

ROADRUNNER

JANUARY 2025

VOLUME 2025-01



FROM THE DIRECTOR ~ BRIAN GRAYBEAL

Happy New Year, everyone! I'm so excited for the year ahead and all the wonderful things it will bring for us. But before diving into the new, I want to take a moment to reflect and start this year by sharing a few heartfelt thank-yous. A heartfelt thank you to everyone at Blue Skies who makes this place so special.

To our wellness and life enrichment staff, who work tirelessly to support our residents' daily lives—thank you for your dedication.

To our food service team, who bring people together with delicious meals and warm hospitality, creating moments of connection and joy—thank you.

To our maintenance team, who tackle every challenge and keep our facilities running smoothly—thank you for your hard work.

To our marketing team, who welcome new residents into our community, enriching our Blue Skies family—thank you.

To our capital projects team, who turn dreams into reality and make our campus beautiful—thank you for your vision.

To our HR team, who empower our staff with tools and support for growth—thank you.

To our finance team, who keep us on track and make sure every resource is used wisely—thank you.

To our Hospice care team – you bring incredible compassion and care to everything you do every single day.

To our Liberty, Freedom House staff, The Mission, and Select Rehab who provide compassionate care every day—thank you for your kindness.

To my team in Resident Services:

- Transportation, for getting residents safely to where they need to go.
- Environmental Services, for keeping our homes and spaces welcoming.
- The beauty salon staff, for making our residents feel cared for and pampered.
- The front desk team, for being a friendly face and helpful guide.

To my Assistant Director—your support has made a world of difference in my first months here. Thank you!

Special thanks to the Executive Team, whose leadership and vision push Blue Skies forward.

And finally, to our residents—you are the heart of Blue Skies. Your energy, kindness, and care for one another make this community feel like home. You inspire us every day.

New Residents

New residents coming soon to a neighborhood near you.

Michael & Elena Wellman, #144

Randall Trott, #227

Sam & Mary Hergert, #735

Delmar & Doreen Milligan, #2613

Resident Services Announcements

From the Director Continued...

Thank you all for everything you do to make Blue Skies a truly special place.

I'm excited to share a few new enhancements to our campus! First, a new car charging station in the main lobby parking lot, expected to be operational by the time you read this.

Second, expanded golf cart parking outside the Tower 3 & 4 entrance, providing much-needed convenience, enhancing resident experiences, and elevating the beauty of our grounds.

Finally, exciting updates for the Roadrunner Lounge and Lakeview Dining! The new sound system includes 6 wireless mics, 2 lapel mics, and these fantastic upgrades:

- Added speakers to eliminate "dead zones," including near the dance floor spotlights.
- Dual-event capability allows separate sound for Lakeview and Roadrunner events.
- Bluetooth connectivity and an app-compatible feature for updated hearing aids, with a demo coming soon!
- Thanks to Larissa Alejo's smart budgeting, we secured a new mixer for the portable sound system, upgraded two speakers and added two more wireless mics and lapels.

Get ready for a top-notch audio experience!



Save the Date:

Wednesday, January 1 – Happy New Year!

Thursday, January 2 – Coffee with Chef – 9:30-10:30am – Roadrunner Lounge

Friday, January 3 – Thrift Shop Re-opens – 7am

Tuesday, January 7 – Winter Skin Awareness Day – 2pm – Conference Room #110

Wednesday, January 8 – Distinguished Flying Cross Society (DFCS) – 10am – Roadrunner Lounge

Thursday, January 9 – DRAC Meeting – 1:30pm – Roadrunner Lounge

Tuesday, January 14 – Wear your best Hat Contest – 2pm – Main Lobby

Wednesday, January 15 – Poster making signs for Martin Luther King Day- 2pm – Arts & Crafts Rm

Thursday, January 16 – Resident Council Meeting – 1:30pm – Roadrunner Lounge

Friday, January 17 – A Winter Wonderland Pool Party – 2pm – Pool Area

Monday, January 20 – Martin Luther King Day Walk – 10am – Outside Main Lobby

Monday, January 20 – Cruise Planners Meeting – 2pm – Roadrunner Lounge

Tuesday, January 28 – Kidney Smart Class – Bus departs BSTW at 1pm – BSTE Legacy Room

Tuesday, January 28 – Flagpole Parking area closed for Private Marketing Event

Wednesday, January 29 – Chinese New Year – 2pm – Roadrunner Lounge

Friday, January 31 – Cowboy Breakfast – 7:30-9am - The Lakeview and Roadrunner Lounge

Friday, January 31 – Resident Roster deadline!

Resident Services Announcements

Holiday Closures:

New Years Holiday for Blue Skies Employees is on Wednesday, **January 1**. There will be no mail delivery, no BST transportation and minimal staff on campus. Please make note of the following closures:

Tuesday, **December 31**

Broadway Bank - 9am-12pm

Wednesday, **January 1**

WHASC - Closed

Friday, **January 3**

Broadway Bank - Normal hours

Yee Haw...It's Time for The Cowboy Breakfast

A time-honored tradition!! On Friday, **January 31** from 7:30-9am mosey on down to The Lakeview and the Roadrunner Lounge where we'll be serving free breakfast tacos. Music is courtesy of the Thrift Shop, and free Tacos are courtesy of Morrison and Blue Skies. Throw on your western duds /cowboy boots/hats, your "wranglers" or whatever cowboy-themed attire you feel comfortable wearing and join us!

Resident Roster

It's time to start reviewing the resident roster. Stop by the Front Desk to be sure your info is updated, please do so by Friday, **January 31**. We'll be printing in February and want to be sure everything we print has your accurate phone number, email address, rank, etc.

