



Embrace!

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Special points of interest:

- Family Councils
- Announcing the 2007 Grant Awardees
- The family perspective on Culture Change

Embrace! is a project of the N.C. Coalition for Long-Term Care Enhancement. To respond to articles, contact the editor:

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Creating a Family Council By John Suddath

The Friends of Residents in Long Term Care has published a manual “Creating a Family Council: A Group for Success,” which is a guide for families and friends of residents in long term care facilities. The manual is available to local councils at no cost and is distributed through the Regional Ombudsman Program and through FORLTC. The cost for printing the manuals was generously underwritten by Brookcare Pharmacy Services. Those who would like to obtain a free single copy should contact their regional ombudsman or FORLTC, and additional copies may be duplicated locally provided that appropriate credit is given Friends. Mail requests should include \$6 to cover the cost of postage and handling.

The loose-leaf, 3-hole punched guide is formatted to be placed in a ring binder along with records of the local family council so the secretary can keep all the information in one place. The 27-page guide includes: Why Form a Family Council, Getting Started, The First Meeting, and Ensuring Continuity of Leadership. The manual also includes a sample set of bylaws, a typical nursing home organizational chart with brief job

descriptions and suggestions of where and how to express your concerns to the appropriate people, excerpts of federal and state laws regulating nursing homes including a condensed version of the N.C. Bill of Rights for Nursing Home Residents and a discussion of practical applications of these rights, a sample service award certificate and suggestions for recognition of staff, and a listing of reference numbers and agencies for older adults services in North Carolina.

Further information is available from the Friends of Residents in Long Term Care web site: www.forltc.org.

John Suddath is the coalition’s representative from Friends of Residents in Long Term Care and can be reached at <jsuddath@earthlink.net>.



Cuthbertson Village at Aldersgate in Charlotte features a town square theme, complete with movie theatre. The authentic marquee recalls an earlier time that even memory-impaired residents can relate to.

Grant Awards Focus on Care Enhancements in N.C. Nursing Homes

Sixteen skilled nursing facilities in North Carolina are winners of grants of up to \$15,000 each to improve the quality of care and the quality of life for their residents. The more than \$224,000 in grant funds come from federal fines levied against nursing homes in the state for deficiencies in the provision of care. Grants ranging from about \$11,000 to \$15,000 were distributed to the facilities whose applications were approved. Uses include renovations, gardens and courtyards, computer rooms, media rooms, playgrounds, incorporation of buffet dining services, and resident pampering with the addition of a spa.

“With these projects, residents win and the facilities and their staffs win,” said Nadine Pfeiffer, grant coordinator and a nurse consultant in the N.C. Division of Health Services Regulations. “The outcomes for all these facilities will be measurable, and they will be positive. We extend our congratulations to all those who applied and encourage those who did not win, if they can, to go forward with their plans on their own.”

Grants are being distributed by the N.C. Coalition for Long-Term Care Enhancement to 16 of 35 applicants. Advocacy groups, industry providers and regulators comprise the coalition. Recipient's efforts will be performance monitored and evaluated for possible modeling for industry application. The

grants are aimed at helping facilities provide a more comfortable and more stimulating atmosphere for their residents.

Funding is provided through the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which reverts fines levied against nursing homes in the state for use in improving nursing home care. In previous years the reverted fines have been used for similar purposes.

A list of the recipients, grant amounts and project descriptions follows:

»Crosdaile Village, Durham, \$14,992, relaxation room.

»Lutheran Home, Hickory, \$15,000, renovate bathrooms to spas, new bathing techniques.



Cuthbertson Village in Charlotte carried the town square theme to the front door of each neighborhood. Covered areas, complete with rocking chairs, invite residents to socialize in a way reminiscent of earlier times when neighbors gathered on one another's porches to watch the evening go by.

»Lutheran Home, Albemarle, \$15,000, buffet dining.

»Lee County Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Sanford, \$14,999.34, computer system.

