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THE GOOD LIFE

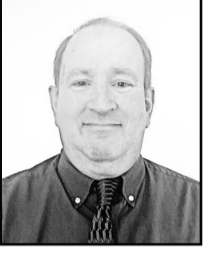
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Music, Photos, and the Power of Connection

By John O'Farrell, Associate Director of Marketing and Development



John O'Farrell

I really wasn't sure what I wanted to write about this week and then it magically became very clear to me. Of course, you will have to read all the way to the end of the article to find out. At first, I was going to write about all the beautiful snow of winter in New England and how each snowflake is unique and special just like each of us, but then everything iced over and no one needed to be reminded of the harsh weather conditions of late. So then I thought maybe I should write about the Eagles victory at the Super Bowl, with the whole country coming together behind the underdog, and how that translates into coming together behind a common cause for a better tomorrow.

Over the weekend, I decided to do a technological disconnect of sorts. A kind of experiment with no TV, no phone, no email checking, no texting, and just listening to instrumental music for the whole day, commercial-free, I might add. The peace and quiet and the ability to slow down the pace a little bit was amazing. As I listened to each song I was immediately transported back in time to memories that I had long forgotten about. The whole experience was very grounding, even transformational. As an added bonus, by the end of the day, I had accomplished so much on my list that I felt really good about how I spent my day.

During that time, I also took a few minutes while I was cleaning to look at some past photos of me and my grandmother from when I was a kid. As I looked through the scrapbook on the table, I thought about days gone by and the wonderful things that we got to do together over the years. As some of you may know, photography is one of my main hobbies, along with woodworking, and it was actually my grandmother who encouraged me and taught me about the craft of photography from a very young age. Now, flash forward a few years and I have 14,000 photos on my phone, and most of them framed correctly with the right balance of light and shadow to make for a really great photo. My grandmother would be proud.

The whole day forced me to really slow down and to get a better view of the world around me as it was racing by. It got me thinking about how much I enjoy walks in the woods, connecting with nature, and taking in all the sights and sounds along the way; my love for family and friends; and how much I like to help others throughout my day. Speaking of walking, don't forget to mark your calendars for our annual walkathon event on October 18. Something warm and fun

to think about on a really cold day. We hope to see you there. Now back to the story!

Just as music and photos play a powerful role making new connections, so does LifePath, by being that connecting force for so many individuals and their families throughout our local communities in the Franklin County and North Quabbin region. Through programs such as our Community Engagement Center and Age-Friendly Dementia Care programs, to our Meals on Wheels and SHINE programs, just to name a few, LifePath continues to make a profound difference, influencing positive change by helping to support some of our community's most vulnerable populations.

The ability to make that special connection is displayed time and time again by our dedicated volunteers and staff, through countless interactions with those we serve, delivering compassionate and supportive care, every step of the way. In addition, we also help to open an invaluable dialogue between generations, helping to build bridges through conversations, and providing an important opportunity to learn and share with one another along life's journey. It all comes down to making that connection, and in turn, making a positive difference in the world around us.

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There are so many wonderful things that LifePath has been able to accomplish over our 50-year history. It is hard to list them all in this article, however I would like to focus on two of them in particular for a moment. The first is LifePath's strong ability to connect people to the right programs and

services to support their loved ones, and the second is being able to convey the importance of companionship and partnership in building relationships.

Reassuring people that they are not alone in their challenges, as we partner together with them in helping to navigate their current circumstances, and doing our best to be a guiding light in establishing potential next steps for a better future, is so important. Providing comprehensive support, tailored to meet each individual's unique circumstances, while building trust and peace of mind with older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers, is what we do.

Much like a balanced, well-framed photograph, working with families in helping to slow down the pace of the world for just a little while helps to give caregivers that sigh of relief, that time and space to evaluate beneficial options for their loved ones. Helping to be a valuable partner along the way can be worth its weight in gold.

We are so proud to be able to make a difference for others in our region, collaborating with local community partners and gathering behind our local neighbors in support of a better tomorrow.