



Oakdale Care Center

In June 2013, I visited Oakdale Care Center in Poplar Bluff. Oakdale is located on a 32-acre property with a 70-resident Medicare/Medicaid certified skilled nursing home, 60-resident assisted living home, and a 36-resident residential care home. They have duplexes, some of which are rented to staff members and residents' family members. This enables the family members to be close by and easily visit, share meals, and participate in activity programs with their loved ones. They are also preparing to open an eight-resident home for individuals transitioning from Youth Services to the community this fall.



Assisted living (left) and residential care (right) homes



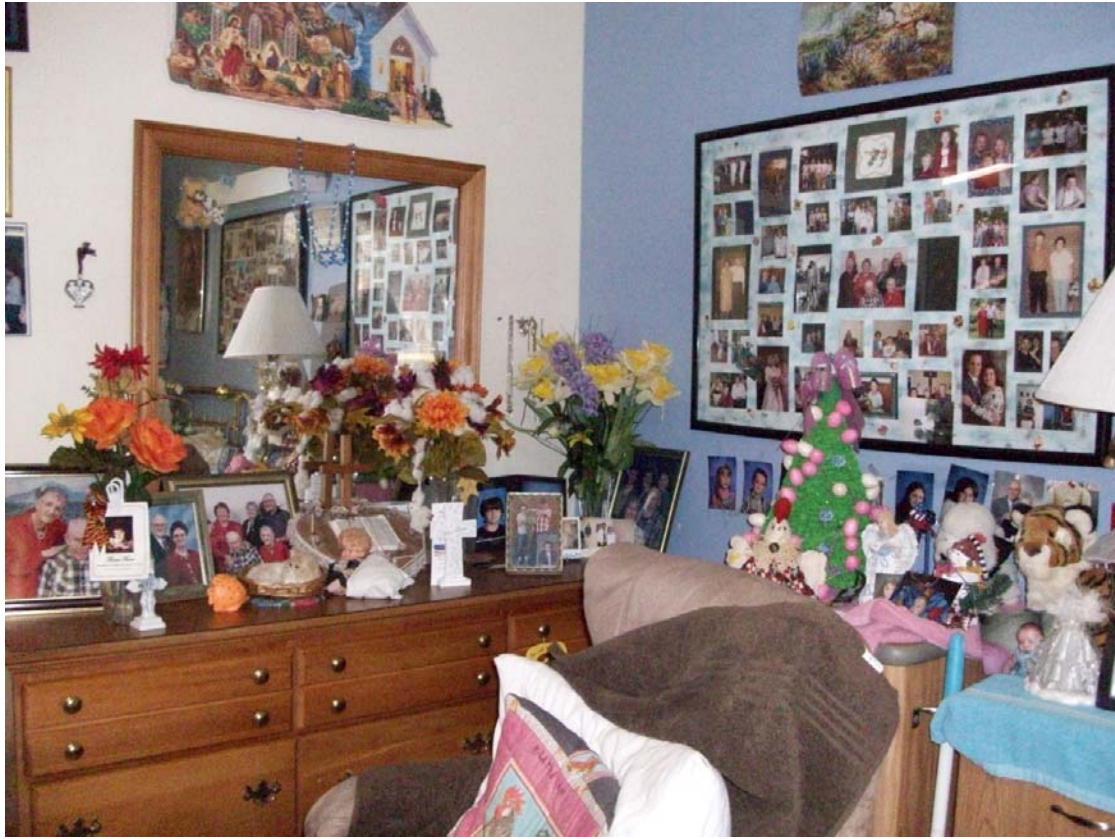
Oakdale Transitional Home



One of the duplexes on the property

Oakdale is on the culture change journey and are involved with Missouri's Culture Change Coalition, [MCS](#) (Missouri Coalition Celebrating Care Continuum Change). Administrator Jeff Newman serves as Co-Regional Representative for MC5's Poplar Bluff region.

They pride themselves in having a family environment where there are strong relationships. When residents go to the hospital, caregivers often go sit with them on their own time. Residents' individual choices and schedules are accommodated. They go to bed and get up when they want. Medication passes have been liberalized as much as possible. Bathing assistance is provided based on residents' preferences. They can have the type of bath they want when they want it. There is also no overhead paging.



A resident room

The skilled, transitional, and assisted living homes have all private rooms, with the exception of some suites that are designed for couples. The only restrictions on personal furniture and decorations are fire safety constraints. There is a residential type laundry in the assisted living home that is available to residents and their families. Some of the nursing home residents' family members also use it.

All of the homes, except the residential care and duplexes have full generator backup. Mr. Newman told me about an ice storm that took out the electricity. He said the residents didn't even know anything had happened.



