



Givens COMMUNITIES

Discovery

Celebrating Community, Connection, and Care

From joyful gatherings to meaningful milestones, the past couple of months have been filled with moments that brought us closer together. This edition highlights the people, events, and everyday victories that make our community such a special place to call home. We're grateful for the shared experiences, smiling faces, and dedication that continue to shape each day. As you turn the pages, we hope you're reminded of the joy found in connection and the pride we take in celebrating life together.

February 2026

NOTES FROM THE MANOR

Dear Givens Communities,

As we enter 2026, I am filled with gratitude for our residents, team members, families, volunteers, board members, and partners who make our communities vibrant and mission-driven. Your dedication, compassion, and shared commitment bring Creating Community, Empowering Lives to life each day.

This year, we are proud to introduce our new three-year Strategic Plan, introduced in campus meetings and shared in my recent Givens Connect video. Focused on Excellence in Experience, People and Culture, and Expanding Our Impact, the plan strengthens how we operate, deepens our investment in team members, and guides purposeful growth across our campuses and services. It emphasizes reliability, responsiveness, meaningful connections, and stewarding resources thoughtfully for the future.

While the Strategic Plan offers shared direction, it also honors the uniqueness of each community, service line, and department. I encourage you to review the full report on our website and share your questions and feedback—your perspective truly matters. I am optimistic about the path ahead because of the strength of our people and the clarity and purpose with which we move into 2026 and beyond. Thank you for being an essential part of Givens.

Sincerely,



Kevin Schwab, President & CEO
Givens Communities



POTTERY GROUP HELPS FEED HUNGRY

For the Empty Bowls pottery group at Givens Estates, supporting local food banks isn't just a mission-it's a calling.

Empty Bowls is a grassroots, artist-led international movement designed to raise money and awareness for food-related charities through local events. In the case of Givens Estates volunteers, it also incorporates time and craftsmanship by donating unique, beautifully-designed and skillfully created bowls for fundraisers.



According to Givens Estates resident organizer Blake Salmon, "It's reasonable to estimate the value of each event meal bowl at \$20-25. With plans to donate between 260 and 280 bowls this year, our contributions could potentially raise \$5,200 to \$7,000 for local fundraising efforts." He further explained, "Our material costs are about \$1,200, so the impact represents a return of four to six times our investment."

- Haywood County: Haywood Pathways Center confirmed their next event on March 26 at Long's Chapel in Waynesville. The pottery group has already donated 70 bowls and three auction items.
- Madison County: Beacon of Hope, hosting its third Empty Bowls event on April 18 in Marshall, will receive 70 bowls and at least three auction items from the group.
- Henderson County: The Saint John in the Wilderness Backpack Empty Bowl event, set for May 17 in Flat Rock, will benefit from 70 donated bowls and at least three auction items. All proceeds will help feed school-aged children facing food insecurity in Henderson County.
- Buncombe County: MANNNA plans a traditional Empty Bowl meal in the fall and will receive between 50 and 70 bowls, along with two auction items.

GIVENS PRESENCE FELT AT MLK PRAYER BREAKFAST IN ASHEVILLE

Givens Communities once again served as a platinum level sponsor of the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast in Asheville Saturday, January 17, reflecting a commitment to resilience, opportunity and living in harmony.

Givens residents and team members alike were inspired by the speakers and the lifelong commitment to justice, equality and the beloved community of our local association's founder and president, Dr. Oralene Simmons. Some 1,000 people were in attendance.



It was a special day of remembrance for us all as we remember the lessons of Dr. King and hope to continue his teachings through small, consistent acts of kindness and courage, whereby we lift each other up and embody the change we wish in the world.



BROOKSIDE HUB: A COMMUNITY VISION COMING TO LIFE AT GIVENS HIGHLAND FARMS



Givens Communities celebrated a major milestone in November with the successful completion of the \$800,000 Brookside Life Enrichment Center Campaign at Givens Highland Farms.

Fueled by extraordinary resident and community generosity—and anchored by a \$400,000 matching gift from the Givens Highland Farms Resident Association Council (formerly HFRC Board) – the campaign reflects the power of shared vision and collective investment in community life.

