



# Pioneer Network™

*What* have we achieved in 2019?

2019  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



## OUR VISION

*A Culture of Aging  
that is Life-Affirming,  
Satisfying, Humane  
and Meaningful*

## OUR CREDO

Growing older presents limitless opportunities to pursue joy and meaning wherever we call community. Aging is the path to life-long learning, growth and connection regardless of changes we face. Pioneer Network is working to bury stereotypical views and combat ageism. Helping others understand and experience life in a fulfilling way creates a culture of care and support we all desire. Let's celebrate the virtues of aging together!

## REACH

- ❖ Reached over **70,000** people through our website, social media, and newsletter

## SUPPORT

- ❖ Received funding through the May & Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, Kentucky Office of Inspector General Division of Health Care, Maryland Department of Health and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- ❖ Over 50 exhibitors and sponsors participated in the 2019 Pioneering a New Culture of Aging Conference
- ❖ Launched the Pioneer Partner Network, our corporate and organizational partnership program, and our first partner to sign on was WhisperGLIDE
- ❖ Partnered with Eversound, It's Never 2 Late, LeadingAge, Linked Senior, National Certification Council for Activity Professionals, Rockport Health Care Services, The Eden Alternative, and more on special projects

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- ❖ 2019 Pioneering a New Culture of Aging Conference— we “made it happen” in Louisville, Kentucky with over 800 attendees, pre-conference sessions and over 75 concurrent and intensive presentations
- ❖ Two new webinar series— Sharing the Vision, a shorter complimentary webinar every other month, and Growing Person-Centeredness, paid webinars throughout the year on topics of current interest

## OUR MISSION

*Pioneer Network advocates and facilitates deep system change and transformation in our culture of aging.*

## OUR VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- Know each person
- Each person can and does make a difference
- Relationship is the fundamental building block of a transformed culture
- Respond to spirit, as well as mind and body
- Risk taking is a normal part of life
- Put person before task
- All elders are entitled to self-determination wherever they live
- Community is the antidote to institutionalization
- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you
- Promote the growth and development of all
- Shape and use the potential of the environment in all its aspects: physical, organizational, psycho/social/spiritual
- Practice self-examination, searching for new creativity and opportunities for doing better
- Recognize that culture change and transformation are not destinations but a journey, always a work in progress

- ❖ Biweekly newsletter, *Pioneers Networking*, provided informative articles and resources to over 13,000 people
- ❖ The Pioneer Network team presented for LeadingAge, LeadingAge Pennsylvania, Masterpiece Living, Illinois Pioneer Coalition Summit, Planetree International, Southwest Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging, American College of Health Care Administrators, and The Society for Post- Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine
- ❖ Contributed articles to *Caring for the Ages* and *Certified Senior Advisors* newsletters



## SPECIAL PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

- ❖ Co-sponsored the second annual Community Commitment Awards in conjunction with Rockport Health Care Services to honor those senior living communities that are engaged in meaningful programs and projects within the larger communities in which they reside
- ❖ Established the Pioneer Network Council of Elders to ensure the voices of elders are involved in our planning and vision
- ❖ Began revising the original Artifacts of Culture Change tool
- ❖ Pioneer Network CEO was a guest on *The Laura Flanders Show*
- ❖ Team members served on the boards of Center for Excellence in Assisted Living, Advancing Excellence in Long-Term Care Collaborative, Wish of a Lifetime, National Certification Council for Activity Professionals, Missouri Coalition Celebrating Care Continuum Change, Florida Pioneer Network, and Long-term Care Equality Index

## RESOURCES

- ❖ Updated the online Resource Library with free downloadable resources to bring you the most up-to-date information on the philosophy and practices of person-centered and person-directed living
- ❖ Added books, recorded webinars and other products to the online Bookstore

## THE POWER OF PIONEER NETWORK:

# Reflections on the 2019 Conference

BY KRISTIAN PARTINGTON

Culix Wibonele had never been to any type of conference before she landed in Louisville, Kentucky in August, 2019 for Pioneer Network's annual event and she really didn't know what to expect. She is a direct care worker with Georgia's Park Springs retirement community, armed with a wealth of energy and enthusiasm, so she carried that with her. She also has firsthand experience in the transformative *Dementia Care Matters* approach to dementia support, and she was asked to share her story during a presentation at the conference.



