



*Schuyler County Nursing Home*

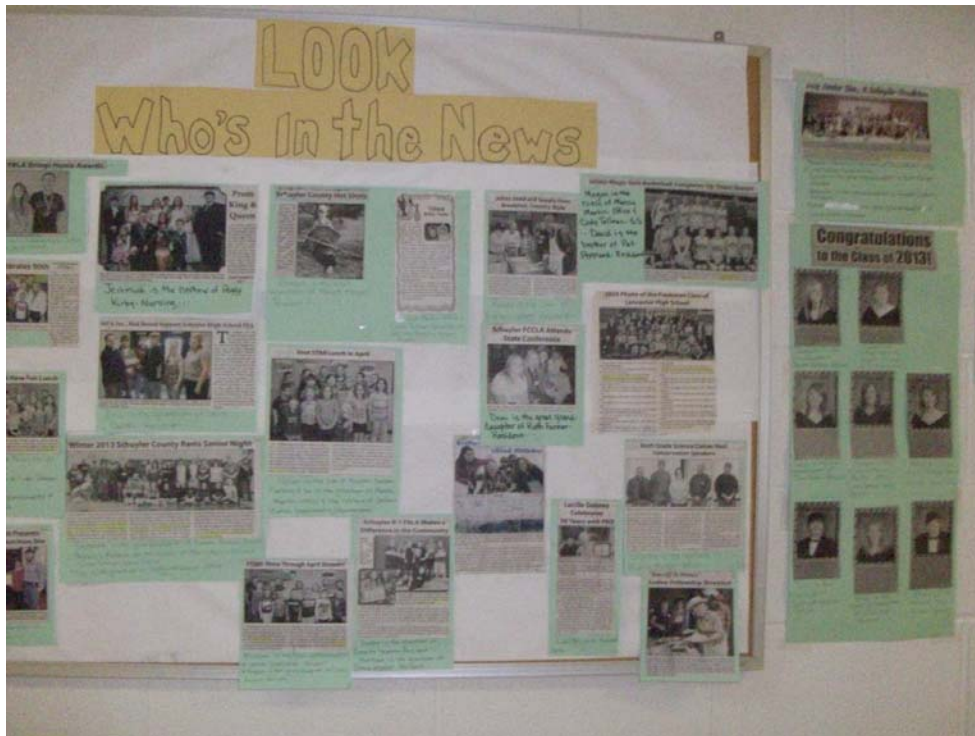
In June 2013, I visited Schuyler County Nursing Home in Queen City. Schuyler is a 60-resident Medicare/Medicaid certified skilled nursing home operated by the Schuyler County Nursing Home District and a good example of the fact that culture change is about much more than a fancy building; it is about relationships and assisting individuals to live their lives the way they choose to live them.

After spending a good portion of a day speaking with residents and staff, it appears that they truly are well on their way on the culture change journey. Residents direct their own lives and everyone I met seemed to be happy and content. Not only are residents more content in a person-centered environment, but I have found that staff members are too. I met several employees who have worked there more than 30 years.

Administrator Penny Bowers and others from her staff actively participate with Missouri's culture change coalition ([MCS](#)) and faithfully attend the Northeast regional group meetings. Some changes they have already made include adding Wifi throughout the building and providing community computers with internet access and webcams. They also recently purchased a new bus to improve residents' transportation opportunities.

During my visit, they were in the midst of implementing consistent staffing assignments and aides were to begin attending care plan meetings the next week. Other planned changes include adding an enclosed outdoor area to provide residents with more opportunities to spend time outdoors. Even though they already offer alternatives, accommodate special requests, and snacks are always available at no cost, they are planning to start offering more meal choices.

Residents furnish and decorate their rooms as they choose. They can have small individual refrigerators if they wish. They receive assistance with the type of bath they want, when they want. They go to bed and get up when they choose and attend a variety of activities and entertainment as they choose. At the time of my visit, none of the residents had personal pets, but I was told about a past resident who had his own dog and another who had birds. They currently have a community cat and several family members bring pets in for visits.



