

In April 2013, I visited [The Manor at Elfindale](#) in Springfield. The Manor is a 100-resident Medicare/Medicaid-certified skilled nursing home owned by [Vetter Health Services](#). Administrator Matthew Gould showed me around and told me how they strive to provide person-centered care in accordance with Vetter Health Services' mission, vision, and values:

MISSION: "Dignity in Life" is reflected in our Vision and Values:

VISION

1. Quality Life

We will create a living environment that radiates love, peace, spiritual contentment, dignity, and safety, while encouraging personal independence.

2. Quality Care

We will dedicate ourselves to provide personalized care and services that achieve extraordinary results and exceed the expectations of those we serve.

3. Excellent Teams

We will select and develop team members who radiate warmth, compassion, and respect while skillfully performing their duties.

4. Outstanding Facilities

We will develop buildings and grounds that enhance quality life and are recognized as attractive landmarks in their community.

5. Quality Reputation

We will be known for promoting relationships of trust, confidence, and loyalty through the quality of our services, the honesty of our people, and involvement in our community.

6. Stewardship

We will be responsible stewards of our resources to serve our residents, ensure the long-term financial stability of the company, reinvest in our people and facilities, and pursue growth opportunities.

VALUES

7. Serving

We succeed by focusing our attention and energies on anticipating and exceeding people's expectations. Our actions are driven by a "Yes, I Can" attitude and the commitment that we are "Family Serving Family".

8. ***Integrity***

Our relationships, services and decisions will speak for our desire to always act with honesty, fairness, and compassion. People learn from interacting with us that they can trust us to be who we say we are and do what we say we'll do. We strive to act in a way that will make God smile at our efforts.

9. ***Teamwork***

Our relationships are built on mutual trust and respect. We recognize the value and worth of each person we are privileged to encounter, work with, and serve. We seek to understand what is important to others and let people know they are appreciated for who they are and what they do.

10. ***Excellence***

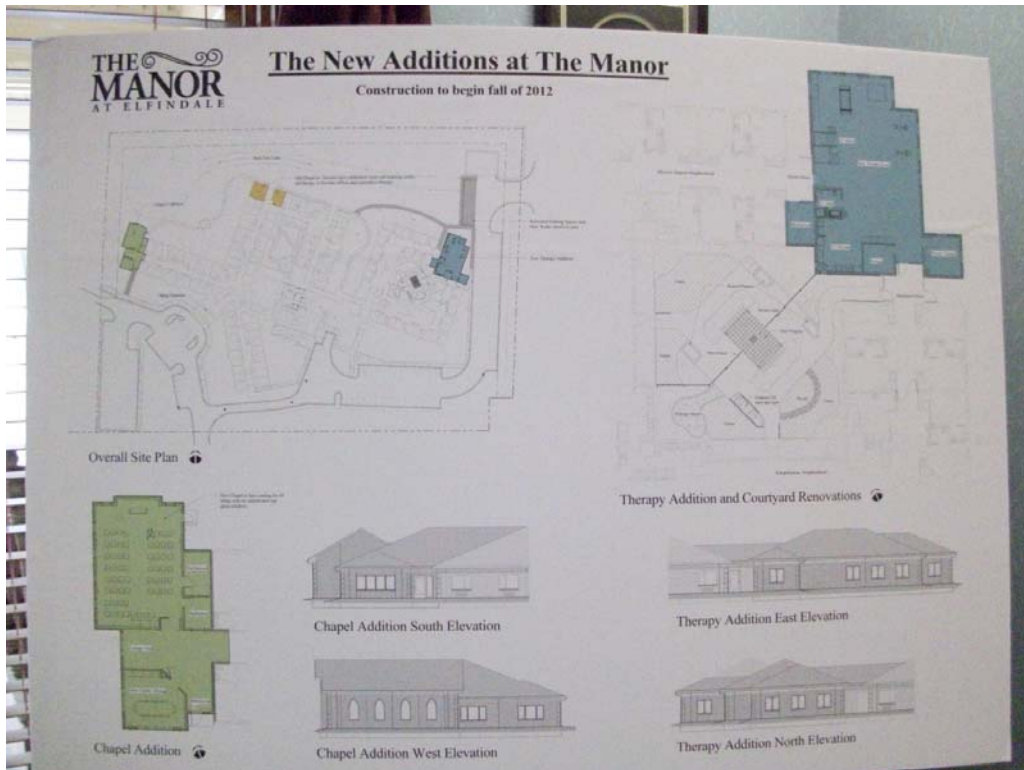
We continually pursue opportunities to improve ourselves and the services we provide. We learn from our experiences, build on our successes, and make changes when changes are beneficial. We develop people's strengths and remain committed to becoming the Best of the Best.