Oh, Chute!

A reminder to Tower residents: please do not throw boxes, or small household appliances down the trash chutes. It clogs them, and it's a bear trying to get them out. Either leave them outside your apartment or call Larissa, 210-568-3241, and she'll have someone come to retrieve them from your home.

Catered Living Update

Sophia Figueroa is your new point of contact for your Catered Living needs. She can be reached at 210-568-3261. For a list of what Catered Living can do for you stop by the front desk and a flyer can be made available to you.

Online Orders (Fed Ex, UPS, H.E.B., etc.)

Please ensure that you are inputting your full address to include apartment number when placing online orders so that your package is delivered directly to you.

Finance Office Update

Please be advised that the Finance offices at Freedom House will be closed for the month of January, for renovation. However, all phone numbers, for all finance employees, will remain operational. During this time, Wendy Sobczyk will be available in The Vista, by the reception area, for any in-person inquiries.



New Year, New Scams! ~ Ashlie Maltos

Beware of the "BRUSHING" scam! This is when someone receives an unexpected gift of items such as jewelry or Bluetooth speakers from a retail store that they did not order like, Amazon or other companies. This gift will have the recipient's address, but it will NOT have the sender's information on the package. When you open the package recipients have found a QR Code to scan so they can see "who" sent them the gift. DO NOT scan the QR Code! This is a way for the scammers to get into your phone! On the bright side you do not have to return the gift!



Resident Services Announcements

Understanding the Modification Process

At Blue Skies of Texas, we are committed to ensuring that your home reflects your preferences and needs. To support this, the Blue Skies of Texas Modification Committee meets weekly to review modification requests from current and future residents. Here's everything you need to know about the process:

What is a Modification?

A modification refers to any upgrade or change you would like to make to your home. Whether it's enhancing functionality or adding a personal touch, modifications allow you to create a space that truly feels like home.

Who Handles the Work?

Approved modifications will be performed by vetted contractors through Capital Projects. This ensures that all work meets quality standards and is completed by experienced professionals.

How to Submit a Request:

Modification requests can be submitted through: **Capital Projects, Maintenance, or Resident Services**. Simply provide the details of your desired modification, and the process will begin.

The Approval Process:

- 1. Committee Review:* Once your request is submitted, the Modification Committee will review it during their weekly meeting.
 - If your request is disapproved, you will receive an email explaining the reason for the decision.
 - If your request is approved, you will receive an email confirming that the project is moving forward to the bidding phase.
- 2. Bidding Phase:* Capital Projects will solicit bids for the approved modification. Once bids are received, you will be sent the details along with a request for your approval.
- 3. Approval and Payment:* Upon approving the bid, you will sign off on the modification and work will be scheduled. After completion, you will pay the contractor directly, ensuring you receive the best pricing.

Coordination and Completion

Capital Projects will work closely with you and the contractor to schedule the work, keeping the process smooth and efficient from start to finish.

We value your input and strive to make the modification process as transparent and straightforward as possible. For questions or additional information, feel free to reach out to Capital Projects, Maintenance, or Resident Services.

Together, let's make your home everything you envision it to be!

Resident Services Announcements

Pest Control Schedule

	Friday, January 3	Friday, January 10	Friday, January 17	Friday, January 24
Tower Apts.	631-638, 641-648, 441-448	611-618, 621-628	711-718, 721-728	731-738, 741-748
Cottages	2300-2400	2500-2600	2700	2800
Ranch Homes	837, 838, 839, 840	841, 843, 845	847, 851, 853, 855, Basketball, Tennis, and Bocca Ball Courts, Cabana and Restroom	857, 859, Pavilion 2
Specials	Village Center, Kitchen, The Vista Office and A Wing	Exterior of Main Tower Building	Liberty House, The Vista B and C Wings	Freedom House: Int. and Ex.

In Memoriam

Barbara McCullough - December 15

Employee Anniversaries

	Location	Anniversary Date	Years of Service
Aileen Ramos Herrera	Dining Services	January 4	1
James Ballard	Hospice	January 4	6
Calista Burns	Marketing	January 9	1
Ashlie Maltos	Wellness	January 9	10
Cynthia Figueroa	Freedom House	January 11	2
Teresa Elizondo	Wellness	January 15	5
Darrell Jones	President & CEO	January 15	7
David Soliz	Maintenance	January 25	3
Christen Cantu	Housekeeper	January 25	3
Zytlally Vasquez	Hospice	January 30	5
Gina Cortez	Freedom House	January 31	5
Brittany Scott	Freedom House	January 31	1

Resident Services Announcements

Beware of Bank Fraud and Protect Yourself! ~ Maureen Parrish

The holiday season is often a time of joy, celebration, and giving. However, it also presents a golden opportunity for criminals to take advantage of unsuspecting consumers. With increased shopping, online transactions, and the excitement of the season, bank fraud becomes a serious concern as banks, retailers, and other financial institutions often see an uptick in fraudulent transactions during this period. From now through the spring months, it's crucial to be aware of the risks and take proactive steps to protect your personal and financial information.

