

FAMILY MATTERS



Winter 2021 Newsletter

Sandy Hess is one of a kind!

She is always ready to lend a helping hand or play a practical joke; she radiates light and joy at the Villa.

Sandy was born in Lansdale, PA and moved to Lancaster with her family as a young girl.

Her father worked on the railway system and her mother as a stay-at-home mom for Sandy and her two sisters. Sandy's face lights up the room when she talks about her family. The fact that she chose Faith Friendship Ministries to be the family of her heart means even more.

We recently received a call from her former grade school teacher, who had managed to find her contact information. She remarked how Sandy was such a delight, and how she was "well loved" by her teachers and friends.

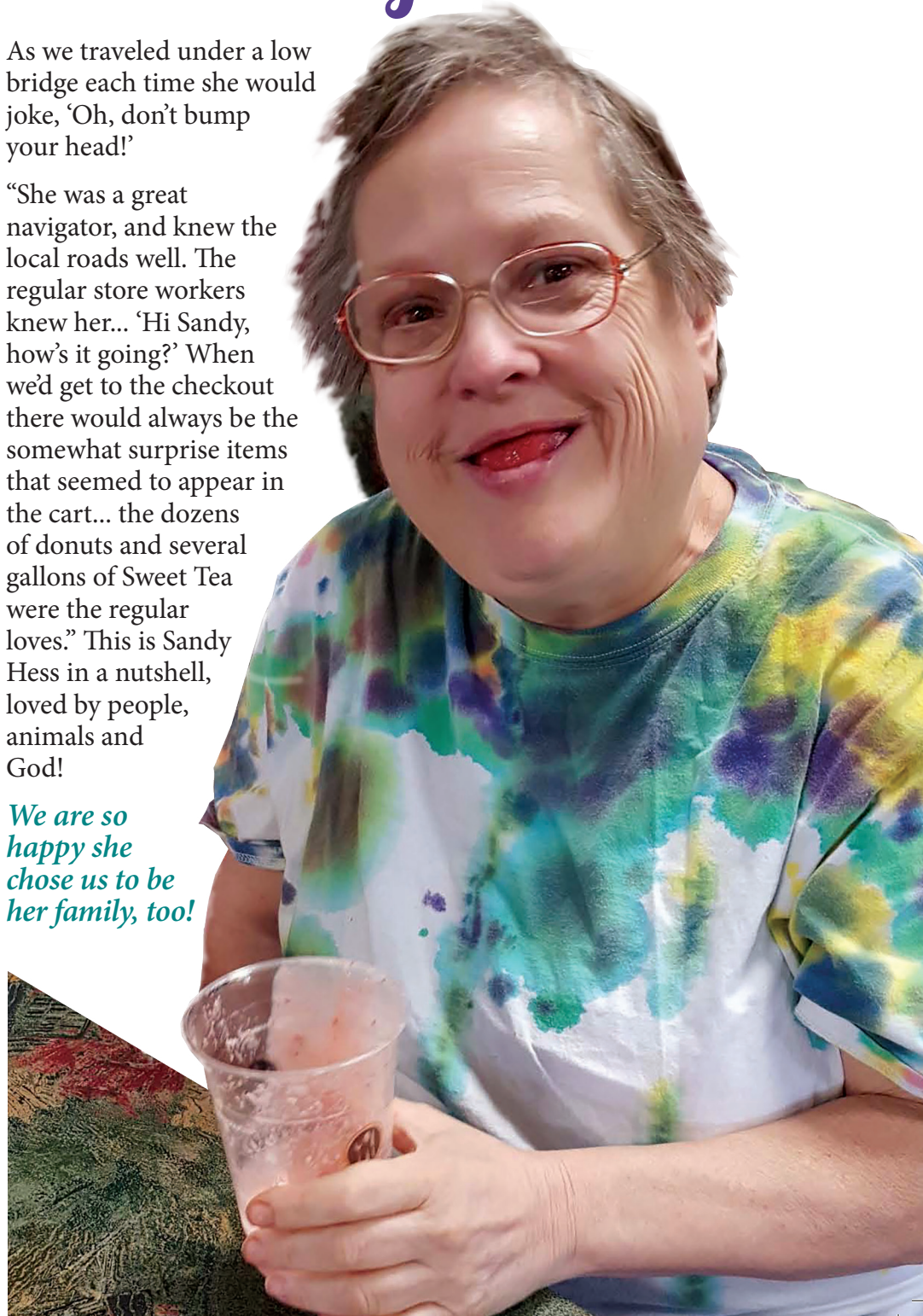
Some other "loves" for Sandy include her husband (who she mentioned is "now with Jesus") and animals. (This is kind of a problem in that she would collect all animals if she could!)

