



## Plaza's Interior Redecorating – Phase 1 Completed

Walker Plaza has completed its significant interior redecorating capital improvement project for 2009. The overall redecorating/design theme for Plaza is that of a restored historic hotel – furnishings are updated, simple, with a touch of elegance. This theme is marked with the lighting selections, color scheme, furnishings, and the unique tin-type ceiling for the main entry.

A few details remain to be completed as most of the ordered furniture and furnishings did not arrive until several months after they were ordered – a sign of the economy. Yet to be completed is the acquisition of historic photos and prints from the archived collections of the Anoka County Historical Society. These items will be framed and displayed in various areas of the building, providing residents, families, and visitors a glimpse of our local past. Many of Plaza's residents grew up or raised their families in the Anoka area. Displayed historic photos and prints will be a welcomed addition to our new décor.

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The redecorating plan has focused on resident common areas for Phase One of the total plan. Phase Two, scheduled for 2010, will focus on residential corridors and other areas not addressed in 2009. Walker Plaza will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a premier provider of senior housing and services in 2010. The capital improvements planned for 2009–2010 will bring the building up to date in décor and comfort for its residents and visitors.

Individuals interested in contributing a Memorial or Honorarium to particular elements of the redecorating capital improvement plan may read more about this on page 4 of this issue of PARTNERS.

## We Need YOUR E-Mail for PARTNERS Newsletter!

This issue of *Plaza PARTNERS* is the sixth issue of a newsletter and communication tool launched late in 2008 aimed at the families, caregivers, and friends of Plaza residents. However, many Plaza residents will find items of interest in this newsletter as well. Why this newsletter? The management staff at Plaza believes it is time to create a periodic way to communicate certain information or resource materials to the families and friends of residents.

The *Plaza PARTNERS* newsletter will be issued at least quarterly, and will include information pertinent to the senior housing and assisted living business that consumers should know or may want to know. We are building our data base of e-mail addresses for electronic sending of this newsletter. If you would like to receive *Plaza PARTNERS* via e-mail, please send a message to: [manderson@walkermethodist.org](mailto:manderson@walkermethodist.org) today!

## Residents Now Have A Choice of Meal Tickets with Rent

Starting January 1, 2010, Plaza residents will have a choice in the meal tickets they receive with their monthly rent and service fee. Residents will now have the choice of either 10 dinner meal tickets or 13 lunch meal tickets. Prior to this change, residents were automatically issued 10 dinner meal tickets.

Our lunch meals have been growing in popularity, especially with the introduction of several specialty salads this past year – the most popular is the Crab Salad. The higher interest in our lunch meals and comments from our residents has brought about this change in meal ticket selection.

Residents will continue to be able to purchase a la carte meal tickets in the General Store. The Meal Plans remain as another alternative for residents who desire a more complete dining service each day.

## U.S. Life Expectancy Hits All-Time High

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says U.S. life expectancy is the highest it has ever been – 78 years old, on average – mainly due to falling death rates in several categories. This latest statistic, combined with plentiful data about the aging population, is yet another reason investors are eyeing opportunities in the senior living sector.

U.S. life expectancy reached 77.7 years in 2006 and 77.9 years in 2007, which ranks the nation at about 30th among other developed countries. Japan has the longest life expectancy – 83 years – according to a report by *USA Today*. Source: *Assisted Living Executive*, Nov/Dec 2009

*The average age of the residents at Walker Plaza is about 87 years – a common statistic in assisted living settings in Minnesota.*

## Long Term Care Insurance Benefits Likely Cover Health Services in Assisted Living – Plaza No Exception

Residents of Plaza who have maintained a long term care insurance policy should check their policy benefits for provisions of coverage for health services in assisted living. Most long term care insurance policies carry benefits that help to pay for covered services if the policy holder resides in an assisted living setting and is receiving health services from a licensed home care agency. Every policy is different – for example, many policies require a waiting period before benefits are available and the length of the waiting period will vary from policy to policy. Long term care insurance policies typically provide a daily, weekly, or monthly benefit, reimbursing the policy holder for services received and paid for. Benefit payments are made to the policy holder and not to the health services provider. Long term care insurance benefits help to make assisted living services affordable. Residents with long term care insurance policies are encouraged to contact their insurance agent or an insurance policy representative for details about their policy benefits.

## Plaza Awaits Results from Recent Satisfaction Surveys

Walker Methodist initiated its annual satisfaction surveys late in 2009 as part of its ongoing efforts to ensure resident services are meeting the needs and expectations of those who come to us for their residency and health care needs. At Plaza, nearly 150 surveys were distributed to residents, families, and employees. Walker contracts with the nationally acclaimed organization *My InnerView* to conduct its annual satisfaction surveys.

Once the satisfaction survey results are tabulated and interpreted by My InnerView, Plaza's management team will receive a detailed report indicating the level of satisfaction for each survey item measured. Management will then develop an Action Plan to address areas where satisfaction levels fall below standards.