She was honored to do so, she says, because her time alongside the residents of Park Springs is central to who she is, and she believes deeply in what she does.

Perhaps she didn't anticipate meeting so many others whose passion for person-centred care burned as bright as hers when she arrived in Louisville, but that is what the Pioneer Network Conference has been about for more than 20 years. It brings hundreds of like-minded people together from across the world to share their passion and experience, and it fuels the momentum of positive revolution in the realm of aging.

"It was wonderful," Culix says. "I've never been to any conference before so that was my first time and I didn't expect to be that grateful."

"I was on the moon."

Culix is exactly the type of person Park Springs managing partner, Andy Isakson, wants to bring to these events. Her enthusiasm is contagious among the people she serves and works alongside and the conference feeds into that energy, while also offering a platform to celebrate the work she and her team accomplish in their community every day. Andy saw that value almost immediately upon attending his first conference in New Orleans in 2016, where he discovered innovative ideas to address the changing needs of the members he serves at Park Springs. Beyond that, however, it was the people within the network itself that shone at his first event.

"The people that go to this conference are the people who are trying to make a difference," he says, "people that have heart."

Other 'industry' conferences seem to focus more on making money or making loans, he adds, and very few among the powerful entities that profit in the care of older adults would bother to attend the Pioneer Network Conference, but Andy knows the world is changing.

“To be in this business and succeed,” he says, “you gotta’ have some heart or you’re not going to make it.”



Andy brought 13 people to Louisville this year, all of whom have shown the beating heart of compassion in their work every day.

Tim Knight was among them. Tim came to Park Springs from Maine in the early part of 2017, having spent most of his nursing career there at the front edge of the burgeoning culture change movement. He was attracted to Park Springs because it was a new campus specifically designed with the household concept at the centre of its care philosophy.

When he arrived, the foundation of a strong culture was evident and he was able to help build upon it, in part through connections Andy had made through Pioneer Network, such as *THE GREEN HOUSE® Project* and *Dementia Care Matters*. Like Culix, Tim was proud to be at this year’s event, not only to connect with so many harmonious people but also to showcase the wonderful culture at the core of Park Springs’s success the past few years.

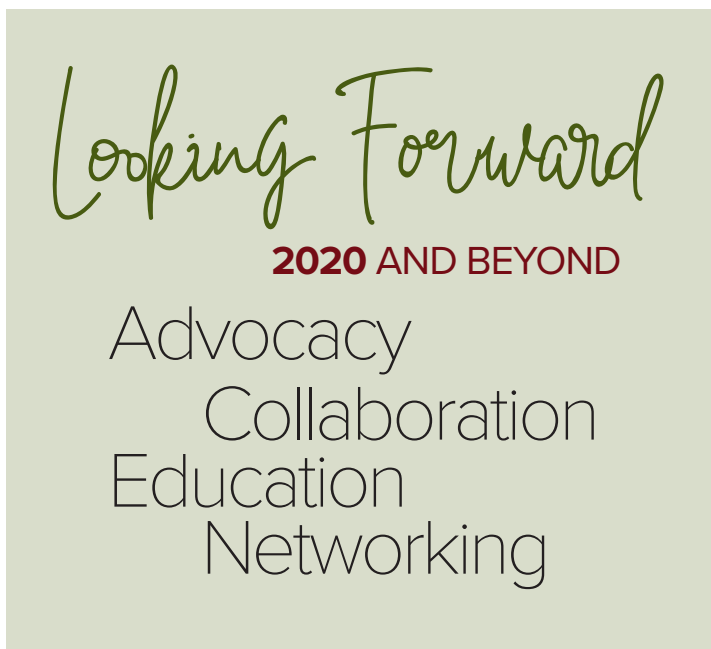
“To be able to take the CNAs and a homemaker along with me was absolutely amazing,” Tim says. “It was so emotional seeing the response from the audience to their stories about what we do here.

“It was a very proud moment for me.”

“Evolution in culture change isn’t easy,” Tim adds. “We have been through so many trials and tribulations together, blessed with tears literally, and to see them shine the way they did ... was absolutely amazing.”

In so many ways, the team members that make change happen on the ground are the ones with the greatest insight. When they share their stories and learn from others, the network of positive influence spreads and its impact stretches from organization to organization beyond the impartial lines of state or country borders.

They are human stories of impact, and Pioneer Network has been threading them together for more than 20 years.



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