



Victorian Place of Washington



The Arbors at Victorian Place

In August 2015, Section for Long-Term Care Regulation Communications Representative Leslie Sebastian and I visited Victorian Place of Washington and The Arbors at Victorian Place. Victorian Place is a 48-resident assisted living home and The Arbors is a 32-resident assisted living home that specializes in memory care. The homes have been operating for four years and have been owned by Americare since 2013. Administrator Caroline Cattinari showed us around.



Administrator Caroline Cattinari



Sign and cookies at front door of Victorian Place

We visited with Resident Kenneth Sohn who was about to celebrate his 90th birthday. Mr. Sohn is from Union. His Father was a farmer and worked for the railroad. His mother raised 12 children, seven boys and five girls. He was the youngest. He helped his Father with the farm work and learned to cook by helping his Mother. He said, "We all got along good. We didn't fight one another."



Resident Kenneth Lee Sohn

Mr. Sohn was drafted into the Army to serve during World War II when he was 18-years-old. He and four of his brothers were all serving at the same time. He was as an infantryman. He spent about a year-and-a-half fighting fought in France before landing at the Battle of the Bulge. They waded through water up to their necks with German soldiers 50 yards in front of them. They were firing so fast that he believes they were killing their own men in front of them.

After about a week of fighting, he was captured by the Germans. The Germans took their uniforms and gave each of them an "old outfit." They were then force marched and hauled on box cars to Stalag IV-B where he was held as prisoner of war for 7 ½ months. During that time, he never received a change of clothing.

He slept on straw on the floor. There was no heat or restroom. There were three German guards in his building and the prisoners were not allowed to talk to one another. SS Troopers would come through at night and "If they wanted to kill you, they shot you right there." They were forced to stand and watch bodies being burned.

The only food they were given was potato water once in a while. When he was captured, he weighed 170 lbs. He only weighed 70 lbs. when they were liberated. He was in such poor condition that he was unconscious and doesn't remember being liberated. He was taken back to the US by ship and was hospitalized in New York. He was so weak that he was not able to walk and had to have 75% of his stomach removed.

After being released from the hospital, he was sent home for three months then on to Colorado Springs where he served as a Military Police for a short time before being discharged.

One of Mr. Sohn's brothers was also captured at the Battle of the Bulge and came home three months after him. He learned later that his brother had seen his duffle bag with his name on it

and knew that he had been captured or possibly killed. His mother had received a telegram stating that he was missing in action.

Another one of Mr. Sohn's brothers was a tank driver and was injured three times and received three Purple Hearts.

Mr. Sohn's service records were destroyed in a fire. He just recently started receiving military benefits. He also earned a Purple Heart but is still waiting to receive it.

After the war, he went to school and became an LPN. He worked at the hospital and took care of several patients in their homes.

He was married for 52 years and has four children, two boys and two girls. His wife passed away six years ago. His wife had a beauty shop built in their home. He retired early and has had a long retirement.

Five years ago, Mr. Sohn had a stroke on his right side, then two weeks later had another one on his left side. He was unconscious four days and the Doctor told his son "If he lives, he is in God's hands." After being released from the hospital, he moved to Victorian Place and received therapy. The strokes affected his speech and they had to work with him to eat.



Resident Sohn's apartment

He was the first resident at Victorian Place and got to choose from all of the rooms. He was the only resident for about two weeks. Then there were only twelve residents for a while. He said he likes it better with more people. He has made friends with the other residents and said "We

all get along so well. It is like one big family.” If someone goes to the hospital, all the residents pitch in and send flowers.

He said, “Life here is nice, good help, good cooks, it’s wonderful, no complaints.” He has the freedom to go and do what he wants. He said time passes quickly. Two of his favorite group activities are the visiting musicians and playing bingo. He spends a lot of time with his dog Bear. Bear spends the days with him and goes to his son’s home at night.



