



NEWS RELEASE

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St. Matthew Dedicates New Courtyards Designed to Enhance Residents' Well-Being

On Thursday, June 22, St. Matthew Center for Health, located at 1601 Western Avenue in Park Ridge, will host an evening Garden Party to celebrate its newly landscaped courtyards. The public is invited to the party, which will run from 6 - 8 p.m. A ribbon cutting and dedication will be held at 6:30 p.m. Music will be provided by Penny Currier, harpist, and guests will enjoy hors d'oeuvres and garden tours. St. Matthew is a program of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI).

St. Matthew's two enclosed courtyards have been completely renovated, thanks to a gift from Albert and Jane Wohlers made in memory of Mr. Wohlers' parents, Maude and Albert Wohlers. The gift provided for landscaping improvements in two areas of St. Matthew's grounds. The Wohlers wanted the residents to have beautiful surroundings to look at – whether sitting outdoors or looking out from the inside. In 1993, the couple made another gift to St. Matthew in memory of Maude and Albert Wohlers and, like the garden, the Wohlers Chapel was dedicated in their honor.

Re-landscaping the courtyards was no small task. The existing trees, patios and low walls had to be cut up and removed through an inside hallway. New materials, including sod, soil, plants, gravel and bricks, were brought into the courtyards through the same hallway. Each courtyard now has a beautiful pergola, irrigation system, new plantings and automatic doors, along with a fountain in the west courtyard.

The extensive activities programs at St. Matthew Center for Health include numerous outdoor events, plus accessible gardening, and just relaxing in the fresh air. Residents interested in

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Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

gardening may join in the weekly horticultural therapy program provided through the Chicago Botanic Garden. Researchers are learning that well-designed outdoor areas contribute to healing and good health. An article by Jane Adler in the April 23, 2006, *Chicago Tribune* stated, “A nursing home with a thriving garden for residents can help them stay healthy longer.”

A May 2006 story in the *Times Leader* (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.) echoed that, noting that horticulture therapy benefits people’s physical and emotional well-being. Working in a garden encourages balance and physical effort, and can be used to build strength, improve coordination, sharpen cognitive skills and reduce blood pressure.

St. Matthew Center for Health is a skilled nursing facility offering intermediate long-term care, rehabilitation services, respite care, hospice care, and a specialized Alzheimer’s and dementia unit.

For more information, call 847/825-5531, or visit www.StMatthewCenter.org.

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