

Spreading inspiration one story at a time

Lyngblomsten community member finds purpose in writing to help others

By Brandi Jewett



Author Your Life is our philosophy on living well that's meant for anyone connected with the Lyngblomsten family. In each edition of Lyngblomsten Lifestyle, we're profiling individuals who are authoring their lives. This edition, we're highlighting Jean Larson, a longtime Lyngblomsten supporter whose volunteerism and creative pursuits demonstrate you're never too old to make an impact.

Jean Larson is a familiar sight around the Lyngblomsten campus. Always clad in purple, she flits from stop to stop, chatting and seeking hugs along the way. As a member of the Lyngblomsten community, she wears many hats, including volunteer, donor, church delegate, and support group co-facilitator.

Her connection with Lyngblomsten helped her don another hat. In 2016 at the age of 80, Larson added “author” to her many titles, demonstrating no one is too old to accomplish a dream.

“Follow your dreams—and it’s OK to dream,” Larson said. “You can make things happen if you have dreams.”

Her book, *Hope on the Journey*, reflects on the more than two-decade-long journey she shared with her now late husband Milton as he lived with Parkinson’s disease. Through a collection of poetry and prose, readers walk alongside the Larsons as they navigate changes brought to their lives following Milton’s diagnosis. For a majority of his journey, Larson served as Milton’s full-time caregiver. Then a fall sent to her the hospital and into surgery. Afterward,

being his full-time caregiver was no longer an option. Milton came to live at Lyngblomsten Care Center in 2010 and remained until his passing in November 2014—just shy of the couple’s 61st wedding anniversary.

By reflecting on that journey through poems and storytelling, Larson says the book gave her a voice as a caregiver.

“This becomes a voice for all sorts of caregivers, and I have been delighted to share the book—and share my story—of caregiving and faith and gratitude and thanksgiving,” she said.

After spending nearly every day with her husband at the care center, Larson remains a dedicated supporter of Lyngblomsten. She volunteers, co-facilitates the Parkinson’s Disease Support Group, serves on the Volunteer Advisory Committee, and is a generous donor.

“Lyngblomsten cared so much, not only for my husband but also for me, and I just want to give back,” she said. “Jesus said, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ and these are my neighbors.”

Larson’s faith is a primary motivator in all areas of her life and a foundation for her acts of giving. Amid her purple accessories is at least one bag, the contents of which always contains a Bible.

Author Your Life, Lyngblomsten’s philosophy on living well, is something Larson encapsulates. The philosophy encourages anyone connected with Lyngblomsten to live their best life possible and to help others do the same.

Through the stories she shares in her book and in daily conversations, Larson hopes her words can inspire others to live their lives to the fullest no matter their age. **L**

 Upper left: Jean Larson puts pen to paper at a poetry class held at the Lyngblomsten campus in November 2016.

Author Your Life

Intentionally living your best life possible

Author Your Life is Lyngblomsten's philosophy on living well. It's about aging vibrantly, living fully, having purpose, and being as well as possible in mind, body, and spirit—at every age. It's meant for anyone connected with Lyngblomsten, including our residents, tenants, participants, family members, volunteers, employees, and donors.



Watch a four-minute video on Author Your Life at www.lyngblomsten.org/AuthorYourLife and then fill out the questions below to help guide you on your purpose-filled journey.

What *drives* you? Give a few examples of your hopes, dreams, passions, goals, beliefs, or values below.

What does your *best life* look to you? What can you do to achieve it?

Is there something you've stopped pursuing or enjoying as you've aged? Are there ways you could *reconnect* with this passion, talent, or skill?

What's *something new* you'd like to try? Does Lyngblomsten have opportunities to help you try it? What other resources might you need?

What are ways you can *help others* author their lives?

With Lyngblomsten, we can all join together through **Author Your Life** to encourage each other to live the best life possible at any age.

Learn more at www.lyngblomsten.org/AuthorYourLife.