

What exactly is Green House living in Sheridan?

Members of our community who were privileged to attend the AARP program last month sponsoring Dr. Bill Thomas were inspired to learn of the dramatic changes being offered in elder care.

Dr. Thomas, nationally acclaimed geriatrician and author, is the originator of this new philosophy of professional service, which — according to *The Wall Street Journal* and *Time* magazine — is considered to be one of the most exciting and innovative ideas in the health care field.

Well, what is Green House living anyway? Let me enumerate the Green House approach:

- a) A Green House residence is indistinguishable from a private home.
- b) Each of the residents has a private room and bath that can be decorated according to his own taste.
- c) Residents are served meals family style and live and eat together as family.
- d) Meals are cooked in the home.

e) Basic care is provided by the Shabaz, who staffs each residence giving professional care, coordinates meal preparation, plans activities and services, and does light house-keeping and laundry.

f) There is a clinical support team associated with each residence, including skilled nurses, social workers, activities experts, therapists, nutritionists, pharmacists, and a medical director.

g) Residents have freedom to make their own daily schedules.

h) Costs are paid through Medicare, Medicaid, and privately as a nursing home.

The advantages of this care philosophy are:

a) The home atmosphere results in better acceptance by residents and fami-



Center Stage

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ly, and a University of Michigan study indicates much higher satisfaction than in institutional situations.

b) Improved quality of life. Person-directed care.

c) More continued over-

sight resulting in less injury, less depression, and a decrease in need for psychiatric and other medication.

d) High staff satisfaction. Visitors and family are always welcome.

e) Operating costs compare very favorably with conventional nursing homes.

The Green House concept is spreading, and there are now over 40 homes in the United States and abroad.

We in Sheridan have a unique opportunity to be the first in the world, let alone in the United States, to make this innovative idea a reality with community participation and assistance in helping provide the first four homes.

Green House living in Sheridan is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt group of interested and dedicated volunteers formed to help make Sheridan the first stand-alone, community-supported project that will provide a welcome alternative in elder-person care.

Dr. Thickman is a physician with the VA Medical Center and a member of the task force that is leading the development of the "Green House Living for Sheridan" project. He is also director emeritus of 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.