

St. Joseph Bluffs Visit



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St. Joseph's Bluffs is a 100-bed skilled nursing home located in Jefferson City. The original home was opened in 1950 but has recently undergone a remodel with a serious emphasis on culture change.



St. Joseph Bluffs has two neighborhoods with two households each. Additionally, there is a 25-bed Medicare certified rehabilitation unit. Each neighborhood has its own entrance, complete with doorbell and porch light. Each household has its own kitchen, which is open to the dining room so residents can see and smell what is being prepared. Some residents also participate in the cooking. The kitchens are stocked with foods that the residents like. Mealtimes are based on the household's preferences. All neighborhood staff members are trained in cooking. Breakfasts are prepared 100% on the neighborhoods. The lunch and dinner entrées are prepared in the main kitchen and sent to the households. All side dishes are prepared on the households. Additionally, household staff can prepare food for individual residents anytime they wish and snacks are available 24-hours per day. The kitchens are also available for resident/family use.





Bathing schedules are based on resident preferences and they can take whatever kind of bath they like. Each bathing room includes a shower and tub and is equipped with towel warmers, heat panels, and electronic scented candles.



There is a large salon, which is also available to staff.



There is an onsite chapel. A resident volunteer from the neighboring independent living community provides music for the services. In addition to routine services, memorial services for deceased residents are held in the chapel. They have even conducted full funerals.

During my visit, I met 94-year-old resident Virginia Ford. When I arrived, Ms. Ford was typing a note to a family member on her manual typewriter. Ms. Ford's husband had also been a resident of St. Joseph's until he passed away recently. She was born and raised in Indiana, where she married her husband right after his Army career. He played a French horn for the Army during World War II. They were both school teachers at South Bend, Indiana. She taught English and Art and was the head of the Art Department. He was a music teacher. When they decided to retire, their friends begged them not to and told them they would be dead within two years; that was over 40 years ago. After retirement, they moved to the Jefferson City area to be near their son, who works for the State of Missouri.



Her walls were decorated with her artwork. She enjoys Monday afternoon bingo, church services, Wednesday afternoon Bible study, spending time in the library, and playing games. She especially likes the special parties that are held on holidays. She also enjoys her private time reading, working puzzles, and watching the Cardinals play. She has a lot of friends and family who enjoy visiting her.

She was very complimentary of the staff. She recently went to the hospital but was only there for four hours. While she was there she was visited by St. Joseph's Chaplain. She said, "If you have to live in a long-term care facility, this is about the best place to live."

Residents are encouraged to move in their own furnishings and belongings. There are laundry areas available for resident/family use. There are no audible alarms or overhead pagers.

The households have consistent staff assignments. They hold learning circles with residents and staff. They also have meetings with staff and families to discuss what is working well and what isn't. CNA's also attend the care planning meetings. They have a staff member who is training other staff on "Healing Touch."

St. Joseph's occupancy rate is very high and staff turnover is low. Future plans include adding a gift shop and remodeling the outdoor pavilion. They also have a team looking into aromatherapy and massage therapy services.

The changes made by St. Joseph's are truly groundbreaking and are good examples of successful collaboration with the Section for Long-Term Care Regulation to make culture change a reality. The Section approved several exceptions to state regulations, including a first time ever exception allowing the neighborhood kitchens to be open and accessible to the residents.