

Marbridge

LIFE



Christmas at Marbridge

Residents and Team Members Share Their Favorite Holiday Memories (pg . 5)

Marbridge Foundation

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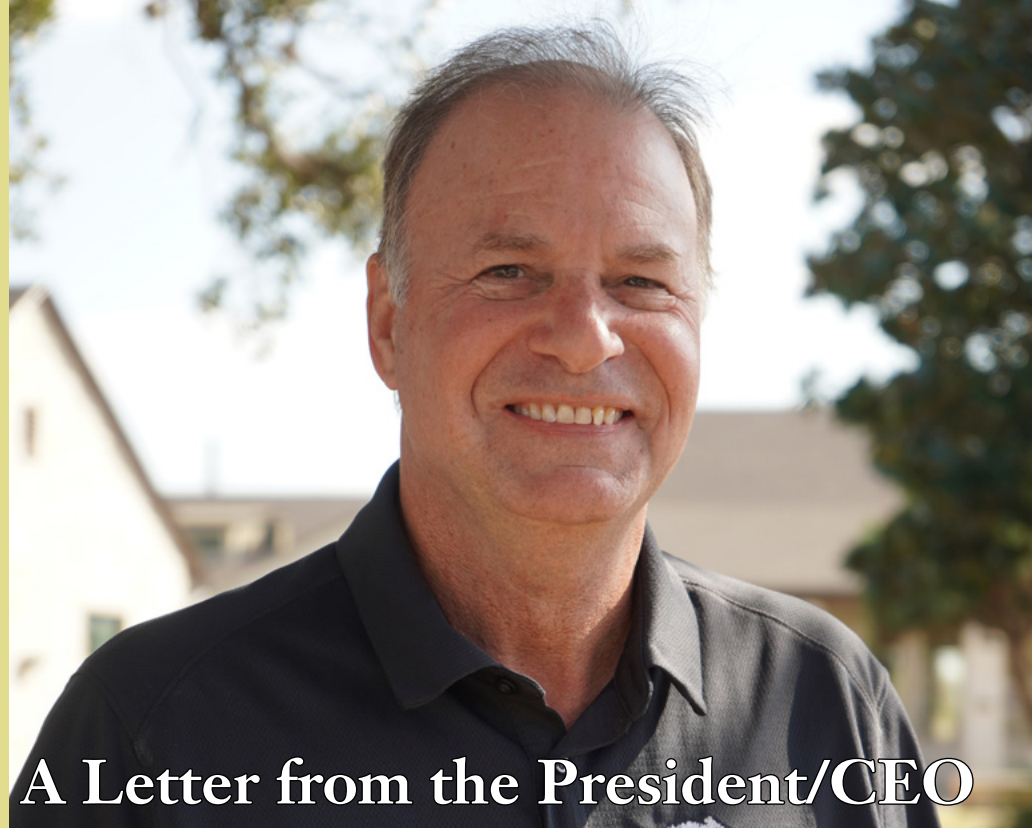
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A Letter from the President/CEO

Well-being is defined as the state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy. It's a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional, and social health factors. We strive at Marbridge to assure that all our residents are achieving a sense of well-being.

Whether it's our nurses, CMAs, CNAs, and medical team monitoring and attending to healthcare needs, our direct support professionals attending to the emotional and social health needs, or our instructors and life enrichment specialists improving the mental and physical needs of all our residents, we continue to invest in having the best people in the right places to provide the best experience for our residents.

Our people are the strength of organization and the engine of our person-centered care approach. Attracting and retaining the best employees available is an ongoing and increasing investment that sets our residents up for success. We are so thankful to our many supporters who continue to allow us to increase wages without passing the total cost to our families.

We continue to work hard at our nursing home, The Villa, in finding ways to enhance revenue which is largely Medicaid funded and at the same time managing controllable costs. We are working with many community partners and volunteer groups to offer additional classes and activities on and off campus and offering financial support to enhance and add to our residents' life experiences.

