



*Ravenwood – Assisted Living by Americare*

In November 2013, I visited Ravenwood – Assisted Living by Americare. Ravenwood is a 55-resident home in Springfield, which includes The Arbors, a 15-resident special care home that serves individuals with dementia. They also provide adult daycare and respite care to support caregivers in the community.



*Dietary Manager Judith Boyd*

I visited with Ravenwood Dietary Manager Judith Boyd. Ms. Boyd grew up in Stone County and is the youngest of 13 siblings. Her most vivid childhood memories are fighting with her brothers and sisters. She spends her free time camping, fishing, sometimes gambling, and watching her favorite television show, *The Walking Dead*. She has four grandchildren. Her sister is the Dietary Manager next door at The Arbors and her daughter works for another Americare home.

She has worked at Ravenwood for ten years and has been the Dietary Manager for about 9 ½. She helps out in other areas when she has free time. She is a Certified Medication Aide and since all staff members are cross-trained as universal workers, she has done a little bit of everything. She said they have always tried to provide a family/home environment. She knows what foods that every resident dislikes and makes sure it doesn't get put on their plates. In their recent resident satisfaction survey, they received 98% overall satisfaction in dietary. When residents return from being away, they tell her that they missed her food.

Breakfast is served from 7:00 to 9:00. Some residents come early and others come late. They tried to expand dining hours for lunch and dinner, but the residents all prefer to come at the same time. They

like to encourage family members visiting and eating with residents, so they provide meals to family members at no charge. Staff members also eat for free.

In addition to the main entree and several side choices at each meal, there is also a menu that includes many choices that are always available. She always keeps a variety of lunch meats, fruit, peanut butter, sweets, and snacks that the residents like available at no extra charge.



*Dining menu with choices that are always available*

Two days each month, they have special meals that the residents choose. Each quarter, they have Family Night. Everyone enjoys the apple and pumpkin pies that are provided. The annual Christmas buffet is also very popular. They typically serve around 100 visitors.

They have private dining rooms for visits and special events. Many residents have personal refrigerators and there are community refrigerators for those who don't. They have kitchenettes available for residents and visitors. During my visit, resident were gathered at one of the kitchenettes for the "Baking in the Bistro" activity being led by the Lifestyle Coordinator and a volunteer. They were enjoying Danish, hot chocolate, and coffee. A resident was also baking bread for later in the day.



*Ravenwood kitchenette available to residents and families*

Administrator Jayme Duncan shared with me how Americare has intensified staff training on person-centered care and hospitality. They have adopted [The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer's Care](#). She showed me a supply of books used to provide education and resources for residents, families, and caregivers. She is a trained Alzheimer's Support Group Facilitator and is proud that they have taken a lot of culture change steps and are going in the right direction. "It's not what we want to do. It is what they (residents) want to do."

There is a laundry room available for residents and family members who wish to do their own laundry. Residents go to bed and get up when they choose. There is no overhead paging. There is also no institutional nurses' station or medication carts. Individual medications are kept and administered from medicine cabinets in residents' rooms. There is a small office where medical records and narcotics are stored. Medication passes have been liberalized to fit the residents' individual schedules.

There were no animals living in the home during my visit, but they have had several. Ms. Duncan told me about residents who had owned dogs and cats and one who had a bird that was challenging because it was so messy. They have regular pet therapy visits.

I noticed beautiful flowers throughout the home. The local Price Cutters store donates flowers every week. One of the residents' favorite activities is making bouquets from the donated flowers and decorating the home.

We stopped and visited with several residents along the way who were eager to show off their home. They have studio rooms and suites. There are three semi-private rooms; the rest are private. All resident rooms are equipped with private baths, each with a bathtub or walk-in shower. There are also community spas with whirlpool tubs and large walk-in showers available for those who prefer to use them. Assistance is provided based on individual preferences.



*A resident showed off her heirloom furniture*



*Resident Shirley Horton*

I met 90-year-old resident Shirley Horton. Ms. Horton was born and raised in Lamont, Missouri. She was an only child, but was quick to let me know that she "was not spoiled." Her parents owned a lumber yard and had a large farm with a feeder cattle operation. She grew up during the great during the great depression, but said her parents sheltered her from the effects.

She completed a two-year program at William Woods University. Because of World War II, she put off completing her education to work in the Payroll Department at Whiteman Air Force Base. After the war ended, she attended Central Missouri State College, where she obtained degrees in Business and Legal Stenography. While at the university, she began dating a fellow student who she had known from high school. He had recently returned from serving in Europe during the war. They got married and moved to Sedalia, where they raised three daughters. She now has five grandchildren and "Don't ask how many great-grandchildren." Her girls had boys and her boys are now having girls.

Her husband was a rural mail carrier and they had a construction company. She ran the family farm for ten years after her father passed away. She also served as a guide at the Daum Museum of Contemporary Art in Sedalia. They traveled a lot. They wanted to walk to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back. They chose to go in May so the weather wouldn't be too hot. It was 101°F. They set

out at 5am and returned at 5pm. At the end of the day, her husband bought a bottle of Jack Daniels and said, "I think we need this." The next day, she was hardly able to get in and out of the car.

