



Lyngblomsten Lifestyle

Spring-Summer 2025



STORIES OF LIFE:

Elaine Ogren: The Lady,
the Legend, & her Legacy

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Volunteers Making Connections
2025 Fergstad Award Recipients

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Letter from the Editor

No one is more cherished in this world
than someone who lightens the burden of another.
— Joseph Addison

Dear Readers,

This edition pays homage to our volunteers. You'll notice the word "legacy" used a few times in the various stories. Lyngblomsten was begun a century ago by volunteers and is still undergirded today by hundreds of active volunteers (760 to be precise!)—a legacy, indeed!

Volunteers are essential to carrying out our mission, and we are deeply grateful for them. In the pages that follow, you'll meet a handful of these difference makers. While their stories are as different as the roles they play, the common thread is their love of older adults and concern for their community. The thousands of hours of service volunteers give to our organization each year lighten the burdens for many—residents, participants, and staff alike.

Even with the multitude of dedicated people already serving, there are opportunities to get involved. To learn more, visit www.Lyngblomsten.org/Volunteer or call (651) 632-5499.

May the stories in this edition lift your spirit and lighten whatever burden you may be carrying today.

Don't just live; leave a legacy!

Patricia A. Montgomery

Patricia A. Montgomery | Editor
Vice President of Communications & Stewardship



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On the Cover: Elaine Ogren—longtime volunteer and now campus resident—pauses near Anna's café & gift shop where she volunteered for many years.

Elaine Ogren:
The Lady, the Legend, & her Legacy

By Patricia Montgomery

At 99, Elaine Ogren has only recently started to consider slowing down. A volunteer with Lyngblomsten at the Como Park campus since the 1950s until about two years ago, she holds the title of Lyngblomsten's longest-serving volunteer. Not only has she turned the most calendar pages, but she's also logged the most hours of all volunteers on record: 9,810 hours!

Elaine's story of service began like those of many young women decades ago. She married, had children, and found some spare time she could devote to volunteering once the kids were in school. Since then, she's been making the community a better place through active involvement at Como Park Lutheran Church and Lyngblomsten.

"One of my roles was receptionist in the early 1960s when the care center was just the North Building," Elaine recalled. In addition to welcoming visitors, the volunteer receptionists managed a display case from which they would sell items handmade by residents, such as baby sweaters.

It was also in the early 1960s when the Lyngblomsten Auxiliary was formed with women from the former Lyngblomsten branches and from the newly established Lyngblomsten member congregations—including Como Park Lutheran Church.

"We [the (former) Lyngblomsten Auxiliary] met in the basement of the original building [Lyngblomsten Home for the Aged]," Elaine reminisced. "There we planned and hosted our rummage sales and cookie fairs." Later, their

meeting and selling space transferred to the basement of the Lyngblomsten Care Center.

When the 1977 addition to the care center brought dedicated space for a gift and coffee shop, the Lyngblomsten Auxiliary took on managing the shop, and Elaine volunteered frequently. This included going to market to purchase merchandise for the gift shop. In recalling her years at the Lyngblomsten Gift & Coffee Shop, as it was called then, she remarked, "We [the Auxiliary members] really enjoyed it—or we wouldn't have done it!" noting that she especially liked scooping ice cream.

Elaine also racked up hours (and steps!) by transporting residents in wheelchairs from their rooms to worship in the chapel or to therapy or

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▲ Elaine Ogren smiles for the camera in a recent photo taken in the care center lobby.



▲ Elaine dons her Norwegian bunad as she showcases rosettes for sale at the 2006 Scandinavian Cookie Fair, an important fundraiser for the Lyngblomsten Auxiliary and a highlight of the Christmas season for many years.

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salon appointments—a role from which she retired just two years ago when she stopped driving and could no longer get to campus easily.

Other than cutting back her volunteer work, Elaine shows little evidence of slowing down. A volunteer driver from her church picks her up for Sunday worship and the monthly senior luncheon, helping keep her connected with her church family. She still serves as a Delegate to Lyngblomsten from Como Park Lutheran.

Elaine spends much of her days reading, as evidenced by a rather large stack of books on her table. Her favorite genre is mysteries, especially those by Sandra Brown.

