



# JULY - SEPTEMBER QUARTER CALENDAR OF EVENTS



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | JULY-SEPT 2018

## MASTER GARDENING TRAINING COMING TO COVENANT WOODS

Becoming a master gardener requires intensive classroom training -- and soon, this training will be taking place at Covenant Woods. Beginning September 6th through November 15th, The Hanover Master Gardeners Association will hold their 60-hour classroom training program in the Commons at The Lodge. The class, which is open to the public, will also venture out onto campus greenspaces to observe many practices such as native landscaping. Training will be led by members of the Virginia Cooperative Extension and may include guest speakers.

Master gardeners are individuals who are trained to teach others about gardening. When they're part of the Hanover Master Gardeners Association, these gardeners help with plant sales and clinics, speak to professional groups

and take part in other educational activities.

To become a master gardener, one must complete 60 hours of classroom training, take an exam, complete a 50-hour internship and eight more hours of advanced education, and volunteer for 20 hours every year. The 60-hour training program at Covenant Woods will cover topics like growing from seeds, soil management, fruit trees and berries, vegetable gardening, native plants and much more.

Residents and friends of Covenant Woods are welcome to sign up for the Master Gardeners Program. The fee is \$125 for one person, \$145 for couples, and \$225 if you're interested in the training only and do not intend to volunteer.

### JULY

*Caremerge goes live. Kiosks to be installed. Food Truck Fridays!  
Look for announcements of food truck visits to Covenant Woods.*

- 5<sup>TH</sup>** Bistro Renovations Begin
- 11<sup>TH</sup>** Bistro Renovations End  
Traditions Renovations Begin
- 23<sup>RD</sup>** Resident Town Hall  
Caremerge Launch
- 30<sup>TH</sup>** Traditions Renovations Complete

### AUGUST

- 7<sup>TH</sup>** National Night Out Event
- 20<sup>TH</sup>** Employee Town Hall

### SEPTEMBER

*Master Gardening Classes begin. New website goes live.*

- 3<sup>RD</sup>** Labor Day Picnic
- 21<sup>ST</sup>** Resident Annual Report Brunch

## Point, Click, Caremerge

### NEW ONLINE INFORMATION HUB IN THE WORKS FOR COVENANT WOODS

Covenant Woods will soon have its own virtual news center. With the new Caremerge application in place, residents will have easy access to an online source of community information. This user-friendly application will feature searchable calendars for all levels of care, as well as menus for all dining venues, resident interest group information, and much more. Residents will also be able to message each other and staff instantly through Caremerge. The system is projected to be up and running this summer.

According to Lauren Marwitz, CTRS Recreation Manager, Covenant Woods is putting this system in place to give residents a way to customize their recreation schedule. "Residents will be able to filter their calendars by dimension of wellness. For example, if they only want to see music programs or art programs, they can easily filter their calendars to see only those programs."

Caremerge can be downloaded and accessed on personal smartphones, tablets and computers. In addition, dedicated Caremerge kiosks are being installed in the Manor foyer and Lodge foyer.

Covenant Woods will hold tutorials and offer assistance on downloading and navigating the new app closer to the launch date.

In the future, with permission granted by residents, Manor East families will be invited to stay connected to the community through Caremerge. This application will give families the ability to view Covenant Woods programs, receive Covenant Woods information pertinent to families, and the potential for more features down the road. Family members will be contacted in the future on how to get connected.

Applications are available at:  
<http://hanovermastergardeners.org/master-gardener-training>.

Those with questions can contact Angelette Pryor at **804-752-4309** or [angellp@vt.edu](mailto:angellp@vt.edu). The deadline for registration is July 9, 2018.



## EMPLOYMENT OUTREACH

### EFFORT UNDERWAY TO BRAND COVENANT WOODS AS EMPLOYER

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Virginia's unemployment rate fell to just 3.4% this year. In Hanover County, those rates are even lower, with February 2018's numbers showing a rate of only 2.8% unemployment. While these statistics are great news for those looking for work, this situation presents challenges to employers like Covenant Woods, as the competition for qualified employees gets even tighter.

