

Lorien Health Services Celebrates 40 Years of Caring

“There are no old people in Columbia,” they said. “Your plan,” they added, “is crazy.”

The public reaction to Nicholas B. Mangione’s decision to build a nursing home in the Howard County planned community 40 years ago made sense.

At the time, Columbia was in its infancy, just 10 years old. There was something new everywhere one looked: the villages, the homes, the families, even the idea of the place, conceived by the visionary James W. (Jim) Rouse. And, so, the notion that there would be a sufficient number of older people in the area to fill and sustain a nursing home struck many as inconceivable.

The skepticism proved misplaced.

Mangione’s first site was an instant success, thanks in part to a little luck, and now the company he launched in 1977 operates 10 nursing home/assisted living facility communities throughout Maryland and employs more than 2,000 people.

‘Take Care of Them’

The success story of Ellicott City-based Lorien Health Services is somewhat unlikely, and not just because of the company’s “risky” beginnings. The improbability stems from leadership’s laser focus on people rather than profits, on delivering innovative, high-quality services and amenities at a time when financial considerations have become paramount in the health care industry.

The reason?

“They weren’t patients to him. They were somebody’s mom, somebody’s dad,” Lou Grimmel, Sr., Lorien’s current chief executive, said of Mangione. “That is somebody’s most prized passion. You better take care of them,” he added, summarizing the founder’s philosophy.

Mangione passed away in 2008, but his guiding principle — loved ones before bottom lines — endures.

The company’s chief operating officer, Wayne Brannock, confessed that he and his Lorien colleagues consistently break their own budgets, exceeding projections to enhance and improve facilities. “It is the right thing to do,” he explained.

As a result of such investments, Brannock said, “It is not uncommon to have people walk into one of our nursing homes and turn around and walk out. They think they are in a hotel.”

About That Lucky Break

Lorien owes its successful start four decades ago not to a hotel-like setting, but rather to a hospital. Needing more beds and the space to accommodate them, Howard County General Hospital’s Chief Executive Ted Hussey turned to Mangione for help, ultimately leasing the top floor of the new nursing home, installing some 60 beds, and using it as a kind of extension facility. Lorien provided all of the services except for nursing. It was a lucrative contract.

“It was a stroke of luck that the hospital saw an opportunity. [The CEO] came knocking on our door,” Grimmel said.

From there, Mangione went on to construct a retirement community in Columbia. Like the first facility, he built the second at the request of his friend, David Harans, who became part-owner for his expertise in nursing homes and would operate them. Likewise the third and fourth sites. Mangione ultimately took total control.

Today, Lorien runs communities not only in Columbia, but also in Elkridge and Ellicott City, as well as in the counties of Baltimore, Carroll and Harford.

A Family Affair

Despite the considerable expansion, Lorien remains a family affair. Mangione hired Grimmel, his nephew, even before establishing the nursing home company.

During one of his regular visits with his mother, Mangione asked Grimmel what he was doing professionally. The newly minted Salisbury State University graduate reported he was selling cars. His uncle responded by saying he didn’t see much of future in that line of work for the young man, and offered him a job as a dump truck driver at his construction site for Fallston General Hospital in Harford County.

When his first nursing home opened, Mangione arranged a job there for Grimmel so he could learn the business.

“He made me do every job there was to do in a nursing home,” Grimmel said, recalling 70-hour work weeks without complaint. Since those early days, Grimmel has been joined in the business by his four children and four of Nick Mangione’s 37 grandchildren.



Above: Dining facilities at Lorien’s Harmony Hall resemble a trendy restaurant.



Left: A portrait of Nick Mangione, who started Lorien Health Services 40 years ago with a single nursing home.

“You can tell I love what I do,” he said. “They love what they do. I don’t think you can be good at something you don’t like.”

Value Added

There’s more than love apparent at Lorien’s homes. In addition to a wide and growing variety of medical services, such as a telemedicine program to treat patients in place, there are also many

features and activities on view that one doesn’t naturally associate with nursing facilities. There is a Starbucks coffee shop in every one. There are cafes, ice cream parlors, libraries and movie theaters, too. And at the Taneytown location, there is a restaurant called Flick’s Pub, featuring live music on weekends, karaoke and craft beer specialties. The place actually attracts

See *Lorien*, page 28



Celebrating 20 Years
Serving the
Federal Contracting
Community!

www.TargetGov.com • 410-579-1346



Celebrates 10 Years of Commitment to Your Success

2007

GRAND OPENING

2017

10

YEARS

REVERE BANK

OPENS FOR BUSINESS

Laurel, MD • 15 employees

\$2+ BILLION

IN ASSETS

11 Offices • 208 Employees

Revere Bank is proud to make local decisions that benefit the communities we serve. Founded in 2007, we provide exceptional service to customers throughout the Baltimore-Washington and I-270 corridors. With our team of experienced bankers, we have the resources and capabilities to meet your needs.