Another friend wrote about Sandy, "I will treasure the days that I got to take Sandy on errands. She was always happy and light-hearted.

As we traveled under a low bridge each time she would joke, 'Oh, don't bump your head!'

"She was a great navigator, and knew the local roads well. The regular store workers knew her... 'Hi Sandy, how's it going?' When we'd get to the checkout there would always be the somewhat surprise items that seemed to appear in the cart... the dozens of donuts and several gallons of Sweet Tea were the regular loves." This is Sandy Hess in a nutshell, loved by people, animals and God!

We are so happy she chose us to be her family, too!



From the Desk of the Executive Director

Heraclitus of Ephesus wrote, “The only thing constant in life is change.” Nothing can make a case for that statement more than the year 2020. It seemed like nothing was predictable, reliable or within our control. The challenge of supporting people with mental illness during a global pandemic, while trying to be State compliant and safe, was daunting and downright overwhelming. While many providers lost employees due to illness or fear, the staff at FFM ran into the crisis, knowing that they were doing something noble and just. But the bravery and constant change does take a toll.

In 2021, the effects are still felt by all. We are tasked with monitoring disease levels within the county verses how often must we COVID test our community of family and staff. At the same time, we must continue to reassure our family members that one day soon we will be able to welcome our friends, families, and volunteers back onto our campus and into the

building. Yet, with all the heaviness, hope arises with each milestone we celebrate, such as being a COVID-free campus. Our hope for the future continues to grow.

One of my favorite times of the week is hosting the Tuesday night Bible study for the family members. It is in their sincere prayer petitions to God and their genuine expressions of gratitude for the quality staff members that support them, that I am truly humbled. As well, they pray for you, our readers and donors. They know that without your kind support, they may not have a safe place to call home; they may not have a family of choice to love and support them through the tough times; they may not have encouragers who will celebrate their successes. From our family to yours, we thank you for your kind words, heartfelt prayers, and tangible donations to help us make this house a home.

*Sincerely,
Gwendolyn FAITH Didden, MHS, PCHA
Executive Director*

Who are we? Faith Friendship Ministries was founded in 2001, with the mission of providing housing and support services to adults of low income, particularly focusing on those with mental illness, regardless of their ability to initially pay for services. We strive to show the love of Jesus through service and support for our “family members.”

What we do - The Villa is a 74 bed, state licensed personal care home. Over 85% of our residents have an income well below the poverty line.

The question has been asked...

“What would the community do without Faith Friendship services?” For many of our residents, hospitals, shelters, living outdoors and in some cases, jails, would become their housing alternatives, becoming costly to the community at large. We are one of the largest personal care homes in the state of Pennsylvania to accept low income residents. The housing and support services Faith Friendship provides is an invaluable and needed service in Lancaster County.



If you are entering The Villa as a volunteer, visitor or essential worker, you first must STOP, MASK, and take and record your TEMPERATURE. Please disinfect your hands with the hand sanitizer provided. At this time, there are outside areas provided for visiting. Additional inside visits must be scheduled through Dusty Mende, the Director of Community Life. She can be reached by calling (717) 285-5596 and asking for her by name.



We acquired a Gator, complete with snow plow and salt spreader. Snow removal is more efficient and timelier now that it is handled “in house.” It also comes in handy as many materials are moved from place to place on our busy campus.

Holidays During the Pandemic

The holidays are usually filled with residents making plans to go visit their families. This year, due to the Covid infection rate in the county, Thanksgiving meant “you may only celebrate with whom you live.”

Staff went into action to make the holiday as “festive and family” as they

could. Many staff volunteered to come in on their day off, decorate the dining room, serve the meal and home cook all the regular goodies.

Christmas was also a challenge. We were unable to go to our annual Shady Maple dinner, so we brought Shady Maple to the Villa!

A wonderful time was had by all. We look forward to putting 2020 behind us, but this past year showed us we can adapt.

We did our very best to celebrate holidays with the restrictions in place to stay safe during the pandemic.





Many have said Pat Weaver IS Faith Friendship Ministries. She retired at the end of 2020 after 20 years of faithful service. *She is missed!*

Check out our website at
faithfriendship.org
 and follow us on Facebook

*Where
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 Create a Family™*



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CANCELED!

Due to the uncertainty of the times in which we live, the Board has decided to cancel the Signature Event planned for October 14th, 2021.

We are hoping to plan a celebration of the Villa and FFM when it is safe to gather.

Check out our website for weekly updates on our Covid-19 progress. Our re-opening plan will also be posted when finalized.

What would a newsletter be without a picture of Jim Zook?

