

ALTENHEIM IS HOME

By Ken McEntee



Shurmer Place Memory Assisted Living center offers spacious one- and two-bedroom suites in clusters of six or seven, each with its own living room, dinette and roll-in shower, to accommodate residents with memory loss. Pictured in a “hearth pod” common area is Beth Seese, director of nursing and director of memory assisted living, connecting on a personal level with a resident.

The “like home” claims expressed by many assisted living residences most often are contradicted by bulky

centralized nursing stations and other institutional features that distinctly remind residents that they are in a facility, not a community.

Fortunately, says Cornelia (Cee Cee) Hodgson, whose firm C.C. Hodgson Architectural Group designs senior living facilities around the country, resident-centered, homey environments are the future of senior care. In Northeast Ohio, the future is represented by *Altenheim Senior Living*, in Strongsville.

“With our new memory assisted living wing and therapy rehab center opening this spring, we are the only senior community in the area designed to the Planetree principals of person-centered care,” announces Paul Psota, CEO of Altenheim, a not-for-profit life plan community. Several years ago, when Altenheim decided to address the area’s shortage of memory assisted living and rehabilitation services, C.C. came immediately to mind.

“C.C. is one of the few architects who specializes in the Planetree concept,” Paul explains.

“Planetree removes the barriers between residents and caregivers, and focuses on the needs of residents and their families. The buildings are designed to emphasize nature and calmness,” states Director of Marketing Donna Casey.



Altenheim, which has served Northeast Ohio's seniors since 1892, broke ground on its new memory assisted living and rehabilitation services buildings in the summer of 2016.

The two-story Shurmer Place Memory Assisted Living center, which opened in March, offers 38 private one- and two-

bedroom suites with living rooms, dinettes, four-seasons rooms and roll-in showers, to accommodate residents with memory loss, Paul says.

The Altenheim Therapy Rehab Center will serve patients recovering from orthopedic, cardiac and neurological conditions that require therapy. Along with 32 private rooms, a full-service spa and a beer garden, the center also will include an outpatient unit for occupational, speech and physical therapy.

Assisted Memory Care

"I'm proud to say we have built the most beautiful memory assisted living community in the area," Paul says.

Consistent with the Planetree philosophy, the community emphasizes natural light and openness, explains Resident Director for the Memory Assisted Living community Beth Seese.

"The community was designed with nature in mind, with color schemes that were specifically chosen for residents with dementia," Beth says. "Studies show that certain colors create feelings of calmness, which is especially important to the emotional and psychological well-being of memory care residents."

The apartments are arranged in clusters of six or seven, which open into a common area to create a feeling of community.

Each common area features a fireplace, oversized windows and a central kitchen where residents can gather and participate in meal preparation.

"We want the residents to participate and remain involved," Beth says.

Activities in the memory assisted care community range from performing everyday tasks such as meal preparation; enjoying arts and crafts and having an entertainer perform.

“When we show a movie, we’ll make it a special and familiar experience, complete with popcorn and classic cinema,” says Linda Begley, activities coordinator. “The goal of activities is to bring joy while establishing connections to maintain and encourage a positive daily experience.”

The morning routine includes coffee, talking about daily events in history and the news, saying the Pledge of Allegiance and singing God Bless America.



Therapy Rehab

The new therapy rehab center, Paul says, allows Altenheim to meet the demands of ever-changing post acute care.

The 4,000 square feet of space allows Altenheim to provide all aspects of physical, occupational and other therapy. The community features a training kitchen, bath and bedroom, where patients can prepare for the routine daily tasks they’ll need to do when

they return home. Outside, an area has been set aside for residents to practice getting in and out of their own vehicles.

All inpatient therapy rooms are private, spacious and have roll-in showers.

“Keeping with the hospitality concept, we offer room service,” Donna says.

Along with inpatient therapy, the new community also offers outpatient therapy services by recently acquired Hands On Physical Therapy at Altenheim.

“Folks in need of post-surgical rehab don’t want to feel like they are in a hospital,” he says. “That’s why our new center was designed to have an Alpine Lodge feel, from the mountain mural to the pub-inspired dining area to our outdoor beer garden.”

You can learn more about Altenheim and schedule a tour by calling the admissions office at 440-238-9001. You also can get more information by visiting Altenheim.com. Altenheim is located at 15653 Pearl Road, in Strongsville.