



In January 2012, I visited West Vue Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in West Plains. West Vue is a 120-resident Medicare/Medicaid certified skilled nursing home operated by the Howell County Baptist Association.

Interim Administrator Stacey Smith showed me around. He pointed out that the front lobby area, which used to be offices, has been transformed to a comfortable living room for the residents. There is also a small gift shop in the area.



*Center Court Dome*

The center court, where the old institutional nurses' stations once stood, has been transformed to a beautiful community gathering place, with a waterfall, glider rockers, and a large television. It is open to the chapel and the Mon Café De Choix. While I don't speak French, I believe the translation to be My Café of Choice. I found the name to be quite appropriate, since it is open to residents, visitors, and staff at all times and is one of several dining choices available throughout the home.





*Mon Café De Choix*

The café is stocked with hamburgers, hotdogs, salads, and homemade soup. There is also a community refrigerator and other small appliances available to the residents and their families. Residents particularly enjoy using the microwave to make popcorn.

There are six neighborhoods, each with its own staff and dining area, including a full kitchen in the memory care unit. Even the nurses serve only the residents in their neighborhood. Staff and residents take pride in their neighborhoods. The neighborhoods' staff and residents have chosen paint colors for their individual dining alcoves and are actually doing the painting themselves. All resident rooms are privacy enhanced rooms that share a bathroom with the neighboring room or private apartments. Residents may furnish and decorate their rooms how they choose. They may also have personal refrigerators and pets if they wish.



*Resident Room*





*Another Resident Room*

The Bread of Life Diner is also available for residents who prefer restaurant style dining. Wait staff take orders as the residents enter the dining room. They can either select the meal of the day or order from the menu, which has many items that are always available. Dining hours have also been extended to accommodate residents' choices.



*Bread of Life Diner Menu*

Many institutional features have been eliminated. The audible call system has been replaced with a silent wireless call system. Overhead paging is limited to special circumstances. They have mostly eliminated alarms; there is still a couple that physicians insist on. Residents get up and go to bed when they choose. They take the type of bath they choose, when they want it. There are consistent bath aides, because that is what the residents prefer. They also have a towel warmer for the residents comfort.

Aromatherapy and massages are offered. They have many community pets, including a dog, birds, turtles, and fish. They also have community computers with internet access and two special areas for private get-togethers. As I have found to be the case with many homes that adopt culture change, they stay full.





*The Fireplace Room - One of the areas available for special get-togethers*



*West Vue Community Dog – Buddy*





*Another one of the home's many community pets*

During my visit, I spoke with Lifestyle Coordinator Susan Anderson. Susan is originally from Redwood, California. When she was a child, her family moved to Alton, MO, where she attended Jr. High and High School. She has also lived in Colorado, Minnesota, and England. She has been back in Missouri and has worked at West Vue for six years.



*Lifestyle Coordinator Susan Anderson*

Ms. Anderson started working in nursing homes as a relief cook when she was only 22-years-old. She has also worked in assisted living, adult daycare, and a hospital. She is excited about culture change and wants to keep moving forward. One thing she particularly likes about West Vue is the fact that residents choose what they like to do.