We are so appreciative to all who continue to enhance and grow a sense of well-being within all of our residents. Thank you.

Humbly,

Scott McAvoy
President/CEO

Resident Spotlight Meet Bill

Bill moved to The Ranch in 2009 and quickly became a friend to his fellow Dorm residents and to staff. He always had a smile to share, a question to ask, and a new friend to meet.

He then transitioned to life at The Villa in 2021 and without hesitation, quickly became a friend to everyone there, just like he did at The Ranch.

"I liked going to classes and going for a ride to town in the shuttle," Bill shared. "I like where I am now too. I have friends and like my classes."

Bill also takes classes at The Villa which are activities coordinated by Michelle Caddel and Daniel Miranda, the amazingly talented Life Enrichment Specialists.

Bill also likes to spend time at The Bridges, his home at The Villa. He and the other residents who live at The Bridges enjoy spending time with team members who work there, relax in the living room, and do various hobbies throughout the day.

Abby Vaughan, a Certified Medication Aide who works daily at The Bridges, notes that Bill is still the loveable friend to everyone that he was on his first day in 2009.

"Bill, to me, is a gentle giant. He's very tall but he has a great heart and is very respectful," Abby shared. "His height can be a bit intimidating at first, but he really has a great heart for everyone."

Next time you're at The Villa, make it a point to talk to Bill. He'll always put a smile on your face, share a laugh, and ask a question or two.

Learn more about The Villa when you visit:

[Marbridge.org/villa](https://marbridge.org/villa)

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Top: Bill stops to share a smile in The Villa Life Enrichment Center
Bottom: Bill opens presents on Christmas morning with a special visit from Santa (photo credit: Warren Capps Photography).

Fall Fest - A Scary Good Time

Halloween was a Skele-TON of Fun

Marbridge's Fall Fest included all three communities, team members, and volunteers coming together for a fun night to celebrate Halloween. Enjoy these photos from the spook-tacular evening.



See more photos from the 2024 Fall Fest when you visit:
Marbridge.org/photos

Support Campus Through the Wishlist

See How You can Help Residents Learn, Experience, and Achieve a Whole New Life



Above: Residents fill a bird feeder in the 'World of Birds' class. Instructor Jeff Hess teaches the class and stands behind to watch residents Abby, TJ, and Cole fill the feeder and watch which birds enjoy the spoils.
Below: Residents in 'Jewelry Art' lay out their beads in preparation for their next piece. Residents (L to R) Jerry, Molly, and Sue enjoy the beautifully colored beads for their creations.



Throughout the year, residents and team members from all three communities, along with our Training & Education and Rehab teams, have needs to help our residents learn, experience, and achieve a whole new life. During the holidays, generous supporters like you, help fulfill these wishes through the Giving Tree.

Thanks to your support, many of these items come to campus and help improve our daily lives. There are numerous other items that are needed throughout the year that continue supporting residents as well as the communities, instructors, therapists, and summer campers. Find those items are on Marbridge's Amazon Wishlist.

The wishlist includes items like batteries, sunblock, Liquid IV pouches, musical instruments, various activities, and so much more. These are small items that help residents stay active, healthy, and improve their overall daily living.

Your continued support helps Marbridge's mission grow stronger and helps our residents in living their best lives. Thank you to everyone who helps make Marbridge the success it is and always will be.

Check out the wishlist to see how you can ensure residents continue to grow and thrive each day.

You can help residents and team members across campus through the wishlist at:

Marbridge.org/wishlist



Fresh Faces

Meet a few of the new staff members from across Marbridge's campus.

You can join the Marbridge team and help residents across campus achieve a whole new life.

Learn how you can join the Marbridge team at:
Marbridge.org/careers



Valerie - Dietary Service Manager

"My favorite about the residents is their individual personalities. They all have their own preferences and it makes my job very interesting."



Kaya - Human Resources Assistant

"I love the residents' personalities. Each resident has a unique and really fun personality."



Kristi - Resident Trainer


"I have the opportunity to make them smile and enjoy their day. They bring me so much happiness."