She showed me a photo of the 1932 Plymouth Roadster that her husband restored from the bottom up. She said, "It was a pile of junk when he picked it up." She kept her bag packed. They went a lot of places to get parts for it. It won first place in the National Antique Care Show in Hershey, Pennsylvania. The night before the car was to be transported to the show, he knocked a can of nuts and bolts off a shelf onto the hood. He spent the whole night repairing the damage. Shortly thereafter, he had five-way bypass heart surgery, which she blames on stress from the incident.



*1932 Plymouth Roadster restored by Resident Shirley Horton's husband*

Several of her friends were moving into assisted living in Sedalia, so she decided to also. Shortly after moving in, she had a stroke and while in the hospital from the stroke, she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and had to undergo surgery. After the incident, she decided to move to Ravenwood to be closer to her daughters. She has now lived there for four years.

She enjoys the view out her window and the beauty of the Ozarks. Most of all, she loves being close to her daughters and being able to go on outings with them and spend time with them. She has always walked a lot and still walks every day when the weather is nice. She enjoys reading the newspaper and

listening to music. Between those and the organized activities, her days are full. She couldn't think of anything she would change.

She said, people often ask her if she is happy. She replies that "happy is when you are young and able to travel and dance and go here and there, when you are as old as I am, it is different. It is contentment. I am very content." She also jokingly added that she can blame anything that happens wrong on being 90-years-old.

After my visit with Ms. Horton, Administrator Duncan took me to The Arbors. We could hear singing as we walked through the front door. A volunteer singer and guitar player had just left, but staff members continued to sing the residents' favorite songs with them. One resident took us to her room where she showed us her hat collection and beautiful photos from when she was a young model.

Since they serve individuals with dementia, there were some features that were different, but not immediately apparent. Individual bathrooms aren't equipped with tubs or showers; everyone receives assistance in the community spa. To help residents more easily manage their clothing, there is a large locked community closet with space for each resident's clothing. Caregivers hang clothing changes in each resident's small open closet space in their rooms daily.

The private dining room also serves as a place for residents who need a quiet place to relax. The enclosed courtyard is a favorite place. Residents especially enjoy barbecues. While there are scheduled mealtimes, some residents don't want to sit for a meal, so mealtime is anytime they will eat. They provide finger foods and small portions throughout the day.



*Administrator Jayme Duncan and Director of Nursing Michelle Fields*

I visited with The Arbors Director of Nursing Michelle Fields. I quickly learned that Ms. Fields is Administrator Duncan's daughter. Administrator Duncan and her husband are both retired from the Army and Ms. Fields is very proud to have grown up in a military family. Not only did both of her parents serve in the military, so did her grandfather and both her brother and sister. While growing up, they were stationed in San Antonio, Texas; Frankfurt, Germany; Fort Riley, Kansas; and finally in the Springfield area, where her father served as a military recruiter until his retirement. Administrator Duncan retired previously, while they were stationed at Fort Riley. Ms. Fields now lives in Nixa with her husband and two children.

Her grandmother lived with her family as a child, and she always knew that she wanted to work with the elderly. She volunteered at the Arbors throughout her high school years, then she worked there as a Certified Medication Aide while in nursing school. She especially enjoys working with individuals with dementia and she loves her job. She has worked there four years and has been the Director of Nursing for the past two.

She worked in other long-term care homes during her nursing clinicals. She likes that meals are always available at The Arbors and the environment and furniture is more like a normal home. They have meal

schedules and activity schedules, but the residents choose what they want to do when they want to do it. She also likes the memory boxes outside each resident's room that gives them conversation tips. They also have a book with each resident's life story. The life stories are developed by sitting with the residents and their families to learn about their lives. They really help staff members to get to know the person. In addition to her nursing duties, she takes time every day to sing to the residents.



*The Arbors dining room*

Nurse Fields, Administrator Duncan, and I sat around a dining room table and they shared stories about individuals who had lived there. One was an attorney. It made him happy to have a briefcase and a newspaper to carry around. Another was a woodworker. He made birdhouses that the other residents enjoyed painting and decorating. They had bird houses everywhere. There was the farmer who would find a bush in the courtyard when he felt the need to relieve himself. There was also the lady who enjoyed spending her time sweeping and cleaning the dining room.

My favorite story was about the gentleman who refuses to participate in the weekly tea parties. The ladies love to attend wearing their flamboyant hats that a volunteer made for them. He doesn't want to attend the parties or have tea, but he always sits close enough that he can see and hear everything that is happening and drinks coffee.

Even though they are already providing person-centered care in a very homey environment, they continue to make changes. They are actively involved with the [MCS](#) Southwest regional group. They have WIFI throughout and recently purchased a computer that they will be setting up with internet access for residents' and visitors' use. They are also starting "Happy Hour" and will be serving alcohol to residents who wish to participate.

Not uncommon for homes that provide caring person-centered care in a home environment, I learned that they have very low staff turnover and a waiting list for individuals who want to move in.