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*Independent Lifestyle ♦ Assisted Living ♦ Encore Memory Care*

January 28, 2020

Dear Members:

I hope 2020 is treating each of you well and I hope each of you had a great holiday season. I am happy to be back at The Birches' from my maternity leave. My daughter Mabel is two months old now and loves visiting The Birches' with me. Thank you to our team for covering while I was away. We are fortunate to have each of you in our lives.

I am proud to announce that The Birches is the first community in Illinois to receive the Bronze Level Credentialing for the Montessori Inspired Lifestyle. We are not perfect, but we continue to aim to create a home where we would want to live, create resident-led programming, and an inclusive community culture. As another "tool in our toolbox," our goal is to reach Gold Credentialing by the end of the year.

Our members take the opportunity each year to try something new so we can continue to age successfully. Residents and team members throughout the month are encouraged to try new things and expand their horizons. There have been a lot of new programs offered over the past weeks for our residents to try, but as a community, we should also continue to grow. This year in 2020, our focus is to improve communication with our members. So far, an *Encore* Resident Welcoming Committee met last week to create ways to welcome new neighbors living in *Encore*, an Entertainment Committee meeting is in the works, and this Thursday we have an informational meeting to develop our inaugural Resident Board. We will keep you posted on progress!

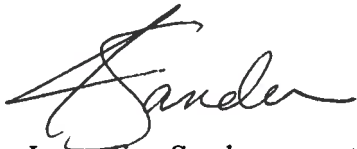
Starting now, we are going to start posting more announcements on Caremerge for our residents and families across each department on a regular basis. This will also allow each of you to connect with our leadership team if you want to "chat" for non-emergency items. In a world where email is fading away, this app can send notifications, pictures, and secure chats. Questions on Caremerge, please send them my way!

As a small business, we are not always able to repair the building as fast as Amazon would if they had a team on-call, although I wish our issues can be resolved with the snap of my fingers. With a 20 year old building, we will have breakdowns and some pains, but please know our team is here to do everything they can for our residents. We have low employee turnover and big hearts, and our team will always fight hardest for our residents. We are hoping to communicate better this upcoming year when breakdowns happen, and I thank you for your patience in advance. If something is not to your satisfaction or expectation, please give us an opportunity to get creative and come to me.

It has been a tough winter this year! As a reminder, if you are sick or not feeling well, please do not visit our community until you are symptom free for 48 hours.

Our dining team wants to remind you that if you have three or more guests coming for a meal, please reserve a table with our front desk. We want you to know that all members are eligible to reserve our private dining room or activity rooms for a family party throughout the year. Our team is available to help with planning or catering if needed.

Thank you for your confidence in our community. We love what we do, and we're privileged to have your support! If there are any suggestions, comments, or improvements you'd like to see, please reach out to me anytime. I am happy to be back in the saddle!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sander". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jacqueline Sander, executive director  
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