

Oakwood Village Administration

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**OAKWOOD
VILLAGE**

Continuing Care Retirement Communities

*Oakwood Lutheran Homes Association, Inc.
Oakwood Village Apartments, Inc.
Oakwood Village East Lutheran Homes, Inc.
Oakwood Village East Apartment Homes, Inc.
Oakwood Foundation, Inc.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 28, 2010
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Oakwood Village Volunteer Earl Thayer Receives Statewide Recognition

MADISON, Wisconsin (May 28, 2010) – After reviewing 48 nominations received from across the state, the Wisconsin Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (WAHSA) has named Earl Thayer the winner of its 2010 “Caring through Advocacy Award.” Thayer will receive this award at a special event being planned by Oakwood on Wednesday, June 2, 2010 at 3:00pm at the Oakwood Village West Auditorium.

The 88 year-old Thayer not only serves as the Chairman of Oakwood’s Long Range Planning Committee, but is a resident of Oakwood as well. Over the past five years, Thayer has been a tireless advocate for not-for-profit senior housing providers. He has dedicated countless hours supporting WAHSA, Oakwood Lutheran Homes Association, and all not-for-profit housing providers in the fight to maintain property-tax exemption.

Thayer was dedicated to educating himself and others on the not-for-profit property tax exemption issue. He developed a strong understanding of the history of property tax-exemption in Wisconsin, kept current with any and all changes in state legislation, and developed a strong understanding of the value of not-for-profit senior housing providers. Thayer encouraged Oakwood and other senior housing providers to develop a relationship with legislators and state representatives, to articulate the critical services provided by not-for-profit senior housing organizations, to espouse how not-for-profit providers differ from for-profits, and to identify the consequences of the potential loss of property tax exemption. Thayer encouraged not-for-profit senior housing providers to take pride in the role they play in health care and to effectively communicate why property tax exemption is important and deserved.

In his fight to preserve the tax exemption for not-for-profit senior housing providers, Thayer served on the Legislative Council’s Special Committee on Tax Exemptions for Residential Property (Columbus Park), representing the position of Oakwood and other not-for-profit housing providers. He personally met with several State Legislators and Representatives, including Senator Risser, Representative Black, Representative Berceau, Representative Gottlieb, Representative Fitzgerald, and others. Thayer drafted several position papers used by Oakwood to effectively articulate justification for property tax-exemption, and he wrote numerous letters in support of the not-for-profit position, effectively encouraging Oakwood stakeholders to do the same.

Oakwood is a Lutheran church-sponsored organization whose mission is to serve older persons through loving, caring Christian communities, responding to their physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs, and to encourage a sense of independence, individuality, dignity, and worth throughout life.

Oakwood Village is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities—Continuing Care Accreditation Commission.

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“Earl Thayer has worked extensively with the WAHSA staff and state legislators to achieve a workable solution to the property tax issue for senior housing,” said WAHSA Executive Director John Sauer. “He has done this through personal meetings, phone calls, and letters. His gentle manner and diplomacy opened many doors that would otherwise have remained shut.”

According to Sauer, Thayer is most deserving of this Caring through Advocacy Award. He testified at public hearings. He personally carried the association’s message to many legislators, and, as a result, the Legislature passed a provision in the budget bill that is favorable to how not-for-profit senior housing will be assessed property tax. Thayer not only helped seniors within his own community, but throughout the greater Madison community and across the state by being aware of this important issue and taking action.

Oakwood Village is a not-for-profit, benevolent organization serving the health and wellness needs of seniors in Madison for over 60 years. Supported by 37 Lutheran congregations, Oakwood Village East and Oakwood Village West offer a full continuum of care including independent living, assisted living, memory care, and rehabilitation facilities.

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