Over the past three years, survey Action Plans have resulted in: changes to employee benefits design; changes to health services packages and service design models to better meet residents' needs; and changes in dining room menus, including the establishment of a Resident Menu Committee. The recent efforts to update Plaza's interior common spaces were initiated in part as a response to feedback received through the satisfaction survey process.

*Satisfaction surveys are instrumental in helping assess quality, to help show what we are doing well and what we need to do better.*

Despite the importance placed on the annual satisfaction survey process, Plaza relies on other forms of feedback to measure effectiveness in attaining service goals and resident satisfaction with their residency environment and the services they receive. Satisfaction surveys are instrumental in helping assess quality, to help show what we are doing well and what we need to do better. However, it is also important to measure efforts along the way.

One of the most important feedback tools in place at Plaza happens every Monday morning when the Housing Director meets with residents in small groups over coffee. Each month carries an agenda of items for discussion from building management and for discussion of concerns from residents. Through these weekly meetings (one floor each week so that each resident floor meets each month with the Housing Director) Plaza management is able to address concerns collaboratively and early on before they become larger issues. Residents report high levels of satisfaction with these meetings that are well attended and where all feel welcome to share what's on their mind.

Once the recent satisfaction survey results are received, residents, families, and employees will receive notices about survey follow-up efforts and survey findings. A survey summary is planned for the next issue of this PARTNERS newsletter.

## Seniors Less Likely to Get Swine Flu Than Children

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that individuals who are 60 years old and over are less likely to contract swine flu (H1N1 virus) than children between the ages of 5 and 14. Children in this age group are 14 times more likely to contract the H1N1 virus, according to a study by the Chicago Department of Public Health.

“One of the unusual things about the swine flu is that it often strikes the young, healthy people, while skipping over the elderly,” reports *The Wall Street Journal*. It has also recently been reported that some seniors may have an existing immunity to the swine flu because of previous exposure to H1N1 viruses that circulated between 1928 and 1957.

Here are six recommendations from the CDC that any of us can use to prevent the spread of swine flu:

Avoid contact with people if you, or they, are sick; stay at home – from work, school, or other public activities – when you are sick; shield others from your coughs and sneezes by using a tissue; wash your hands often; keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, or mouth; maintain healthful habits – get ample sleep and exercise, drink fluids, eat well.

About 40 percent of Americans are expected to contract the H1N1 virus, according to the CDC. For the latest CDC updates, go to [www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu).

*Source: Assisted Living Executive, Nov/Dec 2009*

*Walker Plaza's Flu Prevention Program for 2009–2010 has, so far, kept all residents and staff free of influenza.*

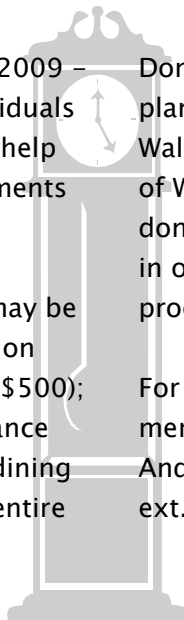
## Capital Improvement Plan Provides Opportunities for Memorials & Honorariums – Your Tax Deductible Gifts are Welcomed!

Walker Plaza's capital improvement plan for 2009 – 2010 provides unique opportunities for individuals to contribute memorials and honorariums to help pay for the expenses of the interior improvements made for the enjoyment of residents.

Some of the items included in the plan that may be suitable for a memorial or honorarium donation are: new outdoor benches on Monroe Street (\$500); grandfather clock (already acquired) for entrance lobby (\$500); sound system for the 1<sup>st</sup> floor dining room (\$3,100); or even the “adoption” of an entire area of the building.

Donations received toward our capital improvement plan are tax deductible and become part of the Walker Foundation fund raising program on behalf of Walker Plaza. Over the past year, memorial donations have already provided for enhancements in our activities programs and our outdoor programs held on our rooftop patios.

For more information, or, to make your donation in memorial or honor of another, please contact Mark Anderson, Housing Director, at 763-422-1226, ext. 302.



## Age: Wide Angle – A New Lecture Series Offering Fresh Perspectives on the Topic of Age and Aging by Prominent Local Arts Leaders

Mill City Commons and the Library Foundation of Hennepin County are pleased to present a new innovative lecture series, *Age: Wide Angle*. Held every Tuesday evening in February and March, the *Age: Wide Angle* lecture series offers a fresh perspective on the topic of age and aging by prominent arts leaders who will explore the role age plays in their field of expertise or their own artistic lives. Speakers include choreographer James Sewell, conductor Philip Brunelle, photographer Laura Crosby, composer Libby Larsen, dance activist Sage Cowles, author Faith Sullivan, actor Richard Ooms, MIA director Kaywin Feldman, and many others.

