

**Address by Nevin Dulabaum, President of
Brethren Benefit Trust, at the Dedication of
the Harmony Ridge West Apartments and
Harvey S. Kline Wellness Center
Friday, May 29, 2009**

Lafiya.

Lafiya!.

I believe the word “Lafiya” to be the ideal word with which to greet you today. Lafiya is a word in the Hausa language that is used extensively in Nigeria. It is a complex word that in its most basic sense means “well being” or “wholeness.” It can also be an exclamation – Lafiya! — meaning “I am well,” or a question — Lafiya? — “How are you?”

In the 1970s, Church of the Brethren mission planners in Nigeria and Nigerian health workers established a community-based health approach called *Lafiya*. The goal was to switch the focus from treating disease to concentrating on preventive measures. In some Nigerian villages, the healthcare system was radically changed by this holistic approach.

Building on the success of that new approach, in the early 1990s, the Church of the Brethren here in the United States began a ministry focus for wholeness, which you might correctly guess is also called Lafiya.

Why?

From the Church of the Brethren perspective, the answer can be found in the Lafiya handbook, which was produced in 1993. It states,

“For the Christian, the search for health and healing is centered in mind-body-spirit wholeness for self and community. The Bible clearly indicates that this is true. The path for the Christian is LAFIYA. It is more than self; it is more than disease. It is more than a program or self-help group. It is a continuing journey of self and the community of faith toward health and wholeness.

One more time — Lafiya is *a continuing journey of self and the community of faith toward health and wholeness.*

Isn't that why we are here today as we dedicate the Harvey S. Kline Wellness Center and the Harmony Ridge West apartments ... to celebrate the health and wholeness of those who reside here at Cross Keys Village – The Brethren Home Community?

And so again, I greet you with, Lafiya!

I am so pleased to be here with you today for this historic event as a national representative of the Church of the Brethren.

Cross Keys Village – The Brethren Home Community was founded in 1908 by Southern Pennsylvania district members of the Church of the Brethren. Throughout its existence, Cross Keys Village has played an active role within local congregational life and as an organization within this vibrant Church of the Brethren district. It has been an advocate for the aging, and a model of compassionate service.

It has also been, and continues to be, an important voice within and supporter of the wider church. It is an active member of the Fellowship of Brethren Homes, which as a group of retirement communities nationwide strives to work collegially and collaboratively to address issues that are confronting today's aging population. The Fellowship of Brethren Homes is working hard to address the infrastructure that is in place to support the segment of society that its members, including Cross Keys Village, serves. Let me briefly explain how Cross Keys Village and the organization I serve, Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust, are connected.

Cross Keys Village is a strong supporter of the Brethren Pension Plan, the Brethren Foundation, Church of the Brethren Credit Union, and Brethren Insurance Plans. Brethren Benefit Trust, which administers all of these ministries, was formed in 1988 to be the financial ministry arm of the denomination. Through its strong support of the Brethren Benefit Trust services, Cross Keys Village has enabled my organization to better support other organizations and congregations throughout the denomination. Indeed, the concept of mutuality — which is where members of a group participate together for the benefit of all of the members — is alive and well at Cross Keys Village.

Church of the Brethren Benefit Trust has also benefited through Cross Keys Village representation on our Board. Most recently, Dave Gerber, senior vice president here on the Cross Keys team, completed eight years of exemplary service on our board. Today he continues to serve on the board of the Church of the Brethren Credit Union.

With the relationships our two organizations have had over the past two decades, it simply is a pleasure to be here today to celebrate with you on this festive occasion. To commemorate this event, I want to briefly touch on three areas where I believe congratulations are in order.

First, I would like to congratulate Harvey Kline, the namesake of this new wellness center.

Twenty-one years ago when Brethren Benefit Trust was created to serve the entire denomination, Harvey joined our organization as one of our original Board members. He came to us as the long-time administrator of Cross Keys Village, and he was pivotal in expanding participation in the Brethren Pension Plan and in starting up the Brethren Foundation. A look at his biographical information shows that he served the denomination, and this surrounding community, with profound leadership. Numerous board seats, leadership roles, and district and national church assignments are testaments to Harvey's commitment to the church and his dedication to people.

He was a committed leader to the Brethren Homes and Hospitals Association, which was the predecessor of the Fellowship of Brethren Homes. During the time that Harvey was a member of that group, the group lobbied hard with national leaders of the Church of the Brethren to engage in health and healing ministries on all levels of the denomination. This call to promote wholeness by Harvey and the other members of the homes and hospitals association led to the creation of the Church of the Brethren's Lafiya ministry. Thank you, Harvey, for helping to make that a denominational priority.

