

suburban life



Maureen Casey, the new president and CEO of **Dunwoody Village**, leads the Newtown Square-based retirement community into a bold, bright future. page 68

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Maureen Casey (far right) talks with Dunwoody residents Steve Ruzansky and Susan Bell.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

Maureen Casey, the new president and CEO of Dunwoody Village, leads the Newtown Square-based retirement community into a bold, bright future.

by **BILL DONAHUE** photography by **JODY ROBINSON**

MAUREEN CASEY'S CHILDHOOD WAS BLESSED with the rarest kind of good fortune. Specifically, she got to grow up with both sets of grandparents, and even some of her great-grandparents.

"I remember spending a lot of time with them," she recalls. "We even went on vacation together. I always appreciated the wisdom they had to share."

The experience fundamentally changed her, and guided her path in high school, when she started working as a nurse's aide, and higher education: a bachelor's in biology from the University of the Sciences, a master's in gerontology from the University of Pennsylvania, master's-level coursework in health administration and education from Saint Joseph's University.

Earlier this year, Casey succeeded Sherry Smyth as the president and CEO of Dunwoody Village, a continuing care retirement community in Newtown Square. She brings to the organization her years of management experience and leadership skills honed in the administrations of some of the Philadelphia area's most respected healthcare organizations and continuing-care retirement communities.

"I have known about Dunwoody since



Casey reviews plans for Dunwoody's new community center with Facilities Director Wes Kuehnle and Josh Hauser of Warfel Construction.

I was in graduate school for gerontology, and the community has certainly upheld its good reputation,” Casey says. “It was extremely important for me to come to a mission-driven not-for-profit community, and I’m thrilled to be working at a single site that is financially secure and known for its quality. The health care here has a five-star reputation, and the community is so warm and welcoming.”

She comes to Dunwoody at an exciting time, even a transformative one. Look around the idyllic campus, and signs of change abound—namely, the construction of a \$24 million, 30,000-square-foot expansion of the existing community center that will significantly enhance life on campus. Once complete, the sprawling new community center will touch multiple aspects of residents’ lifestyles, from dining and entertainment, to personal growth, to health and fitness in mind, body, and spirit.

■ **Dining.** The community center will include four different dining venues, including a bistro, self-service, and formal dining with a wait staff, as well as a chef’s table for culinary demonstrations and special events. It will also have a lounge and bar area serving cocktails and casual pub-style fare.

■ **Entertainment.** A 200-seat auditorium will include an expansive stage and supporting spaces to accommodate music, performances, and other forms of entertainment. Casey says the auditorium is scheduled to open in April 2022.

■ **Health and fitness.** Residents’ physical well-being has always been a top priority. A new fitness center will include a wide range of equipment for maintaining residents’ whole-

body wellness, including cardiovascular health, balance, and strength.

■ **Personal growth.** Casey says amenities will include an expanded library with a history studio, a salon and spa, an arts-and-crafts studio, a game room, a woodworking shop, and a resale store. In other words, the center will “check almost every box” in terms of opportunities for enrichment.

“We’re at a point in the project where you can see all the defined spaces, and we’re touring residents through the space 20 at a time,” she says. “Much of the new space

We’re excited about where we go from here.”

— **Maureen Casey,**
president and CEO of Dunwoody Village



will have spectacular views of the nature reserve, the walking trails, and the natural beauty we have here. We’re very excited to complete the project so people can start enjoying the new center.”

Dunwoody expects the entire project to be completed by October 2022. While the winds of change continue to blow across the campus, much about Dunwoody will remain the same, particularly the atmosphere of togetherness and camaraderie that Casey considers the community’s greatest strength. She cites the phrase “One Dunwoody.”

“Our residents are constantly looking out for each other,” she says. “When I joined Dunwoody, I had residents come to me and ask, ‘What can we do to help?’ Our residents are very engaged. We have over 40 committees, and just today I received an email from the chair of our floral committee, telling me they completed all the floral arrangements for residents in our care center, with plans to distribute them around the holidays. It’s that sense of community—that’s what we mean by ‘One Dunwoody.’ It’s part of our culture.”

Less than a year into the job as Dunwoody’s chief executive, Casey has been thrilled with the support she has received from the community’s leadership team, its board of directors, and its residents. As she moves forward, she does so with the wisdom of experience.

“The past two years have been challenging for the whole country, and our community has not been immune to those challenges,” she says. “With the pandemic and the construction activity on campus, we’re all eager to move forward. We have taken every opportunity to welcome visitors back on campus, and have hosted many ‘welcome back’ events and celebrations. We now have opportunities for dining and togetherness. We’re excited about where we go from here.”

Considering her role in leading Dunwoody into the future, and the many ways in which she and her team have helped strengthen an already “wonderful community,” as she calls it, the grandparents and great-grandparents who helped shape her life and career would be proud. ■

→ **DUNWOODY VILLAGE**

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