



In May 2012, I visited Parc Provence in Creve Coeur. Parc Provence is a 130-resident, state-licensed-only, skilled nursing home that specializes in dementia care. Director of Resident Well-Being and Social Services Angela Keeven showed me around. Angela is also the West Regional Representative for [MC5](#) (Missouri's Culture Change Coalition).

Parc Provence uses the "Forget-Me-Not" questionnaire to document individual preferences and to guide the care and services they provide. Residents are very active and engaged, with the assistance of a large staff of caregivers, including a dentist, a massage therapist, music therapists, art therapists, and over 30 activity specialists. They also have many interns and volunteers. Each intern works 200-300 hours per semester. All volunteers go through their staff orientation program. There are six activities occurring simultaneously throughout the day, with 100 separate activities daily.

Many high school and elementary students also provide volunteer services. Grade school students conduct service projects by performing tasks such as working in the gift shop or bistro, watering plants, disinfecting, or making beds.

They have teamed with a local school to provide the Forget-Me-Not course for special needs students. Eight to ten students attend the course conducted at Parc Provence. Students learn customer service skills in housekeeping and food service. They perform tasks such as passing water and making beds.

Residents also do volunteer work. They have a team who participates with the Alzheimer's memory walk. Some residents go to schools and read in classrooms. Others volunteer for Card Care Connection making cards for individuals with cancer.

Alcoholics Anonymous meets in the non-denominational chapel. Meetings are open to the public, but it is specifically for recovering alcoholics with memory loss. The Mind-Body-Spirit support group is lead by a Resident Care Specialist and a volunteer. Meetings open with a laughter yoga exercise and closes with a neurobic exercise. Residents also care for live flowers that are delivered every week.



*Photo display developed by students from a local school's photography course, featuring Parc Provence residents.*

The home is divided into neighborhoods and households. Each household includes resident rooms, a kitchen, a dining room, a staff work area, and access to the outdoors. Each household is unique, based on the residents who live there. They have both private and semi-private rooms. To provide a more homelike environment, staff members wear polo shirts with gray or khaki slacks.



*A courtyard*



*A resident's Room*

Overhead paging is only used in emergencies. The residents' call system only alarms at the nurses work area. They are also working on getting rid of all alarms. They still use medication carts, but they are modern carts that look like household furniture. They have community computers with internet access. Skype is available for residents to communicate with friends and loved ones who aren't able to visit regularly. They are having WIFI installed throughout. It is probably done by now. They accommodate overnight guests by bringing in extra beds or offering open rooms if they are available. They also have a gift shop that is available to residents and guests.

Parc Provence has a Fine Dining Committee, which is made up of staff and residents. Some of the changes they have made include eliminating clothing protectors, putting salt and pepper shakers and flowers on the tables, and adding soda fountains.



*A neighborhood dining room*



*A neighborhood kitchen*

A main meal and alternate is served in the households during set meal times. However, accommodations are made for residents who choose to eat at different times. Additionally, the kitchen, with a stocked refrigerator and pantry, are open and available for resident and family use at all times. Muffins, cookies, and bread are baked in the households daily. Residents also enjoy waffle days, barbecues, and days when large cuts of meat are brought in and carved on the neighborhoods. Food choices are based on the Forget-Me-Not questionnaire when residents are no longer able to verbalize their choices. They also have Happy Hour every day.

Resident rooms have design features to help cue individuals with dementia. There is extra counter space so that personal items can be left in view and the bathroom and night lights are aligned with the head of the bed. They try very hard to accommodate individual residents' preferences. Residents can have personal pets and personal refrigerators. They have had residents who had their own carpet installed. They have even put doors between residents' rooms who have requested it. The only restrictions on personal furnishings and decorations are

based on the fire code. Some residents like to do their own laundry and ironing in the households. Family members also enjoy using the household laundry rooms to do their loved-one's laundry.



