

suburban life

Scarlett!

pg. 50

A sprawling, pet-friendly campus makes **Dunwoody Village** "the perfect place to be" for residents and their furry friends.

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A sprawling, pet-friendly campus makes **Dunwoody Village** “the perfect place to be” for residents and their furry friends.

Part of the

Family

by MINDY TORAN photography by JODY ROBINSON

When Connie Carino began scouting for a retirement community in the area, she had one stipulation: The community had to accept dogs.

“I wasn’t going anywhere without my 11-year-old wirehaired dachshund, Jock (short for Giacomo),” says Carino, a retired nurse who had been living in Bryn Mawr. “He’s a very special dog, and an important part of our family.”

Luckily, Connie and her husband, Jim, did not have to look far. They discovered Dunwoody Village, a continuing-care retirement community for active adults in Newtown Square. The community offers independent residential homes, personal care, and memory care, in addition to providing a welcoming environment for pets. Located on 83 sprawling acres, the campus offers a number of hiking and walking trails, a wildlife refuge, and a dog park to encourage residents to socialize outdoors with their furry friends.

“Dunwoody is home to about 340 residents and approximately 20 dogs in our independent living community, which includes apartments, country houses, and carriage homes,” says Monica Knauss, Dunwoody’s community relations coordinator. “Both the residents and their dogs are very involved in the community, and our expansive grounds provide plenty of opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities.”

Jean Fisk and her husband moved to Dunwoody from the Chicago area approxi-

mately three years ago. The ability to bring dogs into the community has been a godsend.

“We didn’t know anyone when we moved here,” says Fisk, whose daughter lives in Bryn Mawr and encouraged her parents to look at the campus in order to be closer to the family. “It’s a beautiful campus, and the people here are very friendly and welcoming. We would often visit my daughter, who has a four-year-old cairn terrier, and one day my husband decided he wanted to get a dog. We had never even considered getting a dog when we moved in, but the community made it easy to bring a pet into our home. We’re now blessed with a very energetic, two-year-old cairn terrier named Violet.”

About a year after moving into Dunwoody, Fisk’s husband’s health began to decline and he moved into the Care Center on campus, which provides skilled nursing services. Fisk is still able to see her husband on a regular basis, but having Violet to keep her company has helped her ease the transition to living alone.

“She has definitely helped me feel less lonely, and people always stop to say hello when we’re walking around outside,” she says. “The residents in the community have also been so supportive and have made it so easy to adjust to living here.”





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— **Connie Carino**, resident of Dunwoody Village

"I never realized how much it means to people to be able to hold a dog. It's magical," she says. "He's a very mellow dog, and he loves the attention. He seems to know how important his job is, and he even 'smiles' at the residents."

Carino and Fisk truly believe the pet-friendly amenities offered at Dunwoody have played a major role in their satisfaction with life at the community.

"Especially now, during the pandemic, having a dog has helped lessen the feeling of isolation," says Fisk. "We're able to get outside and walk, go to the dog park, and visit my husband through the window at the Care Center."

Adds Carino, "Dunwoody made it easy to make the choice to transition into a senior living community. It's a great location, right in the heart of everything but far enough away that you can see nature right outside of your window. It's a beautiful campus with lots of wildlife and walking trails, and it's the perfect place to be if you have a dog. I can't imagine living anywhere else." ■



The dogs of Dunwoody play a key role in the overall health and happiness of the community. Some, like Jock, even serve as therapy dogs for residents living in the Care Center, in addition to visiting with staff members and entertaining others on campus.

"On Halloween we hold a dog parade where residents dress up their pets in costumes and walk around the outside of the Care Center and around the community so members of the community can see them," says Knauss. "The dogs seem to know their role in cheering everyone up, and they even know whose offices to stop by and visit for treats every day. We often find that when people have a companion, it helps them find a purpose within the community."

In addition to providing quality care for its residents, Dunwoody offers on-site veterinary services for residents with pets by way of a visiting veterinarian.

"Our residents' pets are members of the family," Knauss insists, "and it's important to provide them with the care they need as well."

For Carino, who spent years caring for others during her nursing career, bringing joy to other residents through Jock's therapy sessions has been extremely rewarding.



DUNWOODY VILLAGE

3500 West Chester Pike • Newtown Square, PA 19073
(610) 359-4400 | dunwoody.org