



Laughing ... “It gives you life!”

When Bev Kuhn is asked why she’s always smiling and laughing, she quickly answers, “It’s a good release and makes things go well.”

She says she laughs at any humor she finds. Pausing, she thinks about an example and then lights up as she describes her “fun table” of six women who enjoy eating dinner together each evening. “One woman brings a book of Yiddish phrases to share with the group. They’re common phrases we all know, and that sets the stage for a fun dinner.

“We’re all different and may not agree on everything, but we can talk about anything, laugh, and have a great time.”

Research has shown there are many real benefits of laughter, from managing pain to reducing stress, and Bev acknowledges laughter played a

big role helping her cope with the many demands of caring for her husband for five years as his Alzheimer’s disease progressed. “It was such a difficult time. I tried crying, but that doesn’t work, so I thought I might as well laugh about it. He had a great sense of humor!”

Before her husband’s diagnosis, the couple spent 20 years traveling across most of Canada and throughout the U.S. and Mexico in their RV. “He was a jokester! I’m not a joke-teller, but I love laughing at jokes when others share them.” Born in North Hollywood, California, Bev has lived most of her life on the West Coast. She and her husband owned a metal engraving business and raised three daughters. With her flair for design, Bev also was an interior decorator. Plus, she was a district manager for Avon, overseeing 150 representatives.

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Life—and laughter—at Touchmark

“I’ve had more culture here at Touchmark since I moved in almost three years now,” she says throwing her head back with a laugh. “The music is amazing, but that’s not all. You can’t do everything there is to do ... there’s lots and lots to do.”

In addition to all the cultural events and activities, you can find Bev bubbling with enthusiasm at happy hours, chatting with people while she walks her dog, and signing up for “most anything.”

At the top of her list is the A-MAY-Zing Race, an activity patterned after the popular TV show, the *Amazing Race*. “I love it! That is the most fun! It’s a challenge, and I didn’t realize I was so competitive, but I jumped into it.” Her team (the Sweet Chicks) has won for the past two years. “And we plan to do it a third year: We’re tough!”

That competitive spirit also shows itself when she plays Wii Bowling, another favorite pastime.

Having crisscrossed North America with her husband, Bev still enjoys traveling and appreciates Touchmark’s organized trips. “We went to Cape Cod last fall, and we plan to go to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, later this year. I’m excited to go to the Panama Canal next year.”

But ask Bev what she likes the most, and she quickly says, “The people! Not only the residents but the staff, too: They’re wonderful and very caring.”

When she’s not talking and laughing with friends and neighbors or playing Pegs and Jokers, Bev is busy with projects in her home. “I adore quilting and have an embroidery machine and a pretty extensive collection of quilts.”

Whether she’s bent over her sewing or raising a glass and toasting life with friends, the one common thread running through Bev’s full and fascinating life is laughter. “It gives you life!”



Melissa Conrad
Vice President, Wellness & Marketing

“Humor is mankind’s greatest blessing.”
– Mark Twain

Most people have heard the saying “laughter is the best medicine,” and while that may be an overstatement, laughter does offer some profound benefits.

In fact, recent studies have shown that laughter has the power to reduce stress and anxiety by shutting down stress hormones like cortisol and triggering dopamine production. It also increases oxygen intake by stimulating the heart, lungs, and muscles, and it is a natural pain killer.

Here are a few suggestions for increasing your laughter levels:

Laugh when others laugh. Sometimes your body just needs to get warmed up, and a few false chuckles can help you get started on the real thing.

Learn to laugh at yourself. Laughing instead of getting angry at yourself when you make a mistake will give you more reasons to laugh and may help you be a happier person overall.

Browse YouTube. Type in “funny videos,” and you will find thousands of opportunities to tickle your funny bone.

Change up your radio stations. There are a variety of ways to listen to recorded comedy, including CDs, humor podcasts, and satellite radio comedy stations.

Schedule a weekly funny movie night. Invite friends or neighbors and suggest taking turns hosting and selecting the film. When accompanied by others, many people are 30 percent more likely to laugh than when on their own.

Embrace every opportunity to laugh: after all, our health can be a laughing matter.

Health & Fitness Club Updates

Expresso Bike Challenge

Have you signed up for an Expresso HD bike account? If not, we would love to help you create one! Once you have an account, it's easy to track your miles, times, and personal progress. An account allows you to race against your own best times, making it easier to push yourself to higher performance levels.

Your membership also allows you to take part in the Expresso Bike Challenge! The Club member who rides the most days and the member who rides the most miles in the month of April will both win a prize. Also, join the team relay in May. It's time to create your teams of up to four, and the team with the most miles will win prizes for each member.

New ways to stay fit

Have you tried the new classes? We are now offering Aqua Yoga and Aqua Zumba®. If you're looking for something new, give one of these great classes a try!



If you have any questions about your workouts or goals, stop by to schedule a consultation with one of our personal trainers today. Touchmark trainers can help set you on a path to achieving the success you're looking for.

Celebrating chocolate!



