



For Immediate Release
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UMRC & Porter Hills Opens Newly Renovated Mackinaw Dining Room at Chelsea Retirement Community

Donors' Gift Names Gracie's Grotto Lounge

Chelsea, MI, June 30, 2021 – United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) & Porter Hills is delighted to announce the recent opening of the newly renovated Mackinaw Dining Room located at its historic Chelsea Retirement Community (CRC) campus. In addition to infrastructure improvements, this project includes updates to the dining room, a new patio deck with gas fireplace, and lounge space where residents can gather.

A gift from former UMRC Board member, Rich Brown and his wife, Karen, of Plymouth, Michigan, helped make the lounge area possible, according to Wendy Brightman, President of the UMRC and Porter Hills Foundations. “This new lounge, named ‘Gracie’s Grotto’ to commemorate their beloved Italian greyhound, Gracie, offers a beautiful and comfortable space where residents can mingle before and after their meals, play games, and enjoy snacks, sips, and socializing,” said Brightman.

Rich Brown, who served on the UMRC Board from 2004 through 2019, including as board chair in 2018 and as UMRC affiliated with Porter Hills in 2019, said he and Karen were honored to help support this project. “I have great compassion for the residents and team members of UMRC & Porter Hills,” said Brown. “The concept of upgrading the dining room was appealing, especially knowing how important the dining room environment is for residents. It’s part of their home, and we see it as something that adds to their comfort and enjoyment.”

Regarding the new lounge, Karen Brown added, “A grotto is a warm, secluded area to relax in and to enjoy together. We hope residents will enjoy the conviviality of this space, giving them a special place to get together and socialize.”

UMRC & Porter Hills Chief Project Development Officer, Kate Collins, who led the project, said, “UMRC has been serving meals and nourishing older adults in this same part of the Chelsea Retirement Community building since it opened in 1906. Our plans for this newly renovated

space included weaving in old and new, including the use of many historic photos of CRC. Because it is our residents' home, we encouraged their participation in choosing the chairs, silverware, and place settings in the new dining room.”

The dining room menu has also been updated, including a signature dessert of Mackinac Island fudge in keeping with the theme of the space. Appetizers are also available in Gracie's Grotto.

“With this project, we are excited to change the whole feel of dining for our residents,” said Collins. “Friendships will be created here in Gracie's Grotto. We could not have had this scope of a project without gifts like the Browns'. These extras bring love and joy to those we serve.”

To learn more about Chelsea Retirement Community or UMRC & Porter Hills, visit umrcph.com.

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*Building on a foundation of 165 years of combined service to older adults, **United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) & Porter Hills** is a faith-based, nonprofit organization whose mission is: Welcoming all, partnering together, enriching lives. Its vision is: A world in which all are empowered to age well. Together, UMRC & Porter Hills represents the second largest nonprofit senior living organization in Michigan. With a tradition of exceptional quality and a commitment to cutting-edge care, UMRC & Porter Hills and its affiliates combine to serve over 7,400 older adults each year, from 24 locations and service lines, across 22 counties in Michigan's lower peninsula. umrcph.com/734.433.1000 and 616.949.4975*

*The **UMRC Foundation** is the charitable arm for United Methodist Retirement Communities, with headquarters in Chelsea, Michigan. Since its inception in 1998, the UMRC Foundation has provided over \$18,500,000 through its Benevolent Care Fund to help UMRC residents remain in their homes when they outlive their resources. The mission of the UMRC Foundation is to promote the wellness, dignity, and independence of seniors by supporting UMRC residents, staff, and the communities UMRC serves. umrcfoundation.umrcph.com/734.433.1000*