New Home at Creekside

During the month of October, the team at Artisan at Creekside turned a situation that could have been a big problem into an opportunity to help a new resident in need. The community had a resident who moved out and left all of the personal items and furniture behind. The unwanted furniture was donated by SAMMinistries, and it could not be returned.

That same week, a new resident moved into Artisan at Creekside with her baby. This resident was transitioning from a homeless shelter and came with no furnishings at all. She had applied for assistance from Furniture for a Cause, the for-profit storefront for SAMMinistries, but she had been told it would take up to two months to receive any assistance.

The **Creekside Team** quickly mobilized and assembled the surplus furniture from the move-out. Everyone then pitched in to furnish the new resident's apartment with everything she needed for her new home. The team moved in couches, televisions, beds, a kitchen table set, bookshelves and even a washer and a dryer! The new resident was overwhelmed with the support, kindness and thoughtfulness the team showed her. She was grateful that she and her baby could have a fresh start in their new apartment.

*Thank you, Team Creekside! You all recognized that you had the **Freedom** to take **Ownership** of this situation, and in the process you lovingly **Shepherded** this family through a difficult transition. Thank you for your example of **FOCUS!***

## Taking Care of Each Other in Lewisville

You never know when a difficult situation might pop up. At Franklin Park Lewisville, they encountered a very challenging issue in October. The main water line that services one of the residential buildings broke, requiring the water to be cut off for two days. Of course, this was not only a significant inconvenience, but also a matter of health and safety concerns.

The entire **Lewisville Team** pitched in to serve the needs of the residents affected by this predicament. Throughout three shifts per day, the team filled up buckets and delivered water door to door to provide the necessary water for health and hygiene. They also delivered gallon jugs of drinking water to ensure that all residents had the water they needed to remain hydrated.

*Thank you, Team Lewisville! You absolutely took **Ownership** of this critical situation and while **Utilizing** all of the resources at your disposal, **Shepherded** the community through this difficult time. Because of your efforts, all of the residents were able to stay in their homes without worrying about their health or safety.*

### **Standing Up When It is Needed at Rancho Sierra**

**Jennifer Hambright** is the Resident Services Coordinator at Rancho Sierra. In her role, she has the privilege of working and serving the children of that community through the ‘After School Program’ there. While this program is important for all of the children it services, it is particularly helpful for those children who might have learning disabilities. Jennifer intentionally works with these children in a personalized way and takes her role very seriously.

One day as the children were pulling out their homework for the afternoon, Jennifer noticed that one of the children pulled out a folder labeled “Dyslexia Homework.” Jennifer asked the child why the folder had that label and she was informed that the school’s Dyslexia Specialist required the children in that program to label their folders with their specific learning disability.

Jennifer was shocked that a trained school specialist would blatantly ignore the students’ right to privacy and very insensitively require them to publicly label their materials with their disabilities. The next day, Jennifer went to the school in question and met with the principal about the issue. The principal acknowledged Jennifer’s concern and agreed that the specialist had indeed violated the students’ right to privacy. The problem was resolved that very day and the folders were no longer labeled!

*Way to go, Jennifer! You went above and beyond with your **FOCUS** on this issue. Thank you for standing up for the rights of the students at this school who were not able to advocate for themselves. Importantly, thank you so much for caring for our young residents so much that you would go to such lengths to ensure that they are properly cared for in their schools as well. You are truly a gift to Franklin Companies!*

### **Going Above and Beyond in DeSoto**

You may remember that in September we highlighted the work of the maintenance team at Franklin Park DeSoto as they helped support Kareika Bell, Executive Director at Franklin Park DeSoto, when she also took on the role of leading the Artisan at Rush Creek community. In September, this team helped her with required pool maintenance on their own time.

This month, we would like to highlight the selfless efforts of **Walter McFail**, Porter at Franklin Park DeSoto. Walter also helped the maintenance team work on the pool at Rush Creek. Then during October, Walter stepped out again and helped at the community by power washing the breezeways at Rush Creek. He dedicated three weekends of the month on his own time to go over to the community and do the needed work on the breezeways. He completed all three floors of each apartment building and asked for nothing in return. Because of Walter’s efforts the Rush Creek, residents there can enjoy clean breezeways and also importantly, these efforts have had a significant impact on the atmosphere of the community. The residents are happy and the employees are proud to be a part of this community.

*Walter, thank you for being a true team player! You go out of your way each and every time to help wherever and whenever you can. Your example of **FOCUS** is inspiring and we appreciate your efforts at both Franklin Park DeSoto and Artisan at Rush Creek!*

### **Smiles and Kind Words Mean a Lot at Sutton Oaks**

One Friday in October, Carolina Wong, Leasing Agent at The Park at Sutton Oaks, was wrapping up her day when she noticed two of the community’s residents, Davina and Dezzie. Davina is 12 years old and spends a lot of time with her cousin, Dezzie, who has multiple sclerosis. Davina often pushes Dezzie in her wheelchair around the community. During their walks, Dezzie is able to visit with other residents and staff members and this time out of her apartment helps her feel more like a part of the community. In fact, it has been on these walks around the community that some staff members have heard Dezzie share that there are times she wishes she could be like the other girls in the community and walk and play as they do.

Carolina saw **Rodrigo Pineda**, Lead Maintenance, stop one day to talk with Davina and Dezzie. After they had chatted for a while, Rodrigo gave Dezzie a green teddy bear and told her that it was a gift “especially for her.” Dezzie was overjoyed and so appreciative of Rodrigo’s gift. Carolina was very touched that Rodrigo would take the time and effort to make this young girl smile. Carolina went back to the leasing office and told the staff what she had witnessed and that she told Rodrigo: “It makes me feel so happy and proud to work with you, Rod.”

*We are all proud to work with you, Rod! Thank you for your **FOCUS** and for going out of your way to help our youngest residents understand they are a part of our family. Your kind gesture really made a difference for Dezzie that day. Thank you!*