Christmas at Marbridge

Residents and Team Members Share Their Favorite Things About the Holidays at Marbridge

Christmas is a magical time at Marbridge. The campus glows with holiday cheer and residents prepare for a visit from Jolly Saint Nick. The holiday season brings happiness, joy, and excitement for everyone on campus.

We asked residents and team members from across campus to share some of their favorite memories of Christmas at Marbridge. We hope you enjoy their favorite things about the holiday season as much as we do.



Bill - Ranch Resident
I've been at Marbridge almost sixty years and I love Christmas here. I love getting presents on Christmas morning and like all the good food they make.

Alyssa - Villa Resident
I like when family comes to see me and going home for Christmas. I like all the decorations and activities. I like the Christmas Play too.




Bryan - Village Resident
I like the presents of course. I also like spending time with my family at home. My favorite gift of all-time was getting my first model train at five. I've got hundreds in my room here at Marbridge.

Rosie Dunlap - Admissions Coordinator
I love to see the changing décor as we move through Halloween into the Christmas season. I am continually amazed to see how blessed all of us at Marbridge are as we see the impact firsthand of our community supporters through Giving Tree donations.




Eddie - Villa Resident
The food, of course. I love when they make turkey, dressing, cranberries, and pies. I really like the decorations. They go all out with the decorations.

Jenny - Ranch Resident
I really love the Christmas lights here on campus. I also love spending time with my friends and family at Christmas. I'm sometimes in the Christmas program and I like when I perform in them.





Jack - Ranch Resident
I like the Christmas program. I'm the star of the show usually. My favorite program so far has been *The Christmas Carol*. I was Scrooge in that year's performance.

Laura - Villa Resident
I love making and spreading holiday cheer. I also love getting into the holiday spirit. I'm in the Christmas play every year and in the band. I play the flute. My favorite play that I've been in is *Nutcracker: Revenge of the Mice*.




Aaron Szymanski - Facilities Tech
I really love the landscaping and decorations on campus. Our volunteers always do a great job decorating campus with our landscaping team. It really lights up campus.

Randy - Villa Resident
I love getting presents on Christmas morning. It's my favorite. I don't have a favorite present. I just like opening them on Christmas. I also like going to the Christmas program and seeing my friends there.





Pat - Villa Resident

I loved when we used to go to the Trail of Lights. I want to go do that more. I like our Christmas programs and going every year. I'm not into presents, but I like Christmas here.

Molly - Ranch Resident
I like all the decorations and lights outside. I like having hot chocolate and making gingerbread houses. The best gift I got while I've been here at Marbridge is my flat screen TV!



Danny - Village Resident

I always like Christmas here because I get to spend time with my friends. I like the lights around campus and the hard work they do to make campus look good.

Kristen - Village Resident
I like all of the decorations they put up. The wreaths, Christmas tree, and lights. It's always so nice around the holidays and the RT's make it feel special. I also like spending time with friends and family."



Daniel Miranda - The Villa

Last year when we decided that The Villa will put on their own play. This is going to be a yearly tradition to showcase the residents talents on the stage.

Help make even more lasting Christmas memories by supporting Marbridge with a tax-deductible donation at:

Marbridge.org/donate

Hippotherapy Soars at Marbridge

Villa Residents Participate for the First Time at the Creed Ford III Therapeutic Riding Ranch

Marbridge continues celebrating milestones to ensure the safety, happiness, and well-being of our residents. Since the opening of the Creed Ford III Therapeutic Riding Ranch, a fire was reignited, and our team has been working hard to expand the equine program to meet more of the capabilities which Creed III envisioned. Residents at The Villa now benefit from Hippotherapy, a unique and effective therapy intervention driven by the collaborative efforts of the teams across campus.

"Hippotherapy is not a discipline, it is a treatment tool used by therapists to achieve their patient's functional goals in their daily lives by improving strength, balance, range of motion, and endurance," said Trish Johnson, Physical Therapist. "It takes a close partnership with our Therapy team and the Training & Education team." Trish and Amy Patton, Marbridge's Occupational therapists, have been trained by the American Hippotherapy Association.