COLUMBIA CORPORATE 100 OFFICE
6031 University Boulevard, Suite 170
443.574.3600

SEVERNA PARK GATEWAY OFFICE
8529 Veterans Highway
443.274.1020

reverebank.com



The Business Monthly – 25 Years in the News

By Joan Waclawski, SPECIAL SECTIONS
EDITOR

This year marks 25 years that The Business Monthly has been in the news business covering Howard and Anne Arundel counties. Becky Mangus talks about those years, in particular her last 15 as co-owner and publisher, and speculates on the future.

What first motivated you and your business partner Cathy Yost to buy the paper 15 years ago?

The original owner, Carole Pickett [now Hughes], was looking to retire or at least relinquish some of the day-to-day responsibilities. She asked me to be associate publisher. Even though I had had a marketing and graphic design firm for 16 years, I had always wanted to be a publisher. This seemed like the right opportunity. Cathy, who already was working with Carole as general manager, and I spoke and we decided to make an offer to buy the paper. A couple of months later, we owned a newspaper.

You would think two women past mid-life crisis would have known better, but we jumped right in and have been jumping ever since. It has been a great experience for both of us, however, and we really love the business community in this area.

How have the paper and the news cli-

Lorien

from page 27

patrons who live elsewhere.

"Imagine that a nursing home is the talk of the town," said Jim Hummer, the company's vice president of home and community-based services. "It is the coolest nursing home on the planet."

Then there is the boxing. Lorien is partnering with the Maryland Association for Parkinson's Support (MAPS) to offer a program called Rock Steady Boxing. The dual objective for patients with Parkinson's is empowerment and physical fitness that is specifically tailored for their needs.

"They love it. Day one, it was amazing," said Grimmel. More space is needed already to meet demand for the program.

Korean Seniors

Also uncommon is Lorien's long-term care unit for Korean seniors. In fact, it is believed to be the only such offering in the state. Featuring Korean food, worship, language and games, the program started four years ago with five beds. Within three months, it tripled in size. Today, the program is available at two locations, one in Columbia, the other in Baltimore County.

The company's liaison in the initiative, Dr. Sue Song, said she selected Lorien rather than a competing nursing home for a number of reasons. To begin with, she said, it is a supportive and stable long-term care company, while so many other outfits are regularly bought and sold.

What's more, "The Mangione family and Lou [Grimmel] strongly believe a nursing home does not have to be separated from the community. At Lorien, I didn't feel there was a wall. This family was part of the community."

Forty years later, Lorien remains a part of a community that, come to find out, has older people after all.



Becky Mangus and Cathy Yost

mate changed over the past 25 years?

As with all types of businesses, things have changed dramatically. Certainly technology has had a major impact on the industry, but also the "great recession" has affected people's marketing perspective.

People still want the news, but now there are a multitude of mediums from which to get it. So we have to try to be everywhere, so people can get their news the way they most prefer.

Of course, we can't provide the news without selling ads. That is probably a larger challenge than keeping up with the various mediums. Publications still rely on advertising sales to stay in existence, for the most part. Over the past several years, larger newspapers have tried different approaches, including charging for online subscriptions. But so far, the revenue for subscriptions and online advertising cannot sustain a newspaper or magazine.

As a marketing professional, I still believe in diversified marketing unless you have a very specific target audience. So I believe that companies will continue to advertise with us, which allows us to exist another day. And, perhaps most importantly, it allows the Howard and Anne Arundel business community to continue to get important local news that really is hard to find anywhere else.

And, if you don't mind, I want to say that my editorial team is probably the finest in the business, large or small. They are extremely professional and talented and each has many years of journalism experience. This community, and The Business Monthly, is fortunate to benefit from their abilities.

Your newspaper has a rather unique business model: Some of the articles actually are contributed, at no charge, by members of the business community. How do you encourage people to contribute articles? And doesn't that open the paper up to a certain amount of editorializing by those contributors?