While the risks of fraud are real and the personal financial impact can be devastating, there are effective steps you can take to reduce your risk:

1. **Be Cautious with Emails and Links:** Always verify the sender before clicking on any link or attachment. Banks and legitimate retailers will never ask you to provide sensitive information via email. If you're unsure, go directly to the website by typing the URL into your browser.
2. **Use Strong, Unique Passwords:** Avoid using the same password for multiple accounts, and consider using a password manager to securely store your login details.
3. **Monitor Your Accounts Regularly:** Check your bank and credit card statements frequently for any suspicious activity.
4. **Shop on Trusted Websites:** Stick to reputable, well-known websites when shopping online. Look for "https" in the URL and a padlock icon next to it, indicating the site uses encryption to protect your data. Read reviews and do a quick search to ensure the website is legitimate.
5. **Use Credit Cards Instead of Debit Cards:** Credit cards typically offer better fraud protection, and any fraudulent charges can be disputed more easily without affecting your immediate bank balance.
6. **Avoid Public Wi-Fi for Financial Transactions:** Public Wi-Fi networks are not secure, so avoid accessing your bank accounts or making financial transactions when connected to public Wi-Fi. Instead, use your mobile data or a trusted private network.
7. **Watch for Skimming Devices:** When using an ATM or paying with your card at a point-of-sale terminal, inspect the machine for any unusual attachments or devices.
8. **Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA):** Many banks and online retailers now offer two-factor authentication for added security. Enabling 2FA will add an extra layer of protection to your accounts, making it harder for fraudsters to access them.

If you believe you've been a victim of bank fraud, it's important to act quickly. Report any suspicious activity or fraudulent charges to your bank as soon as possible. Most banks have a fraud department that will help you investigate the issue and may be able to reverse the charges. If there is evidence that your online banking or shopping accounts were compromised, change your password immediately and update any other accounts where you use the same password. Lastly, remember following a fraud incident, to continue to monitor your accounts regularly to spot any additional suspicious activity.

Bank fraud is a real threat, but with vigilance and a few simple precautions, you can protect yourself and your finances. By staying informed and proactive, you can ensure that this time of year remains about celebration and new beginnings. Stay safe and enjoy the festivities without the stress of fraud!

Resident Updates

AFIO Chapter Meeting

Lots of things happening in the world, the intelligence briefing will present information about Russia and Chinese undersea cable cutting, the US ATACMs and British Storm Shadow missiles in Ukraine, China seizes another source of critical minerals and getting away from it all on Diego Garcia. Presentation starts at noon, Monday, **January 6** in the Roadrunner Lounge. All residents of Blue Skies are welcome to attend.



Russian soldiers preparing to deploy. One ate his last meal several times, guess which one!



US ATACMS missile being fired from mobile launcher.

Freedom House Dementia Caregivers Support Group

The Freedom House Support Group will NOT be meeting in January, due to the holidays. See you all in February.



Distinguished Flying Cross Society

~ Robert Certain

The Alamo Chapter of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society will hold its monthly open meeting on Wednesday, **January 8** at 10am in the Roadrunner Lounge at Blue Skies West. Ron Bordwell will discuss his experiences in the Pacific during the tests of several nuclear weapons. All residents of Blue Skies East or West are welcome to attend.

Gadabouts ~ Andrea Sandifer

Come one, come all, singles and caregivers. No need to sign up this month, cause it's time for our 2024 planning meeting. Join us at 11:30am on Friday, **January 10**. Grab your lunch in The Lakeview and join us in the Roadrunner Lounge. It might be a good idea for you to be thinking about anything we may need to discuss, in addition to who's going to host what, when and where.

Happy 50th Birthday for P.E.O. Chapter EU

P.E.O. is celebrating our 50th Chapter Birthday at Blue Skies on Tuesday, **January 14**. We are inviting everyone to join us in The Vista Sunroom at 1pm for cake and ice cream as a THANK YOU for all of your support over the years.

P.E.O. helps young women reach for a brighter future through scholarship and loan help. The proceeds from our Christmas quilt will fund our newly established scholarship for a Blue Skies female employee or family member. Our P.E.O. Chapter EU is currently financially supporting three young women. Through the years P.E.O. International has helped thousands on their journey to success. Blue Skies residents have helped our projects financially, now we want to celebrate you. Won't you come join us for cake and ice cream on Tuesday, **January 14** at 1pm in The Vista Sunroom?



B & A
CELEBRATE!



January 8 B&A Welcomes New Year ~ Corlea Plowman

All BST West residents and guests are invited to say, “Welcome to the New Year” at the Wednesday, **January 8**, Birthday and Anniversary event (B & A). The Theme is “Rodeo” and western wear is encouraged. Doors open for the hosted Social Hour in CC1-3 Rooms at 5pm. Dinner service in the Lakeview Room is at 6pm.

Bob Howen will be available to take Birthday & Anniversary pictures from 4-5:30pm in the Helen LeMay Room. Please check in with Judy Howen.

The dinner includes:

Starter: Salad with Black Eyed Peas, Black Beans, Corn, Red Onion, Tomatoes & Red Cabbage tossed in Charred Tomato Ranch Dressing.

Entrée: BBQ Braised Beef served with Southwest Loaded Mashed Potatoes & Creamed Corn topped with BBQ Demi-Glace

Dessert: Texas Pecan Pie with Whipped Cream

Bread: Buttermilk Biscuits

Water, Coffee, or Iced Tea

\$30 Per Person

Alternative Entrée: BBQ Salmon

Dinner reservations are required. All those planning to attend, including guests, must sign up on the Sign-Up List in CC3. If you need to cancel after 11am Monday, **January 6**, call the Dining Services Office (210-568-3232). If you wish to create a table of 6-8, call Bonnie Gardner or Donna Bowman. Seating will be assigned for all others. Reservations are not made through the Dining Room for this event.