Although Harvey's son, Joel, has served as my pastor at our church in Illinois now for a number of years, and although I have heard many stories about Harvey and his work on our Board and as the administrator here, I only met him for the first time last fall. However, in talking with former BBT board members and staff, Harvey is known as a savvy administrator who

always was on the cutting edge in his leadership methods. He is known as a person who gained the respect of those he served, and those who served as his employees, because of his compassion and care for those with whom he interacted.

Indeed, although wellness is the buzzword of the last decade for what used to be known as wholeness, had wellness been the “in” word during Harvey’s service, he would have been seen as a leader of the movement, a person who promoted spiritual, mental, and physical wellness among the Cross Keys Village residents AND employees, in addition to advocating for wellness throughout the Church of the Brethren.

Thus, it is fitting for this organization, which has a history steeped in church tradition, to name this new facility for a man who has had a profound impact on the overall wellness of so many.

Congratulations, Harvey!

Lafiya!

I would also like to congratulate the residents of Cross Keys Village. Over the many times I have visited this campus through the 15 years of my church service, I have long thought that this community was amazing with all that it has to offer, from the independent living units to the assisted living it provides. It also has a number of special touches, such as birds for sight and sound sensory stimulation, a pool table and computer for residents to use, and a regularly scheduled closed circuit television program that works to mold this collection of buildings, residents, and staff into a community. There are many more such offerings throughout this village; these are merely examples that a visitor can quickly see.

Well, this community might have been amazing before, but with the completion of the wellness center and the new apartments, it is now phenomenal!

At Brethren Benefit Trust, we talk about comprehensive wellness consisting of three components - mind, body, and soul. I believe with the addition of the Harvey S. Kline Wellness Center, Cross Keys Village is no longer an institution that promotes a niche called wellness, but is an institution where wellness is woven into the very fabric of its being.

Complementing the spiritual possibilities that are offered each week through several worship services, including worship by a Church of the Brethren congregation that is based here on the campus, and the physical care that those in need receive, this community has long offered numerous activities for residents to participate in. However, with the wellness center, Cross Keys Village now offers a pool, extensive exercise room, a cardio room, an arts center where residents will be able to utilize their creative abilities, and a room where people can participate in computerized brain exercises. And plenty more.

This community's tagline on its Web site proclaims, "How you live has much to do with where you live." If that is the case, then the residents of Cross Keys Village live very well, because this facility now has so much to offer in the ongoing growth of people's minds, their bodies, and their souls. I celebrate with the residents of Cross Keys Village for the new opportunities they now have as they nurture their own wellness.

Lafiya!

Finally, I congratulate the Board and staff of Cross Keys Village for the completion of the wellness center and the new apartments, which no doubt will have tremendous impact on the life and culture within this community. In an era where there are many challenges, including high costs of health care and uncompensated medical and assisted living expenses, these new structures stand in tribute to your leadership. Not only did you have the vision for expanding the quality of life for many of your residents, but you also engaged in successful planning and project development to make these facilities financially feasible.

Indeed, these are tough economic times, which makes it all the more impressive that these new facilities are ready to go into service. For an organization that has had strong church affiliation throughout its existence, the development of the wellness center is not only right from a business sense in that it will allow the village to continue to attract new residents in a competitive marketplace, but it is the right thing to do as an organization that prides itself for the compassionate service it gives to its residents. This is a fantastic facility. It is full of potential and of new possibilities. So to the Cross Keys Village Board and staff, I say, Congratulations!

Lafiya!

As I have greeted you today with the expression of Lafiya, a wonderful word for wellness, and described how Harvey helped promote the nurturing of heart, soul, and mind throughout his career, both here and throughout the Church of the Brethren, I now conclude my remarks with a Lafiya challenge for you —

As you dedicate these new facilities today, which now complement so many other fine amenities of this facility, I challenge you to utilize all that you have on this campus to live into what it means to be a Lafiya community.

To paraphrase the mission statement from one of the Church of the Brethren's Lafiya congregations, I challenge all at Cross Keys Village to encourage each other to remember that the body, mind, and spirit are intimately connected. Empower one another to receive, as well as give, loving care with spontaneity and joy. Help each other take responsibility for preventative approaches to your own wellness, and continue to advocate this God-given responsibility within this setting, within the nearby communities, and within the local, district, and national church.

Lafiya!

May it be so.