Her newest adventure as of mid-April is coming to live in assisted living on the campus where she has devoted so much energy. She is a resident of The Heritage at Lyngblomsten,

located on the same parcel of land where she began her volunteer work about 70 years ago.

Technically, Elaine's story isn't a legend because the facts of her life are verifiable. However, her service to others and her attitude are beyond remarkable. She has been described by many as the Energizer® bunny, an apt title given her record and the advice she shared for us: "Be active. Keep busy. Socialize. If you have the time, it's important to get out and do something worthwhile."

In Elaine's special way of getting her point across, she added one final piece of wisdom to accentuate her previous comment. "If you sit at home, you'll turn into a slug!" she quipped as she flashed her signature ear-to-ear grin.

In addition to all the lives that have been directly touched by Elaine's dedication and can-do spirit, her modeling of service to others and her sage advice are surely a legacy she has given to all of us! **L**

If you have the time, it's important to get out and do something worthwhile.

—Elaine Ogren



▲ Ready for shoppers! The Auxiliary ladies huddle in the "Oval Room"—a space reserved for the most special treasures—at the Fall Rummage Sale, October 2007. Elaine is at the far right.

Volunteers Making Connections is Always on the Menu!

By Sam Patet



▲ Pat Veach serves ice cream to an employee while volunteering at Anna's café & gifts.

The way Pat Veach interacts with residents and staff during her weekly volunteer shift at Anna's café & gifts, you'd think she had spent her entire career in customer service. While that isn't the case, she thrives whenever she's there because she enjoys connecting with others—something that's made her volunteerism life giving for herself and those she serves.

After retiring from a teaching career at the University of Minnesota, Pat began volunteering with Lyngblomsten in late 2021. She tried a few roles, but none of them were the right fit. Then, she landed behind the cash register at Anna's—an experience that whet her appetite for more. Now, nearly four years later, she's one of about 20 volunteers who serve at the café and gift shop regularly, and she has no intention of stopping.

"Anna's is just what I absolutely love," Pat said.

"I'm very oriented toward helping people," Pat continued. It's no surprise, then, that she relishes getting to spend much of her four-hour volunteer shift interacting with customers—ringing up their bills at the register, helping

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Want to enrich the lives of older adults?

Become a Lyngblomsten volunteer!

No matter your age or experience, you can make an impact as a Lyngblomsten volunteer.

Opportunities for individuals and church/school/corporate groups tailored to your interests, skills, and schedules are available at our campuses in Como Park and Lino Lakes.

Contact us to start your application today!

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www.Lyngblomsten.org/Volunteer



them select something from the gift shop, and making conversation (even if brief). Anna's (which is named after Anna Quale Fergstad, Lyngblomsten's founding president) is centrally located on the Como Park campus, ensuring Pat gets to interact with a wide variety of individuals.

"Anna's really helps people feel connected—helps them not feel so isolated," Pat said.



▲ Lyngblomsten volunteers, like Pat Veach and Jeff and Sharon Bartels, enhance the lives of older adults living on both the Como Park and Lino Lakes campuses.

Sharon and Jeff Bartels have a similar experience whenever they volunteer at Wally's, one of three dining venues located at Lyngblomsten's campus in Lino Lakes. Named after Lyngblomsten President & CEO Wallace (Wally) Hauge who served from 1980 to 1992, Wally's offers lunch and dinner specials to residents and their guests in a restaurant setting.

"There's always something different coming up," said Jeff about volunteering at Wally's. "It's kind of fun to see what the soup of the day is and what the people are ordering and who comes back."

During their shift over the lunch hour on Mondays, Sharon and Jeff are always on the move: taking orders, serving meals,

and cleaning up. But when they do get a chance to connect with residents, they take it.

"We don't have a lot of time to just chat [with residents], but once in a while we can," Sharon said. "It's just really enjoyable to hear something about their lives: where they used to live, what they used to do. She added, "It's just been, really, a joy to visit with them, and they seem to enjoy visiting with us."

Forming connections with customers is one of the benefits volunteers bring when they serve at Anna's, Wally's, or any of Lyngblomsten's dining venues, said Shelli Beck, Director of Volunteer Services for Lyngblomsten. "They provide not only a functionality aspect to the respective area of service, but an energy that the staff and customers appreciate," she said.

