



*The Tree Unites the
Branches; The Branches
Bear the Fruit*

The ORANJ TREE

Quarterly Newsletter of the Organization of Residents Associations of New Jersey

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SIGN UP FOR PLENARY



On April 10 at 10 AM at Applewood Estates in Freehold, NJ, ORANJ will hold its Spring Plenary meeting. For many of us the visit will be a first since that community's recent remodeling and expansion, a great venue for visiting with old acquaintances and for making new friends. Make sure to sign up right away because space is limited.

We are very fortunate to have two excellent speakers. In the morning, Heather Howard of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University will speak on health care. After

lunch, Ray Guarino, director of sales and marketing at one of our largest CCRCs, will tell us how he has maintained occupancy at 94%-96% in good times and bad. See the back page for further information.

Because some of you are relatively new to ORANJ, we have decided to emphasize at this meeting the ways that ORANJ disseminates best practices in service to residents in CCRCs. Therefore, your packets contain a list of the 31 surveys that have been conducted in the 23 years of our existence. Subjects range from "Pet Policies" to "Income Tax Deductions" to "Employee Scholarship Programs" to "Transparency." Reports are available on our website at www.oranjccrc.org.

Another type of study is essentially a repeat of a previous survey, which had uncovered serious problems. For instance, the ORANJ Finance Committee is planning a re-study of transparency issues, because the original survey had detected serious problems especially in financial issues such as the preparation of budgets.

Finally, we have developed an informal mechanism to find out what others are doing through the network of Presidents of Residents Associations. For specific brief questions a group email works well. Within hours, certainly within a day or two, enough information will have arrived to suggest a possible solution. All these strategies work because so many of you take part in both formal and informal channels for dissemination. Many thanks to all who have participated.

See you at the meeting.

Ellen

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A VISIT TO FELLOWSHIP VILLAGE

As Zara Cohan and I arrived at the circular drive fronting Fellowship Village, a sprawling CCRC nestled into 72 acres of rolling countryside in Basking Ridge, Zara, the former art teacher, called it “a pastoral scene.” We were greeted by ORANJ Regional VP Ed Babbott and Anne Ryan, President of the Residents Council, and introduced to FV President and CEO Brian Lawrence, a dynamic young man in his forties. Mr. Lawrence outlined the community’s history: founded by the Fellowship Deaconry, it began operations in 1996 as a secular not-for-profit retirement association with vestiges of its roots appearing here and there such as an occasional quote from Isaiah or Leviticus and the Lion/Lamb logo.

Mr. Lawrence gave us a quick tour of the Community Center and we then repaired to his office, immediately off the entrance. As might be expected, the visit taking place in early December ’12, our first subject was Hurricane Sandy. The community fared well: only three days without power, hot food for the first two days and Stryker “escape-chairs” utilized to transport residents up and down stairs. Power was restored quickly due to a high priority listing with the utility, JCP&L.

Management at Fellowship Village uses the adjective “proactive” and that was obviously the case when serious consideration of backup power began immediately after the 2011 Halloween snow storm. An emergency power generating system will be up and running in 2013. Clearly, savings in energy costs have been addressed: numerous rooftop solar panels are in place and LED lighting has replaced the more costly incandescent.

Fellowship Village features all of the usual CCRC amenities: fitness center, pool, library and so on. But the visitor gets blown away by the newly renovated dining facilities: a choice of three formal venues, the crown jewel being the Atrium, with its seven tables and wrap-around full length windows offering a garden view and a genuine al fresco feeling. The more casual Bistro offers a complete gustatory selection from deli sandwiches to pizza to hot meals plus an opportunity to mingle with management and Wellness Center staffs. A flexible meal plan allows residents to shift their dining choices and skip dinner one night and have lunch and dinner on another day at no extra cost.

FV infobits noted en passant:

- The occupancy for Independent Living stands at 94%, for Assisted Living it is 99%
- Skilled nursing care is provided 24/7
- For residents on the Traditional payment plan there is no additional cost to transfer to Assisted Living other than extra meal charges
- The new Senior Living at Home program is off to a successful start
- A new larger auditorium is in the planning stage.

After a pleasant Bistro lunch with Cynny Babbott, we took our leave from this peaceful home for seniors with Brian Lawrence’s words resonating: “everything depends on what the residents want.”

Gene Lanigan
Zara Cohan

PEARL’S NOTE

I hope you enjoy reading your ORANJ TREE Newsletter as much as we enjoy writing it. Although I’ve only been your editor a short time, I find that each issue makes me realize again the importance of ORANJ and our newsletter. There are twenty-five accredited CCRCs that are members of the Organization of Residents Associations of New Jersey (ORANJ). The organization represents about ten thousand senior adults, which is why it’s good to know that the Legislative Committee, chaired by David Hibberson, constantly monitors and evaluates bills that are introduced in our State Legislature. The committee acts as an insurance policy for our senior citizens’ legal needs.

Our mission states that one of the main purposes for CCRCs that belong to ORANJ is to share information with each other. We want to know what is important to you and the needs of your community. For this issue we visited Fellowship Village, a beautiful CCRC in Basking Ridge. Perhaps our report will help you find programs that Fellowship has done that may be applicable to your organization. In the future we plan to visit other CCRCs and share their programs and functions with you.