»Woodlands Assisted Living and

Rehabilitation Center, Fayetteville, \$15,000, buffet dining.

»Liberty Commons Nursing and Rehabilitation Center of Alamance County, Burlington, \$12,170, computer system.

»Cleveland Pines Nursing Center, Shelby, \$14,998, playground project.

»Wilkes Senior Village, North Wilkesboro, \$15,000, buffet dining.

»White Oak Manor, Shelby, \$10,964, buffet dining.

»Fair Haven Home, Bostic, \$15,000, mobile computer system for resident activities, a café area, and add a second dog.

»Grace Heights Health and Rehabilitation Center, Morganton, \$13,500, courtyard project.

»Mary Gran Nursing Center, Clinton, \$12,170, computer system.

»N.C. Special Care Center, Wilson, \$15,000, transform institutional environment to home-like environment.

»Davis Health Care Center, Wilmington, \$15,000, horticulture program for courtyard.

»Lutheran Home Trinity Oaks, Salisbury, \$15,000, Alzheimer's sensory garden.

»Pender Memorial Hospital, Burgaw, \$10,843.39, horticultural therapy, deck, plants, irrigation system.

Family Council: A Voice for the Residents

By Susan Gosnell

One thing many successful long term care facilities have in common is strong family involvement in the daily activities of the nursing home community. Family councils are one great way for resident representatives to offer suggestions to enhance a loved one's nursing home experience, to improve facility services, to plan resident, staff, and family activities, and to support each other.

Through a trial and error process, Cleveland Pines Nursing Center in Shelby has formed a Family Council that is an integral part of the facility. Initially, the council met every other month in the evening and was open to all representatives. Attendance was inconsistent, in part because many family members did not wish to leave their homes at night. In 2006, when the center began the process of culture change, the council was re-organized. Two representatives from each hall, or neighborhood, were personally asked to be part of the new committee. It was decided that the council would meet at noon on a set day each month so that those who worked could plan accordingly. Lunch is

provided by the dietary department in a comfortable, informal setting.

In addition to the 10 representatives, the Council meeting is facilitated by the social worker. The administrator and director of nursing attend the meetings with the council's approval. Many of the meetings are educational, featuring speakers as requested by the council. These have included other department managers within the facility and also community speakers from Hospice and the Alzheimer's Association.

The key to a successful family council is a strong chairperson who is elected by the other members. The chairperson can lead the group in developing the mission statement, setting the tone for the meetings, and taking the lead in organizing projects. Meetings are guided by written policy, and each member is given a copy of the family council by-laws, the mission statement, and the ground rules. The mission statement is also posted in a prominent place within the center.

Many ideas have come from the family council. For example, Cleveland Pines now offers an assortment of greeting cards to visitors. Cards are kept in the business office for purchase, and

proceeds go to the resident activity fund. Another example is the dry erase boards that are now placed in each resident's room. These boards are used for daily information, such as the name of the staff members on duty, beauty shop appointments, or special events. The council has also sponsored bake sales at the annual Cleveland Pines Fall Festival, as well as ice cream socials for staff appreciation. Family members have also offered valuable input into the evolving culture change processes within the center.

Another way that Cleveland Pines encourages family interaction is by hosting a Family Night each quarter. An informal dinner is served by the department managers, and an educational topic is presented. Past topics have included advanced directives and the role of the ombudsman.

A successful family council can provide much needed input and support for family members and the facility as a whole. Most importantly, the family council at Cleveland Pines has provided a voice for the residents.

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Magical Moments: Family perspectives on culture change

By Mary Ann Johnson

What would you think of a medication that lowers blood pressure without side-effects or a drug that can reduce depression, stress, and pain without risk? Such pet-powered wonder drugs do exist and are available without prescription at a Lutheran Home near you. Just ask the families of Lutheran Home-Hickory West who say the place has gone to the dogs, the birds, and the rabbits.