"I am grateful to be a part of the Marbridge family and to be able to incorporate equine movement during therapy for our Villa residents. I have been rewarded by seeing the excitement and smiles on our residents as they achieve their goals," Amy mentioned while getting John, a Villa resident, ready to mount up.

With the Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy sessions at the Creed Ford III Therapeutic Riding Ranch growing and thriving, we can build on the number of residents who can participate. MacKenna, another resident at The Villa, is new to the equine program and able to experience more in her life.

"MacKenna has always loved horseback riding. It is one of the best therapies to help balance her tone and make her more comfortable. She absolutely loves the horses," shared Cecilia, MacKenna's mom. "It makes my heart happy to see her back riding again. I love everything Marbridge does for the residents to make their lives happy and fulfilling."

Each resident requires at least four team members to assist in the therapy session. Someone to guide the horse, a therapist, and two people to hold and support the rider using specific safety equipment.



Top: MacKenna, a Villa resident, participates in her first Hippotherapy ride. Bottom: John, a Villa resident, shares a smile on his first ride at the Creed Ford III Therapeutic Riding Ranch.



"This is still new; we are working it out," said Shonda. "The horses are still getting used to the different therapy tools, the noodles, the bat, the balls, the beanbags. We also must make sure that the horses are adjusted."

We are just coming out of the gate, opening services to more residents to give everyone who is interested the opportunity to experience the therapeutic benefits and the happiness that ensues.

Learn more about the Creed Ford III Therapeutic Riding Ranch at Marbridge when you visit:
Marbridge.org/equine

The Perfect Match

How Two Sisters Found Marbridge and Their Story of Success

On behalf of our entire campus, we hope this year has been full of blessings and great things. Before I share more about one of our amazing residents, Kristin, I wanted to let you know that your gift will be doubled UP TO \$100,000 THIS HOLIDAY SEASON! This year, Marbridge has worked closely with some of our supports, who recognize how dire fundraising is during an election year, and have stepped forward to make sure Marbridge never misses a step.



Above: Kristin (left) shares a smile with her little sister Megan.

Kristin (pictured here with her younger sister, Megan) has Down syndrome and moved to Marbridge in May of 2022 at age 54. Kristin lived with her family south of Philadelphia until the time that she moved to Marbridge, and in her youth, Kristin went to several schools focused on teaching students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) where she greatly enjoyed her classmates and participated in Special Olympics and all the other social and learning opportunities offered. Kristin graduated around the age of 20 from the highest level of education available for IDD students in the region, and then, she got a job as a mail clerk where she worked for over thirteen years.

While working full-time during her 20s and 30s, Kristin’s wonderful community of friends from school dwindled as people moved away and fewer social opportunities for her age group existed. As Kristin’s parents aged, they were less able to seek out and facilitate her participation in social outings, and as Kristin entered her 40s, she was leading a sedentary life consisting of lots of time watching tv and being alone in her room.

“Kristin moved in with me when our parents were no longer able to care for her. Her willingness to socially engage, level of physical activity, and overall health were in decline, and she had a strange jealousy towards my college aged daughter. As I helped Kristin get back on track and talked with her about her jealousy, I realized that what Kristin most needed and wanted was not to live with me, but she longed to live with friends and have a community of her own.”



Above: Kristin (center) celebrates her graduation with family.

Megan started researching options and became disheartened as she learned how few intentional community living options for adults with IDD existed in her region. Megan was also very concerned about what would happen if Kristin had any serious health concerns through the end of her life. All the living communities Megan found sent residents back to their families or into the greater community if health issues required any skilled care. After watching their mother spend the last months of her life in an understaffed nursing home during the pandemic, the thought of Kristin being in a similar environment where the staff wasn’t familiar with IDD was her worst nightmare.