We welcome your suggestions, criticism, new ideas, etc. and want your input in order to make

this newsletter serve its primary purpose, which is to work together, care and share information with and about each other. Thank you for your help in the past.

Please contact me by email pearlr415@aol.com or write to me at Pearl Randall Lehrhoff, 333 Elmwood Ave. Apt. 401 Maplewood, NJ 07040.

PLUGGING A GAP IN CONTINUING CARE

All CCRCs by definition have an independent and assisted living program. Most have long-term or skilled nursing care at the far end. Increasingly, private home-care aides have become an option between independent and assisted living. These aides help residents in independent living units who are no longer able to function totally independently. In some cases, the aides may even serve around the clock and keep residents in their own apartments instead of making the move into assisted living. Generally, agencies that license the aides require that they be employed by a resident for a minimum number of hours, such as 3 hours a day, because of the travel involved.

In recent years, several CCRCs have initiated a program whereby residents can be served for short periods of time, sometimes with a minimum of a half hour or less. In some cases, the cost per hour is approximately the same as the traditional home health agency rate but it makes a difference if you can buy a half hour of service for \$14 rather than pay a minimum of about \$69 for 3 hours.

These programs have a variety of structures. What CCRC home-care programs have in common is that the recipients are near each other so that the time and cost of transportation between cases can be eliminated. Some provide a wide spectrum of services in addition to nursing care – ranging from medication reminders to helping with a shower, walking a dog, watering the plants, taking out the garbage or spending an hour at three different times a day to help with meals.

Some services can be covered with Long Term Care Insurance contracts and some by Medicare but even if they are paid for out of pocket they are a bargain because they are available in small time increments. Under this system, residents never

need worry about “keeping the aide busy” because the aide leaves after the service has been completed.

These programs are a response to a growing demand among independent living residents to remain in place rather than moving down the continuum of care. Responses from staff at CCRCs that offer these programs indicate that the start-up may be slow but growth begins quickly and the results are significant, both financially and in resident satisfaction.

Ellen Handler

IN QUEST OF ATM SERVICES

In August 2012, Frank Honn, then President of the Residents Association at Crane's Mill, conducted a survey of ATM services at NJ CCRCs. 21 communities responded to the survey. About half, 11 communities, had at least one ATM and 10 did not have any. The ATMs were all supplied by the community's bank and were generally installed and serviced free of charge. Users were not charged transaction fees if they were depositors at the bank.

Selected comments from CCRCs with ATMs:

- Many CCRCs also have personal service offices open up to three days/week.
- While all ATMs provide cash, they usually do not accept deposits.
- Some accept credit cards as well as bank cards.
- Residents do use ATMs. Visitors and staff find them helpful.
- Some sites are so large and spread out that their banks have installed ATMs at one location and a personal service branch at another location.

Selected comments from CCRCs without ATMs:

- We are located downtown. Lots of ATMs nearby.
- One-site personal service (one day per week) judged sufficient.
- Our bus takes residents to banks.
- Our population is too small.
- Our bank is just across the street.
- No one has requested an ATM.

Frank Honn

SPEAKERS AT PLENARY MEETING



Heather Howard, Director of the State Health Reform Assistance Network and lecturer in Public Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, will speak to us on health care reform with emphasis on the Medicare program.

Before taking her current position she was New Jersey's Commissioner of Health and Senior Services, where she was responsible for public health services, regulation of health care institutions, hospital financing, senior services, health care policy and research. She currently works with the newly formed health insurance exchanges and other state agencies to implement the Affordable Care Act's (Obamacare) coverage expansions.



Our other speaker is Ray Guarino, Director of Sales and Strategic Marketing at Cedar Crest in Pompton Plains, NJ. Ray has had 16 years of sales experience with the last 10 years in sales management.

Since 2004 he has been at Cedar Crest and has brought over 1,600 people to that facility and plans to bring in another 132 in 2013. He will speak about his experience in keeping his community filled, occupancy at 94%-96%, even in difficult economic circumstances. He credits his success to his team's understanding the benefits of a consultative selling approach. Among his awards have been "Top Gun" winner and "Presidents Club" recipient. In his first year at Cedar Crest he was the only sales manager to receive the Erickson Sales Leadership award.

THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The following are two of the bills our Legislative Committee is involved with now.

Earlier in this session (2012-2013) the Senate Bill to Extend Veterans Town Tax Rebate/Credit to CCRC veterans and their widows was assigned to the Urban Affairs Committee as S588. This bill has been in Trenton for ten years now and we and others continue our efforts to have it signed into law. Gary Baldwin has actively solicited support from members of the Senate Committee and additional support from various organizations around the state as he spearheads our efforts. The Senate Committee late last year finally passed it and it was assigned to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee (since there is a fiscal consequence), where it now sits. Gary has contacted these members also and urges action by them.

The same Veterans Bill in the Assembly (A1969) was assigned to the Veterans Committee. Last December the Assembly Committee unanimously passed the bill. It now awaits a final vote by the full Assembly.

Our ORANJ Bill of Rights for Residents in Independent Living (S2052/A3132) was introduced into the State Legislature last June. It was finalized during January and February. These bills were assigned to the Senate and Assembly committees for Health and Senior Services. Finally in September three members of the ORANJ Legislative Committee attended a Senate Committee hearing in Trenton and gave supporting statements for the bill which was passed unanimously, and the next month, again unanimously by the full Senate.

David Hibberson