

Older Generations Give the Gifts of their Life Perspectives

Walkathon Celebrates Mutual Support on Life's Paths

By Gary Yuhas, MBA,
 Executive Director



Hello, The Good Life Readers. My name is Gary Yuhas and I am excited and honored to make my first contribution to The Good Life as the recently appointed Executive Director of LifePath.

I am thankful to be offered this opportunity to lead LifePath. LifePath holds special importance for me for a number of reasons. I've spent considerable time in the world of healthcare administration. I witnessed first-hand many ways we were able to help people manage illness, cure disease, gain independence, and live longer lives. However, we often struggled knowing that once our patient was gone from our clinic or hospital, we were immediately limited by what we could do to support them and ensure their continued well-being. LifePath is unique in its ability to serve members of our communities by helping them to guide their own care, remain independent where they are most comfortable, provide assistance through our programs, support caregivers, and provide hope, reassurance, and a sense of community.

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My own experience helping my grandparents age and die at home encompassed many areas, including managing appointments, medications, finances, hospitalizations and assistive technologies. I saw firsthand how important it was for my grandparents to remain at home, as comfortable and safe as possible. Helping them in this way was the best gift I can think of to give someone. In turn, my grandparents gave me the gift of their life perspectives, and taught me how vitally important compassion, understanding, and autonomy are in navigating the many difficult paths we will all encounter in some way.

I am thankful for what I learned from those experiences and that, now, I can bring those gifts and spirit to LifePath.

I am writing to you in advance of our 31st annual LifePath Walkathon. You may be reading this before the event, on Walkathon day, or afterwards. I am hoping it was another successful event with a great turnout and perfect weather. The work and planning that goes into this event is remarkable. And even though we can't predict the weather or other factors, we always know that the Walkathon provides a wonderful opportunity for our community to come together, enjoy being outside, connect or reconnect with friends and colleagues, gather information, enjoy great music, and explore other activities. Many Walkathon participants are returning walkers and visitors who support us year after year, and we are always delighted to see and meet first-timers!

Another important aspect of the Walkathon is the exposure it gives to the wide variety of work we do at LifePath. Many of you are undoubtedly aware of our many programs because you've worked with us to meet your own needs, or for the needs of a family member or friend. Many know of our work because they are volunteers or team members. Many in our community may not know the ways we can help our aging population and those living with disabilities, along with the caregivers providing support to both of those groups. The Walkathon provides an opportunity for us to share all that LifePath has to offer. If you or someone you know would like to learn more about us and how we can help, we welcome questions at the Walkathon,



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or by calling our office at (413) 773-5555, (978) 544-2259, or (800) 732-4636, or by stopping in our office at 101 Munson Street, Second Floor, Suite 201, during normal business hours. We have staff onsite from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for holidays. We invite you to explore our newly revamped website at lifepathma.org, and also welcome you to call to inquire about our many volunteer opportunities!!

Many of you already know that the Walkathon is our largest fundraiser of the year. Walkathon contributions help to support programming that is unfunded or underfunded, and help us to fill financial gaps and provide more services in the community. For example, funds raised from the LifePath Walkathon allow us to support more individuals benefiting from our Meals on Wheels program. These funds also allow LifePath to provide emergency assistance for food and medications, while individuals navigate the complex world of administrative processes for various assistance programs. In addition, Walkathon funds assist individuals transitioning between housing situations to purchase necessities and furnishings.

Walkathon "season" (also known as "spring" for those not working diligently on the Walkathon) is an exciting time to join LifePath. The winter is difficult for many of us, with the short days and darkness, and with weather challenges making it harder to do simple tasks,

while also decreasing opportunities for social interaction. Spring is a time of changes, joy, and renewal. This is also a time of change for me and for the organization as I embark upon my journey as a new team member here.

I hope that I have (or had!) an opportunity to meet some of you at the Walkathon and hear your stories about your relationship to LifePath. Learning how our neighbors are connected to this organization and why you feel compelled to support our work is both a learning opportunity and an absolute joy.

To our sponsors, fundraisers, and volunteers: I extend a heartfelt thank you for supporting LifePath. To our community partners, walkers, and others: Thank you for showing up to bolster this agency and the work that we do, and for spreading the word to those around you. And to all the donors and other supporters: Please know how much we appreciate your investment in LifePath!

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