



The Springs
Living®

The Springs Living History

How one family endeavor led to helping thousands of families across the Northwest

Fee Stubblefield always knew his childhood home was special. Remotely situated in the Blue Mountains of Oregon's Umatilla County, Lehman Hot Springs is the largest collection of natural hot spring pools in the Pacific Northwest.

Young Fee and his cousins heard stories about a lost Native American gold mine not far from the springs, and they searched for it every summer. They spent many days enjoying hiking through the forests. Fee heard stories about the tribe taking their elders to the springs to soak in the warm waters, as they had been doing for centuries. He was told that the hot springs gave relief to the elders, making them feel refreshed and renewed.

Fee's family had deep roots in the region going back seven generations. But it was Fee's grandparents, Fancho and Lillian Stubblefield, who had acquired Lehman Hot Springs and the neighboring lodge and cabins in the early 1900's before there were paved roads or any sort of infrastructure in the area. As a 27-year-old proprietor, Fancho had many responsibilities, including keeping the grounds, hosting guests, and even making a little moonshine from time to time. Known to walk about town on his hands, Fancho loved to coax a smile with his embellished stories, practical jokes, and warm hospitality.

Using lumber milled on the property and water heated from the natural springs, Fancho built the Grand Hotel at the springs during the Great Depression. Visitors would arrive by horse-drawn wagons filled with hot bricks for warmth during the long journey. Fancho's wife Lillian added her talents to the venture. She was a wonderful cook and had high standards for cleanliness, order, and beauty.

Over the years, multiple generations of Fancho and Lillian's extended family enjoyed time together



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soaking in the mineral waters. Growing up, surrounded by the values and ideas of each generation, Fee learned the importance of hard work, respect, and caring well for others. He was shaped by the major influences of his upbringing: a close relationship with his family and the wonderment of the Northwest's natural beauty.

As the years went by, Fancho passed away and the Stubblefields moved to a different area of Oregon. Lillian faced growing old alone and would tell her grandson, "Promise to never put me in an old folks' home." Fee would never forget those words.

By 1988 Fee was grown, grandma Lillian was aging gracefully. However, one day, while mowing her lawn as she often did on her own, Lillian suffered a heart attack. She was strong and quickly recovered, but from then on, she needed help with the maintenance of her house. The family rallied, and everyone pitched in.

When Lillian's doctors recommended that she move to a place where she could get even more help with day-to-day tasks, Fee researched the options. He couldn't find any senior housing options that he was comfortable with moving his grandmother into. From what he saw, the traditional "old folks' home" was where people go to wait to die, not where they went to continue living.

Inspired by his upbringing at Lehman Hot Springs, Fee had a vision to build The Springs Living, a place for Lillian that felt like home with a sense of the natural beauty of the Northwest and a feeling of the joy of being surrounded by friends and family. In 1996, he set out to create a company that would lead the way to change the way people think and feel senior living.

Fee purchased land to build his first senior living community to honor his grandma's wishes. Lillian had her own place, retained her independence, and continued to do the things she loved. She also had personalized support around her, so life could be a little easier for her, and her family had peace of mind.



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Today, The Springs Living offers independent living, assisted living, and memory care across nearly 20 communities where they help residents and their families live life to the fullest. And though Lillian has since passed away, her legacy of quality, compassion, and respect led to a strong and vibrant employee culture at The Springs Living.

The company has a tradition of hiring employees based on shared values. This not only led to earning certification as an employer of choice by The Great Place to Work Institute in 2019, but it also reflects the high standards for serving the residents. Team Springs embraces teamwork, respect, and diligence in its efforts to consistently deliver quality services to residents and their families. Each year, employees who demonstrate those qualities are nominated for the company's highest honor, the Lillian Award.

Fancho's larger-than-life personality is also remembered throughout The Springs Living. Most communities feature Fancho's Public House, a casual dining alternative with full bar and pub-style meals. Fancho's is the heart of the community, complete with tall tales, happy hours, big-screen sports, and musical entertainment from time to time.

Today, Lehman Hot Springs still plays a vital role in the culture of the company. Not only did it inspire the naming of the company, but it also is at the heart of the company's culture and the location for annual leadership retreats. It is a reminder that the employees, the residents, and the company deserve continual investment and attention so they can thrive well into the future. As The Springs Living grows, it continues to nurture the quality of relationships, the quality of work, and the quality of each person who joins Team Springs.

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