The Social Hour provides snacks and drinks at no charge to guests prior to the three-course B&A meal. Hosts include: BENNETT, Joann and Ross; BRIGGS, Linda and Jack; COCHRAN, Tom and Cynthia; CONNOLLY, Mike and Connie; DAVIS, Sandra and Mark; DENISON, Alan; EHRLICH, Clarke; FOLKESON, Barb and John; GONZALES, Roman and JoAnn; GRIFFITH, Susan – Chair; HALEY, Paula; HOPFENSACK, Bill and Virginia; OHMAN, Nancy and Bo; OLDHAM, Jo Ann; OVERACKER, Betty; PERELLI, Diantha and Layne; PLOWMAN, Corlea; RAJCZI, Katherine; RITCHEY, Chris; ROSENBERRY, Denise and Dennis; WESSMAN, Marti and Mark; WESTWOOD, Mike and Pamela; WHAYLEN, Tom and Linda; WILKINS, Caroline; WILSON, Barb; and YANICH, Karen and Peter.

Resident Updates

BSTW Resident Council Meeting ~ Jane Hill

The Residents' Council meeting will take place on Thursday, **January 16** at 1:30pm in the Roadrunner Lounge. All residents are encouraged to attend.

Red Hat Luncheon ~ Vivian Ray

This month's lunch is hosted by Vivian Ray. On Friday, **January 17** at 11:30am, we will dine at Roca and Martillo Cucina and Bar, 6107 Via Mercado, San Antonio, 78256. Please be in the lobby by 10:30am. The bus leaves at 10:45am. If you sign up, you need to ride the bus. If the bus fills up, you can then drive yourself. When you sign up on the sheet, you must indicate "W" if you are using a walker or wheelchair because the bus only accommodates one wheelchair. If you sign up and can't go, it is essential that you remove your name from the sheet by the Wednesday morning before the luncheon. If you do not remove your name, you will be considered a "no call, no show," and will be charged the transportation cost. Please don't prevent someone on the waiting list from attending because you didn't take your name off the list in time.

Village Voices ~ Nancy Sowada

The Village Voices enjoyed performing our holiday music in December. We performed at 5 programs, plus the Blue Skies West Tree Lighting Ceremony. We are taking a break until we begin rehearsals again on Tuesday, **January 21**, at 1:30pm in the Blue Skies West chapel. If you can read music and/or have sung in a choir before, please join us for our rehearsals every Tuesday from 1:30 - 3:30pm. We work hard and have a lot of fun. We will be singing a variety of music for our spring programs. We appreciate the contributions made to the Blue Skies West Activity Coordinating Council and the Air Force Village Charitable Fund. We would not be entering our 50th year as the Village Voices without the contributions of residents to these funds. If you have not already contributed recently, please make a contribution soon. Thank you.

"WFD" ~ Betty Overacker

"WFD" is Winter Field Day which is an exciting annual event for Amateur Radio Operators sponsored by the "Winter Field Day Association", and occurs on the last full weekend in January, which is January 25 and 26 this year. Amateur Radio Operators countrywide construct temporary transmitting stations in public places to demonstrate ham radio's capability to provide communication in winter environments. This event's objectives are to improve preparedness for disasters, and to enhance their operational abilities in adverse conditions. BST's Amateur Radio Club members will join the Medina County Radio Club to construct and operate a field radio station at the Castroville Regional Park located at 816 Alsace Avenue. Transmission commences at 1pm on Saturday, January 25 for 24 consecutive hours and ends on Sunday, 26 January at 1pm. This is a sight to behold, and all are invited to observe communication capability in emergency situations. All are welcome to attend the next Amateur Radio Club meeting on Tuesday, **January 21** in Meeting Room 110 at 11am. Please contact Bob Stuckert for more information. 73—Best Regards in Ham Language

Thrift Shop Christmas Decoration Donations – Did You Know?

The Thrift Shop Furniture Sales accepts donation of gently used Christmas decorations all year long.

If you have items that you would like to donate please call or text Susan Shumaker (See Resident Directory).

I would be happy to pick up your donated items.



Resident Updates

Blue Skies West Handbells ~ Nancy Sowada

The Blue Skies West Handbell Choir really enjoyed sharing our music at 6 performances in December and we hope you were in the audience. We are taking a break until Thursday, **January 23**, when we will meet for rehearsal in the Blue Skies West Arts and Crafts Room from 10:30 - 11:30am. If you can read music and you can be able to attend rehearsals every Thursday, please join us! We appreciate your continued contributions to the Blue Skies West Activity Coordinating Council. This allows us to keep these 30-year-old handbells in great service and condition and it allows us to purchase new music and supplies, like polishing cloths and gloves. If you have not made a contribution recently, please contribute to the Activity Coordinating Council. Thank you!

Great Courses ~ David Brands

Join us Monday evenings for two 30-minute lectures from the Great Courses. We meet at 7pm in the Roadrunner Lounge. The current lecture series is Understanding the Inventions That Changed the World. Topics can be viewed at www.wondrium.com and are chosen by those present as we conclude the current series.

Many Thanks to Blue Skies

Once again our Blue Skies Residents have proven their generosity in a big way!! Recently the Protestant Chapel sponsored a Toy Drive for Christian Assistance Ministries. We filled a van and SUV with brand new toys for their free Christmas Store. Parents who are struggling are allowed to choose a few toys for their own children. Not only are their children excited on Christmas morning but the parents have the satisfaction of giving a chosen gift to each of their children. Your many gifts allowed families to have an exciting Christmas morning. A big thanks to all who participated.

BSTW Ambassadors for 2025 ~ Stet & Karen Reid

Hi everybody, we're delighted to let you know that we will continue to manage the Ambassador Program during 2025. We learned a great deal during 2024 and want to continue expanding upon those lessons. Our most enduring lesson was that the program works well if you have a list of 50-60 volunteers. This enables everyone to participate during the year and ensures we have Ambassadors who represent all of the neighborhoods/living situations at BSTW and a variety of previous work experiences.