And it isn't just the customers who benefit, she continued. The volunteers do too—a fact confirmed by Pat.

"Lyngblomsten feels like a home—like my volunteer home," Pat said. "The atmosphere around here is very accepting and very positive. I've lost count of how many times someone has thanked me for being here." **L**



▲ Jeff Bartels gives residents their receipts following their meal at Wally's on the Lyngblomsten at Lino Lakes campus.

Difference Makers Honored with Fergstad Award

By Patricia Montgomery

At this year's President's Luncheon held April 2, Karina Allen (in memoriam) and David Christianson were recognized for their contributions. Named for Lyngblomsten's first president, Anna Quale Fergstad, the award recognizes selfless giving of time, treasure, and talent to Lyngblomsten and the community.

Karina Allen (in memoriam)

Karina's legacy with Lyngblomsten began in the 1930s when Karina accompanied her mother to branch meetings and volunteer assignments at the Lyngblomsten Home for the Aged, as it was called back then. Later when Karina became a mother, her children accompanied her to Lyngblomsten.

Karina had a passion for our mission and contributed for decades in a plethora of roles: Youth Volunteer; Branch Member, then Life Member; Auxiliary Member and Officer; Lyngblomsten Board Director; Member of the Lyngblomsten Centennial Celebration Committee; Donor; Member of the Heritage Society, and Resident of The Heritage at Lyngblomsten. When she passed away in 2024, Karina was the last Life Member of Lyngblomsten.

In the community, Karina worked as a licensed social worker for various care facilities and was involved in healthcare lobbying at the Minnesota State legislature.

Karina was a well-educated woman, consummate storyteller, able organizer, passionate leader, compelling speaker, and



▲ Karina Allen (in memoriam) and David Christianson were each honored with the 2025 Anna Quale Fergstad Award for Distinguished Service.

servant of Christ. Her legacy lives on through the lasting impact of her contributions to Lyngblomsten and the broader community.

David Christianson

Dave has built his life around service to others—through his work, through his volunteering, and through his philanthropy.

Dave's commitment to his local community is beyond measure. He has supported more than a dozen local organizations ranging from senior and family services to arts, music, and literature as well as Augsburg University and St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church.

His financial support has always been generous, and his gift of time has equaled that. Dave served on the Lyngblomsten Board of Directors—including as treasurer—and on the Finance Committee and Investment Committee. Going the extra mile, he brought his church together in a "mini campaign" to support Lyngblomsten's capital campaign to renovate the care center a few years ago.

In what may be the thread that ties all this together, David's mother, Janet, lived at Lyngblomsten for nearly seven years. Dave has demonstrated a history of service to, and trust in, Lyngblomsten. It is a joy to honor him with this distinguished service award for his impact through Lyngblomsten and beyond. **L**

Room Service with a Twist

Art with You delivers transformative enrichment in residents' rooms

By Mara Gawarecki

When residents of the Lyngblomsten Care Center aren't able to join group art activities, staff bring creative opportunities to them in their rooms through Art with You, a one-on-one art companionship program.

"It enriches both their environment and their life experience to have colorful, interesting materials set out in front of them that they get to touch and make things with," said Holly Nelson, Director of Lifelong Learning & the Arts for Lyngblomsten, who launched Art with You as a pilot program in the summer of 2023.

Direct care staff identify residents who would benefit from the program, like those whose mental health or mobility issues prevent them from joining group activities. The Art with You cart is stocked with a variety of materials—watercolors, clay, items for collage-making—as well as prints, poetry, and other sources of inspiration to help spark conversations and creativity. Many of the resulting artworks become part of gallery walls in resident rooms.

In the fall of 2024, Nelson handed over reins of the program to Michèle Coppin, a contracted teaching artist for Lyngblomsten. Coppin has residents set the pace and terms of each encounter, and she tailors projects to each resident's interests and physical needs. "Having a chat is important, rather than jumping into art right away," Coppin said. "You want to get know them, and you want them to trust you."


In her prompts, Coppin highlights artists who created when they were older, such as Beatrix Potter, who wrote and painted into her 70s. The length of visits varies, but Coppin has spent several hours at a time engaging with residents,

making sure they're comfortable throughout the creative process.

