



Department Heads Endure the Cold Weather to Pose for a Photo

In January 2012, I attended a groundbreaking ceremony at the Golden Age Living Center in Stover. Golden Age Living Center is a 60-resident not-for profit Medicare/Medicaid certified skilled nursing home operated by Morgan County Nursing Home District #1. They are in the process of building an addition to their existing home.

The new addition, which is slated to be completed by July 4th, significantly moves Golden Age forward on their culture change journey. The addition will include 12 new private rooms, complete with private bathrooms and showers. Since they won't be increasing their license capacity, they will also be converting existing semi-private rooms to private. They are going from two private and 29 double rooms to 21 private and nine double.



Attendees Look at Plans

The addition will also include a new spa/bathing room, complete with a new whirlpool bath, towel warmer, and foot spa; a new activity room, which will include a resident use kitchen with a range hood extinguishing system and a community refrigerator; a covered patio; two new sitting areas; and a guest room for residents' visitors.

They will also be renovating the existing structure. The renovation will include removal of the institutional nursing station and replacing it with a desk, consultation room, and sitting area; replacing the audible call system with a silent wireless system; removal of offices and replacing them with a resident lounge/living room; and adding internet connectivity to resident rooms.

Culture change is not something new with the construction project. They have been on the journey for a while. They have a culture change team and use the [Artifacts of Culture Change](#) tool to assist them. Staff members at all levels participate with Missouri's culture change coalition, [MC5](#). Some of the changes they have already made include consistent staffing assignments, liberalized medication passes, liberalized and eliminating overhead paging. Residents may furnish and decorate their rooms as they wish. They can choose the type of bath they prefer and get it when they want it. They also have a consistent bath aide.



Medication Storage Cabinet in Resident's Room



Residents go to bed and get up as they choose. A hot breakfast is generally served until 9:00. There is a continental breakfast available for residents who choose to sleep later; however, residents may request a hot breakfast at any time. Lunch and dinner is served buffet style. There is a main meal and an alternate, as well as an always available menu. Residents may additionally request something special if they like, and snacks are also available at all times at no additional cost.



Artwork and Photography by Former Resident Ralph Stobie, Jr.

The home and residents are very much a part of the community. They go out on a lot of outings, such as shopping or fishing. Many church, music, and singing groups visit regularly. One of their residents recently hosted a tea party for the community. They also recently held a staff member's wedding at the home, so that the residents could attend. It was a theme wedding. The bride and groom dressed in their favorite NFL team attire and the minister wore a referee uniform. One of their nurses made the wedding cake and the home hosted the reception.

They have an active guild that throws a monthly birthday party and buys each resident a gift, which is in addition to the balloon, card, and cupcake the home provides on individual birthdays. The guild also buys each resident a Christmas gift. Staff members throw a Christmas party and pass out the gifts. They have a male aide who plays Santa Claus. They also have a volunteer who dresses as Santa Claus and his wife dresses as Mrs. Claus. They take photos with the residents. The staff's children make cards with the photos and send them to the residents' families. They also provide free photos with Santa for staff.

Administrator Vera Cline and I discussed end-of-life at Golden Age. They try to ensure that no resident dies alone. Staff members volunteer to sit with dying residents who don't have family with them. Other residents also visit. After a resident dies, they take residents who want to go to the funeral or visitation. They also have a tree that is decorated with angels that represent each resident who has passed. She told me about a funeral that they held at the home for one of their residents. They also framed puzzles that the resident had put together and gave them to the family.

During my visit, I met CNA Rosie Heller. Ms. Heller attended elementary and high-school at Versailles, which is just down the road from Stover. She has lived in the area her whole life. She has two children and two grandchildren. She enjoys gardening, biking, and playing with her grandchildren. She has worked at Golden Age for nearly five years. She has several additional years of experience caring for the elderly at another nursing home and for an in-home-care agency.



CNA Rosie Heller

I asked her what Golden Age does especially well. She said she likes the fact that the residents get up when they want and can eat breakfast anytime they want. They hold a hot breakfast for those who choose to sleep in. She said, "Residents seem happier and more content with natural waking." She also likes that residents can request what they want to eat if they don't like what is being served. Residents can have the type of bath they prefer, as often as they like, when they want it. She also said, "With consistent staffing assignments, you know the residents' needs and you don't have to think about it."

During my tour, I also met 75-year-old resident Alice Stucker, who was playing a game in the activity room. After she finished the game, she told me about herself and her experience at Golden Age. She was born and raised in the Stover area. She grew up on a farm, where her family raised turkeys, hogs, and cattle. When she married, she and her husband also farmed. In addition to farming, her husband worked construction and she was a kindergarten teacher for over 25 years. They had been married for more than 50 years when he passed away. She has three sons, one granddaughter, and four grandsons.



Resident Alice Stucker

Ms. Stucker was at Golden Age for short-term rehabilitation following a fall. She had previously been there for rehabilitation after having back surgery. After the fall, she just called and said she was going to "come up for a while." She was very complimentary of the staff, who she described as being "very helpful and friendly." She was especially complimentary of the therapy staff. She said they are flexible and she plans to return for outpatient therapy when she goes home. She went on to say that life in the nursing home depends on your attitude and it helps to get out of the room and play games. She also said, "I think it is a good place."