



The Jenkins Senior Living Community Serves Seniors with Compassion, Excellence and Integrity

## Making a Choice



When a loved one requires long term care, the placement options available to families are often confusing. Making this choice can be one of the most challenging decisions a family must face. Advocacy groups have done a remarkable job in making sure families can be well informed of the clinical issues surrounding their available choices. However, there are many other aspects to take into consideration when making the long term care placement decision for a loved one. Today, more and more nursing communities understand that they must place equal focus on enhancing the Quality of Life of each resident in their community in order to provide the most life-affirming experience possible. While meeting clinical needs might consist of medication assistance, toileting and bathing, Quality of Life needs relate to basic human desires for comfort, emotional well-being, physical, mental and spiritual engagement and the ability to nurture. One could think of this as a foundational shift in the philosophy of care giving: a shift away from providing solely a safe institutionalized existence to that of promoting a life worth living.

Institute for Caregiver Education



# A Lifestyle Shaped by Choices

*You must be the change you wish to see in the world.*

—*Mobandas Gandhi*

It all started ten years ago when St. Elizabeth received accreditation for Long Term Care from the Joint Commission. It was an important step for us. We had a medical skilled unit, and in order to accept Managed Care we had to have the accreditation. We were in the process of pursuing accreditation when Christine Mour became our new administrator, and she gave us the push we needed to successfully complete the process.

After that we explored other things that we wanted to do and began to look at the Eden Alternative, a Culture Change approach to long-term care that was developed by Dr. Bill Thomas. His concept is an approach to nursing homes that focuses on the lifestyle of elders shaped by choices—not circumstances—in a home,... a neighborhood,... a true community where you “live.” Here you are treated as family, and you in turn find the warmth, the security, and peace of mind that comes in knowing that answers to questions about your needs—now and in the future—will be provided. He advocates for a new approach to long-term care that puts forward a radical critique of the status quo and offers a creative way to “change the culture” of nursing homes by bringing growth and laughter into the lives of elders.

Christine and I became interested in this approach to enhancing the lives of elders through culture change. We also attended a seminar, heard Jim Kinsey, Director of Corporate Development and Product Services for the Institute for Caregiver Education, and liked what he had to say. At that point we decided to adapt some of his ideas with those of Dr. Thomas and develop our own approach for St. Elizabeth. Our Neighborhoods, formerly called units, would be centered on elders’ wants and needs rather than on an activity schedule developed by the staff and nursing requirements. This culture change turned the whole organization around to focus on a person-centered approach.

The managers of the neighborhoods are now Neighborhood Guides rather than Nurse

Managers. This change frees the nursing staff to concentrate on their clinical activities, and the Guides can focus on all of the other activities of



***Emory Knight***

daily living. Another key ingredient in the culture change has been to involve the whole staff in meeting elders’ needs. Neighborhood Guides, Nurses, Geriatric Nursing Assistants, Culinary Team Members, Cooks, Housekeepers, Maintenance Staff and Recreation Associates are all members of the team. It has been a most interesting process for me to mentor the staff through the Culture Change. We are well along the way; however, creating home for elders is ongoing. Interestingly enough, the elders have also needed time to adjust to the new routine of making choices for themselves, since they had become so used to the institutional schedule that we had set up for them.

The phase of change that we are currently in involves the physical environment. The nursing station is no longer the hub of the neighborhood. Nurses’ workstations are located in the neighborhoods, and expanded and enhanced activity space/living rooms are now the hub. New bathing spas, wall and entrance décor, and carpeting will complete the transformation from units to neighborhoods. Stay tuned!

Emory Knight  
Director of Nursing

# The Best is Yet to Be

*Come, grow old with me! The best is yet to be.*

—Robert Browning

St. Ann Adult Day Services and the Cherry Hill Senior Center are programs that serve seniors with two different approaches in two different communities of Southwest Baltimore: St. Ann near Catonsville, and the Cherry Hill Senior Center, a little over two miles away in Cherry Hill. Other than their locations, another feature that distinguishes one from the other is that St. Ann, has an important focus on the medical needs of its participants, and The Cherry Hill Senior Center has more of a social focus. St. Ann is a day program that supports older adults who, for medical reasons, are not able to remain home alone during the day. With a nurse and a social worker on staff, the medical needs of participating seniors are met, along with the social, recreational and spiritual needs.

The Cherry Hill Senior Center is a program where members find socialization and recreational activities. Members live in the community, independently or with their families. The social and recreational focus of the program is designed to support seniors as they age while continuing to live in the community. Many members are able to walk to the center from the neighborhood. One Cherry Hill member, who shares a home with her daughter, says that she enjoys coming to the center, and it's a good thing to get out of the house a few days during the week.

Regardless of their differences, the shared mission of both programs is to recognize the value and dignity of seniors as they age and to offer them opportunities to participate in the life of the community—both for their personal enrichment and the community's.

Cherie Melton has been the Director of St. Ann Adult Day program for seven years, and she took over the direction of the Cherry Hill Senior Center last year. Cherie is a Registered Nurse with a career focus in Psychology and Gerontology. She began her work at St. Ann as the Nurse Supervisor. By the time she was promoted to Director one year later, she had gotten to know the participants and caregivers well. This made for a smooth transition. Cherie enjoys working with seniors. She appreciates their wisdom and likes hearing about their life experiences. Listening to participants in the program helps her to develop new activities and make changes to insure that everyone has a positive experience.

Cherie has several goals for both St. Ann and the Cherry Hill Center. She would like to have more volunteers to work with seniors on computer skills, as well as volunteer leaders for the men's groups. Presenters for life skills and memory activities would enhance the centers' current activity schedules. Donated computers and software would also be helpful for a number of programs.

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**Front:** Mildred Gray, Rosie Brooks, Mary Henderson, Frances Harris  
**Back:** Kathleen Cole, Cherie Melton-Director, Annie Tarver-Program Assistant



**The Jenkins Senior  
Living Community**

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“home-away-from-home” feeling —  
*The Best Is Yet To Be***

Your loved one will receive lots of TLC and will enjoy our fun and stimulating activities while you work during the day or enjoy a much needed respite. We provide transportation, meals, activities, assistance with activities of daily living, and medication administration. We have a dedicated and experienced staff of 25, including a full-time nurse and social worker on site.

Visit us and see for yourself!

Contact Susan Kaiser at 410-646-6548 or email [skaiser@cc-md.org](mailto:skaiser@cc-md.org)



*Program Assistants, Caprice Hill & Rosetta Ward and Director, Cherie Melton, RN*

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