"Sometimes the art is going on as a much deeper conversation is happening," she said. "It's not just about making something; it's also about companionship."

Nelson and Coppin point to the example of Lynn, a resident with depression whose life was transformed by participating in the program over the course of a year. "Art with You has helped me come back to life," Lynn said. "I found the courage to live and be creative."

Coppin sees five to six residents each week. She and Nelson have discussed recruiting volunteers to expand Art with You, bringing the one-on-one interactions to more residents.

"One of the beautiful things about this program is there aren't many people who can spend an open-ended amount of time with residents and be entirely focused on them," Nelson said. "It's feeding their souls." 



▲ Art with You participants work with a variety of materials and techniques, including clay sculpture and collage.

Looking for support on your caregiving journey? Give Lyngblomsten Community Services a call.

Lyngblomsten Community Services offers supportive services, resources, and opportunities to informal (family/friend) caregivers living at home in the community, specializing in serving people with memory loss and those who care for them.

When you contact Lyngblomsten Community Services, a caregiver specialist will help you identify resources that are available—providing you with options tailored to your unique situation—and answer your questions.

Offerings include:

- Help navigating information and resources
- Caregiver education (1:1 and groups)
- Memory loss caregiver support groups
- The Gathering, a group respite program offering social enrichment and cognitive stimulation for people with early- to mid-stage memory loss



Connect with us! Let us be a resource for your caregiving journey.

(651) 632-5320 | caregiving@lyngblomsten.org
www.Lyngblomsten.org/CommunityServices

Respite Care Now Available!

Are you caring for an older adult at home and you need an extended break—perhaps to travel out of town or to recover from a surgery? Lyngblomsten can help! We offer extended Respite Care for adults ages 62+ at our senior living campus in Lino Lakes.

- Respite residents receive assistance with activities of daily living and healthcare needs; secured memory care is available.
- Minimum 10-day stay, maximum of 30-day stay.
- Pre-admission paperwork required; caregivers are encouraged to allot at least two weeks for completing this paperwork before requested respite dates.
- Four service packages available, with varied costs depending on the care needed.

For information on openings: Contact Deb Bland at (651) 515-1727 or dbland@lyngblomsten.org, or visit www.Lyngblomsten.org/Respite-Care.



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For information about making a gift in honor or in memory of your loved one, please contact Carrie Godfrey at (651) 632-5358 or cgodfrey@lyngblomsten.org.



Renovation of the central courtyard on Lyngblomsten's Como Park campus is happening this summer!

The highly anticipated courtyard renovation is underway! The project includes the planting of new trees and wildflower gardens, along with the addition of a number of new outdoor amenities—including an activity green, grilling station, and pavilion for concerts and classes. These improvements are sure to make the courtyard a sought-after destination for all to enjoy.

Visit www.Lyngblomsten.org/CourtyardRenovation for construction updates.



Save the Date!



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Annual Gala
Thursday, September 25
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OUR MISSION:

Influenced by Christ, Lyngblomsten provides a ministry of compassionate care and innovative services to older adults in order to preserve and enhance their quality of life.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

For our **participants**, Lyngblomsten promotes dignity through informed choices for living options, respecting individuality, and orchestrating the best life possible.

For our participants’ **families**, Lyngblomsten supports their needs through careful listening, traveling alongside them as they walk the journey with their loved ones.

For our **employees**, Lyngblomsten strives to foster an environment that encourages compassionate caregiving, innovative thinking, problem-solving, and opportunity seeking.

Through our **community** of donors, volunteers, member congregations, and socially responsible corporations, Lyngblomsten encourages the individual to live one’s personal ministry by enhancing the lives of older adults.

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Thank you for all you do to enhance
the quality of life for older adults!

You can make a difference at The Gathering



The Gathering is a group respite program for people with early- to mid-stage memory loss that provides a four-hour break for their family caregivers. As a volunteer, you'll socialize, play games, do art activities, challenge your brains, and have fun with participants.

Sessions held multiple days each week from 10 AM–2 PM at Lyngblomsten's campuses in Como Park and Lino Lakes. Training provided.

For more information: Contact Melanie Jagolino in Volunteer Services at (651) 632-5499 or mjagolino@lyngblomsten.org.