

Corporate Champion Circle Profile

Matthew Walters / Lon Walters – Woodlands Senior Living

Matthew Walters energy and compassion could be felt from the description of his and his father Lon's upbringing. Lon Walters, Founder and President and son Matthew, Managing Member and Chief Operating Officer of Woodlands Senior Living joined the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area's Corporate Champion Circle in 2018.

Our organization has deep family roots. Founder and President Lon Walters learned the value of caring for others at a young age. His hardworking mother, Dorothy, took over a small rest home in the 1950s from her own mother when Lon was a child. It was there—literally living alongside residents, always helping—that Lon first cared for Maine's seniors and witnessed the important role residential care and senior living communities have in the lives of Maine families.

For Managing Member and Chief Operating Officer Matthew Walters, striving to provide exceptional care for Maine seniors is an inherent family value. Like his father, Lon Walters, Matthew understood from a young age how intrinsically valuable the role of senior living communities is for residents, their families and the community as a whole.

Woodlands Senior Living provides assisted living and specialized memory care to Maine seniors, while offering relief and assurance to the people who love them. Our mission is to make each day the best day possible for every resident we serve, while helping to bring peace of mind to the people who love them. Woodlands Senior Living operates 14 communities in 8 locations statewide and employs more than 350 employees. The Farmington campus employs 70 staff members.

Woodlands Senior Living is providing a service that didn't exist in Franklin County before, which allows people to stay in their own community.

As a new community offering services that were previously never offered in Franklin County, our challenge is ensuring that everyone who may need to know about our services do know. It's important that they understand who we are, what we do and why we are different.

In closing, Matthew expresses his family's dedication to community, saying the following - *"supporting the communities in which we serve residents is very important to us. We are proud to support the United Way organizations throughout the state."*

When Susan isn't traveling, she is dedicated to community service. She has served on the board of Sexual Assault Victims Emergency Services which is now known as Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services, and currently serves on the board of United Way, serving as the Communications and Marketing Committee Chair.

I asked Susan why she is obviously so passionate about United Way. She, paused, leaned forward and said "I don't think I realized the need that we have in this area and my eyes were opened through my involvement with the United Way. I can't get over how much the United Way accomplishes in this area for the community and how passionate the people are who work there and volunteer there. It is inspiring and allowed me to understand what is going on in the community. To really realize the need, you need to get your arms around it... and to get your thoughts around it. You just need to really be involved. It is a powerful resource that we have."

Sexual abuse continues to be of interest to Susan, but it is the extreme poverty she became aware of that has caught her attention the most. "I have a real respect for the work health and social service personnel do in this community every day."

I asked why she continued to commute to and invest in Farmington as she spends so much time in Southern Maine. "It is a forgiving community, people are so, well, human. I can relate to my customers here and it's REAL and genuine. I feel like I can make more of a difference here."

Susan joined the new Corporate Champion Circle at the Gold level and she felt like it was a way to support the United Way in what it is trying to accomplish. "I believed in the plan they put together and collaborating on marketing opportunities is valuable. The more we can work together and support each other in this community, the better."

I feel like the United Way can decide as to where the money is needed better than I can, and the Corporate Champion Circle is a great opportunity for me to give money and promote by business at the same time. It's a win-win!"