Certified Medication Aide Allissa Tobben

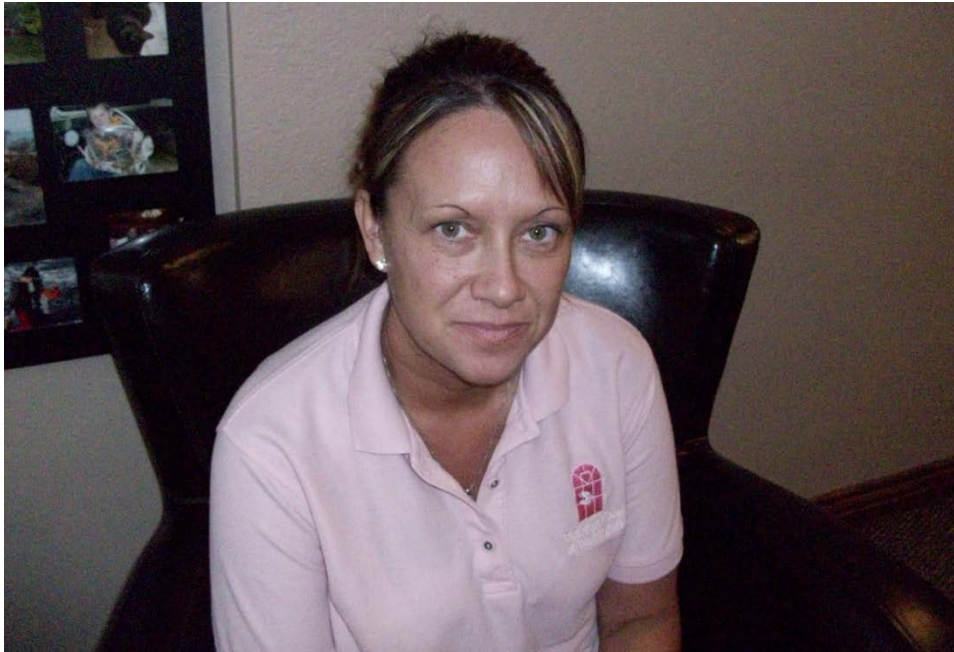
21-years-old Certified Medication Aide Allissa Tobben has lived in Washington her whole life. She is the youngest of five girls. Her father recently retired from the National Guard and her mother works for a local bank. She has two dogs, a black lab pit bull mix named Ella, and a Jack Russell Terrier named Tippi. Tippi comes to work with her and the residents love him. Three residents at Victorian Place have their own dogs and they have a community dog, Montana, at The Arbors.

She started working at The Arbors when she was in high school. She now works at Victorian Place. She has fallen in love with the elderly and decided that she wants to be a nurse and specialize in Geriatrics. She has completed her prerequisites at St. Louis Community College and will be studying at the University of Missouri - St. Louis this fall to obtain her Bachelor’s degree in nursing. After graduation, she hopes to continue her career with Americare as a registered nurse.

Ms. Tobben said her goal is to make home for the residents so they can have an enjoyable life. Her duties include passing medications and giving insulin injections. Her favorite part of the job

is becoming part of the residents' family. She loves helping them and said it will break her heart when she has to leave.

She said, "The teamwork is good. There is no tension. Everyone gets along well." Things have changed for the better since she started working there. There used to be set times for the residents to get up, based on when staff wanted them to. Now it is the individual's choice.



Dietary Manager Carrissa Halmich

Dietary Manager Carrissa Halmich has lived at St. Clair all of her life. She has been married 21 years and has three sons and one grandson. She enjoys sports and her sons are "big into sports." Her youngest son will be graduating from high school this year and going off to college.

Ms. Halmich has worked at Victorian Place for two years. She has a long history of working in food service but this is her first time working with the elderly. She loves it and said, "It is what I have always been looking for." Before she started working there, the residents were unhappy because everything was processed or from a can.

She is cross-trained as a Certified Medication Technician. She does a little bit of everything. She has cut hair, done nails and pedicures, whatever makes the residents happy. She said she likes to pamper them.

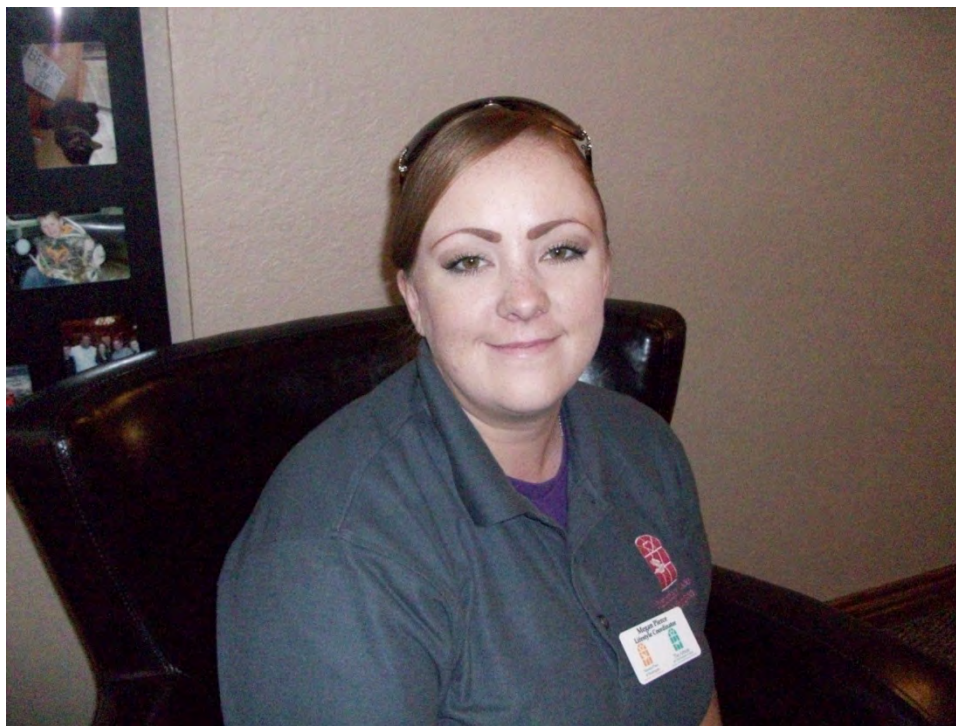
I asked her what the most challenging part of her job was. She said, once in a while there is some issue with an employee or a resident is in a bad mood but she doesn't have any real challenges. She does get in trouble sometimes for putting in too many hours.