If you were an Ambassador during 2024, please send Stet an email or call him (see resident roster) and let him know if you do or do not wish to continue serving as Ambassadors in 2025. We've worked with some great volunteers in 2024 and hope you will all stay with the program but will understand if you say enough is enough take me/us off the list.

New people/volunteers--it's now your opportunity to become Ambassadors for the next year. We've heard from several people that they would like to become Ambassadors, but they didn't know how to join. To volunteer for 2025, send Karen an email or call her (see resident roster). Please be prepared to tell us how long you've been at BSTW, where you live (i.e., Towers, Oaks, Lakes, or Gardens), and if you have prior military experience. If you had military experience, please let us know your branch of service and area(s) of specialization. If you didn't serve in the military, we still would like to know a little bit about your occupational background. Some of you may be thinking Karen is a really nosy person, but the more we know about you, the better our match will be with prospective residents. If you have several areas in common with a potential resident, the easier your meeting/meal with them will be and the greater the opportunity will be for you both to have a pleasant experience.

Please get in touch with us during the next 30 days. We look forward to hearing from you.

Resident Updates

Dining Room Advisory Council

~ Jerry Pierce

As the newly elected DRAC Chair, I will do all that I can to make sure your dining experience is excellent and meets the wishes of the residents (customers). To succeed in this goal DRAC will need everyone's input. Inputs are especially important this month because of the trial run for requiring dinner reservations on Monday through Thursday. I have a meeting with management and Morrison's on Monday, January 6, to review the results so it is important to have your comments by then.

Please let your neighborhood DRAC representatives know how your dining experiences are meeting your desires by using the DRAC Comment Card as follows. Online is the preferred option.

Online - Two Options:

1. Via Uniguest. Click on the "Dining Services" Button. Scroll down the left column to "DRAC Comment Card" and click on it. Note: Double check that you are clicking on the BSTW Comment Card (not BSTE Comment Card).
 2. Via BSTW Portal. Scroll down the middle column to "Comment Card" and click on it.
- Hard copy: Hard copy comment cards are located at the Roadrunner entrance (on the Lakeview Dining Room entrance hallway) and beneath the TV monitor at the Lakeview Cafeteria entrance.

The next Coffee-with-the-Chef is Thursday, **January 2**, at 9:30am in the Roadrunner Lounge.

The next DRAC meeting is Thursday, **January 9**, at 1:30pm in the Roadrunner Lounge. The results of the trial run of the Monday through Thursday dinner reservations requirement will be discussed.

Remember "it starts with the food and ends with the food" because the dining experiences are a key contributor to the residents enjoyment here at Blue Skies.

Light Up Blue Skies Annual Holiday Displays Party

On Sunday, December 15, the Entertainment Committee, chaired by



Layne Perelli, hosted the annual Blue Skies Holiday Decorating Event to reveal the results of the judging of holiday displays. This event was organized and run by Beverly Moore - a big job! Lionel Moore created beautiful winner's display boards which are on display in the lobby. Beverly set up the judging, bus tours (which were a huge success), treats (BSTW Activities Staff made punch and eggnog, and handed out dozens of scrumptious cookies), and contracted the Cox Family Singers, who were outstanding. The number of attendees was the largest ever! Thank you to all for that fun and lively evening!



Thank You

Daniel Collin and family wish to express thanks & appreciation for all the love and support expressed verbally and thru your many cards and cookies after Janice passed away on November 25. Thank you to Blue Skies Hospice and the workers in the Crockett Household at The Mission, for the loving care Janice received.

Resident Updates

What Kind of Dog is That? ~ Jená Hatchett

We often get this question. Nicky is an Italian Greyhound. We were first introduced to these dogs through our children. That was 4 Italian Greyhounds ago. Even though they share characteristics with large greyhounds, they are a separate breed. First bred to hunt small animals during the Roman Empire, these graceful, sight dogs became a favorite among European Royalty. They are often seen in paintings. Nicky is typical. He wants to be in your lap or close by. Yet he is very high energy. Nicky loves the Dog Park where he can run off-leash. He has amazing speed and is very agile. These dogs top 25 mph. They have a very high prey instinct. They have no fear of heights and will chase small animals up a tree. If a squirrel gives them chase, they are off and running. About 15 years ago, we lost one of our dogs this way in 17-degree weather. We thought he was gone forever and would freeze in the cold temperature. Unbelievably, we found him three days later running with a herd of deer.



Thrift Shop Announcement ~ Annie Moore

With 2024 behind us, the Thrift Shop would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year! We're optimistically looking forward to the new year as we prepare to open our doors again on Friday, **January 3, 2025**.

Acceptance of donations will resume on Friday, **January 3, 2025**, during thrift shop regular operating hours - 7am to 1pm and on Tuesdays from 9 - 11am. Who is eligible to shop: Blue Skies of Texas (BST) employees and their family members, BST residents and their family members and guests, contractors who are working on site the day the Thrift Shop is open, and Marketing guests. BST employees must wear their ID badges and also accompany their family members while shopping at the Thrift Shop.

We can't thank ALL our residents enough for their generosity of donated items to the Thrift Shop and Furniture Store. Without that we would not be able to give back to the Village where everyone benefits from our sales.

New Year Wildflower Update ~ Marti Wessman

We continue with our Wildflower Conservation Areas at BSTW. We count on Mother Nature for rain and will continue to hope that this area of south Texas will receive enough moisture over the next several months for us to enjoy beautiful wildflowers this spring on the campus.

We unfortunately had Bastard Cabbage that grew in the area by the basketball court. We mowed them down but didn't use herbicides. We will hope for better results in that area in 2025.

We received \$100.00 again in 2024 for Wildflower seeds from the Activities Coordinating Council (ACC) which we very much appreciate.