*Look Who's in the News*

Throughout my visit I discovered several person-centered touches. I really enjoyed the bulletin board entitled, "Look Who's in the News", which had newspaper clippings of residents' and staff' family members who were in the news. It included high school graduates, prom kings, conference attendees, sporting event competitors, birth announcements, FBLA award winners, and much more. Who wouldn't enjoy seeing their loved ones' accomplishments displayed? Local home-schooled children decorate another bulletin board with the changing seasons. They always incorporate each resident's name in their design. There is also a display board made from old barn lumber that displays photos of residents' personal homes.



*Seasonal bulletin board decorated by local home-schooled children*



*Photo taken by a resident's family member displayed in a hallway*

I had a fun visit with roommates Marjorie Morgan and Ruth Beeler. Marjorie is 89 and Ruth is 91. They shared with me that they have been friends for many years and their husbands were "good buddies." They went to church together and enjoyed going out to eat together. They told me about their husbands being in the hospital at the same time and that they both passed away. I was particularly

touched when Ruth told me that her husband passed away when she left his side briefly to visit Marjorie's husband.

Marjorie was born in Macon, but grew up in Trenton until her family moved to Hartford when she was 14-years-old. Her father worked in the coal mines, then for the Rock Island Railroad. Her mother was a housewife. She and her husband were married on Christmas Eve in 1941, when she was 17-years-old. Shortly thereafter, they had a son. Her husband was drafted to serve in World War II when their son was only two-years-old.

They lived on acreage in Floris, Iowa, where they raised their children and she enjoyed caring for their home and doing yard work. They had two sons 16 ½ years apart. Her husband worked for John Deere in Ottumwa, Iowa for 30 years. After her children were grown, she worked for the Stardust Hotel in Ottumwa. Her oldest son is now 70-years-old. She has four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Her husband was originally from Schuyler County and their son lived there, so they decided to sell their acreage in Iowa and move to Schuyler County to be near their son. Her husband passed away in 2002. She has lived at the nursing home for three years. She likes living there. She stays busy and enjoys playing bingo and other games, spending time outdoors, visiting with other residents, and attending the musical performances on Sunday evenings. She also takes therapy. She said, "They are good to take care of you." She told me that she can sleep as long as she wants and they will bring her food to her. If you don't like what is on the menu, they will give you something you like.

Ruth was born and raised in Downing, MO. Her family farmed. Her mother left when she and her brother were small and they were raised by her father and grandparents. Even though her mother was close by, she did not see her for five years after she left. She got married in 1939, when she was just 16-years old.

When she was 18-years-old and her brother was just 17, he was helping to build a road and was using dynamite to remove tree stumps. After some dynamite failed to explode as planned, he raised from cover to investigate. It exploded and killed him. Losing her brother at such a young age has been very difficult and she told me how much she misses him.

She and her husband adopted their daughter from the Missouri Baptist Children's Home when she was five-years-old. She was a perfect little girl. She and her husband had been married 64 years, when he passed away eight years ago. She has two grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and one on the way. Two of her great-grandchildren were born only a month apart. Her daughter lives 12 miles away and had been there to visit the previous day.

She moved to the nursing home two years ago after falling and breaking her hip. Marjorie heard she was coming and wanted to be her roommate. They "have been together since, and haven't had a quarrel yet." She enjoys all of the activities, especially bingo and other games. She said, "It is just home." I asked her what she liked best about life at Schuyler. She said, "You always have company dropping in. That's what I like."