Delectable desserts dotted the tables during last month's Chocolate Extravaganza. The annual Valentine's Day event is a favorite of residents and guests, and this was Executive Chef Chris Warner's first time preparing all the scrumptious sweets. Mixed among the favorite chocolate-covered strawberries were handmade truffles, homemade fudge, and chocolate drop coins.

He and the Dining Services team were busy throughout the day, as they incorporated chocolate into every meal. For example, dinner included a strip loin steak with dark chocolate port sauce and chocolate fudge cake for dessert. Chris brings more than 30 years of cooking experience to Touchmark. He has served as Executive Chef at dining venues throughout the Midwest, including Chartwells H.E. at the University of Mary and the Blarney Stone Pub, here in Bismarck. As a personal chef, he has catered parties of 16 and served a seven-course fine-

dining dinner to staff of an investment company. He has also worked as a sous chef and assistant kitchen manager. "Basically, I have worked in every position in kitchens over the past three decades. Delighting others with great food is my passion!"

"This is such a rewarding job! The residents are so enjoyable, and it's great to see the excitement on their faces when an event is happening."

Chris holds a diploma in Culinary Arts with Honors from the Western Culinary Institute/Le Cordon Bleu in Portland, Oregon.

When not cooking memorable meals or sharing culinary tips with residents, Chris likes to spend time traveling with his family and watching Cubs baseball games. He also coaches his son in baseball and football and loves to watch his daughter perform ballet.



TEAM MEMBER

Spotlight

Name: Melissa Neuberger

Position: Environmental Services Supervisor

How would you describe yourself?

I am an outgoing person and love to be around people. I enjoy meeting new people.

Share a bit about your family and growing up.

I grew up on a ranch in Raleigh, ND. My dad ranched, and my mom is a school teacher. I have two brothers and one sister. We grew up enjoying the outdoors. I married my husband in 2010, and we have a daughter Adilyn (5), Brody (2 1/2), and a baby girl due in March.

What are some of the most significant events in your life?

The most significant would be becoming a mom! I enjoy experiencing all the good moments—and even the tough ones—of them growing up. Also, going to Washington, D.C., with my sister and attending an Adele concert.

How long have you worked at Touchmark?
Almost two months.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I love how friendly and welcoming everyone is. I enjoy walking the hallways and always being greeted so nicely. My coworkers made me feel comfortable immediately. I also love getting to know everyone who lives at Touchmark.

What Touchmark value do you most closely relate to and why?

“I build community one relationship at a time” would be what I would say I have related to most. I value getting to know my coworkers, the housekeepers, and all of the residents. I want to meet their needs and requests and make them happy. I also value showing my team that they can trust me and that I listen!

Outside of work what are your favorite ...

Activities: I love going to the family ranch, to the lake, and spending time with my family.

Food: I love sushi and pad thai.

Movie: *Family Stone*.

Music: I am really not a picky music girl, but my favorite would have to be '90s country.



We had fun making—and eating—popcorn balls for National Popcorn Day.



As part of the Touchmark Kindness Campaign, we hosted a chili feed for the local firefighters.



Touchmark veterans invited the Century Patriots basketball team over for a pizza party a couple days before their Military Appreciation Night game. Some of the veterans attended the game to cheer on the girls.



We dressed in our Caribbean best for a tropical poolside party and swayed to the rhythms of Jamaican Me Crazy steel drum band.



In the Pembroke and Yorkshire neighborhoods, we enjoyed a visit with furry friends and craft corner!

Save the date!

DEMENTIA CONVERSATIONS

Monday, March 5, 1 pm • Chapel

Talking with a family member about dementia can be difficult and uncomfortable. Join Nikki Wagner, MS, OTR/L, from the Alzheimer's Association for tips on broaching important topics with your loved one. RSVP by March 2.

PUB CRAWL

Friday, March 16, 2 pm • Lobby

Don't miss this annual St. Patrick's Day celebration. Put on all your green and join us on the party bus for a visit to three local drinking establishments. RSVP by March 13.

IDIOT ON THE PRAIRIE

Thursday, March 22, 7 pm • Chapel

Don't miss this hilarious performance by local comedian Diane Esslinger. Her real-life, relatable, and ridiculous stories will have you rolling in the aisles! All are welcome. For those interested in joining us for dinner, get your VIP pass. For \$25, enjoy predinner drinks, a delicious gourmet meal, and special seating for the show! RSVP by March 9.

PARTNER WITH YOUR DOCTOR

Monday, April 2, 1 pm • Chapel

If you or someone you love is living with dementia, developing a good doctor-patient relationship is essential to making informed decisions about care and services. Join Nikki Wagner, MS, OTR/L, from the Alzheimer's Association, for tips on communicating more effectively.

View our {FULL} Life calendar online for a complete list of events: TouchmarkBismarck.com

What others are saying ...

"I have never regretted one moment of my choice of Touchmark as my new home. The entire staff could not be any better or efficient than they are ... I thank you for your excellent ability to hire people who take such good care of us."

-Blanche Flynn, resident since 2012

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