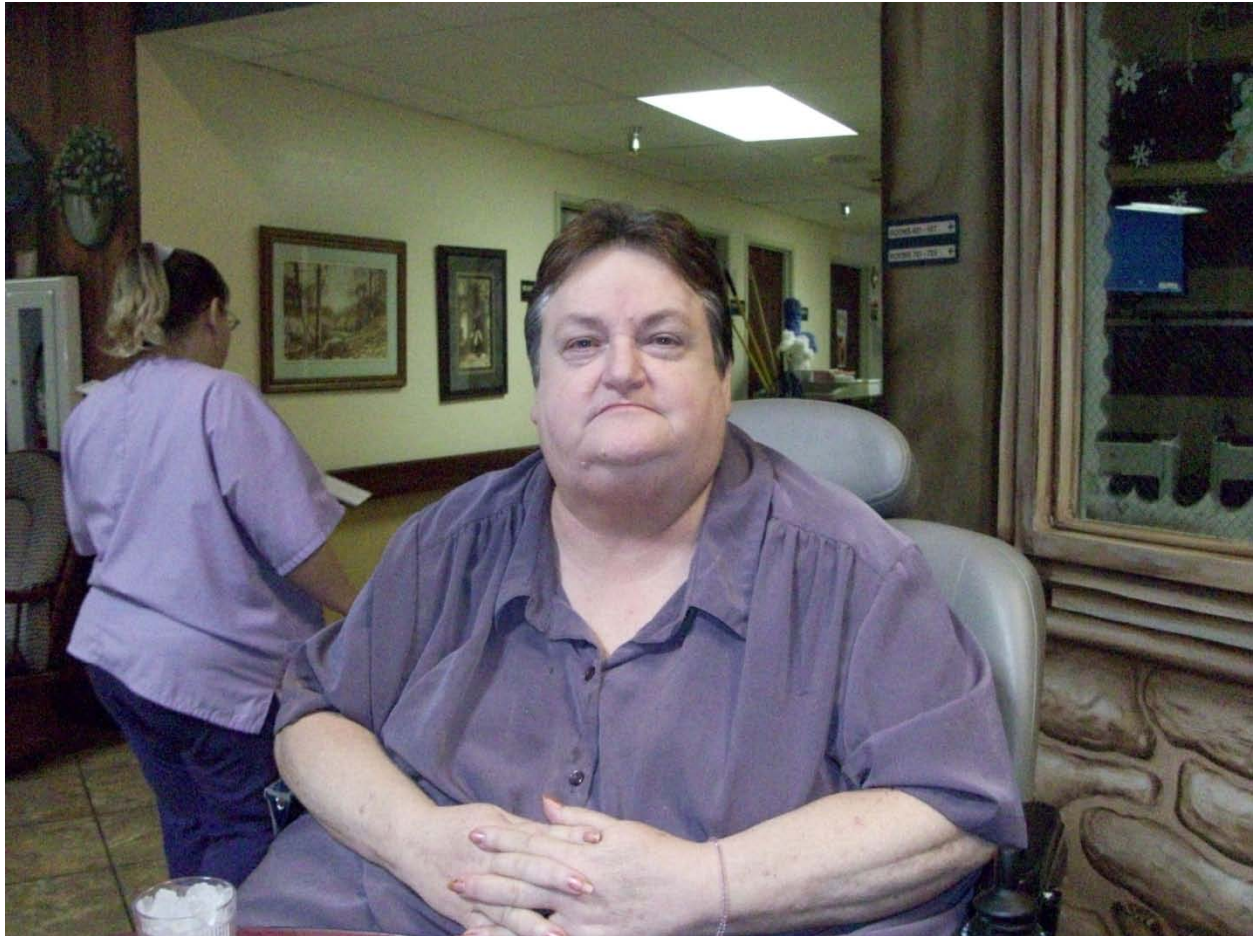
She told me about positive changes that have taken place since she has been there, including implementing consistent staffing assignments, extending dining hours, addition of neighborhood dining areas and the café, adding the dining menu, removal of the half-moon tables and special dining room for what was formerly known as “feeders,” renovating the spas, and residents being able to choose when they get up. She particularly likes the extended dining hours, but her goal is 24-hour dining.





*Renovated Spa*

I also met resident Billie J. Whelchel. Ms. Whelchel was born and raised in West Plains, where her family operated a farm. They raised pigs, milked cows, and raised feeder calves. Her father also worked at Cloud Oak Flooring Company.



*Resident Billie J. Whelchel*

She moved away from the area in the late 60s and lived in Illinois for 20 years. She was a factory worker and her husband worked in meat packing plants. He passed away in 1995, when he was only 53-years-old. She has one son, four grand children, and one great-grandchild.

She temporarily lived at West Vue for short-term rehabilitation in 2005, 2006, and 2007. She moved in permanently in 2008. She has been in another nursing home, but did not like sharing a room with another resident. She is a people person and looks forward to every day; however, she also likes her privacy.

The staff members are very friendly and courteous. She comes and goes as she pleases. She enjoys riding her electric wheelchair to Quiznos and back. She also enjoys playing bingo and card games. She said, "I'm never bored, I wouldn't move to another place." We discussed positive changes that have taken place since she has been there. She particularly likes the café and the fact that residents, staff, and visitors can help themselves.



She is the Resident Council President. Other residents come to her if they have concerns and she takes them to the Resident Council Meetings. She also volunteers to deliver newspapers in the evenings. She said she doesn't feel like a resident, she feels like one of the workers.