



Lake Stockton Healthcare Facility

In October 2013, I visited Lake Stockton Healthcare Facility in Stockton. Lake Stockton is a 75-resident skilled nursing home and 37-resident assisted living home. The skilled home includes an 11-resident special care unit that serves individuals with dementia.



Special Care Unit Kitchen

Lake Stockton residents and staff are looking forward to many upcoming changes. They are preparing to replace their current building with a new state-of-the-art home. Property has been purchased and plans are being finalized. They have also received approval to increase the skilled home's capacity to 90 residents.

When I arrived, the first resident I met was Copper, a beautiful brown and white Border Collie lying near the front door. He barely acknowledged my presence; apparently focusing on relaxing at that moment. Copper isn't the only dog at Lake Stockton; Princess (a Chihuahua) also resides there. I later saw Princess in one of the courtyards with Copper, but I didn't actually meet her.



Copper and Princess relaxing in one of the courtyards during lunchtime

Administrator Kevin Costello and Social Services Director Debra Stockton showed me around. We visited the therapy department that serves residents and individuals who have returned home. We also visited the Angel Room, where residents on hospice are served. We walked past a memorial display and the U.S. flag that was flying over the home on May 4, 2003, when Stockton was hit by a devastating tornado. They were extremely happy that they had a large generator installed shortly before the tornado. Another interesting display was a quilt that had belonged to past resident Jewell Schuyler, who lived to be 101-years-old. Ms. Schuyler's Grandmother crossed Kansas on a covered wagon with the quilt.



Flag that survived the devastating tornado that hit Stockton on May 4, 2003

OUR FLAG

On May 4TH 2003, a devastating tornado struck the Stockton community, killing three people and destroying many homes and businesses. As a testament to God's protection of this home, this flag bears the names of all the residents and employees who lived and worked here that fateful evening.

As a symbol of the enduring spirit of this community, this flag will be on permanent display and will be ceremoniously flown again each year on May 4th. This tattered flag will forever remind us that although we had fallen, we did, in fact, rise again.

Tornado memorial



Former resident Jewell Schuyler's quilt that crossed Kansas on a covered wagon

With the upcoming building project, they have been putting off environmental changes, but have made many improvements that impact the residents' quality of life. To help guide their progress, they participate with Missouri's culture change coalition, [MC5](#) (Missouri Coalition Celebrating Care Continuum Change).

Administrator Costello has worked there 25 years; Ms. Stockton has been there 20 years; and several of the nurses have been there more than 15 years. Caregivers are consistently assigned, so they know the residents they serve very well.

Dining hours and choices have been expanded. During breakfast, residents make lunch choices from menus that include two entre choices and several ala carte items. A kitchenette and refrigerator is available to residents and visitors in the activity room. Snacks are also always available at no extra cost.

They have several volunteer groups and residents also do volunteer work, such as passing mail, watering flowers, and assisting fellow residents when they leave the dining room. Mr. Costello said the residents are friends and they help one another.

They have WIFI throughout the home and community computers are equipped with Skype, so residents can see their loved ones as they visit with them online. Residents receive bathing assistance when they want it and can have the type of bath they prefer. They are also working on becoming alarm-free.

Ms. Stockton took me on an outdoor tour of the property. We visited the Special Care Unit courtyard and the pumpkin patch, where they grew a 112 lb. pumpkin that took second place in the pumpkin growing contest they had with their sister-homes. I can't imagine what the first place winner looked like. She took me to her "favorite place," which is a courtyard with a large lilac bush that emanates an "amazing" aroma in the springtime. We also visited the Century Fountain, where the names of residents who have lived to be 100-years-old are displayed; and the Emily Headley fountain, where roses from Ms Headley's garden are displayed. Ms. Headley was a volunteer at the home for 25 years.



112 lb. pumpkin grown in the home's pumpkin patch

As we walked past all the flowers that were beginning to fade with the fall weather, she told me about resident Joe Fox who spends much of his time tending the plants and flowers.



Resident Joe Fox

After completing our tour, we stopped by Joe's room. He invited me in and asked me to sit for a visit. I learned that Joe is 84-years-old and was born and raised in Cedar County. He is the fourth of six boys. Only one of his brothers is still living. He shared some of the hardships his family faced as he was growing up, including two of his brothers contracted polio. They both survived, but one was paralyzed as a result and the other had a crippled arm. His father also died in a car accident at a young age.

He married and raised three sons and worked for Benson Manufacturing in Kansas City. He started out making beer barrels, then airplane components. After 27 years with the company, they sold out to a company in Nebraska. They wanted him to move to Nebraska, but he chose to move to a small farm in Dade County instead, where he operated a dairy and later raised beef cattle.

Joe's mother was a resident at Lake Stockton for 12 years and one of his brothers lived there for seven. He went there two years ago for rehab after having three strokes and decided to stay. He said, "Life is great here." He likes gardening, putting puzzles together, kidding around, keeping others happy, and the food. He enjoys going to the dining room early before meals to drink coffee and hot chocolate.

