

# Community MOMENTS



**Jodie Walker**

*General Manager*

GrandManors

November 2019





## Message From The President

As we move into Thanksgiving, this is a good time to reflect and be present to enjoy the true spirit of the holiday with our community and family. Thanksgiving has been celebrated nationally since 1789 as a holiday declared by President George Washington.

The spirit of Thanksgiving revolves around thankfulness and spending time with family and the community. Many communities across the United States give thanks by having food drives and providing meals to those that are unable to put food on their own table. Regardless of what you are doing for Thanksgiving, whether it is a traditional family meal and football or a Turkey Trot, please remember to be present and happy when the happiness is happening.

I want to genuinely thank you for your commitment to partnering with RealManage and wish you an absolutely fantastic Thanksgiving holiday.

**Chris Ayoub**  
*President, RealManage*

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# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## Jodie Walker



GENERAL MANAGER  
GRANDMANORS



To know Jodie Walker is to love her. From the minute you meet her, you note the quick smile, the friendly eyes, the engaging personality, and the willingness to give her opinion! She started working for RealManage in early 2007 and has been the General Manager of Avery Ranch, a 4,000-home GrandManors community for three years. But that's just part of the story.

Jodie moved from Colorado with her family in the 5th grade and has lived in the Georgetown, Texas area for the last 30 years. Out of high school she started working in the hospitality industry, first for La Quinta Inns, then for International Hotels Group (IHG) at Holiday Inns as both Assistant and General Manager responsibilities. It was during this 11-year career where she first met Jennifer Stephens, who we now know as Jennifer Jordan, and who could not have been a better mentor for Jodie as she showed such confidence in the fledgling professional.

Jodie lives on 5-acres with her husband, Dexter, and a menagerie of animals, including four horses, four dogs, cats, and chickens. She loves providing fresh eggs to Maryellen Romich in the Austin Branch office. As she grew up, and even today, Jodie enjoys barrel racing and has won numerous trophies and saddles from around the state. She is a member of a group that regularly rides horses in the rural part of Georgetown. If she wasn't busy enough with her animals, she also raised her daughter Ashlee, who recently graduated from Texas State University.

Her career with RealManage, which started in 2007, has been varied and involved. She started as a CAM, where she worked exclusively at prominent developer-controlled properties in the Austin area, at the request of the Developer. She then became the Transition Manager during the largest growth in the history of the

Austin branch and later became a DCAM, while still managing her own portfolio of communities, ranging from municipal utility districts to high-end, gated communities with a full range of amenities. When the opportunity to manage a large-scale community arose, she jumped at the chance and has never looked back. Not only is Avery Ranch a Master Association, where Jodie, a CMCA®, serves an 11-member Board, it also contains four sub-associations as well as 15 commercial properties.

To say that Jodie is very involved in the Austin CAI chapter would be an understatement. She has always been encouraged to be a board member but has resisted since she enjoys being a committee member where she can encourage continued education and social events. I recently watched her at the 4th annual Chili-Fest as she welcomed sponsors and managers who attended, sold raffle tickets, tasting the different food offerings, and participated in the volleyball tournament, on a team going back to the annual golf tournament, which she also helps organize.

In asking how her hospitality career benefited her transition into the community association industry, she said it taught her to be customer service oriented. It gives her a great deal of satisfaction when an upset member comes to her with a problem and, in the end, thanks her for helping solve it within the community policy and making life within Avery Ranch enjoyable. Indeed, when I asked a professional cohort about Jodie's style, her comment was that Jodie is the embodiment of, "The customer is always right, even when the customer is not always right!"

Anytime I need a boost, with a dose of reality, I call Jodie. By-the-way, her team won the volleyball tournament! Don't mess with Texas? . . . don't mess with Jodie!

