



The Living Center

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In August 2011, I visited The Living Center. The Living Center is a 99-resident Medicare/Medicaid certified skilled nursing home located in Marshall. Administrator Jack Baker took me on a tour.

The Living Center is on the culture change journey. They participate with Missouri's culture change coalition, [MC5](#). They are utilizing the [Artifacts of Culture Change](#) tool to help guide their changes. They have provided culture change training to their staff and have already made several changes with many more planned for the future.

Caregivers are consistently assigned, so that they develop relationships with the residents they care for and anticipate their needs. Residents choose the type of bath they take. They offer free massages. Staff members are not required to wear uniforms and CNAs attend care planning meetings.



Pond and waterfall

Approximately 1/3 of their rooms are private. There are no restrictions on residents' furniture or decorations. They have eliminated overhead paging. They have a gift shop available to the residents and their visitors. They also have a chapel.

Three meal choices are offered at each meal and there are always available items. Meals are offered to residents' visitors at no charge. They use cloth napkins, rather than clothing protectors (bibs). There is a resident use refrigerator in the dining room. Residents participate in cooking activities. Snacks are available at all times at no extra cost. Residents can also have their own refrigerators in their rooms if they wish.

They have three full-time activity staff members, including one assigned to the dementia unit. They have a Red Hat Ladies Club. Residents come and go as they choose. They go outside, to church services,

and to attend outside activities. They enjoy regular trips to Wal-Mart. Mr. Baker told me about a talent show they host and how residents serve as judges. He also told me about Fair Week, which they were getting ready for. They have a pie eating contest. They serve funnel cakes and corn dogs. They also have a recipe contest. Residents submit recipes that are judged.

Their future plans include instituting open dining, replacing the old “feeder tables” and adding new tables and chairs. They are removing the hall numbers and adding names chosen by the residents. They are adding WiFi and community computers with internet access, web cams, and Skype. They are implementing a “buddy program.” They are painting, updating their bathing rooms, adding a family room, and building a dock to their pond. They are also planning to add a snoezelen room.



Courtyard Gazebo



Resident Evaline (Maxine) Waters



Resident Waters' room

During my visit, I met resident Evaline (Maxine) Waters. Ms. Waters is 83-years-old and has been a resident of The Living Center for four years. She was born in KC and also lived in St. Louis. She started school in Arrow Rock but graduated from Marshall High School. She worked for Mattingly Variety store for 25 years and Scott's Variety Store for six years. She also did a lot of babysitting. She told me about a boss she once had who had fun with the employees. She and the other employees once gave him some cologne that “stuck with you for a week.” He got her back by spraying her from her head all the way down.

She enjoys going on outings, such as trips to Wal-Mart, going out to eat, and attending parades. She had gone out to dinner with friends from Church the evening before I met her. She enjoys socializing and attends meetings to discuss new food choices.

Prior to moving to The Living Center, she lived alone and was very independent. She attended the First Presbyterian Church, which is the oldest church in Marshall. She had an accident that affected her balance, which precipitated her move to The Living Center. She is still independent and the only real change has been getting used to others waiting on her. She tries to do things for herself and doesn't like to ask others for help. It makes her feel like she is losing her independence. When she does need help, the caregivers respond quickly. "If you have the slightest difficulty, they are right there to help you." She went on to say, "They ought to give these young people an award for patience and kindness."