A rubber lizard on his television caught my attention. He told me that he uses it to scare staff members. In addition to being mischievous, he spends a lot of his time helping others and "doing things around here." He especially takes pride in helping new residents. He told me about his former roommate, who recently moved to the Mt. Vernon Veterans Home. He received a report that he is doing well there, but misses having him as a roommate.



Resident Fox' rubber lizard, used to play pranks on staff

He showed me a photo collage of him gardening that a neighbor gave to him. He said, "I used to be quite a gardener." Based on all the flowers out back of the home, I'd say he still is. He also showed me a photo of himself in a duck suit. He was "The Duck Man" during an Optimist Club "Ducks in the Stream" fund raising event.



Photo collage of Resident Fox gardening – displayed in his room



"The Duck Man" (Resident Fox) photo displayed in Resident Fox' room

The home had hanging baskets out last year. He told them that if they would let him take care of them this year, he would make them last until frost. We discussed that there had already been some reports of frost in the area, and one of the plants was still alive. Because the pumpkin patch was down the hill, he wasn't directly involved, but he gave them advice. They were watering on the vines, so he told them to use a soaker hose. They did, but still watered too much and some rotted. "Pumpkins don't take a lot of water."



Resident Juanita Yaw

90-year-old Assisted Living Resident Juanita Yaw was born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri. Her mother died when she was very young, so she was raised by her grandparents. She was proud that her Grandfather had fought in the Spanish American War and she still has his military papers. Her Grandmother worked in a sewing factory. She recalled seeing trains "washed off their wheels" during flooding in the Kansas City area.

Ms. Yaw married and she and her husband had two sons and one daughter. Her husband was Maintenance Supervisor for General Motors. He was transferred to California, where they lived for 18 years. She put craft kits together for photographic displays in Hobby Lobby stores.

After her husband retired, they moved to a small farm in the Stockton area. She had a large hobby room with kilns for firing her china paintings. Her husband got into antiques and had a barn across the driveway from their home where he stored them. She told him to keep his stuff on the other side of the driveway. She said, "When the man retires, the wife gets double work."



China cabinet in Resident Yaw's apartment, displaying her artwork

Ms. Yaw is an accomplished artist and her work is displayed throughout her apartment, including china dolls and plates that she painted. I noticed a beautiful painting of an old country home on her wall. She explained that it was a painting that she was not particularly fond of. After painting it, she threw it away but her grandchildren found it in the trash and removed it. Her husband then had it framed. She said she couldn't throw it away after that.



Painting by resident Yaw that she threw away, but was salvaged by her family members

She has lived at Lake Stockton Assisted Living for two years. Her daughter is a resident at the nursing home. She spends quite a bit of time visiting her daughter and oftentimes eats in the nursing home dining room. She enjoys visits from Copper, who comes to her apartment to hide when he thinks he is going to get a bath. He also stops by frequently for bite to eat. She enjoys attending church services and the hobby craft program. She said, "Life is wonderful because of the activities."



Resident Yaw's award winning craftwork from the Missouri Health Care Association Golden Age Games



Resident Yaw's awards from the Missouri Health Care Association Golden Age Games



CNA Mercy Nail Espino

CNA Mercy Nail Espino was born and raised on a plantation in Manila, Philippines. They grew mangos, corn, beans, rice coconuts, chickens, dogs, geese, carabao (water buffalo), and goats. Her father farms with carabao.

She attended the University of Pampanga Agricultural College, where she obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture. After college, she worked in Singapore. While in Singapore, she learned of a job opportunity in the United States at the Italian Embassy in Washington, D.C. She obtained the position and moved to Washington DC in 1992. She met her husband in Washington, D.C. and later moved to Stockton, which is his hometown. They have three children, ages 10, 8, and six-years-old.

Ms. Espino previously worked at a CMH home in Bolivar. She transferred to Lake Stockton after CMH purchased the home, because it is closer to where she lives. She has worked there since 2012. She loves her job and the residents. The residents' choices are honored and the home is clean, pleasant, organized, and all of the staff members are very nice. Staff members help each other and the staff and residents are treated very well. They are all on the same level.

She likes to stay busy and assists both skilled and assisted living residents. "I treat them like they are my own family." The residents love that she shows them that she cares about them. "They are really nice and treat me well." They stay busy with many activities, including bingo, tai chi, singing, church, crafts, and parties.



Miranda Costello, CNA, CMT

Aide Miranda Costello grew up in Fair Play, Missouri. She has three brothers and one sister. She got married a year-and-a-half ago and she and her husband have a puppy.

She started working at Lake Stockton shortly after graduating high school. She works in the special care unit. The residents enjoy spending time outdoors, root beer floats, and snack time. She said, "I was taught this is their home." They do what they want. There is no set schedule. One resident likes to sleep until 9:00 in the mornings. They sometimes want to play board games or put together puzzles. Sometimes they just want to watch TV or sleep. She couldn't think of anything that could be improved. She said she loves the residents.