“When I found Marbridge online, with the vibrant community, beautiful campus, wide range of activities, and a full-service nursing facility on campus, it all just seemed too good to be true! As I learned more, I just had to see Marbridge for myself, and Kristin and I were on a plane to visit within a couple months. We both fell in love with Marbridge on that trip, and I felt so reassured after touring The Villa that Marbridge could meet Kristin’s needs no matter what sort of health situations arose.”

Right: Kristin and Megan pose for a photo in The Dorm at The Ranch.



Since moving to Marbridge, Kristin’s physical, emotional, and social well-being have all improved immensely. She lives in The Ranch Dorm where she has loads of friends, and she enjoys taking a full class load. Kristin hasn’t been this independent and socially fulfilled in decades. Megan and her husband have also moved to the Austin area and enjoy the opportunity to be close to Kristin and be part the Marbridge community.

Kristin and her family are proudly apart of the Marbridge family. Due to such a passionate race leading up to the election, donors have reallocated their donations exclusively to support their candidates and non-profits around the nation are experiencing the worst “Presidential Pause” (meaning donations are not coming in during a strong election year) in history. To ensure Marbridge’s sustainability for many more years, please consider making an extra donation this year. Our deserving residents and amazing team members thank you.

Happy Holidays,

Scott McAvoy, President/CEO



Make a tax-deductible donation today and help residents like Kristin continue to learn, experience, and achieve a whole new life at:

Marbridge.org/donate

Volunteers Shine on Special Night

A Special Evening for a Special Group of People

April brings sunshine, flowers, and an opportunity for Marbridge to say “Thank You” to our amazing volunteers for all they do across campus.

Volunteers spend thousands of hours each year supporting the Marbridge mission through coaching Special Olympics sports, attending competitions, leading outings, and keeping our campus safe and beautiful.

Marbridge hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Event at Bear Creek Retreat on Thursday, April 25 to say thank you to all the amazing volunteers who give their time to campus. It was an evening of delicious food, drinks, and awards for volunteers who went above and beyond this year.

“There’s so much our volunteers do for our residents and team members,” said Bob Worden, Director of Communications and Development. “Being able to celebrate them with an appreciation event is the tip of the iceberg in showing how truly grateful we are to have them as volunteers.”

The night shined the spotlight on the volunteers. Throughout the event, team members and volunteers spent time sharing stories and laughs, and gave Marbridge the opportunity to say thank you. The event also saw various awards given out to volunteers for the work they did.



Top: Connor (center) displays his Volunteer Group of the Year award for his work with Divine Canines.

Volunteer of the Year:
Scott and Merri Cary

Volunteer Group of the Year:
Divine Canines

Mary Higges Commitment Award:
Kathy Slater

Bridges Award:
Leah Johnson

Bridges Award:
Beth Patterson

Exceptional Mentor Award:
Catherine Grayless

Exceptional Mentor Award:
Lisa Deterding

This event wouldn’t have been possible either without our amazing sponsors. Thank you to Frost Bank, Gourmet Gals, A+ Federal Credit Union, Premiere Events, TruWest Credit Union, Bear Creek Retreat, H-E-B, McCoy’s, and the Marbridge Parents & Families Association.

Learn more about volunteering at Marbridge when you visit:

Marbridge.org/volunteer



Top: Volunteers of the Year award winners Scott (far right) and Merri (Center) celebrate their well deserved win.

CoAct Symposium is a Touchdown

Leaders from Across the Country in Awe of of Keynote Speaker

Founded by the Marbridge Foundation, the CoAct Project Symposium is a national executive symposium focused on best practices, challenges, and opportunities when caring for individuals with cognitive and intellectual disabilities. Marbridge hosted over 100 professionals and families from across the county who traveled to Marbridge from 22 different states for the three-day symposium.

The excitement was heightened with the arrival of the 2024 keynote speaker, Doug Flutie; the Heisman Trophy winner, NFL Alumni, CEO and Co-founder of the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism. Doug shared stories from playing college football and demonstrated some of his historic plays in the NFL.

During an engaging fireside chat, led by Becca McPherson, Vice President of Development, Doug answered questions from a standing room only audience.

