



207 Stories and Counting!

For over three years now *The Culture Chronicles* has captured and shared the stories that are the bedrock of our unique culture. Together we have read stories that are challenging and have forced us to think deeply about how we handle difficult situations. Some of the 207 stories held within these pages have touched our hearts and moved us to tremendous emotion. A few of these tales have been downright amusing and have served as telling reminders that smiles and laughter are truly sometimes the best responses we can have in life.

The Culture Chronicles was developed to serve many purposes but first and foremost it is an incredibly effective way to share examples of how our corporate culture and values are being lived out across all of our communities. Teams across Franklin Companies have used this publication to facilitate conversations about best practices, and more conversations will follow in the years ahead. Whether it is **CARE**, **FOCUS**, **ELEVATE**, **TRUE**, or any operating mantra to come, *The Culture Chronicles* plays an important role in bringing these mantras to life. Without examples and stories, it would be easy for these concepts to be shelved or pushed aside in order to keep up with the pace of our business today. There is nothing like personal stories to help paint a picture for all of us about how our teams are coming together and encouraging each other to live out our corporate values.

We have experienced tremendous growth as a company while still maintaining our values-based culture, and our ability to do so is a testament to the caliber of our employees and our collective commitment to working with integrity, transparency and empowerment. As we continue to grow and push into new markets and ventures, we will compromise neither our principles nor our culture. In the months to come, we will continue to highlight the stories of Franklin Companies employees at work caring for our residents and their families.

While our culture and our principles will not change, you will be noticing some updates in *The Culture Chronicles* in the months to come. Alongside the personal stories shared here, you will begin to see updates on new programs and services that are being developed for our communities. In addition, our plan is to include more photos of staff members and community activities as we seek to bring our stories to life for all of our employees. Also, we will be creating a new, updated look to the newsletter itself. Stay tuned!

Break Room Makeovers Coming Soon!

Our industry does a lot of talking about how our staff members are our most important assets. However, it seems to us that our actions do not match our words. How do we typically show our staff that they are the best?

We put their break room in the back of the building! The décor is usually less than inspired with tables and chairs that are generally mismatched afterthoughts. While the custodial service does extend to the break room, typically the space appears dingy and dusty. And, it's not a far leap to assume that the food in the refrigerator has been in there well past its prime.

How can we expect our staff to be gracious, kind, and always thinking about the highest level of customer service when we do not provide them the same level of service and care that our residents receive? Is it reasonable to expect that operating mantras and values are lived out daily when the one space that is the staff's in a community is not an environment where they find rest and rejuvenation? What would it mean in the lives of our staff members and our residents if we elevated the attention we give to our own employees' daily needs?

At Franklin Companies, our culture extends even to our employees' break rooms at each and every community. No longer will these areas of rest be an afterthought. These environments will be areas of refuge that reflect the individual community and the needs of the staff members that serve there.

We are pleased to announce that in the coming months, we will be working with each community on how their individual break rooms might be touched up and refreshed. We want our staff members to have voice in the color of the paint in their break room. We want to hear what type of furniture works best in each individual space. If teams have ideas on how the rooms can be decorated differently, we want to hear those ideas as well. More information will soon be coming out to the communities to share budget and process information. In the meantime, be dreaming about how we can make each and every Franklin Companies break room an environment that is worthy of our staff members and their daily efforts. We are looking forward to this initiative as a tangible effort to live out our belief that our staff members, our human resources, are ultimately our only resource.



the epitome of a servant leader.” Similar sentiments were shared by **Jim Duggins**, Executive Director of Franklin Park Sonterra, and **Donny Veal**, Executive Director of TPC Parkway.

Bennie Foss, Accounting, touchingly shared the impact Leslie has had on her life not only as a colleague but as a friend. While Bennie echoed the comments about Leslie’s commitment to the culture of Franklin Companies, she paid the honoree an even higher compliment. Bennie rightly highlighted the fact that when Leslie came to work it wasn’t just for the company, “she worked to give glory to God.”

Celebrating the Legacy of a Beloved Culture Carrier

March 15 was a milestone day in the life of Franklin Companies. We hosted our first company retirement party to celebrate the decade of service and immeasurable legacy of **Leslie Brothers**, Executive Assistant to Luke Classen. Family members, friends, colleagues, and vendors came together in the ballroom at Franklin Park Sonterra to share stories, memories, and praises for a woman who has meant so much to so many of us at Franklin Companies.

Leslie Brothers joined Franklin Companies ten years ago as a payroll clerk. She then wasted no time in finding more responsibilities beyond payroll. She also assumed the role of concierge at the corporate office and always greeted everyone with a smile while simultaneously insuring the office was running in top-form. At the time of her hiring, the executive team knew they were bringing on a talented individual who could perform well. What they did not know was that they were hiring a force of a woman who is a dependable colleague, an indefatigable culture-carrier, and a trustworthy friend. After a decade of Leslie’s presence, Franklin Companies is a better company for her dedication.

Leslie’s impact was certainly felt and celebrated at her party as individuals openly shared about her servant’s heart and tremendous character. **Aubra Franklin**, Chairman and CEO, praised Leslie for her dedication and commitment to the company. He shared that when Leslie started the firm had eleven employees, and now it boasts approximately 450. He commented that they without Leslie’s support that phenomenal growth would not have been possible.

Luke Classen, President and COO, who worked closely with Leslie for seven years, shared a list of attributes that he felt described her attitude and approach to work. His list included words like *integrity*, *committed*, and *loyal*. In Luke’s tribute to her, he shared that “Leslie’s willingness to assist others, regardless of what she has going on, is one of her greatest strengths. For me, she is

After her husband, **Ken Brothers**, shared a few personal stories about their relationship and family, Luke joined Ken and Leslie at the front for the presentation of some gifts. Earlier during the party, Aubra presented Leslie with her Ten-Year Service pin, and Luke topped it off with a framed tribute to her time at Franklin Companies. He also presented Leslie with her parting retirement gift, a first-class trip to Hawaii for two including a seven-day cruise of the islands! Leslie and Ken were speechless, for a few minutes. Then Leslie shared her parting comments of thanksgiving and gratitude. She expressed her love for the company and all of the employees. It was easy to tell that her heart overflows with affection for everyone she worked with on a daily basis. As she closed her remarks she exhorted everyone to uphold the culture of Franklin Companies. She emphatically stated that “the culture is real, and it’s entirely up to the employees to keep it going because Franklin Companies is a special place.” May we all heed the wisdom of this special lady; a culture carrier whose impact will not be soon forgotten.

