



The Westbrook Chatterbox

As you are reading this article, I am on my Mission Trip in Honduras along with my husband, Kurt! This is our 11th year going to Honduras and I cannot get enough of being there! The people are such great people, the food is amazing and the opportunities I get to share my faith and to offer service to others are many and I am so thankful to get to be there! I also get to see so many people that I have built relationships with over the years. I hope to be able to share some of our exciting experiences with you when I get back!

This is a month of Thankful reflection. I love the month of November because we can let others know we are Thankful for them, we can stop and reflect on all things we have been blessed with. I love that the days are crisp, football is in full swing and the Holidays are fast approaching, which means the year is drawing to an end. Thanksgiving is probably my favorite holiday of the year! Our family gathers at my home on Thanksgiving over a wonderful meal that is prepared by all of us together. I love working with my family to create this meal. The conversations we have, the traditions we pass on, the involvement of the grandchildren-they love helping! I love that we have no gift expectations, no egg hunts, no fireworks, usually not too hot or too cold...just food and family(two of my favorite things!).

Here at Westbrook I am so thankful for my co-workers, the residents, their families and all the volunteers. I consider you all my extended family. I love coming to work everyday and seeing you all and spending time visiting with everyone! You all have made my life very enjoyable-Thank you!

Take time to reflect this month. If we stop to take a moment and look, we might be surprised at all the blessings we have received over our lives!

Happy Thanksgiving,
April

A Thanksgiving Blessing

It's cold outside, but it's warm in my heart. And the gray fall sky is His work of art. Laden
and low, quiet and still, November is welcome, and my eyes drink their fill
Of brown-gray grass and red-orange leaves, Of pavement winding through the strong,
stately trees.
Down the hill, past the barn, past the gate, up the lane, The house with bright candles in
each window pane.
Now I step inside; oh, it's warm! Oh, that smell! Hot turkey roasting, potatoes done well!
Sweet, spicy cider, and warm winter wine Cranberry sauce - Oh! - the flavors - divine!
The smiles and hugs are so warm and sweet. In this cold gray November,
a Thanksgiving treat.

A Teacher Told Her Students to Draw What They Were Thankful for – This Was One Student's Moving Response

As this teacher learned, some of the most moving lessons are taught by students.

When Mrs. Klein told her first graders to draw a picture of something for which they were thankful, she thought how little these children, who lived in a deteriorating neighborhood, actually had to be thankful for. She knew that most of the class would draw pictures of turkeys or of bountifully laden Thanksgiving tables. That was what they believed was expected of them. What took Mrs. Klein aback was Douglas's picture. Douglas was so forlorn and likely to be found close in her shadow as they went outside for recess. Douglas's drawing was simply this: A hand, obviously, but whose hand? The class was captivated by his image. "I think it must be the hand of God that brings us food," said one student.

"A farmer," said another, "because they grow the turkeys."

"It looks more like a policeman, and they protect us." "I think," said Lavinia, who was always so serious, "that it is supposed to be all the hands that help us, but Douglas could only draw one of them."

Mrs. Klein had almost forgotten Douglas in her pleasure at finding the class so responsive. When she had the others at work on another project, she bent over his desk and asked whose hand it was.

Douglas mumbled, "It's yours, Teacher."

Then Mrs. Klein recalled that she had taken Douglas by the hand from time to time; she often did that with the children. But that it should have meant so much to Douglas ...

Perhaps, she reflected, this was her Thanksgiving, and everybody's Thanksgiving—not the material things given unto us, but the small ways that we give something to others.



A Heartwarming Thanksgiving Story

A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. He held up a sign which said: "I am blind, please help." There were only a few coins in the hat.

A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. He put the sign back so that everyone who walked by would see the new words.

Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon the man who had changed the sign came to see how things were.

The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?"

The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way." I wrote: "Today is a beautiful day but I cannot see it."

Both signs told people that the boy was blind. But the first sign simply said the boy was blind. The second sign told people that they were so lucky that they were not blind. Should we be surprised that the second sign was more effective?

Moral of the Story: Be thankful for what you have. Be creative. Be innovative. Think differently and positively. When life gives you a 100 reasons to cry, show life that you have 1000 reasons to smile. Face your past without regret. Handle your present with confidence. Prepare for the future without fear. Keep the faith and drop the fear.

The most beautiful thing is to see a person smiling. And even more beautiful, is knowing that you are the reason behind it!

NOVEMBER

That Time Turkey Miming Skills Paid Off

"The first Thanksgiving after moving overseas, I decided to treat my family to a traditional turkey dinner. I went to the closest store, which happened to be French-speaking, and approached the area where a variety of meats were laid out. Not being fluent in French, I looked and tried to determine on my own whether the large poultry breasts I saw were turkey or goose. The butcher indicated that he was ready to help me. I asked in broken French if he spoke English; he replied, 'No.' I tried again, asking if he spoke German; again, he replied, 'No.' I pointed at the poultry breasts, then tucked my thumbs in my armpits, flapped my arms, and said, 'Gobble, gobble?' The butcher broke into a smile as he replied, 'Oui.' Embarrassing, sure, but I ended up with a turkey and the butcher got a laugh!"

