

Center supports new model of care: Green House Living for Sheridan

Green House Living for Sheridan is a relatively new organization created to build and develop a new type of 24-hour skilled nursing facility.

When people need long-term care, they often must move to a nursing home or another type of institutional setting.

The Sheridan Senior Center first learned of this new type of "nursing home" in 2005 from members of the Family Caregiver Support Group, which met once a week. At that time, the first Green House Project had just opened in Tupelo, Miss.

The Caregivers encouraged the Center to bring this new type of nursing home to Sheridan. A feasibility study was completed in 2006 and indicated that our community could support this new project.

From there a group of interested and passionate people organized and founded the Green House Living for Sheridan in 2007.

The Green House approach is a radically new, non-institutional model that reinvents the experience of long-term care for elders. The model combines small homes with the full range of personal care and clinical services.

Each element of the Green House

model's operation and design is crafted to deinstitutionalize skilled long-term care and return control, dignity, and a sense of well-being to residents, their families and direct-care staff.

Each Green House home is a self-contained house for 10-12 people. Each resident has his own private bed and bathroom, which are situated around the hearth, an open kitchen and a dining area. Green House homes look and feel like home.

Direct-care staffers report higher levels of job satisfaction and spend more quality one-on-one time with residents than in traditional nursing home settings. All aspects of the living environment and health care are designed to allow a higher quality of life.

For example there is no pre-established schedule. Elders work with staff to set all of their daily activities including meal times. Elders receive needed care without that care becoming the focus of their existence.



**Center
Stage**

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Green House homes are designed, built and operated with a mix of public and private dollars. The homes will serve both private-pay and Medicaid-eligible residents.

A core element of the Green House Project's

mission is to serve low-income individuals, regardless of their ability to pay.

As of January 2010, the National Green House Replication Model is active in 26 states with 76 homes open, 30 homes under construction, and 98 homes in development.

Several completed research projects compared the Green House model to traditional nursing homes. Findings include significantly improved quality of life for residents as measured in the domains of privacy, dignity, autonomy, relationships and overall well-being.

A group of talented and hardworking community members volunteers its time

and is fully committed to bringing this new model of care to Sheridan. Four homes (12 residents each) will be built on land donated early in the project.

Over \$2 million of public and private funds has been pledged, and financing is in progress. Once built, the organization will be self-sustaining.

Now is a good time to complete this project, because construction costs are lower, jobs will be created, and Sheridan will be at the forefront in offering choices in long-term elder care.

The Sheridan Senior Center supports this project for many reasons but mostly because it is consistent with our vision ... "Sheridan is a community that improves the quality of life for people of all ages by strengthening and supporting its elders and where elders contribute to the well-being and foresight of the community."

Carmen Rideout is executive director for the Sheridan Senior Center.

Center Stage is written by friends of the Senior Center for the Sheridan community. It is a collection of insights and stories related to living well at every age.