Fundraising began in March 2024 and quickly gained momentum through the leadership and commitment of residents, vendors, and friends of Highland Farms. In addition to their financial leadership, the Resident Association Council played an active role in the planning and design of the Brookside Hub, helping shape a space that reflects the needs and aspirations of the community. Construction is now nearing completion, with the Brookside Hub expected to open soon.

Designed with residents at the heart of every decision, the Brookside Hub will offer a vibrant new space for connection, creativity, and lifelong learning, featuring a 60-seat meeting and classroom area with modern technology, an art studio, a kitchenette, and welcoming gathering spaces. Designated areas—including the Lynne Community Room, Herb and Jane Johnson Kitchen, Mary Anne Art Patio, Linnea Greenhouse, and Marco Patio – honor the intentions of generous supporters.

As Brian Guengerich, Vice President of Philanthropy, shared, “This campaign is a powerful example of what happens when a community comes together around a shared vision. The generosity, trust, and commitment of our residents and friends made the Brookside Hub possible, and this space will enrich daily life at Givens Highland Farms for many years to come.”

NEW SERVICES AT PRENTICE LODGE

Prentice Lodge at Givens Highland Farms is introducing new services designed to provide additional care and support for residents whose needs are changing while preserving the unique, resident-centered character of the community.

Services will be delivered in a manner consistent with guidelines established by the North Carolina Division of Health Service Regulation (DHSR) under the Multi-Unit Assisted Housing with Services (MUAHS) framework.

The approach will allow care and support comparable to traditional assisted living communities, while maintaining the unique character and resident-centered approach that Givens Highland Farms is known for.

"This enhancement will allow residents to receive additional support and flexibility as needs change, including 24/7 nursing availability and an expanded team presence within Prentice Lodge," said Matt Sharpe, Executive Director of Givens Highland Farms. "These enhanced nursing and support services will be included for residents under the new Residential Assisted Living agreement."



Current residents of Prentice Lodge will have the option to remain under their existing agreements and may still access nursing and personal care support on a fee-for-service basis, just as they currently do.

GIVENS CAREER UPDATES

Givens Communities is committed to fostering a meaningful work environment, with career growth being equitable and accessible for all. Together, team members contribute different ideas, skill sets, and backgrounds, which lead to more innovative solutions and services. We are excited to announce these recent promotions:



Lauren
Miller-Holman

Lauren joined the Givens team in June 2011 on the Wellness Team. Lauren later transitioned into the Administrative Assistant role for Financial Operations, and then later grew through several roles on that team to the role of Senior Accountant. With the recent affiliation with Givens Aldersgate, our Financial Operations team is being restructured, and Lauren has been promoted to Director of Revenue Accounting and Systems. In this new position, Lauren will have oversight of the revenue cycle management process including billing and accounts receivables for the organization.



Raphael Odili

Raphael, formerly the Givens Aldersgate Financial Operations Lead Financial and Systems Analyst, has been promoted to the role of Enterprise Database Administrator on the Technology team. Raphael joined the Givens Aldersgate team in March of 2011 and has been instrumental in analyzing business data to help create operational strategy. Raphael excels in working with data and complex technology systems. We are thrilled that Raphael is continuing to grow with our team.



Greyson Gilder

Greyson has been promoted to HR Generalist for Givens Home First. He joined Givens in 2024, starting as an HR Assistant and later moving into the Talent Acquisition Specialist role, where he made a positive impact and excelled in both positions. In his new role, he'll support Givens Home First's continued growth by focusing on talent acquisition and helping with day-to-day HR questions and needs. We're excited about this growth opportunity for Greyson and look forward to the impact he'll continue to make as he transitions into the role once his replacement is found.

ASHEVILLE POVERTY INITIATIVE RECEIVES GIVENS SUPPORT



Givens Communities continues to be a good neighbor, recently adding support for another food insecurities project in Western North Carolina, in this instance the Asheville Poverty Initiative and its 12 Baskets Food Café.

In the coming year, Givens Philanthropy will serve as Mission Champion for the nonprofit, which works to build community and educate about the realities of poverty. Its 12 Baskets Café, located at 610 Haywood Road, Asheville, serves free nutritional lunches prepared from donations of high-quality, surplus food from local businesses and the food service industry.