With a smaller newspaper, we actually get the best of both worlds. We have professionals, as mentioned above, that cover the hard news in the two local jurisdictions. But we also are able to have experts in their respective fields contribute articles as well — almost a magazine concept.

We are extremely careful that each contributed article is educational or informational and make it clear that self-promotion or opinions are not allowed. We either don't publish the article or we edit out that content. We retain full editing rights on all submissions.

This gives us the opportunity to bring to the business community more business-related articles by upholding strict

standards. As a matter of fact, one time, one of our largest advertisers submitted an article that I rejected. Cathy, who handles advertising sales, just about throttled me. But there were a couple of factual errors, and once we got those worked out, the article was accepted.

We also welcome and rely on press releases or even just a few paragraphs to let us know about news within a company or organization. Each month we print pages of those short news pieces that include promotions, new hires, awards, upcoming events, etc. And, we are told, those pages are well-read so

people can keep track of what is happening in the local area. I had one person tell me that written into her job description was reading The Business Monthly and disseminating the information throughout the company.

How's readership, considering that newspapers in general are on the decline?

According to surveys and word on the street, we are extremely well-read. After all, not only do we provide a quality publication, she said humbly, but there aren't a lot of other places to find the information we make available.

In addition, the statistics that newspapers are on the decline refer to the larger, mainstream publications where people

can get the same information anywhere, including on their phone. Niche newspapers and publications actually are doing well because you can't find the same information everywhere. So there is an actual need for us. Unfortunately, when people hear that newspapers are on the decline, that nobody reads newspapers, only social media, they believe it. Statistics are saying otherwise.

But, we are also making sure we are available to all readers — in newspaper, online on our website, and we even have an app where people can read the paper via their phones.

Where do you see The Business Monthly headed over the next five years?

We will continue to be relevant and hope to stay up with the readership curve, whatever that might be. The biggest struggle, as I mentioned, is being sure we have enough revenue to keep the news coming. As such, we will continue to find topics and opportunities that are of interest to the business community. Last year we had a 12-part series on Columbia at 50 and sold sponsorships. Then we published a magazine celebrating Columbia's birthday. We will continue to stay open to opportunities that make sense so that our main purpose, providing local news, will continue to be possible well past Cathy's and my ownership.

Our goal is for The Business Monthly to continue to be a mainstay in the community.

How Will You Use Your Milestone?

By Angie Barnett



Is your company nearing an important anniversary or achievement? Whether it's a 10th year in business, the 10,000th customer served or other measurement that signals your organization's stability, longevity or success, you can leverage it to share your story.

You'll need to start your celebration with a plan. Here's how you can get set up.

- **Define your audience(s).** You'll want to consider customers, prospects, employees, volunteers and any other stakeholders in your business.

- **Determine your campaign objectives.** This year has been the Better Business Bureau's (BBB) 100th anniversary in Maryland. Not only was a lot of birthday cake served, the organization took the opportunity to tell stories to increase engagement through email and social media, both of which are measurable. At the same time, stories were used to enhance visibility for BBB's sponsors and accredited businesses and to create excitement leading up to its Centennial Celebration, which was held this fall.

Your business might use its milestone as a way to thank the clients and employees who helped you achieve it or even roll out a new product, service or line of business.

- **Brand it.** It might be a special logo, tagline, hashtag or all of the above. But your milestone needs its own visual signature.
- **Set a budget.** Cake aside, you'll need

to decide how much to invest. For an anniversary, you'll likely launch, and/or end, your campaign with a party. In order to allocate the needed resources, you have to determine who will be involved to turn the plan into action, and how and where you'll communicate your story.

Your story should be personal. It should be used to deepen a connection with your desired audience. What got you started? Where did you start and how far have you come? What makes your organization special? Consider sharing memories that convey your core values.

When celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2014, Sparks-based McCormick & Co. used the hashtag #flavorstory. Its goal was to collect 1.25 million "flavor stories" from employees, chefs and consumers around the world. For every story, which ranged from letters to recipes and videos, the company donated \$1 to the United Way.

McCormick's campaign to celebrate its milestone using the role flavor plays in life was the perfect recipe for success. By November, its year-long initiative resulted in \$1.25 million in donations to feed the hungry.

So, as you approach the next benchmark in the lifecycle of your organization, think of it as an opportunity to enlist your promoters, internally and externally, to make it memorable.

Angie Barnett is president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau of Greater Maryland. She can be reached at 410-347-3990 and abarnett@greatermd.bbb.org.