

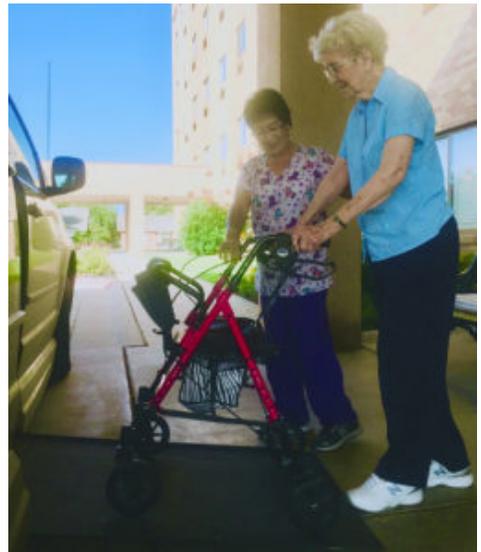
Desire to serve keeps San Angelo woman rolling after 35 years

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SAN ANGELO—When residents at Baptist Retirement Community in San Angelo need transportation to a doctor's appointment, they know they have more than a free ride available. They have a friend in the driver's seat.

For 35 years, Sally Lugo has provided the retirement community residents transportation to and from medical appointments. She views the service she offers as more than a job.

"It's a ministry to me," she said. "I feel called to do this as a mission. I like to help people."



Sally Lugo views her role in providing transportation services for residents of

Baptist Retirement
Community in San Angelo as a
calling. (Photo courtesy of
Baptist Retirement
Community)

Lugo initially joined the senior living community staff as an aide, working late-night shifts. When a job became available in transportation services, she applied for the position. She wanted employment that allowed her to be home with her young children early mornings and every evening.

“Now my children are all adults, with families of their own,” Lugo said.

Extended family

After three and a half decades serving seniors at [Baptist Retirement Community](#), a Buckner senior living facility, they treat her like extended family. Lugo appreciates when residents ask about her four grandchildren, and she eagerly shows their latest photos on her smartphone.

Lugo enjoys the opportunities her job offers to get acquainted with residents as she drives them to and from their appointments.

“I learn a lot from them. I like listening to their stories,” she said. “I have a lot of respect for them, and I feel like I understand where they’re coming from.”

Through the years, she has listened to retired missionaries describe their experiences in overseas service, as well as hearing more than a few humorous or touching stories from residents.

“If I could go back, I would have kept a journal,” she said.

Happy to serve

Lugo recognizes visits to medical appointments can be stressful for senior adults, and she seeks to make the experience as pleasant and positive for them as possible.

“I’m there to listen, not to give advice,” she said. “I try to give them some encouragement, and they know I’m going to keep an eye on them. Sometimes, I’ll give them a call after an appointment, just to make sure they are OK. They appreciate it when I’m checking on them.”

Lugo knows residents’ families also appreciate the service she provides, since it means they don’t have to take time off from work or drive long distances for every appointment.

After three and a half decades, Lugo now recognizes some Baptist Retirement Community residents as the children of former residents she served.

Other drivers at the retirement community provide transportation to planned outings and shopping trips. Lugo’s job assignment focuses specifically on medical appointments. However, that doesn’t prevent her from offering her senior adult friends a ride to evening visitation at a funeral home or to a weekend memorial service.

Lugo finds satisfaction in greeting residents with a smile and providing them “a listening ear.” They, in turn, bring her joy on a daily basis, she added.

“I am very blessed in a lot of ways—being here as long as I’ve been and coming in contact with the residents,” she said. “I enjoy coming to work every day.”