The first sponsored event will be “Westival,” a fundraiser scheduled for Saturday, March 14, from 5-8 p.m. at Archetype Brewing, 265 Haywood Road. Admission is \$50 and attendees may sample unlimited culinary delights from over 10 West Asheville-based food businesses. In addition to food, there will be music and a DJ, info tables, a raffle, and other activities.

“There is so much to celebrate about West Asheville,” said Ben Williamson, Executive Director of Asheville Poverty Initiative. “We wanted to design an affordable, casual event that highlighted the many exceptional food businesses we are surrounded by, as well as the amazing sense of community that exists.

“Asheville Poverty Initiative is deeply grateful to partner with Givens Communities as a Mission Champion in 2026,” Williamson continued. “Their long-term support of 12 Baskets Café has helped create not just meals, but a welcoming space where neighbors connect, stories are shared, and community is strengthened. Together, we’re building a more caring, educated, and connected Asheville and Buncombe County, grounded in the belief that when we show up for one another, real change is possible.”

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG AREA WELCOMES GIVENS CHOICE

We're thrilled to announce that Givens Choice, the innovative Continuing Care at Home program, is expanding to serve the vibrant Charlotte metro area! It's an exciting step forward, especially as research shows that 85% of adults dream of remaining in the comfort of their own homes as they age, cherishing both familiarity and independence.



The Givens Choice membership plan combines the security and confidence of staying in your own home with the outstanding long-term support available in leading Life Plan Communities. This dynamic blend empowers independent, healthy, and active seniors to embrace the future with assurance—without ever having to compromise the freedom and lifestyle they love.

Bringing Givens Choice to Charlotte-Mecklenburg is a milestone that aligns perfectly with Givens Aldersgate's integration into Givens Communities, further strengthening our comprehensive suite of home care, personal care, and long-term care services.

LADY GLORIA RIDGE PARTNERSHIP BUILDS MOMENTUM FOR A STRONG COMMUNITY

Givens Affordable Communities is proud to continue growing its partnership with Haywood Street Community through the much-anticipated Lady Gloria Ridge Community, an exciting new housing development opening soon in Asheville.

Located at 343 West Haywood Street, part of the West End-Clingman Avenue neighborhood (WECAN) and situated between downtown Asheville and the River Arts District, Lady Gloria Ridge is thoughtfully designed to blend into the surrounding community while expanding access to high-quality, affordable housing.

The community will feature 41 one-, two-, and three-bedroom homes, serving households earning 80 percent of the area median income. Many of the apartments will be supported through Housing Authority housing vouchers, helping ensure long-term affordability while creating a stable, well-supported residential environment.

What sets Lady Gloria Ridge Community apart is its intentional focus on community. This development reflects a shared commitment between Givens Affordable Communities and Haywood Street Community Development to create a welcoming place that feels connected, respectful, and rooted in the neighborhood it serves.

To support the successful launch of Lady Gloria Ridge, Givens Affordable Communities created a dedicated Community Manager position to ensure strong on-site leadership and resident support. Bethany Howard will be stepping into this role as the community opens, bringing experience in case management, eligibility processes, and direct client support that aligns with the community's mission and values.

The community is named in honor of "Lady Gloria" Howard Free, who grew up in the neighborhood and remained a passionate advocate for the area throughout her life. Until her passing at age 91 in February 2025, Lady Gloria





Teresa Steps, Vice President of Givens Affordable Communities, speaks at recent building consecration.