Written by **Edwin J. Vitrano**  
Vice President of Large-Scale Management



# BOARD SPOTLIGHT



## Autumn Lakes Condominium Association

Autumn Lakes Condominium Association is a beautiful, well kept, 204 townhouse style community in Aurora, Illinois. This association has a board of directors that is emotionally invested to ensure they meet their fiduciary responsibility and keep to what is written within the rules and regulations of their “intention to maintain a high degree of consideration for ones’ neighbors to enhance living conditions in the community of Autumn Lakes Condominium Association.”

The board of directors comprises of Connie Gallagher that has served as president since 2003, Stuart Lane was elected to the board in 2012 and is serving as vice president, since 2008 Bob Garland has kept a close watch over the financial as he serves as Treasurer, Thomas McKenny had joined the board in 2018 and serves as Secretary, and Matt Bolton has been on the board since 2015 and serves as director.

The board has actively been engaged in a phased roof replacement for close to ten years, in which the board took their time to create a detailed plan as to how the funding and phased

roof replacements would take place. The board was diligent with regard to communicating to the homeowners how this plan would be executed. For such a large capital project to occur, assessments were increased several years in a row to fund the project with no special assessment. The board was able to keep to their promise of holding to no increase in the later years of the overall project as the funding would be where it needed to be along with keeping to the yearly operating costs.

The Autumn Lakes board members not only ensure the residences are well informed, they have created a good working relationship with one another and in turn, with the contractors that serve within their community. Management included. This can be visibly seen by how well the property has been maintained throughout the years. Autumn Lakes has had a long-standing partnership with their landscaping and snow contractor, which in turn, Loree King, Community Association Manager, states, “I rarely get calls or complaints with either landscaping or snow removal.” Isn’t that every manager’s dream?!

Written by **Daneen Reinke**  
Division President, Illinois





## Thanksgiving: How to Set Up a Food Drive For Your Community Association

Thanksgiving is a wonderful time for a food drive. Not only does everyone think about the value of their possessions to be thankful for, but they are also clearing out their pantries for feast ingredients. Associations can share a great deal of Thanksgiving fun by planning for events and charity. Everyone loves the feeling of knowing that the foods they haven't cooked in months will go to a family to help make their Thanksgiving a rewarding day full of food as well. Some so many families can't afford a feast this year who benefit from the food drives put together by generous communities like yours.

If you want to inspire your association to charity this year, all you have to do is organize a food drive and get the word out. Residents will come out of the woodwork with canned goods, packaged goods, and even groceries they bought for the purpose of donating. Because in the midst of giving thanks, we also remember that others have less, and they deserve to be happy, too.

So here's a quick course on how to set up a food drive for your community association to make Thanksgiving full of food for less fortunate families.

### *Choose a Charity Partner*

First, at a board meeting or community meeting, choose the charity partner who will receive your donation. This can be a local food bank, a Thanksgiving charity, a local church that handles holiday charity, anything that your association is comfortable with, and certainly will get your donation to people in need.

Then reach out to your chosen charity and let them know that your neighborhood will have a food drive donation. They may even have guidelines to help walk you through the rest of the food drive process.

### *Set a Donation Duration*

Next, establish the duration of your food drive. Some organizations suggest a week, or perhaps the month leading up to Thanksgiving, so that everyone has time to swing by with their cans. The duration is important because this is the window your residents will aim for when planning to clear their pantries and/or buy things to donate. The cut-off date also needs to be a few days before Thanksgiving so the food can be distributed.

### *Delegate the Work*

Separate up the work needed to make the food drive happen. Assign board members and committee members to:

- Establish the drop-boxes
- Monitor the drop-boxes
- Count the items
- Audit the items for safety
- Make sure the drop box contents get to the charity

### *Start Getting the Word Out*

Next, let your community know what's up! Those who weren't at the planning meetings will appreciate flyers, emails, and even neighborly visits to inform them that there is a food drive, the duration of the food drive, and where they can drop off items before the cut-off date. It's a good idea to create flyers, posters, and other printed announcements that can't be missed so that everyone gets the message even if they never attend a meeting and aren't home when you swing by.