GOBBLE
GOBBLE
GOBBLE

Veteran's Day

On Veterans Day, we honor all
Who answered to a service call.
Soldiers young, and soldiers old
Fought for freedom, brave and bold.
Some have lived, while others died,
And all of them deserve our pride.
We're proud of all the soldiers who,
Kept thinking of red, white and blue.
They fought for us and all our rights,
They fought through many days and nights.
And though we may not know each name,
We thank ALL veterans just the same.



HAPPY
THANKSGIVING

What It Means To Truly Be Thankful

I'm Thankful for Cookies, Candles, and Spotify

Thanksgiving is fast approaching, the semester is coming to an end, and everyone is more stressed than ever. But don't worry, Thanksgiving is coming! The time has come to watch the Macy's Parade, watch a football game, shop 'til you drop, throw it down in the kitchen, and eat yourself into a food coma. It's also the time to be thankful, but that's not that important, right? Over the years, Thanksgiving has become less about being thankful and more about making sure you get the best deals at stores. Everyone is in a hurry to finish eating so they can go do something else. Thanksgiving has lost its meaning. It's hard to be thankful for everyday things when we're aren't thankful for them every day. So what does it mean to be truly thankful? How do we put the thanks back into Thanksgiving.

It's simple. First we have to address what the meaning of thanksgiving is. According to Dictionary.com, thanksgiving is "the act of giving thanks; grateful acknowledgment of benefits or favors, especially to God." Notice how this definition doesn't say "the act of giving thanks on one day out of the year." The holiday of Thanksgiving and actual thanksgiving are two different things. Just because it isn't Thanksgiving doesn't mean you can't be thankful. The moment November hits everyone starts saying what they are thankful for: their parents, their job, their house, etc. But what about the other 11 months of the year? Are you remembering to be thankful then?

Here's the thing, we can't just be thankful during November. There is so much to be thankful for. When you wake up every day, before your feet even touch the floor, find at least three things to be thankful for. It doesn't have to be something elaborate, it can be as simple as the snooze button on your alarm. Be thankful for the little things in life. See the beauty in everything because everything is a blessing. When you start to become thankful for small things in life your outlook on life begins to change.

Thanksgiving is about being thankful but it what it truly means to be thankful is to be appreciative. You don't need big meals and sweet deals to be thankful. All you need is to appreciate life and the people around you. Thanksgiving is not supposed to be a day where you remember to be thankful for stuff, but a reminder of all the things you are thankful for every day. Life is busy and sometimes it's easy to forget all the great things we have. When life gets stressful and it seems like everything is bad it can be hard to find something to be thankful for. But life is a gift and for that we should be thankful.

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name." Psalm 100:4

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." 1 Chronicles 16:34

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." Colossians 3:16

"And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name." 1 Chronicles 29:13

"This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24.

Featured Staff – Isaac Wilson

Isaac was born in Kansas City, MO, to Steve and Melissa Wilson. He has a brother, Steven, who is three years older. Shortly after he was born, the family moved to Independence.

He attended a home school co-op for his first couple of years of school. He would play outside a lot with his brother. They had a beautiful willow tree in their backyard and they loved chasing each other around it.

Then the family moved to Lathrop, MO. Isaac's mom home schooled him in the core subjects and he attended Lathrop Elementary for PE, music and such. However, Isaac wanted to go to school full time. He bugged his mother until she relented. He started going to public school in second grade. He made his first real friend when a boy named Matthew Wilson (no relation) threw a mechanical pencil at him. The graphite stuck in Isaac's chest and he freaked out – thinking he was going to die from lead poisoning. This was the start of a beautiful friendship.

Isaac loved riding his bike to friend's houses, sometimes inviting himself over. He enjoyed hanging out with friends and going to football games.

Isaac's parents divorced when he was 14 and his dad moved to Kearney, MO. They had joint custody and Isaac lived with his mom. Isaac moved in with his dad his sophomore year of high school because he was tired of the small town, everybody knows everybody's business. He attended one quarter at Kearney High School and decided that was all he could take.

Isaac ran away from home. He went to his friend's house, hid his car and was preparing to cut his hair and dye it blond. His friend's mother turned him in and he returned to his dad's house. He started attending an online school and graduated from high school a year and a half early (December 2018).

Isaac started working at the age of 15. He had to be able to support his car. He has worked a lot of fast food jobs including McDonalds, Jimmy Johns, Papa Murphy's and Burger King. He also worked at a couple different green houses/nurseries. And he spent 10 hours working as a pipe fitter. Isaac had a habit of quitting a job without having another one. Then he'd live on his savings until he found another one.