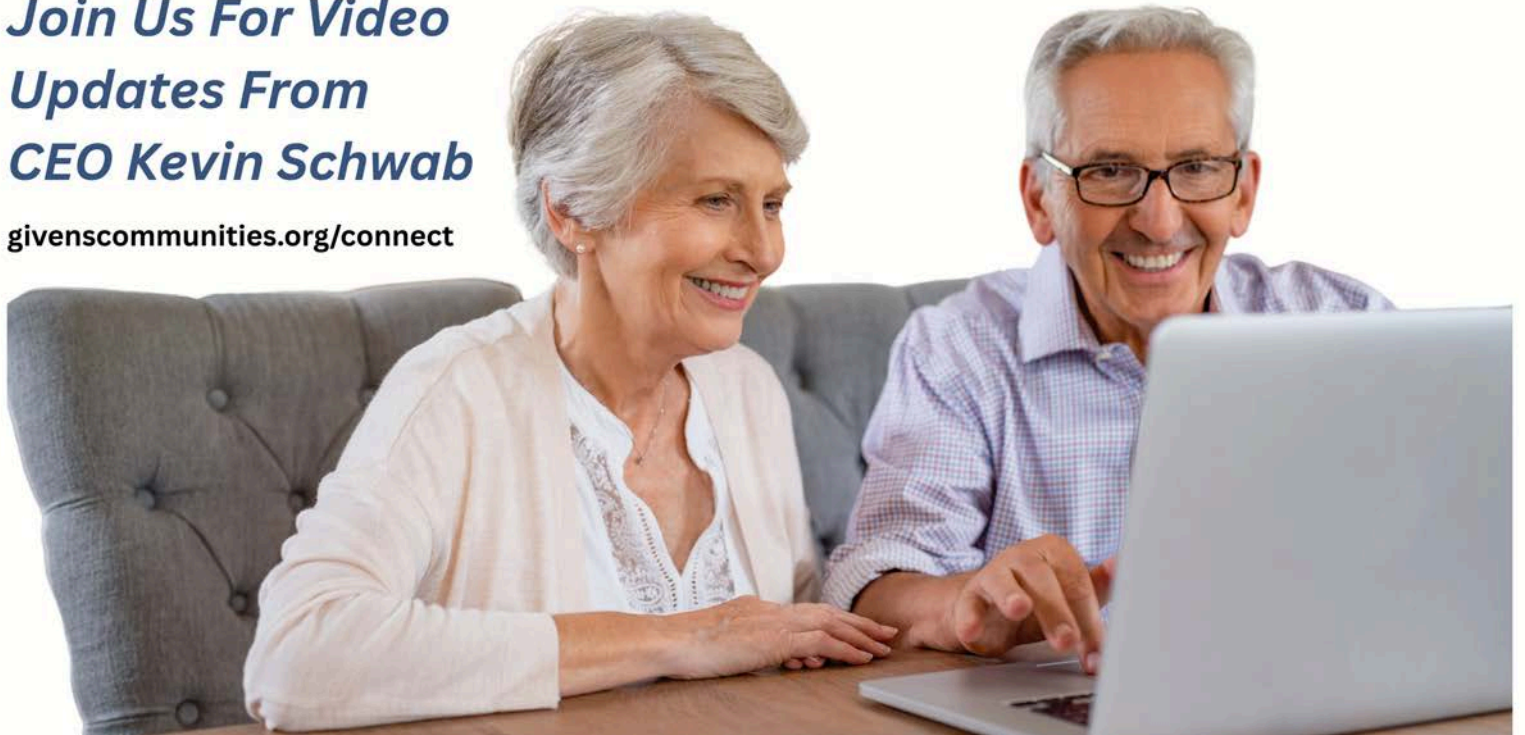
was known as a leader in community renewal, a champion of the YMI Cultural Center, and the founding originator of the Asheville Goombay Festival. Naming the community in her honor reflects the project's deep connection to local history and its commitment to honoring those who helped shape Asheville.

As Lady Gloria Ridge moves closer to opening, we look forward to welcoming residents and continuing this meaningful partnership—one rooted in respect, collaboration, and creating a place people are proud to call home.

GIVENS CONNECT

Join Us For Video Updates From CEO Kevin Schwab

givenscommunities.org/connect



COMMUNITY ENJOYS HOLIDAY GALA

On a crisp December evening, Givens Aldersgate came alive with holiday cheer and celebration as residents, team members and guests gathered for the annual Gala, a night dedicated to honoring accomplishments and strengthening bonds.

Givens Aldersgate Resident Philanthropy and Community Engagement Committee's thoughtful planning and attention to detail ensured that every guest felt welcomed and appreciated. From the moment visitors arrived, they were greeted by a breathtaking display: a runway of twinkling Christmas lights and beautifully adorned trees lining the pathway to the entrance. The festive glow set the tone for an evening filled with joy, laughter, and togetherness.