Meals are served restaurant style. They begin serving breakfast at 7:00 and the residents come down sporadically and choose what they want. They serve daily specials but there is a large

menu of items that are always available that the residents can choose from if they don't want the special.

The menu is determined by the residents during Resident Council meetings. They give her recipes for their favorite dishes and she fixes them for everyone. They want fried chicken every Sunday and enjoy making homemade ice cream. If they request something, she does everything she can to make them happy. Some residents like to help cook. Others like to help in the dining room and clean up after meals.

Snacks are always available and there are always cookies by the door. They also have a hospitality refrigerator that is stocked and available for residents and visitors at all times. Staff members eat for free and a lot of visitors eat with the residents too. Residents with dementia at The Arbors prefer finger foods and sweets.



Lifestyle Coordinator Megan Pierce

Lifestyle Coordinator Megan Pierce was born and raised in Augusta, Missouri and now lives in Union with her husband and four children. Her children are ages nine, three, two, and seven months.

Her husband, who is now retired, was a Gunner and Military Police Officer in the Army. He served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. She enjoys having him home.

She began working in nursing homes right out of high school. She has also worked in Home Healthcare. She is a Certified Nurses' Aide and loves working with people. She has worked at Victorian Place for two years. She said, "It is much more homey here, not institutional."

Ms. Pierce is responsible for the organized activities program. The most popular activity is a country music band that comes in regularly. Several residents enjoy dancing to the music. Other activities that they enjoy are bingo, exercising, nature walks, jewelry making, knitting, scarf making, gardening, shopping trips, the bookmobile, putting together puzzles, going to the library, movies, the beauty shop, getting their hair curled and nails done, singalongs, setting the tables for meals, and front porch talk. They also enjoy participating in activities at the local senior center. Activities involving food, such as popcorn and root beer floats are also popular.

They are actively involved in community service projects, such as donating their newspapers to the humane society and participating in the Alzheimer's walk.



Garden at Victorian Place

Most of the residents are women. There are only four men and most of them are veterans. They recently had a big event for them with a meal. The Jr. ROTC participated and the veterans were presented with Quilts of Valor. During our visit, they were planning a September fishing trip.

She enjoys interacting with the residents. She said they are pretty much a big family and she loves them as if they were her family. She gets to know the residents and finds out their hobbies and interests. She writes their life stories and has learned a lot from them.

They have a monthly newsletter and she is hoping to get the residents more involved with technology.



Resident Alberta Viehland briefly paused her pinochle game to pose with her son-in-law Dan Green

Visitor Dan Green stopped by to check in on his mother-in-law Alberta Viehland. Dan built and serviced swimming pools for 25 years. Ten years ago, all four of his and his wife's parents were still living. He and his wife made the decision that one of them would quit working and become a full-time caregiver for their parents. They made the decision to sell his business and he retired. Three of their parents have since passed away.

He shared how proud he is of his wife, Tri McLain. Tri started as a Candy Striper and is now President of Mercy Hospital in Washington. She works 60 to 70 hours per week but still visits her mother every day.

About three years ago, Ms. Viehland got pneumonia. They decided she needed more help, so she moved to Victorian Place. She has gotten along well there.

Mr. Green told us about improvements that have been made since Ms. Viehland moved in. The home has been lightened up with new paint. They also have new furniture and landscaping.

There are more activities now. He sometimes eats there and the meals have improved dramatically. He said his mother-in-law is happy, so it is hard to be critical.



Resident apartments are equipped with doorbells



Pond at Victorian Place



Montana

While touring The Arbors enclosed courtyard, we met the house dog, Montana, who was enjoying the nice weather along with several residents and visitors. In addition to Montana, Cody the cat also lives at The Arbors. The courtyard is open during the day so that residents can come and go as they please. It is automatically locked at night for their safety.

The Arbors also has a residential style laundry that the residents, or their family members, can use to do their own laundry if they choose.