



## The heart of the matter

**Marge Coalman, EdD**

—Wellness & Programs Director, Touchmark

*“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or touched ... but are felt in the heart.”*

—Helen Keller

In our culture the word heart has multiple meanings. Consider this, according to the American Heritage Dictionary: “**heart:** n. **1.** The chambered, muscular organ that pumps blood received from the veins into the arteries, maintaining the flow of blood through the circulatory system. **2.** The vital center and source of one’s being, feelings, and emotions.” How did one word get to be so “bipolar” in its definitions? Anthropologists debate the source for the designation of the human heart being the control center for emotions and feelings, but many believe that it is due to the critical nature of this important organ in regard to sustaining life.

In today’s world we know the importance of good heart health. With the advances in medical science and research, physicians can accurately determine the condition of the heart and its supporting network of veins and arteries through a variety of tests, scans, and blood work. High cholesterol, obesity, smoking, inactivity, and a host of other less prominent risk factors all contribute to the viability of the body’s most important organ in sustaining life. Further, there are multiple medications, surgeries, and treatments to improve the function of this hardworking muscle. Rating one’s “heart health” via an annual physical exam is not only prudent but critical to healthy aging.

February is heart month in the United States and internationally, and it has far more to do with education and well-being than Valentine’s Day and chocolates. The

offerings and activities of Touchmark’s Life Enrichment and Wellness program focus on providing educational and physical opportunities for residents, their families, and guests to know how to have a heart-healthy lifestyle.

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## Get updated at resident meetings

In January people attended the all-resident meeting to talk about events and issues and ask questions about the Cliff Lodge construction. Future meetings are tentatively scheduled for twice a year in order to give residents a chance to ask pertinent questions and give staff a chance to announce exciting upcoming events.

“A lot is coming along in the near future,” says Human Resources Director Barbara Tracy, “and we hope you enjoy the trek as much as we are.” To find out more about resident meetings, please contact Barbara Tracy.



**Residents and staff discussed the construction progress of the Cliff Lodge at the all-resident meeting.**

## Let Your Spirit Soar

Writers, photographers, and poets live and create in Touchmark communities, and Touchmark is featuring some of this talent and creativity in each newsletter. The Let Your Spirit Soar theme for February is Heart-to-heart.

## Teacher's heart

**Natalie Fitzpatrick**

—Resident at Touchmark's resort-style retirement community in Butte, Montana

Few of us have ever created a life-defining moment in another's life as did Betty Hoffman, a retired music teacher in Deer Lodge, Montana. As a beginning teacher at a school in far western Montana, she heard an outstanding voice at the school choir practice. She identified the voice and had the owner sing a solo part. Not only had the students been unaware of the quality of his voice, but his parents confessed they had never heard him sing. Turns out that the only time the boy sang was with the radio at full volume as he washed the clanging metal milk cans in the milk house on their dairy farm, and no one could hear him above all the racket.

He continued to sing, graduated from the university with a degree in voice and went to Germany. There he sang in an opera, became interested in set design, and eventually became an opera director. He had a spectacular career doing something he loved—a long distance for a Montana farm boy!

I can perhaps name a handful of students whose lives I've touched in a positive way—the girl whose organizational skills I encouraged by putting her in charge of class projects, who became leader of an Emergency Medical Team; a lonely boy who went on a class hayride and confessed it was the only time he'd ever been with a group of kids and gone out for pizza; the boy I threatened to flunk in my typing class, who later became company clerk in the Army and used that skill to fund his way to law school.

Teachers are in a unique position to influence their charges, and most never really know whose lives they have influenced. All of us, however, in our dealings with others have the ability to touch someone in a positive way. A friendly smile and a few words to a lonely person, a trip to the nursing home to brighten the day for someone forgotten by so many, an introduction to your bridge or other card group to a new resident in your community, a phone call to simply visit with a homebound person, a share of your time as well as your money with the local charity or community group—these are the actions that matter.

I am not an overly religious individual, but as a teenager I adopted a two-fold goal in life: 1. to do as much good as I could and 2. to do the least harm to others. Like all goals,

these are lofty ambitions, and I haven't always succeeded. I must confess that I'm neither perfect nor universally beloved, but I remember the line "I'm only human," and I do try—"one day at a time." From my heart to yours, I truly recommend a sense of humor, a light touch, and a real desire to be a friend—these are essential to a full and purposeful life.

*The theme for March is Humor and Life Balance. Deadline for this issue is February 10. For a list of the guidelines, monthly themes, and deadlines, please contact Life Enrichment Coordinator Beth Ann Wesley.*

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## Touchmark lifestyle continues to be popular

**Mattie Swanson**

—Sales Manager

There continues to be great interest in the Touchmark community. Already, 27 of the 39 lodge homes are sold! Thank you to Bob and Betty Wells and Dave and Mary Thomas for sharing the Touchmark lifestyle with their friends; we are now welcoming three more people into the community. We are reinstating a monthly prize drawing for prospective residents. The drawings will be held at the end of each month. The first drawing winner is a couple from Houston, Texas—perhaps our farthest visitors yet!

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## It's time to make your reservation!

If you're interested in participating in Touchmark's Fall Foliage cruise, which sails October 21, 2006, it's now time to make a \$250 deposit to hold your room and guarantee the price.

The cruise is open to all Touchmark residents, family, friends, investors, and staff. The special group rate is based on availability and is per person with double occupancy in each cabin:



- Outside cabin-\$1,585
- Outside cabin with balcony-\$1,785

The cost includes insurance, taxes, and round-trip transfers. (Travel to and from New York not included.)

The Star Princess will depart New York City for a stunning seven-night cruise that will take in the fabulous fall foliage of the eastern seaboard. Travelers will visit Halifax, Nova Scotia; St. John, New Brunswick; Bar Harbor, Maine; Boston, Massachusetts; and Newport, Rhode Island. Brochures are available at Touchmark with more details.

Sign up now for a colorful and memorable cruise. For more information and to make your deposit, call Edwards LaLone Travel at 800-288-3788.

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## Touchmark knitters make patriotic afghan



Jean Crowell, Val Emmert, and Betty Tangney (from left to right), along with other Touchmark knitters, are completing a patriotic afghan that was started by the late Myra Jean Zavacki.

“Myra Jean was a dearly loved friend and neighbor, who we will miss,” say residents and staff.

The group helped untangle the many balls of yarn while working on the project. “Although this is not the easiest afghan to put together, it should be completed and presented to the family by springtime,” says Val.

## Upcoming events

**Friday, February 17, 10:30 am**—Cardiologist A. Koch, MD, and Image Specialist Randall Avolio will talk about Bend Memorial Clinic’s new MRI machine. River Lodge Great Room.

**Monday, February 20, 10:30 am**—Health plan presentation by Brad Westphal from Clear Choice. River Lodge Great Room.

Call Life Enrichment for more information or to register.