

The Social Experience: Using Resident Feedback to Enhance Activities, Recreation and Leisure

September 7, 2006

The Chelsea at Warren



- Assisted Living Community
- 80 apartments- with 20 devoted to our Memory Impaired unit- The Country Cottage
- 50 percent of our community is common space

Activity Philosophy

- Our community believes that activities should be a residents connection to their past, while exploring the future. Activities should address the whole person, their physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and psychological needs. Activities are not just there to “pass the time”, but serve a purpose for satisfaction, enjoyment, self-expression, physical and mental stimulation.

Recreation Staff A team approach

- Certified Recreation Director
- Full-Time Recreation Assistant for Country Cottage
- Several part-time staff for evening and weekends
- Volunteers- students, and families
- Driver, Department heads, Nurses aides, Receptionist, Dietary staff, Housekeepers
- Each position plays a key role in contributing to the recreation program

- Yearly Staff In-service- “ Activities- Staff and Residents a winning Combination”
 - Focuses on the important role activities play in the residents lives
 - Educate staff on the significance of their role within the community and the “team approach” to Recreation
- Employee participation requested by our residents
 - International week
 - Yearly bake –off challenge
 - Theme days

Activity Space Indoor and Outdoor

- Activity Room
- Library
- Garden Room
- Tea Room
- Living Room
- Vista Room
- Ice Cream Parlor
- Fitness Room
- Two Front Porches
- Outdoor Garden area
- Walking Boardwalk around the pond

The Country Cottage also has terrific common space-Tree Room, Library, and Game Room

Activity Space



Activity Room



Main Living Room



Vista Room

In- House Activities

- Activities to engage the mind include
 - Memory workshops, reminisce activities, trivia, word games, educational lectures, poetry groups, world news groups, computer classes, health and wellness talks
- Physical activities include:
 - Daily walking club, yoga, dance and movement, Tai Chi, Afternoon stretching club

- Spiritual programs include:
 - Weekly Church services, Shabbat services, Rosary and prayer groups, Bible study and healing services.
 - Celebration of life service- remembers those residents that have passed away and allows the residents to express their feelings and memories

➤ Social Activities include:

- Drama club, daily tea social, weekly entertainment, cocktail hour, monthly birthday social, intergenerational programs, pet therapy, craft classes, aromatherapy, horticulture club
- The Red Hat Society – a newer group
 - 25 active ladies that meet monthly
 - Group attends luncheons, outings, and participate in a variety of activities
 - Seasonal mailings for Habitat for Humanity



➤ Off Site Activities Include:

- Twice weekly shopping trips
- Lunch outings
- Local and Community center trips
- Library visits
- Museum and Historical sites
- Movies
- Malls
- School plays/ Theatre
- Religious services
- Veterans Celebrations
 - All activities are open to families and friends

Elder Wisdom Circle

- Web Based Non-Profit Organization with a National Network of Volunteer seniors
- Share hard earned knowledge and wisdom with people seeking advice worldwide
- Anyone with Internet access can request confidential advice on any topic – a personalized e-mailed response is sent back
- Group meets weekly and answers request from topics such as relationships, careers, and family
- Opportunity for volunteerism and to exercise their cognitive abilities
- Stay connected to society by utilizing life experiences

Senior Summer School

- Month long program focusing on a topic of interest chosen by the residents
- Presenters/ speakers invited from local colleges, universities or based on their expertise or knowledge of the topic
- Past programs include:
 - World Cultures, Media Studies, All about NJ and Music Mosaic- This year's theme was Aviation
- Open to seniors from the community, families and friends
- Offers a chance to make new connections with people who share similar interests

Country Cottage Program

- Activities planned by Director of Recreation and staff
- Have a full activity program
- Utilize entire building
- Trips scheduled twice weekly
- Join Assisted Living Residents for appropriate activities

Activity Communication Monthly and Daily

- Monthly Calendar, Newsletter and Special Event insert given at Resident Council Meeting
- Enlarged Calendar is posted on the activity board – also available at the front desk
- Country Cottage also has a enlarged calendar posted on their activity board and smaller copies hung in their apartments
- Daily calendar is hung in both elevators and is available at the front desk
- All calendars are available for families/friends
- Special event flyers are mailed to the families

Collecting Valuable Feedback

- Satisfaction Surveys
- Recreation Suggestion Box
- Resident Council Meetings
- Leisure interest survey
- Feedback taken immediately following a program
- Informal gatherings- excellent programs formed after these discussions
- Keep a file on feedback gathered
 - Entertainment file that highlights exceptional performers
 - Events; what went well/ things that need to be improved
 - Ideas for future programs

Evaluation

Program is evaluated several ways

- Reviewing Resident Council Meetings
 - Review suggestions and feedback
- Reviewing yearly resident /family satisfaction surveys
 - Questions encompass the entire program for time, availability, variety, implementation, interest
- Quality Assurance Meetings
- Monitoring Resident Participation
 - Director of Recreation keeps a participation log for every activity including Country Cottage participation
 - Evaluate program success- based on participation levels
- The Director of Recreation and Executive Director meet informally to go over how things are going in the Recreation Department. We discuss what things are being planned, how the residents are enjoying programs, staffing, and changes taking place. At the end of the month we review the new programs for the following month or special events coming up-

- Through the evaluation process we are able offer appropriate, stimulating activities that offer purpose and meaning to our residents lives.
- Offer activities the residents want
- Our community has learned that is essential to keep up with the changing needs of our population, and the recreation program is most successful when you are meeting the needs and desires of the residents.
- This is done through evaluating the valuable feedback that you obtained and by implementing the suggestions and changes expressed by our residents/families
- Never let the Recreation Program become stagnant

Our number one goal in our Recreation Department is to make the activities worthwhile, meaningful and stimulating for our residents. Offering programs that meet the needs and expectations of our residents is essential.

Diverse programming is key. The activity program is always evolving and changing. Incorporating new trips, entertainers, speakers, and ideas is a big piece of keeping the program current.

Changes from feedback

- Recent changes
 - Activity between 1st and 2nd lunch
 - A connection to the outside community and Volunteering
 - Letters to soldiers
 - Pen pals with another Assisted Living
 - Elder wisdom group was formed
 - Habitat for Humanity mailings
 - Residents run programs for our Country Cottage residents reading stories and poems
 - Resident entered a local art show and displayed her work
 - Residents running programs
 - The lives of Hollywood Celebrities
 - Residents talking about their countries and background

- Live music at Dinner time
 - Students from a local violin school will play every Wednesday in the dining room
- Country Cottage
 - Families wanted a daily walking club started after breakfast, before the main activity program started

All the above changes have been implemented based on feedback gathered from residents and families

A few last thoughts...

- Talk to your residents and find out what their interests are
- Recognize there are many different types of residents and capabilities
- Utilize the feedback the residents give you- formally and informally
- Do not be fearful to try new programs or make changes to the existing ones
- Look for ways to be creative with the Recreation budget
 - Bring in volunteers or students to run programs
 - Director of Recreation may train or educate herself on a program
 - Utilize families when appropriate