They must be doing something right; they are usually full and typically have a waiting list. They were also selected by the community as the 2012 [Springfield News-Leader's "Best of the Ozarks"](#) in Nursing/Skilled Care. Mr. Gould said, "Flexibility is key; there are very few things we say no to."



Courtyard

The Manor was built in 1992, but there have been several additions and remodels over the years. They were in the midst of construction again during my visit. They are adding a new chapel, therapy gym, medication room, ice cream parlor, resident lounge, family dining room, and a putting green in one of the courtyards. Even though they are very proud of their building and grounds, Mr. Gould was quick to point out that their focus is on relationships not the building.



New construction underway



The new chapel



The new therapy gym

To foster staff/resident relationships and quality care they have consistent staffing assignments. I spent a couple hours walking and visiting with Mr. Gould and noticed that he spoke to everyone we met (residents, staff, and visitors). He addressed each person by first name. I think he is serious about relationships and person-centered care.



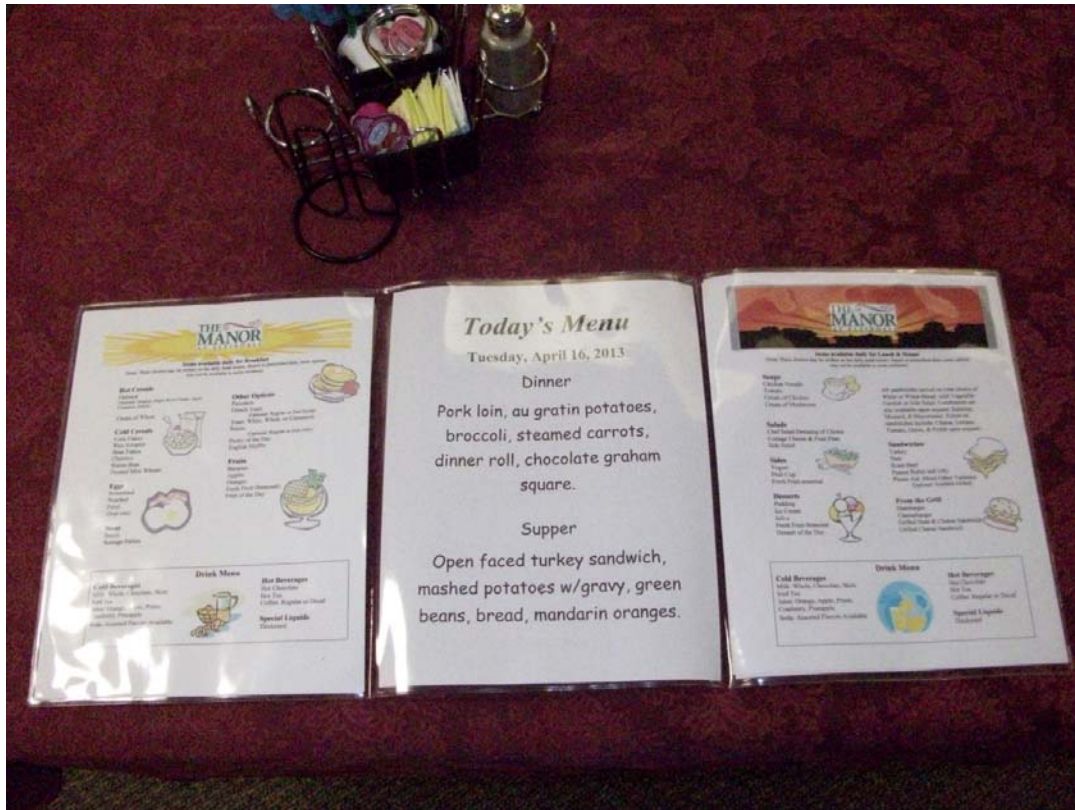
Photos of the Manor's [Missouri Health Care Association's Ms. Nursing Home Pageant](#) winners

Except for four rooms occupied by married couples, they have all private rooms. Visitors who wish to spend the night with their loved-one are provided with a roll-away bed. Other than fire safety concerns, there are no restrictions on residents personal furniture or decorations.