Pets provide unconditional love, create a sense of purpose, and are good listeners. And though animals have been visiting Lutheran nursing homes for years, pets as permanent residents is just one of many successful culture change initiatives taking place throughout the five nursing homes of Lutheran Services for the Aging.

Philip Paul applauds the culture change efforts that have taken place since his wife arrived at Lutheran Home-Hickory West three years ago. Though unfamiliar with the actual term "culture change," Paul states he is strongly in favor of "...anything that helps the home seem less institutional and more like a home; the changes have all been very positive."

A retired professor of music at Appalachian State University, Paul visits his wife daily. Knowing her passion for flowers, Paul keeps her room filled with fresh bouquets. A long history of health problems make it difficult for Mrs. Paul to communicate with her husband, but a broad smile breaks out across her face whenever she receives a bouquet and when she watches the cockatiels that are a visible part of the

home's landscape.

"Lorene loves birds," he states. "She always has. She will sit and watch them for the longest time periods or will let them light on her shoulder."

And Paul knows that his wife is not alone in her affection for the creatures. "When the birds are put back into the aviary, the residents fill the activity room to watch them," he said.

Paul is also aware that the hallways at Hickory West are now "neighborhoods" instead of units and that residents are encouraged to choose their own décor and schedule their own activities. The residents on Morning Glory Place have even opened their own general store. "I will probably always think of the halls as '100, 200, 300, or 400,' he adds, "but I am so glad the rooms are not like hospital rooms. It has become much more of a home."

Also aware of the home's culture change efforts is Wanda Helton, daughter of another Hickory West resident, Blanche Swofford. "The staff are so talented and have worked to paint and decorate. The home has a warm, welcoming feeling."

Helton believes her mother's residence at Hickory West has single-handedly changed nursing home stereotypes across the county. "We have a big family and a big church family and they all have visited Mom. They are always surprised at how happy she is and how friendly the atmosphere is," she said.

"It's not 'number one wing' or '200 hall,' it's where they live, it's home. They have taken away that impersonal, medical-spin," Helton states.

According to Helton, there are

also a lot of little things staff do that make a big difference. "The activity director has a popcorn machine in her office and the aroma of popcorn in the halls is so much nicer than the smell of Pine-Sol. Or the little dessert cups. They began serving dessert in these pretty little cups and Mom just loved it. She asked if she could have one for her room to hold little odds and ends. It's just a little thing, but it meant so much to her."

Both Paul and Helton can't say enough good things about the home's staff. "Bigger isn't always better," Paul stated and Helton agreed. "Nurturing," she began, "they are the most caring, nurturing group and they offer companionship to residents."

"It's not like a hospital, but more of a home," Paul added. "I understand there are regulations but things need to keep moving in the direction they are now toward a homelike situation. Residents need to feel very comfortable and relaxed...just like they would at home."

"The fish, the dogs, the birds, the rabbits, the residents are hungry for living things," Helton added. "It creates such a comfortable atmosphere and helps create friendships between the residents and the employees."

And though the fish, two dogs, two rabbits, and 27 birds can create some challenges for an already busy staff, Pat Harris, activity director at the Hickory home agrees. "No one complains about the extra work. The pets unlock magical moments for our residents. Seeing that sparkle in their eyes makes it all worthwhile."

Mary Ann Johnson is the director of community relations for the Lutheran Services for the Aging and can be reached at <mjohnson@lsanc.net>.

Building a Home

By Linda McNeil R.N., Teesha Bryant R.N., and Kathy McDonald N.H.A.

In the foothills of North Carolina is a nursing home that has embraced the meaning of community. Mountain Vista Health Park is a 120-bed non-profit facility that was built by the community-literally! Kathy McDonald, administrator of Mountain Vista Health Park, recalls collecting money door to door at Halloween as a child to help build the facility. The community held cake sales, raffles and anything else they could think of to raise money for the building. The end result has been worth the effort. Mountain Vista Health Park is the second largest employer in the community with approximately 130 employees. There are 13 employees who have been with Mountain Vista Health Park since the doors opened 27 years ago, and there is tremendous community involvement.