*Age: Wide Angle* is co-presented by Mill City Commons and the Library Foundation of Hennepin County, and made possible by the generous support of the sponsors: Target, Gentle Transitions, AgeWell, and Gittleman Management. Held at the Central Library in Pohlad Hall (300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55401), the programs are free and open to the public. Seating is first come, first served. Doors open at 6:15 and programs begin at 7 PM. For more information: [www.supporthclib.org](http://www.supporthclib.org) or [www.millcitycommons.org](http://www.millcitycommons.org), or 612-630-6174.

Mark your calendars for these upcoming programs:

### **February 2, 2010: Visual Trends with Will Hopkins and Mary K Baumann, Hopkins/Baumann Design**

Will Hopkins and Mary K Baumann will discuss what it takes to keep pace with our fast-moving visual culture.

### **February 9, 2010: Age in an Ageless Art Form with James Sewell, James Sewell Ballet**

James will examine the evolution of his work and the art of ballet, “an ageless art form.”

### **February 16, 2010: How Did I Get Here? with Philip Brunelle, VocalEssence**

Philip (Artistic Director of VocalEssence) will reflect on his life and artistic journey in the music world.

### **February 23, 2010: Turn the Key: A Collaborative Experience with photographer Laura Crosby, composer Libby Larsen, writer Marisha Chamberlain**

Coming together again, the three artists will reflect on their installation and explore “age” through images, words, and sounds.

### **March 2, 2010: Music for Life: Transforming Lives with David O'Fallon, MacPhail Center for Music**

David O'Fallon shares insights and experiences on how the arts transform lives and command and shape the future.

### **March 9, 2010: It's Never Too Late with Sage Cowles, Dance activist**

Sage's talk will cover lessons learned along the way, reflecting her lifelong interest in dance, her recent research into early childhood education at the Humphrey Institute, and her ongoing adventures of getting old.

### **March 16, 2010: A View from the Loft: The Influence of Life Experience on the Literary Perspective with director Jocelyn Hale, author Fred Amram, poet Philip S. Bryant, poet Phebe Hanson, novelist Faith Sullivan.**

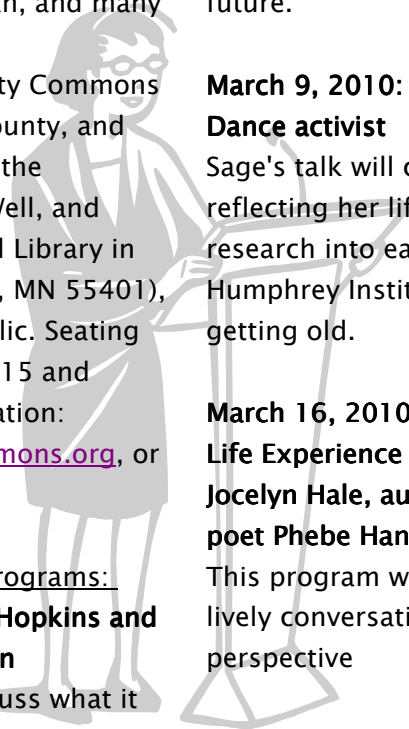
This program will include short readings, musings, and lively conversation about the role of age and long-term perspective

### **March 23, 2010: Acting in the Theater: A Continuing Journey with actor Richard Ooms**

Legendary actor Richard Ooms will discuss the story of his life in the theater.

### **March 30, 2010: Becoming Truly Marvelous: Artists' Later Years with Kaywin Feldman, Director of Minneapolis Institute of Arts**

Kaywin Feldman will examine the style, technique, subject matter and circumstances of works created by artists working in their later years.



**Walker Plaza**  
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Anoka, MN 55303

**Phone:**

**763-422-1226**

**Fax:**

**763-422-8115**



*Walker Plaza is part of the Walker Methodist family, a non profit organization providing lifestyle options for seniors for over 60 years.*

*We're on the Web!*

*Check out our photo gallery, special events, and more.*

*Visit us at:*

[www.walkermethodist.org](http://www.walkermethodist.org)

and [facebook](#)

## Our Management Team

These individuals are the leaders that make up Plaza's great Management Team:

- **Mark Anderson**, *Housing Director*
- **Sue O'Donoghue**, RN, *Health Services Director*
- **Ellen Ingvaldstad**, *Resident Services Director*
- **Diane Knutson**, *Marketing Director*
- **Anita Dahlquist**, *Dining Services Director*
- **Malcolm Anderson**, *Activities Director*
- **Keith Gray**, *Maintenance Director*
- **Verlin & Donna Vedders, Scott Dorff**, *Caretakers*

### Walker Methodist Mission, Vision, and Values Statement:

**MISSION** - Walker Methodist exists to champion the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual health of seniors through health programs and residential and management services.

**VISION** - Walker Methodist will be the leading provider of senior life enhancing and rehabilitative services.

**VALUES** - Respect for the individual; Service through partnerships; Responsibility.



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