“Doug and his family have been such an integral part of growing and advocating for the greater Autism community,” Becca commented. “I have such a high respect that they didn’t know much about autism before Dougie but recognized that it is a spectrum. They have set out to be a voice for every part of the spectrum and it was such an honor to chat with him on stage.”

Doug answered questions about his foundation, Dougie, his son and inspiration, and challenges within our field. He proved to be an informative and motivating speaker at the symposium and a great way to kick things off.



Above: Doug Flutie, CoAct Symposium’s keynote speaker, talks about the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism.

Additional speakers over the three-day event were Gordon Hartman, Founder of Morgan’s; Ashley Kim Weiss with Together for Choice; Jennifer Nicolaisen with SeekHealing; Dr. Arthur Westover with UT Southwestern; and Ruth Thompson with Hugs Café. We were also joined by a Texas Provider Panel with executives from Daymark, BiG: Grace Place, 29 Acres, Down Home Ranch, Avondale House, Project Beacon, and New Danville.

The CoAct Project Symposium covered a wide range of topics including changing perception and awareness of IDD, types of cognitive disabilities that affect people, medical education, integrating education, addressing barriers, and providing opportunities.

This event can’t take place without support from all the amazing sponsors this year, especially our top tier sponsors from Frost Bank / Texas Mutual Insurance / Philadelphia Insurance and Allen Financial Services. Additional sponsors and exhibitors this year added to the symposium sharing information about their business with attendees and how we can all impact the IDD community.



Above: Doug Flutie (blue shirt) poses for a photo with members of the Marbridge Senior Leadership team.

See photos from the 2024 CoAct Project Symposium at:
Marbridge.org/photos

Premier Employees

The Marbridge Premier Employee Program has recognized over 350 employees whose excellent work ethic and positive personal character traits make them shining examples of Marbridge staff. Premier Employee awards are now presented once per year in June. Employees are nominated by their supervisors and receive a certificate of commendation and time-off pass redeemable for eight hours of paid time-off.

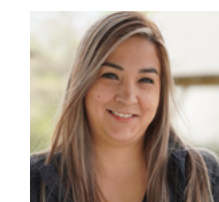
“Our Premiere Employees are the backbone of Marbridge’s person-centered culture. Recognizing those deserving employees who exhibit extraordinary characteristics in the care of our residents and in the course of their work creates a direct link towards achieving our mission,” said Scott McAvoy, President/CEO. “Characteristics such as compassion, patience, tolerance, responsibility, and determination are just a few of the characteristics that our Premiere Employees bring to the workplace each and every day and we’re appreciative and proud of all that they do.”



Molly Barton
Leisure and Recreation Activities Coordinator/Coach/Instructor, Training & Education

[Adaptability](#) // [Optimistic](#) // [Patient](#)

In 2023, the Training & Education department lost two very good instructors that not only taught classes but were Special Olympics coaches and coordinated various activities. In analyzing our resources, an opportunity to create a hybrid role came about. Molly took a chance on a new role that come with a lot of pressure to execute the responsibilities of two positions. It hasn’t been easy, but her adaptability and optimism in taking on this hybrid role over the last year has helped ensure many enriching opportunities for The Ranch and Village residents to experience.



Sophia Gaitan
Resident Trainer, The Village

[Flexible](#) // [Dependable](#) // [Loyal](#)

Sophia has been a loyal employee of Marbridge for almost nine years. She started her journey at The Villa as a Housekeeper. In 2019, she transitioned into a Resident Trainer role at The Village. Since her transition, Sophia has become a valued and dependable member of the morning team. Sophia is always willing to help any resident or staff member during the day-to-day operations and is always flexible when her coworkers need her to step in and help with other duties.