We used the ACC money to purchase more seeds that have been dispersed in the area between the perimeter road and the woodworking building. This new area was approved by Blue Skies Management earlier in 2024 for more wildflowers.

We continue to receive cooperation and mowing from CleanScapes which is very much appreciated. We hope that 2025 will be vibrant and beautiful around campus.



Resident Updates

Resident of the Month

The most popular resident activity is the monthly birthday and anniversary celebration, which occurs on the second Wednesday evening. The “B&A” event commenced in 1988 with a cocktail hour hosted by residents, and a delicious meal prepared by our dining staff. Bonnie Gardner’s and Donna Bowman’s parents were Blue Skies residents, and they recall their enjoyment visiting their parents on “B&A” evenings. Now, Bonnie and Donna are the “B&A” co-chairs, and coordinate the twelve subcommittees who handle the menus, entertainment, pianist, information about the honorees, photography and MC. The most challenging task is handling the reservations and seating arrangements. This is similar to arranging seating for a 200-person wedding every month! They assure that requests for seating are accomplished, the honorees are near the dance floor, placing newcomers with their neighbors, providing accurate information to the dining staff, and handle last minute additions and changes. Once everyone is seated and looking happy, Bonnie and Donna take a deep breath and “high five” each other. With all their challenges and years of commitment, Bonnie and Donna consider their work an honor, fun and privilege to continue this tradition. Thank You Bonnie and Donna for making our “B&A’s” an enjoyable event.



Veteran Says, “Thank You”!

Dear Blue Skies Residents: It has been my pleasure to have assisted over 200 of our residents with their VA Disability Claims and Caregiver Program needs. After 10 plus years helping Veterans, Widows, and Family Members of Residents at Blue Skies, I plan to spend more time with family, friends, my hobbies and traveling. I will not be taking any new cases as of January 1, 2025, and only available to those residents I am “currently” assisting with a VA disability claim. If you are a Veteran, Widow or Widower of a Veteran, Ashlie Maltos, Personal Affairs Advisor, in our “Wellness Office”, has been designated to assist you with preparing for and obtaining an appointment with a local, certified Veteran Service Office (VSO). Two organizations are available at the NW 151 VA Clinic: Texas Veterans Commission VSO and Bexar County VSO. Thank You for allowing me the honor of having served you. Very respectfully yours, Ralph Kelly, Chapter Service Officer, Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Jerry Garcia Tie Sunday Brunch Society

The Quarterly meal for the Jerry Garcia Tie Sunday Brunch Society was successfully held on December 8. Wearing uniquely colorful Jerry Garcia Signature neckties were (right-to-left) Wally Pike, James Schuster, John Siebert, Peggy Gracy, Bob Gracy, Leo Bell, Jr., and Karen Davis. The women "rocked-their-ties" much better than most of the men.

Please join us on Sunday, **March 2** for the next quarterly meeting and meal. Reservations will be for 12:15pm. Food tastes better when we are well-dressed and smilingly happy. Maybe the steak omelets and mimosas have something to do with the joy, too.



Resident Updates

Rotary Corner ~ Debby Cox

All residents are welcome to attend any of the meetings of the San Antonio West Rotary Club which meets right here at Blue Skies of Texas West to hear one of our great speakers, or to learn more about our service projects. We meet the first and third Tuesday of every month in the Roadrunner Lounge from 12-1pm and you are welcome to bring your lunch. However, for the month of January we are meeting in the Helen LeMay Room.

On Tuesday, **January 7**, two of our own Rotary members will talk about their careers. Roy Diatkar will share his many experiences as a Rotarian and as a pharmacist, and Bob Gracy will talk about his experiences in biomedical research and Alzheimer's research.

On Tuesday, **January 21**, FBI Special Agent in Charge, Aaron Tapp, will speak on the FBI mission in South Texas.



A sneak peek into February: On Tuesday, **February 4** John Hutcherson will speak on personal wealth management and the Endowment Fund of The Rotary Foundation. One of our major Christmas projects is to support families in need at Allen Elementary School. This year we helped nine families with a total of thirty-nine children. Toys and clothes were provided for each child. Thank you for your support.

If you would like to learn more about our Rotary Club, please call Debby Cox (see Resident Roster) or you can visit our web site or Facebook page.

Web Site:

<https://www.RotaryClubofSanAntonioWest.org>

Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/RotarySAWest>

<https://www.RotaryClubofSanAntonioWest.org>

Thank You ~ Alex White

Early this month Veda and I celebrated her 75th Birthday in the company of many friends here at the Village. Our guests had fun and it was joyful to be among them. We had many compliments then and afterward and I want to thank those who made it happen, beginning with Teresa Santana. Teresa worked with me to pull people and ideas together in attractive unused space at an unlikely time...and we had fun. Thank you.

Our planning & performing team included Larissa Alejo and Eleanor Frisch who transformed a lunchroom into party space and Guy Fanelli, Nicki Villa and Chef Jeronimo Espiritu, who created a tasty menu. Hunter our pianist on lunch break from rehab duties entertained beautifully while Michael pored, served, cut and otherwise managed the food to keep our guests well pleased. You gave Veda and I time and confidence to be gracious hosts and we loved it. Thank you once again.

Roadrunner Newsletters

If you are interested in a printed version of the Roadrunner, one can be made available to you at the front desk. Don't forget that you also have the option of having the Roadrunner emailed to you. Simply email your request to

Roadrunner@blueskiestx.org and you will be added to the newsletter email distribution list.

