



UNITED METHODIST  
RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

*For Immediate Release:*

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**SE MI SENIOR LIVING ORGANIZATION RECEIVES FUNDING FOR  
GROUNDBREAKING APPROACH TO DEMENTIA CARE**

**Chelsea, MI December 1, 2016**

United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) Foundation has received a two-year grant of \$495,050 from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, aimed at benefitting the health and wellness of Michigan's older adults. This grant will support a pilot training program at UMRC's Towsley Village Memory Care Center, located in Chelsea, Michigan. *Positive Approach*<sup>™</sup> is an innovative, medically-proven caregiving program designed to improve quality of life and reduce stress for those with dementia and their caregivers.

"Adults with Alzheimer's disease may become agitated or aggressive as the disease progresses," explains Ashley Martin, Chelsea Retirement Community (CRC) Executive Director. "At times, these behaviors can even require hospitalization which is traumatizing for everyone. Through the *Positive Approach*<sup>™</sup> training, we will empower our caregivers and families with the tools they need to provide a calming environment and reduce or avoid behavioral challenges for our residents with dementia. We are thrilled to receive this grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund which allows us to provide this training, and delighted to welcome *Positive Approach*<sup>™</sup> founder Teepa Snow to our Chelsea campus in May during Dementia Awareness Week."

This grant also supports UMRC in becoming a certified *Positive Approach*<sup>™</sup> train-the-trainer site. Says Martin, "In year two of the project, we look forward to partnering with other senior care organizations to offer training for caregivers and families throughout the region."

This training is especially important in Michigan which currently ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in the country in the number of older adults living in the state. While Alzheimer's disease is not part of the normal aging process, the prevalence and likelihood of the disease increases with age. In Michigan, the Alzheimer's Association expects to see a 22% increase by 2025 in the number of adults who develop this disease, the 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death among adults 65 and older.

With the *Positive Approach*<sup>™</sup> focus on intervention, preemptive care, and caregiver education, "this grant is a game-changer for UMRC," says UMRC President and CEO, John Thorhauer. "*Positive Approach*<sup>™</sup> training will allow our staff to provide the highest quality of care for residents and their families, and to be a much-needed resource for dementia care in our area."

Michigan Health Endowment Fund CEO, Paul Hillegonds adds, "At the Health Fund, we recognize that supporting older adults means also supporting those who care for them. Caregivers and families play a crucial role helping seniors who suffer from dementia, and that

often means doing a lot with minimal time, resources, and assistance. We're proud to partner with UMRC to implement the *Positive Approach*<sup>™</sup> program, an innovative and replicable solution with great potential to help Michigan's older adults as well as their caregivers."

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*Building on a foundation of 110 years of service, [United Methodist Retirement Communities](http://umrc.com) is a faith-based, non-profit organization that promotes the wellness, dignity and independence of older adults, by providing high quality, innovative and compassionate senior residential care services across Southeast Michigan. [umrc.com](http://umrc.com) | 734.433.1000*

*The **Michigan Health Endowment Fund** was established to improve the health of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of health care with special emphasis on the health and wellness of children and seniors. The Fund was created through the passage of Public Act 4 of 2013, which authorized certain changes to how Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) operates in the state. [mhealthfund.com](http://mhealthfund.com) | 517.374.0031*