### *Set Up Drop-Off Points*

Drop-off points are essential. You may have one location or several, depending on the size of your community. Each box needs to be clearly labeled and, ideally, monitored to make sure all donations are above-board. These days, a wifi camera can serve as well as a human monitor in most cases.

### *Send Reminders and Donation Tips*

During the donation period, send out additional flyers and emails as friendly reminders that the food drive is ongoing. Include helpful and friendly tips for how residents can donate, along with what can be donated.

### *Set Your End-Date A Few Days Before the Real Cut-Off*

As you wrap up, make your official end-date a few days before the actual cut-off. This allows time for people who are always running late to get their donations in at the last minute. You can get a serious boost at the end by being cleverly flexible with your end-date as people rush in with grocery bags of pantry items they forgot to bring in earlier.

### *Thank Everyone and Announce Your Charity Achievements*

Finally, when you've counted all the cans and submitted the donation, make an announcement. Let everyone in the community know how much food you donated all together and what you accomplished in terms of feeding hungry families. This is the feel-good reward that everyone was hoping for and what will bring them back to donate next year. Some might even ask about next year's food drive a month early because they've been saving cans for a good cause.



# Feeding the Wildlife:

## Why it is a problem

It may seem arbitrary, but many community associations institute a policy against bird feeders or any outdoor animal feeding, but there reasoning is sound. There are many reasons why feeding the stray animals in your neighborhood could be a wrong move, not only for your community but for the animals as well.

### THE PROBLEMS WITH FEEDING THE WILDLIFE

Most people assume that feeding a stray animal or giving the occasional duck a bit of bread is helpful and even a fun activity; however, it can make animals sick or even kill them. The food we put out for animals is often not in their natural diet and is commonly unhealthy for them. The tradition of feeding ducks bread is particularly bad. Bread can cause malnutrition in ducklings, and it can cause a condition called angel wing in ducks and geese, in which an overgrowth of bone deforms the wings and leaves them unable to fly and thus vulnerable to predators.

Food that is not consumed by the wildlife you meant it for can attract pests, including rats and mice. Leaving any food outside without being under constant supervision is likely to attract rodents, ants, and pests, not to mention the other scavenger animals that may be attracted to the smell. These can infest your home and make it unsafe for children to play outside.

Animals that are being fed can become a nuisance. The droppings of ducks, geese, and pigeons can, in excess, cause damage to outdoor art and even buildings. Deer that come to associate humans with food may decide to

also chow down on your garden or may bring ticks (which carry Lyme disease) in contact with humans. They may also eat plants that are toxic to them. Coyotes will also follow deer into the neighborhood or may eat pet food, and they have been known to eat cats and small dogs that get out.

An over increase in carbohydrates can even cause the local water bodies in your neighborhood issues, with algae blooms and animal waste causing water quality issues.

Bird feeders can contribute to outbreaks of avian disease as species that seldom hang out together come into contact with each other.

Feeding animals may also result in direct injury to yourself or others. Small animals can be rabid, resulting in unpleasant treatment. Rodents can carry a wide variety of diseases and often pass them to you through saliva or bites. You should never touch any wild animal, and if you find an injured animal call animal control or other expert help before attempting to move it.

Because of this, it is a good idea to either ban all animal feeding or allow only small bird and hummingbird feeders with posted guidelines.



### COMMON GUIDELINES

- Clean all feeders a few times a year with a 10 percent solution of non-chlorine bleach.
- Use specific seeds for specific feeders to reduce inter-species interaction and waste.
- Make hummingbird nectar using only refined white sugar and tap water. Never feed hummingbirds brown sugar, artificial sweeteners, or honey. Red dye is unnecessary.
- Clean hummingbird feeders twice a week in hot weather and once a week when cooler
- Although many people think feeding wildlife is beneficial to them; it can actually endanger them and you. Having rules against feeding the wildlife helps to keep everyone safe.





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