

Finding a Legacy of Compassionate Care

Upholding Mother Mary Theresa Dudzik's legacy of service, under the sponsorship of the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, the associates at Franciscan Ministries' senior living communities care for their residents by helping them live with joy and purpose.

In 1881, Mother Mary Theresa Dudzik, then a young woman named Josephine Dudzik, emigrated with her family from Poland to Chicago. She supported her mother through work as a seamstress—but soon young Josephine became preoccupied with the pain and suffering of those around her neighborhood, who were destitute, sick, and underserved. She felt compelled and knew she had to do something. Moved by a greater calling she and a few others founded a religious congregation in 1894 under the guidance of the pastor of her parish—ultimately becoming the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago. In 1898, she and the Sisters opened the first Catholic home for the aged in Chicago. From that same spirit of service and dedication to the senior population, Franciscan Ministries, a provider of senior living, healthcare, and community-based services, was established nearly a century later in 1988 by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago.

Franciscan Ministries is the embodiment of its foundress, Mother Mary Theresa Dudzik, and the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, and built on a foundation of core values—respect, dedication, stewardship, and joy. These values help guide its Mission to “Celebrate Life and Serve with Joy” for residents and associates alike. This mission is infused into every aspect of its senior living communities, shaping amenities, program offerings, spiritual care, talent recruitment, and the overall quality of care. The organization's integrated wellness and care model is guided by the seven dimensions of wellness: physical, occupational, environmental, spiritual, social, emotional, and intellectual, ensuring all residents' needs are being addressed holistically.

The journey to find a senior living community for a parent can be plagued with indecision, confusion, and trepidation. This was the case for Patrick Schuerer, Vice President of Communications and Brand Strategy at Franciscan Ministries. Facing an overabundance of online data and little experience himself in senior



Patrick Schuerer,
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living, he and his family found out firsthand the difficult reality of searching for the right balance of care, amenities, and living options. Underscoring this search, though, was hope—the hope to find a community that was passionate about senior living while providing

compassionate care and attention. This experience would stand out to Schuerer, ultimately leading him to seek a position with the mission-based, nonprofit Franciscan Ministries, sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago—a premiere, multi-state senior living and healthcare organization.

“Our residents truly are at the center of everything we do,” says Patrick Schuerer, Vice President of Communications and Brand Strategy. “We are focused on making a positive impact through what we call Living Joyfully, which is the deepest expression of our mission and is built around the well-being of our residents as well as our associates.”

Called to Serve

As a nonprofit organization, the resources Franciscan Ministries receives are redistributed back into its communities, something that has attracted many to Franciscan Ministries. The team's approach to senior care is so unique that their sponsors, the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, have also created additional ministries, including the Madonna Foundation that offers scholarships to less fortunate high school girls seeking a Catholic education and St. Jude House, a family violence prevention center providing education, services, and support to domestic violence survivors. Additionally, a consulting arm has been developed to help manage religious and nonreligious senior living communities wishing to adopt the Franciscan model and mission of celebrating life and living joyfully.

Schuerer himself felt called to join Franciscan Ministries because of his own experience with his mother. His experience isn't isolated as so many of the associates and leadership are passionate about working with seniors while using their gifts, talents, and industry expertise to serve the senior population.

“There are so many of us at Franciscan Ministries who feel called to do this work,” says Schuerer. “We are part of something much bigger, and our purpose is to continue the journey of Mother Mary Theresa Dudzik and the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago and to help the people who need us the most by caring for and celebrating their lives. It's this legacy that guides every decision we make.”



**FRANCISCAN
MINISTRIES**

Sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago



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Franciscan Ministries proudly owns, operates, or manages communities in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, New York, and Ohio.

LIVING JOYFULLY

Corresponding with the seven dimensions of wellness, Franciscan Ministries has created seven pillars of Living Joyfully that help guide the residents' and associates' growth at each of its senior living communities:

- 1. Make Your Mark:** care for our physical health and well-being (Physical Wellness)
- 2. Create Your Contributions:** give back to those around you (Occupational Wellness)
- 3. Expand Your Communities:** connect with others (Social Wellness)
- 4. Give Your Gratitude:** show appreciation to God and to others (Spiritual Wellness)
- 5. Grow Your Gifts:** passionately share your gifts and talents with the world (Environmental Wellness)
- 6. Pursue Your Purpose:** continue growing and seeking new insights and learnings (Intellectual Wellness)
- 7. Embrace Your Joy:** live a full and contented life (Emotional Wellness)