Fountain in the assisted living home

They have expanded dining hours and food choices. Two entrées, four vegetables, two soups, and salads are offered with meals. They have no special diets, except altered textures based on necessity. They have found that allowing staff and family members to eat for free has added an additional layer of quality control and has resulted in a big decrease in complaints related to food.

There is a kitchen available to residents and families in the activity room. Community refrigerators are available for residents' use. Residents can have personal refrigerators if they choose. Snacks are always available at no extra cost. Preparing the 2:00 snack every day is an activity that residents love to participate in. After it is prepared, activity staff members deliver it throughout the home.

Residents are cared for and honored not only in life, but also in death. When someone passes away, they take them out the front door. Other residents oftentimes line the halls. They place a card on the resident's bed for staff and residents to sign. They also take residents to visitations and funerals. The activity director reads obituaries to the residents and they talk about memories.



Activity Director Steve (Colonel) Sanders

I met Activity Director Steve Sanders (the residents call him Colonel). He has worked at Oakdale for the past four years. He previously worked in social services and has worked at another nursing home as well. He is also a trained jeweler and says he changes a lot of watch batteries for the residents. Activities are based on residents' preferences. Favorite activities involve cooking, especially foods that bring back old memories.

They take 30 to 40 residents out to eat each month. They also enjoy going to Wal-Mart and K-Mart. Another favorite is the trips to Lake Wappapello, where they barbecue, fish, take pontoon boat rides, and shoot BB guns. Christmas is an exciting time too. All of the residents have personal Christmas trees and there are 16 community trees around the home. They have a huge Christmas party with community participation. Family members cook their favorite recipes for everyone to sample.

There are two on-site beauticians who do fingernails, and rolls and sets for free. Permanents are only \$10 and hair coloring is \$3. Families use the activity room and conference room for private parties. Residents can have personal pets on a case-by-case basis. They have two salt water fish tanks and there is an outdoor walking path that goes all the way around the assisted living home.

The community is also very involved in life at Oakdale. A florist donates flowers every week; a bank gives flowers to all the ladies on Mother's Day; a volunteer makes afghans for all the residents; and Wisdom's Fireworks hosts a big fireworks display each year.



A dog who comes to work with his owner (I forgot his name)



CNA Heather Hiles

I visited with CNA Heather Hiles. Heather has lived in Poplar Bluff her whole life. She has two children, a son and a daughter, and is engaged to be married. She has worked at two other nursing homes for short periods of time prior to coming to Oakdale. She has worked there almost seven years and has found her work to be "very fulfilling."

She especially likes that Oakdale residents have privacy. They have private rooms and private showers. She even told her kids that if they ever put her in a nursing home, put her where she will have private space. She also enjoys the relationships she has developed and that they go on a lot of outings with the residents. They do more and more every year. She recently volunteered to take a resident to a wrestling match and to the resident's class reunion. Other staff members have volunteered to go with residents on family visits.

She went on to say, "This is their home. They do anything they want." Some residents enjoy gardening. Others enjoy the salt water fish tanks. They used to have a laundry in the middle of the building. Now it is an open living area for the residents and the laundry is in a separate building.



Arlene Taylor

I also visited with Enoch and Arlene Taylor who lived together in a two-room suite in the nursing home. Mr. Taylor had not been feeling well and did not wish to be photographed. They have both lived in the Poplar Bluff area all their lives. He was born at Broseley in 1932 and she was born at Puxico. They have been married 61 years.

Mr. Taylor grew up on a farm where they raised cotton, corn, and watermelons. He said, "I know what a field looks like." When he was ten-years-old, he got sick while walking home from school. It turned out that he had an infection in his leg. The Dr. said it was spreading fast and his leg had to be amputated to stop it. He worked at Smith and Richardson Manufacturing in Geneva, Ill for 34 years. Her parents were share croppers. She and her mother later worked in the same electronics factory.

They have lived at Oakdale for five months. Mr. Taylor's health was failing and he was falling at home. They decided that they "wanted a place to live until they went to heaven." Their pastor brought them to Oakdale for a tour. They moved in a week later and didn't visit anywhere else. They couldn't ask for better care and have never regretted moving there. They really appreciate that their Doctor visits and they don't have to get out.

Anything they mention that they might want, the home gets for them. They especially like their lift chairs that have heat and massage. They feel that they are loved and cared for. Their family members worried about them being in a nursing home and came from all over the country to visit them. They returned home very satisfied.

She recently had a problem with her leg. After being provided therapy, she is back to walking with a walker. I asked if there was anything that could be improved. Ms. Taylor said, if they have any complaint, it would be too much food. "My goodness they feed you good." She went on to say they don't have children and "Everybody here adopted us and we adopted them. We have a big family now."