

La Verna Village

In May 2011, I attended the MC5 Northwest regional meeting, which was hosted by La Verna Village. After the meeting, Administrator Denise Curran took me on a tour. La Verna Village is a 120-resident, Medicare/Medicaid certified skilled nursing home located in Savannah.

Residents go to bed and rise when they choose; take the type of bath they choose, when they want it; and are provided care by consistently assigned caregivers. There are community computers with internet access. Residents participate in volunteer work if they wish; some fold linens and others help in the dining room. One resident manages the home's library.

La Verna employees are being cross-trained so that they are better able to meet residents' needs; 85% are CNAs. They are not required to wear uniforms and are provided with tops/shirts. There is also an employee workout room. Some employees bring their children to work to interact with the residents and perform volunteer services.



Resident Librarian's work area

They have made several changes to the dining experience, including increasing food options and extending dining times. There are two meal choices and always available items at each meal. Each unit also has a kitchenette available to residents and their families, which has an oven, bread maker, microwave, and toaster. Snacks are always available and residents can have their own refrigerators in their rooms if they wish.



Dining Room

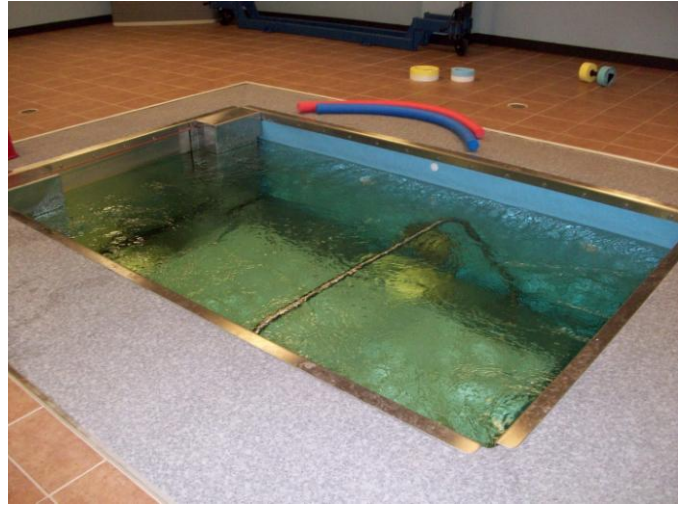


Kitchenette

The many services offered include aromatherapy, in-house therapy, bariatric services, aquatic therapy, and a multisensory stimulation room for residents with dementia. Their therapy area includes an aqua therapy pool, which Ms. Curran was very proud of. The pool floor can be raised so that the resident can walk into it on level ground, then be lowered into the water. It also has jets for resistance therapy and the floor is a treadmill.



Aqua Therapy Pool



Administrator Curran, along with researchers from the University of Missouri, conducted research and published an article in the American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias entitled, **The Effect of Multisensory Stimulation on Persons Residing in an Extended Care Facility**. The use of multisensory stimulation resulted in a decrease in the number of incidences of disruptive or problematic behavior, such as pacing, exit-seeking, hitting, yelling, and aggressive talking.



Nurses Work Area

Some of the environmental changes that have already occurred include adding laminate flooring and equipping resident rooms with flat screen televisions. Future plans include adding a spa with a whirlpool tub and taking out the central nurses' station.

During my visit, I met resident Mary VonKaenel. Not only has Ms. VonKaenel been a resident of La Verna Village for the past nine years, she was an employee for 24 ½ years and she said she “loved every minute of it.” All three of her sisters worked there as well. Nowadays, she enjoys getting up early in the mornings. She enjoys the many activities, especially playing dominoes. She said, “I don’t know what other places are like, but this one here is wonderful, I wouldn’t change a thing.”



Resident Mary VonKaenel

La Verna Village must be doing something right, their occupancy rate is 90% and their staff turnover rate is only 3%.