

Introducing

# Author Your Life

Helping anyone connected with Lyngblomsten live the best life possible

By Brandi Jewett

**ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO LIVE THEIR BEST LIFE** is a philosophy that has been a part of Lyngblomsten since its founders first conceptualized a home for aging adults more than a century ago.

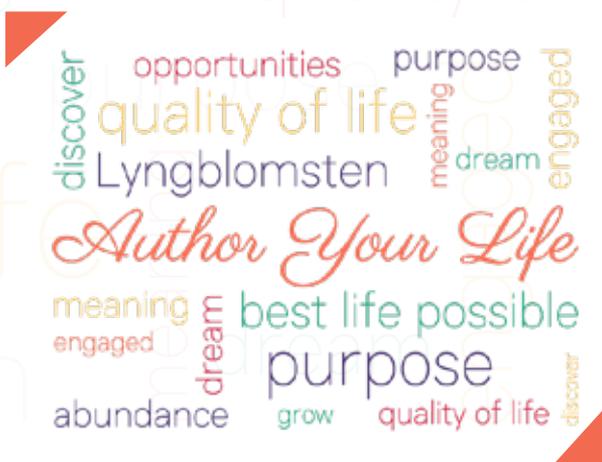
Over the past two years, efforts have been made to name and define this philosophy. Now called Author Your Life, it seeks to inspire people to live their best life and help others do the same. It sets Lyngblomsten apart as an organization where everyone connected with us can age vibrantly, live fully, have purpose, and be as well as possible in mind, body, and spirit. Author Your Life was introduced to employees in 2018, and now in 2019, it is being introduced to all Lyngblomsten constituents.

“Our goal has always been to encourage folks to try new things or become reengaged in things that they once enjoyed,” Lyngblomsten President & CEO Jeff Heinecke said. “Access to activities, events, and resources should not be the barrier to one living the life they want to live. And if an individual has physical, emotional, and mental limitations that might prevent them in participating, we look for innovative and creative ways to eliminate those barriers as well.”

The rollout of Author Your Life helps Lyngblomsten achieve a goal laid out in its strategic priorities defined in 2015: create destination services that, among other goals, integrate vibrant aging values into all aspects of its operations.

“We want people to know we’re a destination because of Author Your Life, that this philosophy is embedded and woven into every aspect of what we do,” said Andrea Lewandoski, Director of Lifelong Learning and the Arts for Lyngblomsten, who leads the Author Your Life Workgroup.

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## AUTHOR YOUR LIFE IS FOR EVERYONE

At its heart, Author Your Life encourages people to achieve their goals, learn new skills, discover new interests and talents, continue enjoying lifelong passions, and help others do the same.

To create this impact, Lyngblomsten seeks to serve as a resource that provides and creates opportunities for anyone in the Lyngblomsten family—residents, tenants, participants, their families, volunteers, employees, and supporters—to pursue dreams and goals. Lyngblomsten is a thread that connects many people, and in turn links each of them to others with talents, skills, and passions that may help them achieve their best life possible. In addition to people, the organization also seeks to provide opportunities and resources to help anyone looking to author his or her life, such as access to supportive programs and services.

In one scenario, a care center resident could learn piano with the help of a volunteer. In another, an employee could pursue a nursing degree with the support of Lyngblomsten's staff scholarship program.

"Author Your Life is going to be different for everyone," Lewandoski said. "That's why we ask the question, 'What does authoring your life mean to you?' I don't think all of us or the people that we serve have those answers yet if we were to ask them, but it's nice to get them thinking about it."

While embracing the Author Your Life philosophy will be different for each person in the Lyngblomsten community, the goal is the same in the end: To encourage everyone to intentionally discover and explore their talents, desires, and goals—and embolden others to do the same.

## HOW YOU CAN GET STARTED

So how can you get started authoring your life?

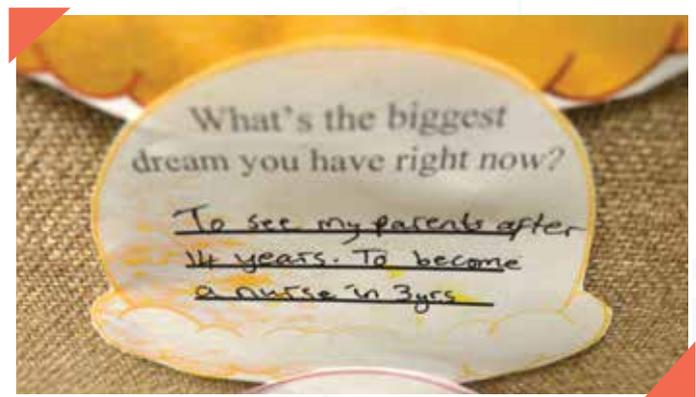
First, find your inspiration. Ask yourself: What does authoring my life mean to me? Do you want to learn a new skill, rediscover an old talent, or have another goal in mind? You're on the right path, and we can help. Turn to page 7 for the Author Your Life activity page that will help you identify dreams and goals.