One of the evening's highlights was a photo booth, a lively corner where residents posed for pictures with friends, capturing memories that will be cherished for years to come. The smiles and camaraderie reflected the heart of the Givens Aldersgate community, a place where everyone feels at home.



GIVENS HOME FIRST: GROWTH AND SERVICE EXPANSION IN 2026

Givens Home First continues to strengthen its presence across Western North Carolina, with Home Care services now available in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and surrounding counties. This growth is supported by an expanding care team, increased availability for overnight care, and longer visit options – allowing the organization to better meet the evolving needs of clients and families.

Our Aging in Place program remains available to individuals throughout Western North Carolina seeking home safety evaluations, modifications, and thoughtful home redesign. Recent cross-functional workshops have helped clarify and refresh the program’s scope and philosophy, with additional updates planned as the initiative continues to evolve.

Concierge Services are now available to residents at Givens Estates and Givens Highland Farms. In the first three months, these flexible, task-based services supported 11 clients and delivered more than 258 hours of household assistance – without requiring the nursing assessment associated with Home Care.

As Givens Home First continues to grow, operations are being refined to enhance efficiency and continuity of care. Jessie Bosshard, Executive Director, and her team remain focused on supporting older adults in living well at home while expanding the organization’s reach and impact across the region.



GIVENS SPOTLIGHT

Carol Watson, Finance Operation Coordinator, is nearing the 45-year mark as a team member with Givens Communities.

In that time, she has made a big impression for dedication on the job, finding innovative ways to tackle challenges, and for maybe being about the friendliest person you could meet anywhere.

The Asheville-Buncombe Technical College graduate had a few stints with other employers before landing at the Black Mountain senior living campus. She still remembers her first day - Oct. 12, 1981 - "like it was yesterday. Walking up to the front desk, going into the accounting office... feeling excited about starting to work... and I've been here ever since."

In her role, she ensures accurate, timely financial operations by handling accounts payable, payroll processing, and assisting with financial audits. Number crunching is a daily task at her desk at Givens Highland Farms.

"I wouldn't be anywhere else and who could blame me? Our amazing leadership, residents and team members make this a wonderful place to work!"



Away from work, Carol and her husband Dennis enjoy traveling to ride ATV trails and visiting family. She reads mystery novels, recently took up riding recumbent bikes and dreams of one day swimming with dolphins in deep blue waters.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PETS

Pet companionship has proven benefits in physical health, psychological and social well-being for seniors.

That's why Givens Choice and Givens Home First are helping people and pets find one another through the Asheville Humane Society. We believe everyone is happiest at home and that includes shelter pets who want to age in place, too.



To make those dreams become a reality, Givens Home First and Givens Choice team members attended a successful Valentine's "Fondue of You" donor appreciation event. Erin Strain, Executive Director of Givens Choice, and Jessie Bosshard, Executive Director of Givens Home First, spoke to attendees about the ways Givens Choice and Givens Home First support those who want to remain in their home as they age and our sponsorship of the Asheville Humane Society - because everyone is happiest at home.

From March 16-21 Givens Choice and Givens Home First will cover all adoption fees for anyone rescuing a pet at the local adoption center, located at 14 Forever Friend Lane, Asheville.

As people age, maintaining social connections and emotional well-being becomes increasingly important, as cited in a report by Mather LifeWays, a non-denominational not-for-profit organization dedicated to aging well. Pets offer comfort, routine, and unconditional affection, making them valuable partners in the lives of older adults, studies found.

The presence and interaction with pets help alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety, contribute to better mental health and an overall sense of wellbeing, especially for those living alone. That's not to mention how many studies indicate pet ownership is linked to lower blood pressure and improved heart health. Walking a dog or playing with a cat encourages physical activity, which is essential for maintaining mobility and overall health.

If you've been considering adopting a pet, now is the time!



**Be sure to follow us
on Facebook, Instagram,
LinkedIn and our news blog,
where we regularly post
highlights of the great things
happening every day at
Givens Communities!**