Deadline for the next Roadrunner is
Wednesday, **January 22**

Send articles to roadrunner@blueskiestx.org

Next Publication Date: Friday, **January 31**

Resident Updates

2024 Tax Prep by AARP/IRS Certified Preparers – It's Time to Gather Your Docs!!

This month we would like to address the collection of tax documents and signing-up for help with preparation. This year we are expanding our tax prep services to three (3) days per week starting in February 2025. Sign-up sheets will be available at the Front Desk starting February 1st for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings. Do not sign-up for a slot until you have all your documents in hand.

Military retirees need their 1099-R from DFAS. Watch for it in your mail. If you cannot find it by Feb 1, 2025, you can download a copy from <https://mypay.dfas.mil> or use the telephone self-service option at 1-800-321-1080.

What docs should you look for?: W-2s for any earned income. 1099Rs for all pensions or retirement plan payouts. 1099INTs for all interest earnings. If you have not received a 1099-INT, bring your end of year statement from the bank or credit union. You still need to report interest of less than \$10. 1099DIVs for all accounts that paid you dividends. Also bring brokerage statements (1099B) for investments. We try to collect and organize these docs based on the source (e.g., DFAS, financial providers, real estate closings, and other potential gains and losses). If we did your filing last year, we gave you a hardcopy return that lists all those inputs from last year. You just need to remember the changes in providers and new transactions during 2024.

People always have questions about itemized deductions. Remember that recent IRS policy has dramatically increased the amount of the Standard Deduction. Your itemized list needs to exceed that Standard Deduction to achieve a larger benefit. You should be tracking your deductions, but do not bury yourself in paperwork or stress if your total is less than the Standard Deduction. Please do not make other appointments in the morning you schedule to have your taxes done. We are trying to have all taxes done by noon and need you here to review and sign the return. If you want a direct debit or credit from/to your checking account, bring a check, not deposit slip, so we have the correct routing number and account number.

If you have questions about the service and basic tax issues, please contact Al Wesson or John Folkson. Phone numbers can be found in the directory.

Forget-Me-Not, A Series of Presentations on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

The forget-me-not flower is a symbol for Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementias, representing remembrance and memory loss. Alzheimer's affects 6.5mn people in the US and 55mn people worldwide. Age is a primary factor in the onset of dementia, so this is a meaningful topic for all residents.

Our first program speaker will be Dr. Sudha Seshadri, founding Director of the Glenn Biggs Institute for Alzheimer's and Neurodegenerative Diseases at UT Health San Antonio. She is scheduled to speak on Thursday, **March 27**, at 1:30pm in the Roadrunner Lounge. Please sign up on Uniguest.

We need your questions... Dr. Seshadri is welcoming your ideas and questions in advance of her presentation. So please submit your questions and suggestions on Alzheimer's and other types of dementia as soon as possible and no later than Friday, **February 28**. Email to: janelukehill@gmail.com or leave a note in the West internal mailbox "H". Please include your name, in the event we need to reach you for clarification.

Thank you for your participation and we hope to see many of you at Dr. Seshadri's presentation in March.



Resident Updates

2025 Blue Skies West Residents' Council Members

Executive Committee

Chair: JoAnn Gonzales

Vice Chair: Ric Cuadros

Executive Secretary: Christine Ritchey

Area Representatives

Tower 1: John Shore and Alan Chalfont

Tower 2: Mary Jane Caudill and Bill Lee

Tower 3: Clarke Ehrlich and Susan Woodrow

Tower 4: Ric Cuadros and Chuck Hobbs

The Gardens 800-900: Julie Conrardy and Tom Cochran

The Lakes 1100-1500: Susan Shumaker and Phyllis Brooks

The Lakes 1600-2000: Linda Prose and Ron Craft

The Oaks 2100-2400: Lou Genco and Marilyn Williams

The Oaks 2500-2800: Ken Wallace and Bob Gracy

Freedom House: John Siebert

Liberty House: Sue Robert

Standing Committee Chairpersons

Finance: Kent Williams

Hospitality: Sue Blansett

Wellness and Life Enrichment: Mike Fox

Entertainment: Layne Perelli

Communication Services: Bob Seigel

Recognitions: Betty Overacker

Elections for Representatives and Officers: Christine Ritchey

Technology Support: Ron Miller

Ex-Officio Members

Air Force Village Board Member: Roger Hansen

Activities Coordinating Committee: Jerre Griffin

Dining Room Advisory Council: Jerry Pierce

High Fight Center: Richard Gardner

Recording Secretary: Susan Griffith

Sports, Games, & Scores

Friday Night Games ~ Karen Tidler

We've been having fun on Friday nights, starting at 6:30pm in CC3, playing games. This particular night included two tables of 5 Crown, Chicken Foot (a dominos game), Phase 10, Scrabble, Rummikub and a table learning bridge. New folks are welcome, even patient to teach you how to play the games.

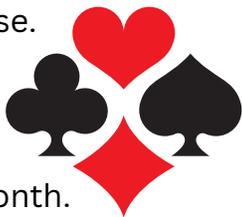


Bridge

The bridge group meets on Mondays starting at 1pm to play Party Bridge. Showtime is 12:30pm. This is an open game, but you need a partner please.

We meet in CC3. There is a sign-up book in CC3. The bridge club also plays Duplicate, one Tuesday a month.

This is a limited space game. There is a sign-up book. Contact Joy Hough with questions.



Blue Skies Hand Elbow and Foot

~ Gaye True

There's a new game in town... If you have never played cards, play a little or a lot; or are considered a true card shark, you are invited to learn a new form of triple canasta. Easy to learn with lots of twists to make winning interesting. No money, no reservation, no partner. Just show up by 6:30pm on Monday evenings in CC3 and we will show you the ropes.