He was working at Burger King and was not happy there. But he was determined to find another job before he quit there. He started looking on Indeed for a job. He filled out an application for a place but never heard back from them. Then he saw a listing for a Dietary Aide at Westbrook. After looking at the requirements, he decided he could do them and filled out an application. He interviewed with April and loved the place. His second interview was with Theresa and he started working here in September.

Isaac is amazed at the sense of community here at Westbrook. He loves that everybody is there for each other. He really likes how all the staff has been so extremely helpful to him and the residents have been kind and accepting of him. He says it's so refreshing to work at a place that is fun, has management that is actively involved and that he doesn't dread getting up in the morning and going to work. He is very grateful that he found this job.

In his off hours, Isaac lives with his dad and their black lab, Phil. Isaac loves gaming (playing multiplayer games online), motor sports and working on his own car. He can do basic automotive repairs but is planning on expanding on his tools and his knowledge base. Isaac also likes to ride his bike and take walks with his girlfriend of three years, Cassandra.

Isaac has struggled with negative self talk and has decided that he needs to be more positive. He says that it's time to stop waking up with a bad attitude. He was ruining his days and those of everybody around him. Now he smiles at everyone, loves talking with people and enjoys the work he is doing.

Six Benefits of Practicing Gratitude for Seniors

Seniors are often thought to be in a stage of life where they can pursue rest, reflection, and hobbies that careers and raising a family limited them from practicing. Unfortunately, growing older is not always picture perfect. With age, comes a decline in health, loss of friends and family, and sometimes financial hardship. What was once easy can be very cumbersome for seniors living with arthritis, limited mobility, chronic illness, or memory impairment. According to the [American Psychological Association](#), these, and other concerns often give way to negative emotions, such as anxiety, loneliness, and depression.

While aging is inevitable, feelings of sadness and despair need not to be a part of the process. Numerous studies have shown the correlation between practicing gratitude and experience greater happiness, despite one's circumstances. Giving thanks can transform a senior's life. Here are just a few benefits seniors can experience when they practice gratitude, along with ways to cultivate more gratitude in your life.

Improves Health - Being grateful does wonders for one's health. Many seniors suffer from chronic illness, pain, insomnia, and feelings of depression. Practicing gratitude leads to better sleep, less depression, and helps with chronic illness. It reduces headaches, eases pain, and is a great way to cope with stress. Grateful seniors are more likely to exercise regularly and choose healthier foods, which is yet another boost to their health. Want to start reaping these health benefits today? Start a gratitude journal and commit to writing just three things you are thankful for each day.

Strengthens Relationships - Practicing gratitude increases social connections and strengthens current relationships. Those who have a habit of being grateful look for the good in others, instead of focusing on their negative attributes. They're more pleasant to be around, so family and friends want to visit. They are more likely to say "hello" to a stranger in the store or step up to volunteer where help is needed. This leads to a senior who is more connected socially, therefore they feel less isolated and lonely. Give the gift of appreciation by writing a gratitude letter to a good friend or family member. You'll strengthen your relationship with that person while reminding them of their significance in your life.

Expands Life's Meaning - Many seniors find it difficult to find purpose for their lives after retirement and/or after all the kids have flown the nest. Cultivating gratitude helps a senior view the bigger picture. When they choose to be grateful for the little things, they can get a sense for their overarching life's purpose. They can see their hard work in raising a family as they watch their own children parent in a loving manner. They can enjoy the fruits of their labor by giving to others out of abundance. Practice gratitude by intentionally saying "thank you" to the people you encounter throughout your everyday routine. Make it personal by expressing something specific. Tell the deli counter staff you appreciate the way they slice your ham just right. Tell the waitress you see each week how much you appreciate how she keeps your coffee warm and filled.

Improves Memory - Many seniors worry about their brain health. Practicing gratitude can help improve memory. Grateful people are more likely to recall past experiences in a more positive manner. They savor the good times and are better equipped to cope when hard times come their way. Want to work on improving your memory while practicing gratitude? Start the day with a little memory game. As you sip your first cup of coffee, spend a few minutes reflecting on the previous day. Come up with ten things you are grateful for that happened yesterday. Bonus points to those who don't have a duplicate on their list for the entire week.

Increases Spiritual Connection - Grateful seniors report a deeper sense of spiritual connection. After all, being grateful is one way to connect to a higher power. It immediately lifts you out of the troubles of this world and directs your heart and mind to the spiritual realm. For many seniors, practicing gratitude reminds them of their true identity and fills them with hope and faith. Whatever your religious background and how ever you pray, spend the first few minutes of your prayer in a spirit of gratitude.

Builds Self-Esteem - Finally, gratitude builds self-esteem. Similar to how seniors experience a lull in their life meaning post retirement, many seniors struggle with low self-esteem in their later years. Change in appearance can contribute to this, as well as feeling neglected by their adult children or other family members due to being busy with their own families. Practicing gratitude helps seniors stay grounded, reminds them that they are valuable, and reduces social comparison. Need to build your self-esteem? Purchase visual cues, such as block letters, to add to your home decor to remind you to be grateful each day.