One of several sitting areas

Food service is an area where they have already made several positive changes and have more planned. Even though they have a liberal dining schedule, they plan to liberalize it more. They also accommodate requests for food prepared outside of the scheduled meal times. Their menus include many breakfast choices, dinner and supper of the day, and a long list of other items that are always available. They are also looking into ways of doing some cooking in front of the residents.



Dining menu

They have a private dining room and neighborhood kitchenettes and dining rooms that are available for residents and visitors use. Ice cream is always available from the ice cream machine in the dining room. There is a community refrigerator and several residents have personal refrigerators. Some residents have microwave ovens in their rooms and snacks are always available at no extra charge.



Neighborhood Dining Room

Wi-Fi is available throughout the building and there is a community computer with internet access for residents who don't have their own. They still have a traditional nursing station, but have plans to remove it. The older portion of the building still has an overhead pager system, but its use is discouraged. The resident call system goes to silent pagers carried by the caregivers. If a call is not answered quickly, the call goes to the nurse, then to the Director of Nurses.

Turtles and ducks live in the courtyards. They have pet therapy and visiting pets. Mr. Gould brings his dog to work with him sometimes and they are considering getting a community dog.

Residents stay busy with many activities and outings. They have several volunteers who provide musical entertainment and theological discussion. One of the regular entertainers who the residents enjoy is a gentleman in his 90s who plays the piano. Each quarter, they choose an Employee of the Quarter. The employee chooses a resident to have his/her photo taken with. The photo is framed and hung. Then the employee and the resident go out for lunch together.



Employee of the Quarter Restorative Aide Deanna Ragsdale with resident Jane Duff

They have four full-time spa aides. Residents choose the type of bath they prefer and when they want it; most enjoy the whirlpool. The spas are equipped with radiant heat, heat lamps, and towel warmers for the residents' comfort.



CNA Carol Cowan

I spoke with CNA Carol Cowan. Ms. Cowan was born and raised in St. Joseph. Her mother and sister still live there. She has four sons, nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Ms. Cowan started her career as a nurse aide at Missouri Methodist Hospital in St. Joseph right out of high school. She has more than 30 years experience working in nursing homes and has worked in homes in Florida, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, and Missouri. She has been at the Manor for the past three years.

The biggest change she has seen over the years is that the environment is more like home. She really likes that the residents have private rooms. “The old nursing homes had two residents per room with just the basics.” The care is also more personalized. She can spend more time with the residents now.



Resident Jane Duff

I also spoke with Resident Jane Duff. Ms. Duff was born and raised in St. Louis. She met her husband at a church party for servicemen. They had been married 44 years at the time of his passing. She went from having two grandchildren to 15 when she remarried to a gentleman with seven children. Everyone came to her home for the holidays. She said, “I loved to cook and they loved to eat, so it worked out well.”

Ms. Duff has lived at the Manor for the past two years. She said she could not be at a better place; “If they ran me off with a stick, I’d sneak back in.” All of the activities keep her busy. She especially enjoys the outings. During my visit, she was planning to go out to lunch. The residents choose where to go.

She also likes the food served at the home and eating with her friends in the dining room. If she does not like the meal of the day, she can ask for something else to be prepared for her. Everyone goes to bed and gets up when they choose, but she likes to get up early for breakfast so she asks the staff to wake her up at 7:00.

One of her favorite pastimes is sitting in the courtyard. Since the courtyard is always open, it is up to her to determine if the weather is “tolerable.”

In addition to the great quality of life, she was complimentary of the quality of care. She couldn't walk when she moved in and said the therapy sure helped her. She couldn't think of a thing that could be improved on; "They are tops in everything."



Resident Duff's room