*Resident Marjorie Morgan*

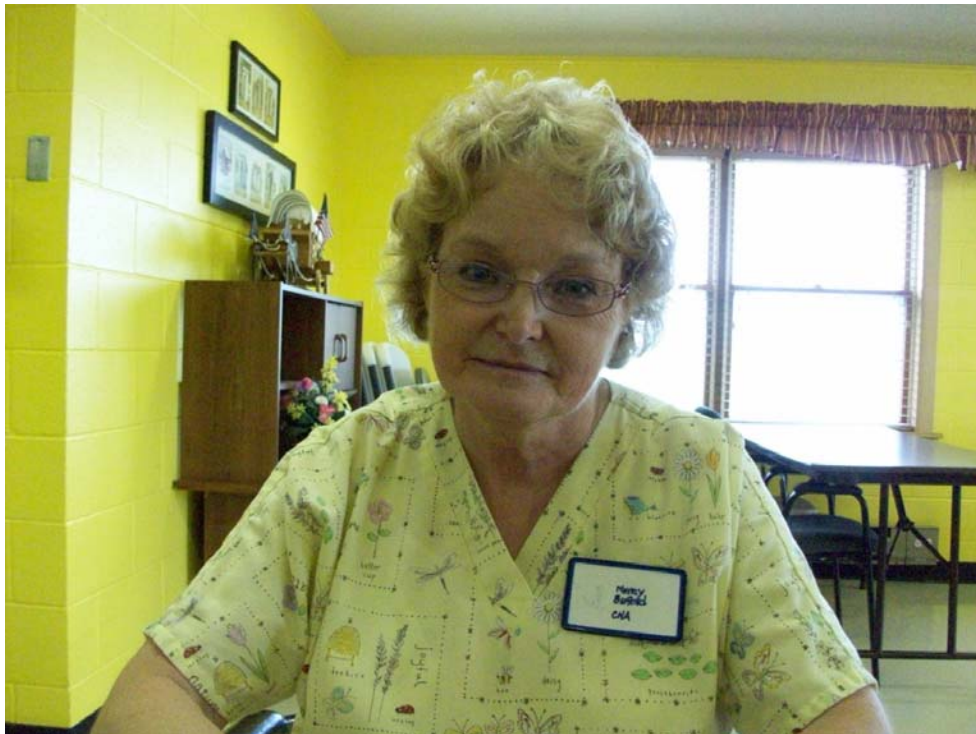


*Resident Ruth Beeler*

I also met 86-year-old Lucille Dabney. Ms. Dabney was from a large family and lived in Boonville, Iowa until she married when she was 22-years-old. She worked at a bank in Lancaster for 34 years. It was originally the Bank of Lancaster, but its name had been changed over the years and was Northeast Missouri State Bank when she left. She was the Senior Vice President when she quit. After leaving the bank, she worked with learning disabled children at the Lancaster high school and loved it.

She has three sons, five grandchildren, and didn't know how many great-grandchildren. Their family has a chromosome disorder that is fatal to girls, so they have all boys. She has had back problems for 15 years and has been all over trying to get it fixed, including the Mayo Clinic. She has undergone six surgeries. The surgeries gave her relief from the pain, but they have not been able to straighten her back.

She moved to the nursing home about a year ago after falling and breaking her ribs and puncturing her lungs. She is receiving therapy to restore her mobility. She participates in a lot of activities and especially loves to play bingo. She is writing the story of her life for her boys, but there is so much to do that it is hard to find the time. I asked her what she liked best about the home. She said the entertainment, food, and therapy. She enjoys life there and especially likes that she is close to family. She could not think of anything that could be improved.



*CNA Nancy Buford*

I also visited with CNA Nancy Buford. Ms. Buford is a native of the area. She has 11 brothers and sisters. She is married and has two sons who are grown and married. She has seven grandchildren and a great-granddaughter was due to be born any day. Her husband is a Warehouse Supervisor for Pepsi Cola.

Her mother was diagnosed with a brain tumor and was told that she only had six months to live. She moved to the nursing home and lived there for ten years. Her mother was a resident when she began working there 14 years ago. She gets to know the residents she cares for so well that she is able to care for them the way they want to be cared for, even after their conditions deteriorated to the point that they are no longer able to articulate their choices.

She shared personal stories of little ways she provides person-centered care. One resident told her that she would like to have donuts. She told the food service manager who ordered them. Since they didn't have donuts at that time, she asked the food service manager if she would make the resident pie crust with cinnamon and sugar. The resident was very happy when she gave her the treat.

During a recent conversation with another resident, she discovered that the resident would have liked to have had more green beans during the recent meal but didn't want to bother anyone by asking for more. She went to the kitchen and asked for more green beans for the resident and took them to her room for her.

She also told me that the residents enjoy their ice cream socials, birthday parties, and the ice cream machine. They can have ice cream anytime they want it. They also have a popcorn machine and they can have popcorn anytime. A good variety of snacks are available at all times based on what the residents like. She especially likes that the home has a fund that they are able to buy Christmas presents for all the residents.