

GOLDEN CROSS Senior Ministries

Laurie S. Garrison, Executive Director

The mission of GOLDEN CROSS Senior Ministries: To enhance the quality of life for all seniors served by Wesley Living.

Golden Cross Senior Ministries was established in 1997 to support the 2,200 residents living in 33 Wesley Living communities by providing the vital “extras” needed to help enrich their lives and give them a purpose. As one of the Wesley Living staff members says, “It’s amazing that when you are having fun you forget about your aches and pains.”

Golden Cross fills a gap for these seniors in three important ways.

Resident Fund:

First, we help add some fun and purpose to their lives. Our funds pay for field trips like visits to museums and movie matinees. Social activities paid for by GOLDEN CROSS funds include birthday parties, bingo, arts and craft activities, and meals at holiday time. Plus, GOLDEN CROSS funds pay for educational programming such as exercise classes, lectures, and music classes.

The average age for the typical resident is 74. Most of them live at or below the national poverty line and after paying rent, not much is left over. GOLDEN CROSS fills the gap for these seniors by accepting in-kind and monetary donations to provide much needed daily-use items such as paper products, cleaning supplies, incontinence wear—anything used daily. Some daily-use items are given out as bingo prizes. The idea is that while residents are socializing, they are winning and getting items they need without having to always ask for them.

Homeless Initiative:

Second, GOLDEN CROSS fills the gap for new residents who qualify as homeless. These seniors may have been removed from their home due to uninhabitable conditions. Perhaps they live with their family, but the family has decided that they can no longer support this senior. When they qualify as homeless, they usually have nothing. For these residents, GOLDEN CROSS supplies a complete move-in kit, including everything needed to restart life: a bed, dresser, sofa, dining table and chairs (purchased from Vaughn Furniture in Memphis), plus \$325 worth of household items including towels, linens, cookware, plates, utensils, and cleaning supplies. The total cost of a move-in kit is \$1,890 and is paid for by donations to GOLDEN CROSS.

GOLDEN CROSS relies on monetary and in-kind donations to do all of this work. 100 percent of these gifts go directly to support the needs of the 2,200 seniors served. Here’s what your donations accomplished in 2022:

- \$79,500 was spent on social events and interactions to fight loneliness and isolation;
- \$49,033 was spent on catered Christmas meals and gifts for residents;
- and \$42,449 was spent on basic furniture and move-in kits turning 34 former homeless seniors’ new-found shelter into sanctuary.

Endowment Fund:

Third, The Endowment Fund represents a permanent lasting gift protecting the future for GOLDEN CROSS Senior ministries for a lasting legacy to all low-income seniors into the future. Rev. Jerry Corlew, founder of GOLDEN CROSS Senior Ministries, had a vision for this ministry 26 years ago that was based on Matthew 25: “Whenever you have done these things to the least of these, my brother and sister, you have done it unto me.”

GOLDEN CROSS is facing an increasing number of seniors who need our support. Each year, the first Sunday in May is designated as GOLDEN CROSS Sunday, when congregations across the TWK Conference generously support this ministry. Your support, prayers, encouragement, and donations are much more than a blessing for the seniors we serve; they are things that matter the most to those who have the least. Individual donations can be made throughout the year by going to goldencross.org and clicking on the donate button on the home page.