*Sandy's owner passed away, now she is everyone's pet.*



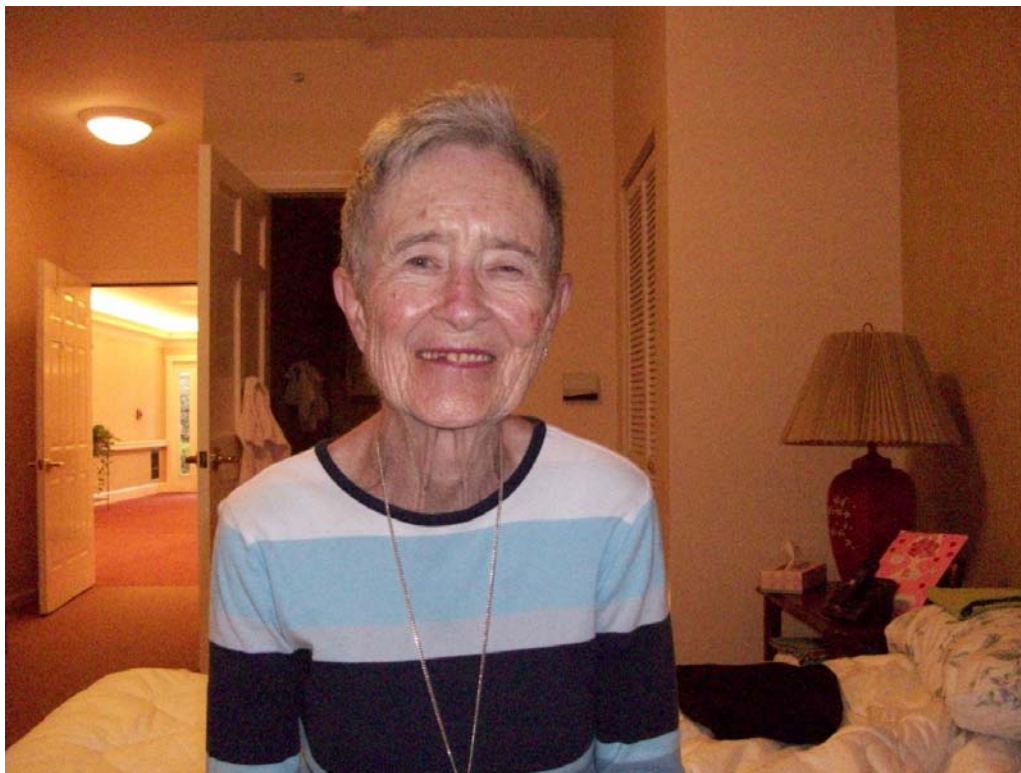
*A resident's personal piano.*

Individual bathing choices are accommodated. Residents can have the type of bath they want when they want it. Some residents choose to receive baths daily. Bathrooms are equipped with towel warmers and radiant heat.

Household activities are based on the preferences of the individuals who live there. Each individual's personal interests are inputted into a database and the top interests are used to tailor activities. Updates are made based on participation levels. Residents go to bed when they choose and sleep as long as they like. They have monthly birthday celebrations, as well as giving individual residents a card, snack, and a balloon on their birthday and singing Happy Birthday to them in the household.



*Forget-Me-Not Cliff Notes in each household provide quick reference information on each resident who lives there.*



*Resident Barb Sullivan*

During my visit, I met resident Barb Sullivan. Barb was born in St. Louis in 1933 and has lived there all her life. Her father owned a bar on Laclede Avenue and her mother was a housewife. She said they didn't have much money when she was a child, but they really had fun.

Barb worked in Human Relations for a telephone company and her husband was an attorney. They had two daughters 12 years apart. Her husband is now deceased, but they had a happy marriage and a wonderful life. They traveled the world.

She enjoyed talking about her children and grandchildren. One of her daughters is now an attorney and the other is a nurse. She loved helping take care of her grandchildren. She told me about her daughter adopting a child she found abandoned alongside a road during a visit to China.

She is a self-proclaimed “health nut.” She complained about the food and now they don’t fry as much. She enjoys walking, exercising, picnics, outings, and going to museums. She also enjoys that her sister lives nearby and takes her for drives.

We also discussed how she is dealing with Alzheimer’s disease. Her doctor told her to just enjoy life. She became an advocate for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease and has spoken before the state legislature. She had a big nice house, but after her diagnosis she decided to let the house go and move into a nursing home so her daughters don’t have to worry about her.

She chose Parc Provence “because they know how to treat Alzheimer’s.” They provide wonderful care and the workers are fun. The staff listens and they care. She has lived there three or four years now.





*LPN Valencia Warner*

I also met LPN Valencia Warner. Valencia was born in Dallas, Texas but later moved to Florissant where she attended McClure High School. She enjoys spending time with her daughter, taking her to Grant's Farm, swimming, movies, and out to eat.

Valencia has been working at Parc Provence for five years. She chose to work in healthcare and believes she was "born to do this." She especially likes working with residents with dementia. She started as a Certified Nurses' Aide, and then became a Certified Medication Technician. She has been an LPN for two years. Her long-term goal is to become a nurse anesthetist. She said the residents at Parc Provence are well cared for. She likes the home environment. They have a lot of activities and the residents love the activities.