

Editor: Henny van Dijk

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August, 2021

The Retiree Benefits Meeting



NO PREMIUM INCREASE FOR PLAN YEAR 2021-2022

The 2021 Annual Retiree Benefits meeting was held on July 15. It was an interesting affair - a hybrid meet combining "in-person" attendance by UTHHealth retirees and the virtual attendance by Zoom with the representatives of BCBS and Express Script. The immediate take away - no significant changes in coverage or contributions so if you don't make any changes the coverage will continue through 2021/22. Attendance in person was primarily by about 20 UTHRO members as they were the only ones notified of the where and when (UCT room 1505 from 10-12). The Benefits team had put a lot of thought into making this meeting a fun and informative one with prizes and food. Several UTHRO members also attended via Zoom and every attendee (either in person or virtual) could ask the Reps questions. Most people complained about the fact that Austin had not yet (as of today July 22) send the Benefits package which was originally promised to arrive on July 7. You have now just over 1 week (July 22 - 31) to make sure that you have the right coverage or if you need to make changes. Let's blame Covid on this one too, but don't blame the Benefits team of Houston who did a great job of organizing and making it an event.

Team members - The recently appointed Director of Payroll & Benefits Patricia Hinojosa, Betty Amburgey, Stephanie Jones and Jennifer Figueroa. The two virtual representatives were Jackie from BCBS and Mike from Express Script, who gave their presentations "live" so people could ask questions. One interesting one was when your spouse who is not a UT employee and on Medicare would he/she be financially better off to sign up for a supplemental plan rather than the BCBS UTSelect, which is not a supplemental, but a full fledged second insurance which covers many items Medicare does not. My favorite being their global coverage at 80%, but also a large number of prescription drugs like "composite formulated" ones.

Benefits Meeting cont...

Finally BCBS Health Advocacy Solutions features 24/7 access to an RN, Pharmacist or Social Worker by calling **1-866-882-2034**.

There was a question about if HEB can deliver 90 days drugs for retirees other than Express Script or Walgreens and the answer is yes. My wife and I have gotten our drugs from our neighborhood HEB for some time now.

I want to give a special "shout-out" to Charlie Figari who "compted" the parking fees for the attendees.





Sep. 14 Brookwood

Sep. 29 Endowment Award

Oct. 19 Health Symposium

Nov. 18 Holiday Luncheon

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Early Intervention for Caregivers



An early intervention developed for caregivers of patients with serious illnesses or injuries will be tested by UTHHealth researchers. "In the case of serious injury, chronic illness, or diagnoses that impact patients' abilities to live and function independently, a loved one often takes on the significant role of providing assistance and support to the patient," said Deborah Little, PhD, principal investigator and professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at UTHealth. "These caregivers deserve our admiration and we cannot forget that providing care to loved ones over the course of months to years can have a profound and significant impact on the health and well-being of the caregiver." Currently, more than 45 million Americans serve in an informal caregiving role and receive little to no support, and more than 50% of persons serving as a caregiver receive diagnoses of depression, anxiety disorders, and/or develop problems with substance use. Little and her team will recruit 300 participants from people who are potential caregivers to patients admitted to the surgical intensive care unit (SICU) at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center. They will test whether an early intervention that begins before the patient is even discharged can reduce caregiver burden in both the long and short term.

The trial will break participants into three groups, with the control group receiving traditional support in the form of counseling groups and access to community support. The second group will receive one-on-one problem-solving therapy, during which the caregivers identify what they are struggling with and work through how they could modify or change their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The third group will receive a diary that has prompts based on problem-solving therapy designed to identify the stressors and lead them through developing solutions to combat those stressors.

"The diary will have simple, open-ended prompts for the person to respond to such as, 'How do you feel today?' and 'What were you thinking during those feelings and did you do anything to combat those feelings?'" said Little, director of research of the Trauma and Resilience Center at McGovern Medical School.

At the end of a 30-day period with once-a-week check-ins, the participants will be screened to see if there is a reduction in their levels of depression and anxiety.

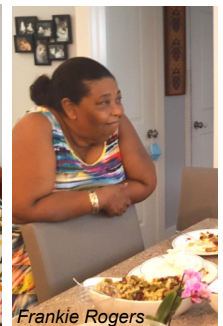
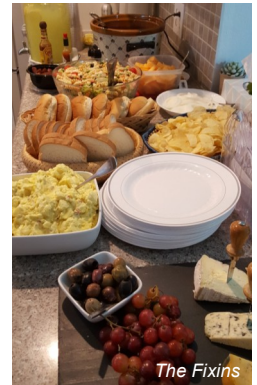
"Our goal is to provide different interventions that can be used to help these individuals when they might be coping with feelings of depression or anxiety and to provide tools so that they do not become overwhelmed," Little said.

"If we can determine that a tool helps these individuals cope with their feelings in a long-lasting way, we can adapt it to help those other populations as well."

Adapted from an article by UTHealth Publications' Alexis Shelley

Reporting on the BBQ ...

"If you can't find an event, make your own!" That's about the scope of it when dealing with the Rittmans, Gill & Barry, our Event Committee who wants us to get back to normal and together and so far with about 4 events in our future they are doing some great stuff. However sometimes you have to improvise and so they did on July 22 at their home organizing a BBQ luncheon for UTHRO members. I let the pictures do the talking because that's also what this is about—getting together, talk about yesteryear or tomorrow with those we used to work with, so in general, fellowship and what better way then with some Texas BBQ and fixings, compliments of Barry & Gill Rittman.