Jeff Hess
Instructor, Training & Education

[Versatile](#) // [Humorous](#) // [Dependable](#)

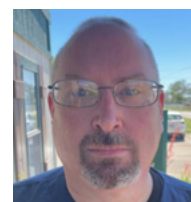
Jeff was a favorite for many residents as a resident trainer and that has continued with his role as an instructor. He is attentive to details and offers a different perspective. He has presented new opportunities to residents who might not have ever experienced cooking classes. He exhibits great versatility in helping throughout Training & Education.



Irene Lopez-Zilberman
Registered Nurse, The Ranch

[Humorous](#) // [Reliable](#) // [Empathetic](#)

Irene displays compassionate and patient approach to every resident ailment; big or small. She embraces a flexible approach while recognizing that she is serving residents in their home environments and visits them in their rooms to administer care. Irene’s “house calls” are greatly appreciated. She flexes time often to make sure the team on all shifts get her attention and training. She provides top-notch and timely communications to our families and her attention to details, communication, and follow-through helps the team provide safe and thorough medication administration.



Robert Lyons
Assistant Director of Nursing, The Villa

[Dedicated](#) // [Flexible](#) // [Compassionate](#)

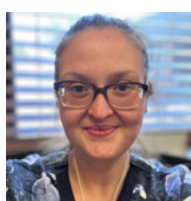
Robert joined the Marbridge team in May 2021. He is an exceptional nurse and since joining Marbridge received his RN certification. He’s very compassionate and patient with all of The Villa residents and skillful in the work her performs. Residents often ask for him by name, even if he doesn’t happen to work that day. Robert was promoted to Assistant Director of Nursing in 2024 thanks to his dedication and hard-work.



Amy Patton
Occupational Therapist, Rehab

[Hard-Working](#)// [Compassionate](#) // [Knowledgeable](#)

Amy consistently demonstrates her expertise in her field, offering invaluable support to our residents. Her compassionate demeanor creates a nurturing atmosphere, ensuring that residents feel truly cared for and understood. Amy’s strong work ethic has not only enhanced the lives of those we serve, but also made a significant impact on our team as a whole.



Erica Sandlin
Clinical Nurse Manager, The Villa

[Warm-Hearted](#) // [Dedicated](#) // [Problem-Solver](#)

Erica makes everyday a joy for our residents and team. Her witty sense of humor and fun going attitude creates positivity at The Villa. Her dedication is demonstrated daily as she always ensures that our residents are well taken care of and happy. She always supports residents through their daily activities and has a warm heart for each one of them. Erica treats each resident and team member with the respect they deserve.



Beija Vazquez
Lead Cook, The Villa

[Adaptable](#) // [Dependable](#) // [Problem-Solver](#)

Beija’s dependability is unmatched. You can always count on her to be the first one to jump in and help when needed. She’s almost constantly switching between roles in The Villa kitchen and adapts between Dietary Aide work, cleaning, cooking, and more. She’s consistent for our residents and they look for her. You can always find her making them laugh. Beija is always there to make our residents laugh with a quick joke and warms their hearts with some great coffee and conversation.

These eight team members are just a small handful of the amazing team that helps grow the Marbridge mission and assist residents in achieving a whole new life. We thank them and each of our over 300 team members who guide residents in learning, experiencing, and thriving.

Learn how you or someone you know can join the Marbridge team when you visit:

[Marbridge.org/careers](https://marbridge.org/careers)



Marbridge Foundation
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Marbridge is a non-profit residential community that offers transitional and lifetime care to adults with a wide range of cognitive abilities and — through compassion and faith — provides them opportunities to learn, experience, and achieve a whole new life.



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Ways to Give

Your financial contributions make a significant impact on the lives of those who are seeking a path to independence.

Did you know there are multiple ways to give to support Marbridge? Monetary donations, securities and stocks, wires, bequests, IRA Distributions, and numerous other ways to give are accepted and appreciated.

For more information on all giving options, contact Becca McPherson, VP of Development, at bmcpherson@marbridge.org.

Upcoming Dates

Marbridge Christmas Program	
Dress Rehearsal	December 11
Last Day of the Fall Semester	December 12
Marbridge Christmas Program	December 13
First Day of Spring Semester	January 6, 2025