

In November 2011, I visited NHC Healthcare, Desloge. NHC Desloge is a 120-resident Medicare/Medicaid certified skilled nursing home located in Southeast Missouri. Administrator Jacki Meyer told me about NHC's 20 promises to residents, known as "The Better Way." All staff members are required to know and live by the promises.

I promise to...

1. Greet you with a smile and make eye contact.
2. Use your name always.
3. Address your needs with a sense of urgency.
4. Put my heart into everything I do.
5. Respect your privacy, dignity, and confidentiality.
6. Answer the telephone within 3 rings and with a smile.
7. Give you as many choices as I can.
8. Maintain a safe and secure environment for you.
9. Do my part in keeping the environment pleasant.
10. Resolve any of your concerns.
11. Give no excuses! Apologies only.
12. Anticipate your needs.
13. Be a part of the NHC team – there is no "I" in TEAM.
14. Only make promises to you that I can keep.
15. Be neatly dressed and well groomed according to NHC standards.
16. Respond to your "needs" rather than maintaining my schedule.
17. Use compassion as my second language.
18. Escort you to your destination.
19. Recognize that all your concerns are major.
20. Maintain a positive attitude.

NHC Desloge has implemented several person centered care changes. They utilize the [Artifacts of Culture Change](#) online tool to monitor their culture change progress. Ms. Meyer said, "Residents are in charge of what they want and staff know it." Staff members are consistently assigned and they have Universal Workers in the Special Care Unit. They also have a policy that nobody walks past a call light. CNAs attend the care plan meetings to ensure that input is provided from those who know the residents the best.



*Special Care Unit Dining Room*



*Special Care Unit Living Room*

They have extended dining hours for breakfast. Residents sleep in as long as they like and they receive better and quicker service. They are now also extending dining hours for lunch and dinner. They have several always available items for residents who prefer something other than the primary meal choices. They also have a “meal of the month,” which is chosen by the residents. Popular choices include barbecues with watermelon, pizzas, hot dogs, and White Castles. They seek out residents’ individual preferences and try to accommodate them. They have one resident who enjoys wine with dinner and they accommodate her.

They have many food centered activities. They recently had a World Series party. Many residents attended and enjoyed beer and popcorn. Residents cook meals in the activity kitchen, which is also available for family use. Residents can have personal refrigerators in their rooms if they wish; however, there is also a community refrigerator available. Snacks are available at all times at no extra cost. They also have an ice cream parlor where residents are served for free.



*Activity Kitchen*

There are many activities offered. They take trips to Cardinals games. Some residents enjoy gardening in the spring and summer months. They pass out tubs of candy at Halloween. They also try to provide resident-centered activities that incorporate the residents' normal lifestyles. I saw a resident in the Special Care Unit who was sanding wood. Ms. Meyer said he had a long history of enjoying woodworking, so they provided him with the materials he needs to continue to do what he enjoys.

They offer both private and semi-private rooms. There are no restrictions on residents furnishing and decorating their own rooms. They have small neighborhood work areas, rather than a large institutional nurses' station. They try to maintain a home environment by limiting overhead paging. They also accommodate overnight visitors by allowing them to use open rooms or by moving in extra beds. Residents can have their own pets if they wish; however, they did not have any while I was there.



*Resident Room*



*Neighborhood Nurses' Work Area*

Residents get up and go to bed when they wish, and choose the type of bath they prefer. Some residents do volunteer work, such as read to others, fold laundry, or fold newsletters.

We talked about how deaths are handled. They try not to let anyone die alone. One of the ways they meet the family's needs is by providing meals for them. Staff member often sit with dying residents and sign or pray with them. They also have great volunteers who help. After a resident passes away, they have "Angel Call" when the funeral home comes to pick up the body. They bring the body through the center court where they stop and say a poem or sing a song. Two staff members always escort the body out the front door to the hearse. They also hold memorial services twice a year and invite the families.

Future plans include updating the bathing rooms, including adding heat lamps and radiant heat. They also plan to purchase a van and add wireless internet throughout the home.

During my visit, I met CNA Michele Dunn. Ms. Dunn has worked at NHC Desloge for the past three years. She has 15 years of prior experience working in other long-term care homes. She

enjoys working at NHC Desloge. She said they take good care of the residents and everyone works as a team. The supervisors are awesome. You can go to them if you have a problem.

