



*Barathaven Alzheimer's Special Care Center*

In May 2012, I visited Barathaven Alzheimer's Special Care Center in Dardenne Prairie. Barathaven is a 66-resident, state-licensed-only, Assisted Living home. It is a new home that has just been open for two years. They have provided person-centered care from the beginning and haven't really had to change their culture. However, they understand that culture change is a journey not a destination. They recognize the need for ongoing improvement and participate with [MCS](#), Missouri's Culture Change Coalition.

Administrator Felieta Boaz showed me around their beautiful new home. They have both private and semi-private rooms. They have two dining rooms, each equipped with ovens where they do baking. There is a very homey feel. They have several living rooms where residents can relax or visit with their loved ones. They have an enclosed courtyard and a walking path. There is WIFI throughout the building. There is no overhead paging. They do have an audible call system, but it only alarms at the nurses' work area.



*Enclosed Courtyard*



*One of several cozy living rooms*



*Another living room*

Residents can furnish and decorate their rooms as they wish. They can have personal refrigerators if they choose and can adjust their own heating and cooling. Resident rooms have bathrooms that are equipped with motion sensors that automatically turn the lights on. They also have walk-in showers and heat lamps. Residents are provided with bathing assistance as needed and according to their preferences.

They have consistent staffing assignments and staff members are expected to know the residents' life stories. Residents go to bed and rise when they choose. They have a dining schedule, but residents are served whenever they go to the dining room and snacks are available at all times.



*Life stories posted outside resident's rooms*

Ms. Boaz told me that some residents enjoy doing laundry, so they used to give them laundry to fold and unfold. One day the Activity Director came to her and said they were not going to fold “fake” laundry anymore. Now the residents are truly contributing by folding the real laundry.

They have a large volunteer program. They also have residents who do volunteer work. Some residents wrap silverware for dining. One resident enjoys washing dishes. They have had residents who helped housekeeping staff and one resident who helped the maintenance man. Their activity staff offer two outings per week. They celebrate birthdays with individual parties for each resident on their birthday. Invitations are sent to the resident’s family members.

During my visit, I met Activity Aide Anne O’Connell. Ms. Connell was born and raised in St. Louis. Her father worked for Southwestern Bell. He started as a lineman when he was only 15-years-old. He also worked as a telephone man for Edward Jones after retiring from Southwestern Bell. Her mother was a housewife and raised 12 children. She was the 8<sup>th</sup> child. She had nine sisters and two brothers.



*Activity Aide Anne O'Connell*

She has one daughter. Her daughter works in the Emergency Room at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and is going to school to become a Registered Nurse. She has been married for five years. Her husband works for Schillers Camera and Video. He is a musician and also volunteers at the Barathaven. He has been practicing old time songs, because that is what the residents like.

Ms. O'Connell started working at Barathaven shortly after it opened. She started out as a caregiver. Before working at Barathaven, she worked as a homecare worker. Before that, she cared for her mother and cared for her sister who passed away from cancer. She said that caring for her sister is what made her decide she wanted to be a caregiver.

I have met very few people who are as passionate about what they do as Ms. O'Connell. She said she loves coming to work. She also said, "I love my job so much, I feel like I'm in heaven already." She told me how much she enjoys when she discovers something new that people like to do. She shared a story with me about a lady who she struggled to find anything that she liked. Just four days before my visit, the lady just sat down and started rolling silverware. It turns out that rolling silverware is something that she likes to do.

She also told me how she learned that residents are more likely to respond and get involved with activities if she simply says, "Come with me, we are going to have fun!" rather than trying to explain to them what the activity is and ask them if they want to participate. She took me to the activity room and showed me things that residents enjoy, like the big puzzles, or books with old pictures.

Something she was really excited about was how she discovered that many of the residents enjoy sketching. Some of the residents are really good at it. She has been collecting residents' sketches and putting them in a book. She has a sketch from Barathaven's very first resident.

Another person I met during my visit was Resident Margaret Gross. Ms. Gross was a real character. She took me by the arm and led me to her room, where she showed me pictures and reminisced about earlier days.



*Resident Margaret Gross*

She was born in Weldon Springs in 1926. She loved and missed the family farm. She described their big beautiful 9-room farm house, dairy, riding stables, riding trails, orchard, and the big garden. They had electricity and a bathroom, which was a big deal in those days. They also had a "hired man." Girls from Lindenwood University came to their stables to ride. Her eyes really lit up when she told me about all of

the horses and how they rode in parades. She showed me a childhood photo of herself and her siblings on their pony, Teddy.



*Resident Margaret Gross with her brothers and sister on their pony "Teddy"*

Besides operating their dairy and stables, her father was a mail carrier and her mother was a housewife "and a good cook." She was also very fond of her Aunt Mim, who was a teacher in St. Louis County. During "the war", she moved to California and worked in a bar. However, she liked Missouri better and moved back to the St. Louis area and worked at Thro's Clothing Store. Her husband was a successful lawyer and they loved to travel. She seemed very happy at Barathaven, but was more interested in talking about the farm, horses, and family, so that is what we did.