

CONTINUING CARE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Friendship Village of South Hills UPPER ST. CLAIR, PA.

Submitted by: **C.C. Hodgson Architectural Group** CLEVELAND, **Kraus-Anderson Construction Co.** MINNEAPOLIS, **Saxton Inc.** DES MOINES, IOWA, AND **Rippe Associates** MINNEAPOLIS



For the community that describes itself as, “We don’t take retirement lying down,” Friendship Village of South Hills took the same approach to a major repositioning strategy. First opened in 1984, the CCRC is located on 73 acres near Pittsburgh. Feeling its age and fully understanding that its architecture was dated and did not reflect the quality or spirit of the community, a dynamic and collaborative master plan was undertaken to create a market-ready community known for its holistic approach to living well.

At a higher level, Lifespace Communities, the parent organization, had rebranded from its founding name and was undergoing a corporate repositioning that outlined specific goals for each of its communities, including alternative dining that became a central element of the new master plan.

Based on community tours and meetings, it was apparent that the highest priority was the wellness center and alternative dining, with an additional focus on improving the health center, expanding residential options, and increasing their campus’ presence in the area. Building additions would need to be considered and their placement on the restrictive site with its ravine and rolling hills would become a driving element of the master planning process. A dynamic charrette that engaged more than 30 participants representing residents and staff created an option that generated high interest because it not only met their initial goals, but provided opportunities to transform the entry image and create a central hub in the commons areas.

The resulting master plan was broken down into four phases for minimal disruption to this active community. Implementing a major renovation on an occupied campus poses many concerns not only for residents but for employees and visitors, as well. The carefully planned sequencing of the phasing focused on first completing the lower level that featured a new bistro, library, media center, and fitness center before starting the major disruption of the main floor, which included substantial new dining options, an updated and expanded kitchen, a new porte cochère entrance, and construction of a new St. Clair auditorium



space. The excitement created by first completing the new amenity spaces was part of the strategy of alleviating construction fatigue.

Friendship Village of South Hills and its parent company are both grounded in a wellness culture. For the design team, this was a natural collaboration, because using wellness as a design principle was a key strategy. With new dining experiences as a central element of the first phase of the master plan, its role in whole-person wellness for residents, staff, and visitors was very evident, not only in the physical dimension of healthy eating but in creating ample opportunities to socialize and reinforce personal relationships.



Project category: New construction & remodel/renovation

Chief administrator: Russ Firewicz

Firms: C.C. Hodgson Architectural Group, www.ccharch.com; Kraus-Anderson Construction Co., www.krausanderson.com; Saxton Inc., www.saxtoninc.com; Rippe Associates, www.robertrippe.com

Design team: C.C. Hodgson Architectural Group (architect and master planner); Kraus-Anderson Construction Co. (construction manager); Saxton Inc. (interior designer and procurement firm); Rippe Associates (foodservice designer)

Photography: ©2015 Ed Massery

Number/type of housing units: 295 independent living, 89 skilled care, 19 memory care

Total building area (sq. ft.): 14,196 (new), 25,831 (renovation)

Construction cost/sq. ft.: \$285 (new), \$206 (renovation)

Total construction cost (excluding land): \$4 million (new), \$5.3 million (renovation)

Completed: September 2014