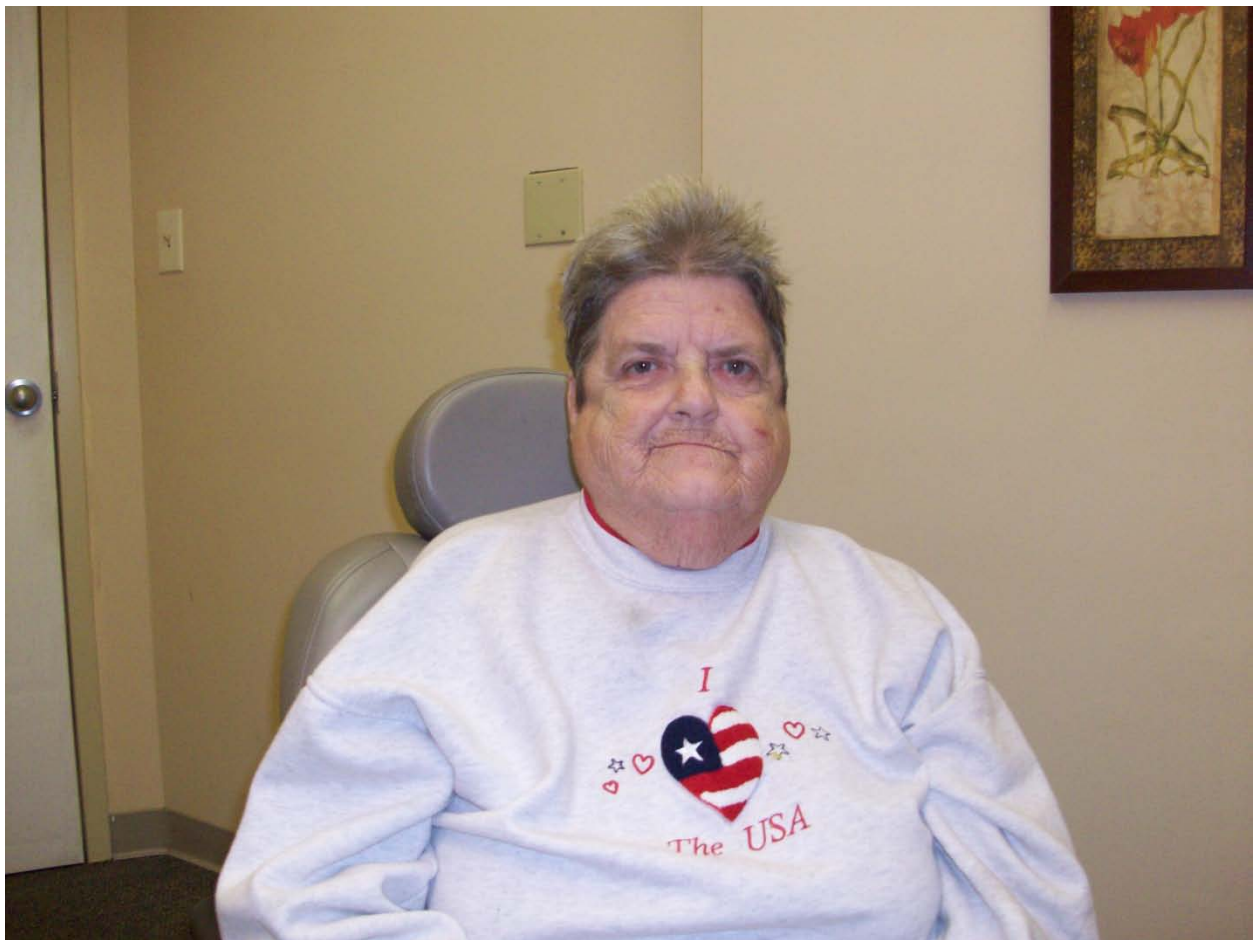
Residents have a lot of choices over their lives and are happy. She was especially complimentary of the “wonderful activity department.” The residents really enjoy trips to ballgames, movie night with popcorn, cookouts, taco salad days, and bingo. They recently had a World Series party and the residents were served beer.



*CNA Michele Dunn*

She likes the open dining and so do the residents. “It is more like a restaurant” and “It works out wonderful.” They have had open dining for breakfast for a while and are now expanding it to lunch. It provides residents with more options and freedom. If residents don’t want what is being served, they can get something different. Cheeseburgers, hot dogs, grilled cheese, or chef salads are always available. She also said that if a resident wants something special, they can just let the activity or dietary departments know and they will go out and get it. They have one resident who wants Pepsi with meals and another one wants V8.

I visited with resident Elizabeth (Liz) Hasty. Until moving to NHC a little over a year ago, Ms. Hasty lived in Fredericktown all of her life. Her mother owned a fabric shop there when she was growing up. She worked as a waitress for 35 years and worked in every restaurant in Fredericktown. She had two sons. Unfortunately, one of her son passed away when he was only 33-years-old. The other is a truck driver. She said life is great at NHC and “I don’t think there is much they could do to improve.”



*Resident Liz Hasty*

I also met resident Terry White, who has lived at NHC since February. He also previously lived there from 2009 to 2010. He grew up in Peavely and lived there until he joined the Army in 1982. He said he was a “Grunt” and operated a Tube-launched, Optically-tracked Wire-guided (TOW) heavy anti-tank missile system. He was stationed in Germany and at Ft. Lewis in Washington. After leaving the Army because of health issues, he moved back to Missouri and managed a sports bar and grill.





*Resident Terry White*

Mr. White has a lot of friends at NHC Desloge. He enjoys the activities. He likes to play bingo, play Wii, and watch movies. He is also a Cardinals fan. He especially likes the food and said he can get snacks anytime he wants or can request something extra from the kitchen. He said, "These guys are great, they take very good care of me."