You may pick up a copy of the rules and instructions along with a sample score sheet at the front desk but you don't have to preview the rules to play. This game is designed to keep you on your toes (and keep the brain cells clicking) so give it a chance. Have questions? Call Frieda Schutza or Gaye True (see resident roster).

BSTW Poker Clubs ~ Ron Rickard

We have Monday night and Tuesday night Poker Clubs here at BSTW. Both Clubs meet in the game room across from the Thrift Shop, and both Clubs are looking for new regular and substitute players. All qualified games are both high hand and low hand split pots. We gather and play from about 6:30 until 9:30pm.

Both Clubs play with a \$5.00 chip buy-in and have nickel/dime/quarter---3 bet limits.

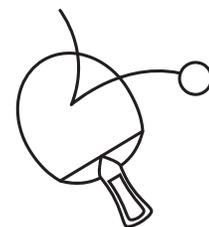
Clubs play with a deck including a joker (which can be an ace or used as a wild card in straights and flushes). Games include OMAHA/5 Card Draw or Stud/7 Card Stud & 10 Card Stud. Texas Hold-em is not played because of betting limits.

The Monday night Club also plays several additional various wild card games which can be challenging. Stop by either night and check out the play to spur your interest.



Ping Pong ~ Bob Stuckert

There is a ping pong table, located in Vista Room 19, for community use. Paddles and balls are in the first wardrobe on the right as you enter the room. Play is on a first come, first served basis. Please cover the table when you are finished.



Blackjack Winners for Quarter 4

Lou Genco - 10350
Chris Wakenell - 5500
Jim Wakenell - 4675



Sports, Games, & Scores

Tennis & Pickleball ~ Linda Prose

Our Tennis and Pickleball courts offer a great opportunity for fun and exercise.



Please come out and join us for Tennis on Monday and Friday mornings and for Pickleball on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings. Please contact Linda Prose (see resident directory) for details on the start times. See y'all out there!

Adventures of the Seasoned Soles

~ John and Pat MacIntyre

The Blue Skies Seasoned Soles finished the year with several of our group participating in a variety of races.

On December 8th, the biggest race of the month was the last Rock N Roll Marathon race to be held in San Antonio. Pat Perry and Lu Schuster both completed the Half Marathon, with Lu winning first place in her age group. Given the number of participants, that was a major achievement.

That same weekend, Dan Van Syoc travelled to Midland to run the Jingle Bell 5K with his son and granddaughter.

Pat Perry ran the San Antonio Road Runners Santa Antonio 5K on the 15th of December.

The first day of winter, the 21st of December, saw a group of our runners and walkers driving to the Marriott Hill Country Resort to finish the year by running the St. Nick at Night 5K or 10K, an evening race throughout the property and golf course of the Marriott Resort. Tom Cochran ran the 5K, with Tom winning first place in his age group. Dan Van Syoc finished third in his age group in the same race. Also running were Cynthia Cochran, John & Pat MacIntyre, Brenda Perry, Steve Perry, and John Paul Sullivan. Pat Perry finished her year by running the St Nick at Night 10K.

It was a great year of running and walking at a variety of local and other races wearing the Blue Skies of Texas "colors" and representing our community.

Ladies BUNCO Group ~ JoAnn Oldham

Ladies, warm up those dice

🎲🎲🎲 for a new year of BUNCO fun. We will be playing on Tuesdays, **January 7 and 21** at 3:30pm in CC3. Please bring \$1 for the "Pot" and a friend. Plan to join us for dinner in The Lakeview following play.

Mahjong ~ Nan Smith

Wright Patterson Mahjong meets every Tuesday at 1pm in CC3.

National Mahjong meets every Wednesday at 12:30pm and Friday at 1pm in CC3.

All are welcome. Please come and join us.

We will teach you to play, if you are new to the game.



Spiritual News

Catholic News

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God - Tuesday, **December 31**, at 2pm in the High Flight Chapel.

Saturdays - 11am Mass (For Sunday by special dispensation of the San Antonio Archbishop) in the High Flight Chapel.

First Saturday of the Month - Anointing of the Sick following Saturday Mass.

Second Saturday of the Month - Birthdays and Anniversaries will be recognized with a special blessing at Saturday Mass.

Saturdays/Sundays - Freedom House: Catholic residents will be visited, beginning about 1:30pm, with Holy Communion and prayers.

Third Tuesday – 9am, Catholic Council meets in Conference Room #110. Guests are welcome.

Wednesdays - 9am, Communion Service in the Vista Willow Chapel.

First Wednesday – 9:30am, Benediction and Adoration following Communion Service in the Vista Willow Chapel.

Third Wednesday – 9:30am, Rosary following Communion Service in the Vista Willow Chapel.

Fridays – 3-4pm, Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration, and Divine Mercy Chaplet in the Vista Willow Chapel.

Pastoral Care - To meet privately with a priest for Reconciliation or Anointing, please contact Fr. Richard Bendorf (see Resident Directory).

Homebound - If you are homebound and unable to attend Mass but would like to receive Holy Communion, you may contact John Siebert, Barbara Wilson, Mary Tucker, or Gil Wolfe by phone, text, or email and they will arrange for a Lay Eucharistic Minister to bring the Holy Eucharist to your home (see Resident Directory).

Hospital Visits - Most hospitals have a Catholic priest available; ask a staff member to contact a priest.

Episcopal Church Services with the Holy Eucharist continue on Thursdays at 3pm in the High Flight Chapel.

Centering Prayer at Blue Skies West ~ Linda Ricketts

We will meet in the Willow Chapel at 8:30am on Fridays, **January 3 and 17**. Questions, call Jenna Hatchett or Robert Ferre.