Now that you have a sense of direction for your journey, it's time to take the next step. Author Your Life works through connection. Share your aspirations with someone you trust to find people and resources that can help you live purposefully.

With people and resources at the ready, your vision of a well-authored life is more attainable no matter what life events have been part of your story.

With Lyngblomsten, we can all join together through Author Your Life to encourage each other to live the best life possible at any age.

To learn more about Author Your Life, visit [www.lyngblomsten.org/AuthorYourLife](http://www.lyngblomsten.org/AuthorYourLife). **L**



*An inspiring statement written by a Lyngblomsten employee displayed during an Author Your Life ice cream social.*



# Care center resident directs Christmas play for 59th year

▲  
Cast members of *The Christmas that Bounced* smile at director Sonya Quam.

By Brandi Jewett

*Author Your Life is our philosophy on living well that's meant for anyone connected with the Lyngblomsten family. To introduce this to the broader community, we'll be profiling individuals who are authoring their lives in each edition of Lyngblomsten Lifestyle in 2019. This edition, we're focusing on one of our residents—Sonya Quam—who at age 82 is excited to be helping friends young and old learn to shine on stage.*

It was happenstance that connected Sonya Quam with the one-act play *The Christmas that Bounced*.

Decades ago as a parish worker for Trinity Lutheran Church in Long Island, NY, she found herself searching for a play that could be performed by the congregation's Sunday schoolers. Quam happened on *The Christmas that Bounced*, read it, and decided it was the one.

The play has stuck with Quam, a former tenant of The Heritage at Lyngblomsten and current care center resident. Since 1959, she has directed a performance of the play every year, even stepping

"I lovingly crack the whip," Quam jokes of her role as director. "I make sure the lines are delivered just right."

—Sonya Quam



in from time to time to fill in when actors were struck with illness.

While usually performed in community churches, including several performances at Grace University Lutheran Church in

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▲ Jane, played by The Heritage tenant June Borowski, delivers her lines.



▲ Clara, played by Macalester College student Brynna Davis, tries on a fur coat given to her by her husband Sam, played by Heritage tenant David Merry.



▲ Sonya Quam watches cast member and Lyngblomsten employee Caryn Erickson deliver lines during a rehearsal.

Minneapolis, this year’s performance came close to home for Quam. On November 30, actors recruited from Lyngblomsten and Macalester College performed *The Christmas that Bounced* in the dining room at The Heritage at Lyngblomsten.

The opportunity to direct a play at 82 years old with the support of the Lyngblomsten community is meaningful to Quam, who got her start in performing as a young girl. She recalls dressing up during her mother’s coffee parties and acting in plays during high school.

The ability to continue this lifelong passion is an opportunity Quam meets with gratitude. The same can be said of her peers performing in the play, which include tenants and a staff member from The Heritage and a student from Macalester College.

★ “It puts the lifeblood right back in them,” Quam said. ❄️

The play follows the holiday gift-giving follies of seven people—a cast of characters whom Quam speaks of as if they were old friends when she describes their predicaments.

Planning for the play first got underway in the summer, according to Caryn Erickson, Service and Activity Coordinator for The Heritage at Lyngblomsten. Erickson and Macalester College intern Brynna Davis both served as co-directors and performed in *The Christmas that Bounced*.

“Since Sonya moved in, she’s been talking about this play,” Erickson said. “She and I got our heads together in July and started planning. Then she started recruiting people for the cast.”

Quam and her peers are examples of people pursuing passions and applying their talents to live the best life possible as they age. It’s all part of Author Your Life, Lyngblomsten’s philosophy on living fully and aging vibrantly (turn to pages 3–4 for more information and to page 7 to get started authoring your own life). **L**



# Author Your Life

Intentionally living your best life possible

Use this page to help you begin your journey with Lyngblomsten and Author Your Life!

How can you get started authoring your life?

## Step One



First, find your inspiration. Ask yourself: What does “authoring my life” mean to me? Write down your response below.

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Do you want to learn a new skill, rediscover an old talent, or have another goal in mind? Take a moment to write down a few potential goals or opportunities that you would like to pursue. There are no wrong answers or time limits.

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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## Step Two



Now that you have a sense of direction for your journey, it's time to take the next step! Share your aspirations with someone you trust to find people and resources that can help you live purposefully.

Who are people with whom you could share your aspirations or even help you author your life and achieve your goals? Write their names below.

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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## Step Three



With your goals identified and shared, it's time to author your life! Go out and make those dreams a reality. Using the information you just completed, write one action step you can take now to get started.

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With Lyngblomsten, we can all join together through **Author Your Life** to encourage each other to live the best life possible at any age.

▶ See the video at [www.lyngblomsten.org/AuthorYourLife](http://www.lyngblomsten.org/AuthorYourLife)