To ensure that the community continues to attract and retain high quality associates, Covenant Woods is launching a new Employment Branding Initiative. According to John Dwyer, President and CEO of Covenant Woods, "Feedback from our employees shows that people love working here – in fact, annual surveys show that 90% of all employees would recommend us to friends looking for a job. The problem is, we're a 'best kept secret' when it comes to employment. We've done a wonderful job reaching out and branding our community to potential residents, but now, we must put the same effort into positioning ourselves as a great place to work."

Covenant Woods currently offers recruits a highly competitive benefits package, which includes retirement plans and scholarship opportunities. Salaries are set near the 75th percentile. This level is higher than the average, and it also allows the organization to stay properly staffed within budget. The community is also known for its low resident-to-staff ratio, which translates into more face time per resident and a lighter workload per employee.

The Covenant Woods leadership team is currently working with Anderson Performance to put the Employment Branding Initiative in place, exploring issues such as wage scales, prospect targeting and new hire onboarding. Says John Dwyer, "We already have the infrastructure in place. The next step is to be more effective in communicating our advantages to the greater community. When we do that, we'll get where we need to be to become a go-to place for high quality job-seekers."

## ANNUAL REPORT BRUNCH TO BE HELD SEPTEMBER 21ST

The Covenant Woods Annual Report is filled with information on donors, leadership, financials and successes of the past year. Those who want the story behind the facts are invited to attend this year's Annual Report Brunch, which will be held for two sessions on September 21st.

According to Development and Community Relations Manager Elizabeth Pace, "The Brunch will bring the Annual Report to life and provide a glimpse at all the entities that encompass the Covenant Woods community."

Donor engagement increased in fiscal year 2018 (April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018), setting the tone for a very positive Annual Report. Each fund will be discussed during this "year in review" event and will include employee scholarships, the Covenant Society, Covenant Fund, Holmes Community Fund and The Capital Fund. The event will give attendees a chance to see first-hand the power of giving.

Residents, friends and donors are all invited to attend the Annual Report Brunch. RSVPs are being taken by David Sukol at 804-569-8006. Those wishing to attend should leave a message noting their preference of a 9:00 am or 11:00 am seating time.

## CHANGE IS ON THE MENU for Traditions and The Bistro

Residents and staff can watch for big changes taking place in two of Covenant Woods' favorite dining venues. During the month of July, renovation projects will launch for both Traditions and The Bistro. According to Director of Dining Michael Scheff, these renovations are forward thinking. "We understand what both current and future residents are looking for in their dining choices, and that's why we're bringing them a combination of both healthier products and personal rewards."

### As our clientele changes, we know we have to evolve as well.

With construction starting in early July, The Bistro will change both its menu and its space. This popular venue for both residents and staff will adjust its menu to focus on healthier choices. Along with hot and cold grab-and-go items, The Bistro will also offer a selection of made-to-order foods. Salad, beverage, ice cream and snack choices will be expanded, and an easy-to-use self-serve coffee station will

ensure a fresh cup every time. New counters, new equipment and new staff members will round out the changes. To accommodate the temporary closing of The Bistro, residents will be able to carry out items from the main dining room and multi-purpose room.

Renovation at Traditions is projected to start in mid-July, and during that time, the restaurant will operate out of the Multi-Purpose Room. Upon completion, Traditions' whole environment will be enhanced with new paint, a number of changes to furniture, new buffets and new food concepts. A higher focus will be placed on wellness, which will be reflected in a salad bar with twice as many choices.

Says Mike Scheff, "As our clientele changes, we know we have to evolve as well. That's why we've brought in new concepts like sushi, and a mixed menu that includes Southern style, classic country foods and selections that will entice those on a heart-healthy diet. In the end, our goal is to exceed our residents' expectations and entice future residents."