

Alexis Henderson Remembered

Lexi's Legacy Lives on at Trinity Community at
Beavercreek's Memory Lane



There's a saying often attributed to Abraham Lincoln, despite no official ties to the president, that points to what is important in life. No matter its origin, the quote persists because the words are profound:

"And in the end,
it's not the years
in your life that
count. It's the life
in your years."

Lexi Henderson was only 34 when she passed away without warning last November. Colleagues and the residents of Memory Lane, the [Trinity Community at Beavercreek](#) neighborhood where she worked, felt not only grief but shock – and dismay. Lexi was a state-tested nursing assistant at Trinity at Beavercreek and a treasured member of the [Comfort Matters™](#) accreditation core team. She served tirelessly to fulfill this program's [standards](#), which are focused on improving the quality of life and care for individuals living with dementia. Lexi dedicated each and every workday to staff and residents of Memory Lane. How could Lexi be gone?

"Lexi was a leader," said Amy Kotterman, United Church Homes' director of hospitality. "When she talked, everybody listened. She connected with residents and staff. They respected and looked up to her."

"Most of all," Amy continued, "she took ownership of creating a home for residents. She was dedicated and committed to her work, but most of all, she filled Memory Lane with love."



Lexi Henderson (left) was just 34 years old when she passed away unexpectedly last year. She was a treasured member of the Trinity Community at Beavercreek Comfort Matters™ core team.

Lexi's Home

Lexi and Betty Garrett, a licensed practical nurse who also served on Memory Lane, partnered to completely transform the memory care neighborhood into home for residents and staff. With STNAs Jamie Kidwell and Haley Perez, Memory Lane was the place to be. Everyone loved working there because everyone loved Lexi.

"Lexi was never upset and never complained. She never got tired," Betty said. "It wasn't a job to her – it was fun."

Memory Lane was Lexi's home, and in that analogy, she was the mother, who offered comfort and advice to all who sought it. If a resident needed extra calories, Lexi made milkshakes and hot cocoa topped with whipped cream. If a resident needed red lipstick to feel fabulous, Lexi spent her own money to buy it. If someone had a special breakfast request or the residents wanted manicures, Lexi would get to work. No task was too big or small for her — she would make it happen.

At one point, Betty said, Laura Farrell, senior executive director, told Lexi not to take on any more hours and to go home — spend time with her family. And Lexi replied, "But this IS my family."

Residents, coworkers and her immediate family were intertwined. In that respect, Alexis' husband and stepdaughter (whom Lexi had raised since she was just a toddler) attended Trinity at Beaver Creek events. And when Lexi visited her relatives in Florida, she would FaceTime residents to make sure they were happy and healthy in her absence. During the tornadoes that hit the Miami Valley in 2019, Lexi had been out of state, but she called to make sure her Ohio family was OK.



In common areas, the team added flip-sequence pillows to brighten the corners. Lexi purchased these on her own. "I like bling," she said.



Memory Lane

The atmosphere in Memory Lane also transformed, echoing Lexi's idea of home. First up, the team added a light to the snack cabinet and a slate with "Sip and Snack" scrawled in white chalk. They arranged treats so residents could easily point to what they wanted. On the lower half of the cabinet, they placed teddy bears and other items that brought comfort to residents.

In the bathrooms, Betty and Lexi decorated with flameless candles, beautiful silk flowers and pink and cream towels. A floral mural and salt lamp added to the ambiance.

You can still feel Lexi's presence as you walk through Memory Lane, which will soon be officially renamed as Lexi Lane, like the sign below says. "She may not physically be in that neighborhood," Amy Kotterman said, "but she is still there. Her spirit is among us. It goes on through us. We can make her vision and dream of Memory Lane happen."





Lexi's Spirit

On Sundays, Lexi gathered residents to attend a worship service in Memory Lane. Her father was a pastor, and Lexi had inherited his ability to reach people through God. Lexi was inclusive — she welcomed and encouraged everyone to join in worship. And join they did.

Lexi grew up in Florida and had been raised in a black church. Despite working in Memory Lane where there was little diversity among residents or staff, Lexi enveloped everyone into her culture. Residents dressed in bright colors and loud jewelry, and Lexi led worship with urban gospel leader [Kirk Franklin's](#) songs.

Lexi would say to the residents:

"Look at God! Raise your hands if you believe!"

And everyone would raise their hands.

Lexi's Legacy

In Memory Lane, Lexi served residents living with dementia. When she passed, some could not articulate their feelings about losing her, but they could feel the loss. And their families expressed their heartbreak in losing such a strong force in their lives.

Betty said everyone at Trinity at Beaver Creek still misses Lexi. On the way in to Memory Lane, there's a sign that reads Lexi Lane — a nurse made this as a tribute to Alexis. On it is a lily, her favorite flower. Betty said residents know it's for Lexi and mourn her when they pass it by.

Now, six months have passed. Betty, Jamie and Haley didn't know how they'd continue serving in Memory Lane without their friend. But Betty has a mission — to continue Lexi's legacy in caring for the residents as family members and to enjoy every moment they have together.

"She was an angel on Earth," Betty said, and during this precarious time as we navigate the uncertainties and fears of COVID-19.



A Walk to Remember
September 19, 2020

lexi lane

Lexi had plans.

Trinity at Beaver Creek could never participate in the local Alzheimer's walk, but Lexi was determined to hold a walk for Memory Lane residents. Staff and residents will hold this walk in her memory on the morning of Sept. 19, 2020.

Not only will they rally in her memory, but the community will host a formal dedication to rename Memory Lane — **Lexi Lane**.