When asked what makes Mountain Vista Health Park so special, Kathy responds, "The volunteers. We have a strong group who are committed to helping with the residents." Teesha Bryant RN, staff development coordinator adds, "Many of our volunteers come to us through a resident. Either they are friends or family of someone who is currently residing here or has in the past. It is a very close knit community where everyone knows everyone else."

The volunteers at Mountain Vista Health Park are vital. The activity directors oversee the 40 plus volunteers that help make so many community activities happen. They assist with monthly outings, resident parties, and the day-to-day activities in the home. They have a weekly mending and

quilting circle that allows residents and volunteers to work together. In June they took a trip to a local horse ranch to learn a few things about horses, and July brought a picnic at the community's Harrison Park on the 4th. Every year they host the Fall Festival that includes community vendors, an auction, raffles, a meal and games for the children. The highlight of each festival is the crowning of the king and queen! Staff members assisted by resident family members sponsor a resident and each vote cost a penny. The money raised is used to help fund the activities throughout the year.

The civic organizations and churches of Denton are also involved in the facility. The Civitans sponsor a monthly Bingo night. The churches rotate weekly Sunday services. The residents' activity plans include music events, religious services, games and crafts in day and evening hours. The facility's rhythm band, The Mt. Vista Joymakers, practices weekly and enjoys performing locally for the community. The activities help the residents stay involved with current happenings in the town and builds on the strong community foundation.

Employees keep families and volunteers informed using a community bulletin board and newsletters. They survey the community to identify activities that interest everyone. The leaders at the nursing home believe in an open door policy and welcome community comment. They were pleased with the feedback the families provided through their satisfaction surveys.

One way the nursing home says **thank you** is with an annual Christmas event. Past events included an Open House Winter Wonderland and a Festival of

Trees. Over the course of the week 2000 people may come through to enjoy decorations, refreshments and activities. The Festival of Trees always includes the memorial tree as well as trees decorated by family members, businesses and staff.

Mountain Vista Health Park is a strong supporter of the community as well. The facility participates in the Annual Tour de Kale each June, which helps a local member of the community in need, and has added Davidson County's Relay for Life to their list of community support. The facility raised over \$17,000 for Relay for Life consecutively for the past two years. One of the highlights of the campaign for the community is the softball game between the CNAs and allied health students from South Denton High School and the department heads and nurses. It was an evening of fun and fellowship.

Speaking of students the educational community is also welcome at Mountain Vista Health Park. The nursing home is the clinical site for local South Davidson High School Allied health students. This year they acted as the in-facility nurse aide competency site for the allied health students. They also sponsor SDHS intern students interested in healthcare careers.

Building on the sense of community that has existed since Mountain Vista Health Park opened has enriched the lives of the residents, the staff, and the volunteers. It allows everyone to stay connected to the home they all helped build.

Linda McNeill is a consultant with the Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence and can be reached at <LMcNeill@thecarolinascenter.org>. Teesha Bryant is the staff development coordinator at Mountain Vista and Kathy McDonald is the administrator. If you have any questions about the article, please contact Kathy at (336) 859-2181 ext 233.

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LONG-TERM CARE ENHANCEMENT**

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To contact the Coalition, please email us at alice@lctcenhance.com.



*Enhancing the lives of residents and staff in
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From their rich coloring to their cheerful sounds, birds can add lots of pleasure to a resident's daily life. With proper planning birds are one of the easiest elements to incorporate into a facility. Wanda Martin from Lutheran Home Trinity Oaks enjoys the company of Kramer the cockatiel. Read about family members' perspective regarding culture change on page 4 of this newsletter. You'll also find information about the latest round of grants and what those facilities are doing with the funds. As always, please share this newsletter with all staff. If you want to view this newsletter in color, you can find a link on our web site.



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