When you see all the smiling faces it means we were glad to see each other and that the food was just too good. They all brought desserts or salads so the luncheon was another success story. Thank you again Barry and Gill for putting up a great luncheon and the skillful way they managed to fit 25 people in their living room and kitchen.

Story and images by Henny van Dijk



The Brookwood Community...



Now that we are slowly getting back to normal in our daily lives, the Event Committee has organized a field trip to the Brookwood Community Center in Brookshire on Sep. 14. It will be a bus trip and we plan to have lunch on the premises.

Brookwood provides an educational environment that cre-

ates meaningful jobs, builds a sense of belonging, and demands dignity and respect for adults with disabilities. The campus consists of eight group homes, two single-family staff homes, a residential Inn, a health and dental clinic, Worship Center, enterprise building, activities and administration building, 47 greenhouses, Gift and Garden Center and the Café at Brookwood, and several other support buildings. The programs serve: 110 resident adults (known as Brookwood "citizens") who are functionally disabled and live at Brookwood 24/7. Another 80 plus adults participate in our day program. The range of diverse needs we help include people with autism spectrum disorders; intellectual disabilities; developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury; dual diagnosis; and/or aging care needs. We also serve as a resource for families. Brookwood's outreach program actively shares our innovative concepts and techniques with other professional caregivers across our nation and around the world.

Our purpose is: To provide opportunity through education so that Brookwood citizens will acquire meaningful job skills and hold real jobs in the Community's own business enterprises and will experience the pride that accompanies the ability to contribute to one's own support as well as grow socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

"Like most things, Brookwood grew out of necessity."

When parents are faced with a child with a disability, the agony of finding appropriate resources for that child can be overwhelming as there are not too many options. People with disabilities, like all people, have a basic need to feel useful and feel they are contributing to the world. There is a real difference between sitting around the house in a wheelchair all day doing nothing and sitting in a wheelchair and making something of value for someone else to enjoy. Hence, The Brookwood Community was founded in 1985. It was built on 475 acres of rolling hills in Brookshire. Brookwood provides a safe environment with proper nutrition, plenty of activity and productive challenges.



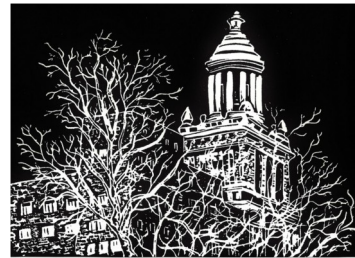
Imagine If You Will ...



Houston's Main Street in 1927

The Summer of 1928 in Houston Texas and you work in one of those high rises Downtown. The sweltering heat permeates the rooms while you anxiously await the 5 o'clock quitting time. This scenario for all of you working in buildings like the UCT tower have one person to thank for AC—

Mellie Esperson, whose 1941 19 story building was the first in Houston with Central Air. The Espersons were very successful business people who added to the Houston skyline two high rises, the Niels and Mellie Esperson buildings. Niels passed away in 1922 and his widow erected a unique building in his name. And to any Houstonian that Esperson building has a very memorable façade standing between the glass entombed neighbors. That first building (Niels) originated as a commemorative and it became the tallest building in all of Texas as well as west of the Mississippi River. It ranked as the third-largest in all of America back in



the year 1927. It was and still is called the Niels Esperson Building. Mellie wished for this first memorial building to be architecturally distinctive. She traveled to Europe to get some design ideas. She liked a particular building in Rome that was

built in 1502 by Donato Bramante. Mellie employed architect John Eberson to transform her ideas into plans to be executed. Thus it was that Italian Renaissance architecture with columns, urns, and terraces with a crowning six-story tiered monument on the top of the building that became a distinctive part of downtown Houston. Gold leaf added to the luxurious crowning adornment of the tempietto and illumination at night gave it even more prominence. The Niels Esperson building is 32 stories tall and rises 410 feet from the ground. Much taller skyscrapers now exist in downtown Houston and have for some time. Fortunately, they are built some distance away. So these Esperson buildings can still be viewed without being dwarfed by adjacent structures.

Completed in 1941 was the adjacent Mellie Esperson Building built during the Great Depression, it offered the most considerable amount of office space in one structure at that time. It also had central air conditioning, which was a first. The Mellie Esperson building is 19 stories tall. She used the same architect, John Eberson plus his brother Drew, to draw up the designs for her building. Mellie Esperson is carved upon "her" building, and she had Niels Esperson inscribed onto "his" structure. Mellie died in 1945.

Her remains are in Forest Park Cemetery.

UTHRO

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*To update your address or phone number
please contact us at 281-655-1983*

And Now For Something Completely Different... A Great Reminder...!

Whatever your dream is, it is not too late to achieve it. You aren't a failure because you haven't found fame and fortune by the age of 21—Grandma Moses didn't begin her painting career until age 76

At age 23, Oprah was fired from her first reporting job

At age 23, Tina Fey was working at a YMCA

At age 24, Stephen King was working as a janitor and living in a trailer

At age 27, Vincent Van Gogh failed as a missionary and went to art school

At age 28, J.K. Rowling was a suicidal single parent living on welfare

At age 30, Harrison Ford was a carpenter

At age 30, Martha Stewart was a stockbroker

Julia Child released her first cookbook at age 39, and got her own show at 51

Morgan Freeman landed his first MAJOR movie role at age 52

Never tell yourself you're too old to make it...

Never tell yourself you missed your chance...

Never tell yourself that you aren't good enough...

You can do it. Whatever it is that sets your soul on fire !!

UTHRO OFFICERS 2021

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