

Anna Maria of Aurora lauded at 60th Anniversary celebration

By **MICHELE COLLINS**

The Anna Maria campus of Aurora celebrated 60 years in business with an “Old Fashioned” themed event with three local chambers of commerce.

One of the first continuing care organizations for older adults, Anna Maria started in 1964. A family-owned and operated business, Anna Maria of Aurora is now run by Chris Norton, grandson of the late founder Bob Norton Sr. and a resident of South Russell, and Aaron Baker, who is married to one of the founder’s granddaughters.

As pioneers in the business of senior living and care, the Anna Maria organization was lauded by the greater community at the April 11 event, including receiving a proclamation of recognition from the Portage County Board of Commissioners.

Members of the Aurora, Chagrin Valley, and Solon Chambers of Commerce joined the staff of Anna Maria of Aurora at the organization’s Norwood Cafe and Salon for a lavish celebration. They were able to see the renovation of the Norwood building which took place recently on the grounds of the Anna Maria campus, at 889 N. Aurora Rd., in Aurora.

The theme of the celebration was an “Old-Fashioned Celebration,” highlighting the business’s beginnings in 1964. Throughout the large meeting area were highlights of what life was like in 1964, including old photos, and information about the Aurora area during that time.

The celebration featured appetizers, cocktails and wine, and the featured beverage of an Old Fashioned, including a signature glass for attendees to take home.

Anna Maria started from humble beginnings, a rest home, to which the founder added a skilled nursing care addition, shared Mr. Norton. Today it encompasses independent living one- and two-bedroom apartments, assisted living residences with nurses on site 24/7 and skilled nursing facilities with a full slate of medical services for all medical care needs.

“We are celebrating our family-centered approach to senior care,” said Chris Norton. “We see our approach as having three pillars, those we serve, their families and our staff members, who we all see as a part of the Anna Maria family.”

Mr. Baker added that what makes Anna Maria unique in the area is its offering of the full continuum of care. “We have independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing care,” he said. “We also offer additional services like therapy and home care within our campus.”

For those who reside on the Anna Maria campus, residents enjoy an active, maintenance-free lifestyle while taking comfort in the safety and care services provided by a 24-hour staff, shared Mr. Baker. He added that residents enjoy chef-prepared meals, just like the attendees at the Old-Fashioned celebration did.

Both Mr. Norton and Mr. Baker shared that they have enjoyed doing many different jobs within the organization to learn the business from the ground up. “I remember doing a lot of landscaping and lawn care when I was a teenager,” laughed Mr. Norton.

“I actually trained as a nursing assistant to learn that side of the business,” shared Mr. Baker.

Both Mr. Norton and Mr. Baker shared that there are additional celebrations in the works to recognize the 60th year of Anna Maria, which will include members of the community.

“We are going to have a community-wide celebration in June, and an additional recognition in the fall,” said Mr. Norton. “We want everyone to share in our 60th year, and highlight how grateful we are for the support we have received from all of these groups.”



At a 60th year in business celebration at the Anna Maria of Aurora Campus, are Chris Norton, administrator and owner of Anna Maria of Aurora and resident of South Russell, Portage County Commissioner Mike Tinlin, who provided the business with a proclamation of recognition, and Aaron Baker, administrator and owner at Anna Maria of Aurora. The senior care and living campus started its operation in Aurora in 1964.

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