



WILLOW  
VALLEY  
COMMUNITIES

# THRIVE FORWARD

MEMORY CARE NEWSLETTER

Volume I, Issue 5



## WHAT'S INSIDE

### GARDEN ROOM

Bringing the outdoors, indoors—  
The benefits of nature in a climate-  
controlled space.

### SITE BANNER UNVEILING

The future of Memory Care  
is in “*site*”

### FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Caring without confinement

# Memory Care Center Site Banner Unveiling



**On March 18, thirty-six volunteers from the *This is Personal* campaign to support the Memory Care Center gathered on Cultural Center Drive, just South of Meadow Ridge, to unveil the onsite banner which marks the location of the much-anticipated Center on the Lakes Campus.**

As if a glimpse into the future, the central focus of the banner is a rendering of the entrance to the Memory Care Center which appears to be revealed through an eye-shaped portal adorned with the sunbursts featured in the Willow Valley Communities' brand logo. The banner, standing 5 feet high and spanning 30 feet, encourages viewers to ponder the abundance of opportunities for this seven-acre campus. Quoting a journalist, the banner promotes the thought that "to care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors." The transformative residential accommodations for 140 Residents at any given time, and the amenities and support available to caregivers, family, and friends to be featured here in the not-so-distant future will inspire the highest quality of care and life.

For information about the Memory Care Center, including information on how to support the Center, please call the Willow Valley Communities Charitable Foundation at 717.517.3901 or email [foundation@willowvalley.org](mailto:foundation@willowvalley.org).



# Key Feature: *Caring for the Resident Without Confinement*

**Another foundational goal of our planned Memory Care Center is to care for the Resident without the restricted environment normally associated with traditional memory care settings.** In this country, typical dementia units are designed to prevent wandering and exit-seeking – to keep the Resident safe. While this is understandable, keeping someone confined can be very unnerving to the Resident and to their family. Imagine what it is like to observe one’s loved one constantly trying to leave the memory care community – but to no avail. The result for the Resident is usually a combination of frustration, anger, hostility and depression; and the family is left feeling guilty and upset.

Our proposed approach builds on concepts in Cedar Brook (see “The Garden Room at Cedar Brook”), striving to overcome this confinement dilemma by situating the Memory Care Center on a seven-acre parcel on the Lakes Campus. Residents will live in a home-like setting with fourteen households, each housing ten persons. While the perimeter of the property is surrounded by a secure fence, camouflaged by attractive and person-friendly landscaping, there is minimal feeling of restricted movement. Weather permitting, the Resident can put on a coat and walk almost anywhere within the seven acres. The Resident may want to attend a club function with friends from other households or they may just wish to meander through the grocery store. The idea is not to restrict the person and to give them a sense of control over their life.

Another method utilized to promote freedom of movement is for Team Members to know the backgrounds of the Residents. For example, if a Resident previously enjoyed gardening, there will be an opportunity for them to garden within the Center. Or, if the person liked dogs, they will be able to interact with either a house dog or a therapy dog. As reasonable, the more we can connect the Resident to their former life, the better.

Within the limits of one’s abilities, our philosophy is to promote a sense of normalcy in the Resident’s daily functioning based upon the person’s earlier life. And providing the freedom to come and go, within their home setting, is certain to add quality to one’s life.



# Concepts in Action: *The Garden Room at Cedar Brook*

**The Cedar Brook neighborhood was designed with careful consideration for preserving the dignity of our Residents living with dementia.**

One vital way to do that is by providing a safe, structured environment while still maintaining their freedom of movement. The addition of our Garden Room creates a continued walking path that gives Cedar Brook a unique openness and allows Residents to navigate about the neighborhood more freely. With its natural lighting, high ceiling, and live vegetation, the Garden Room provides a wonderful alternative to the outdoors throughout the winter months and inclement days. To give the space a more natural outdoor feel, the overhead system is programmed to play bird songs and nature sounds such as trickling water.

The Garden Room provides a never-ending supply of sensory stimulation for those at any level of their dementia journey. For family members who may be looking for a way to connect with their loved ones, it offers a pleasant visiting space with lots to talk about and see. The Cedar Brook Recreational Therapy team supplies materials such as bird identification books, Birds and Blooms magazines, and informational flora coloring pages that can be used for independent use by Residents or visitors. For our bird lovers, life-like birds have been scattered among the trees and shrubs providing another interactive opportunity.

Our monthly Green Thumb Club is structured around the seasonal planting schedule for the Garden Room and immerses Residents in a hands-on Horticultural Therapy experience. For those living with dementia

who may be confused about the time of year, rotating seasonally appropriate vegetation provides environmental awareness. Bright red poinsettias may trigger memories of Christmases past, while the scent of blooming hyacinths reminds us that Spring has sprung. Most importantly, Residents feel a sense of pride and ownership when they assist in the planting and maintenance of those flowers.

A variety of other group programming is frequently held in this area as well. We have found that Residents are often more wakeful and engaged during exercise classes when held in the Garden Room, so our weekly Music in Motion and Tai Chi Circle are typically hosted in this location. A monthly Conversation on Canvas painting program also takes place there. Because walking into this room feels very much like a transition from indoors to outdoors, this is also a go-to space when we need to redirect someone who is distressed or exit-seeking.





## The Impact of Environment

Dwight Jasmann, Providence Park Resident and Hospice Volunteer, arrived at Cedar Brook one day to visit a Resident whom he had befriended. This Resident was receiving hospice care and had not spoken a word to Dwight in the previous weeks – barely opening his eyes. The expanded portion of Cedar Brook having recently opened, Dwight was pleased to locate his friend in the Garden Room on this sunny day. His friend was sitting up, bright-eyed, and greeted Dwight with a smile. Convinced his friend had recalled him and heartfelt, shared memories, Dwight engaged his friend in a one-way conversation, and concluded the visit with another smile and a wave from his friend.

# Creating a Quality Experience



**When a Resident moves into Cedar Brook, Whitney Hackman, the Recreational Therapy Coordinator for Cedar Brook, completes a comprehensive Recreational Therapy Assessment.** With the information gathered from the Resident, their families, and prior health history records, Whitney adds biopsychosocial information to the Resident's Care Plan. Important details such as the Resident's preferences, dislikes, hobbies, prior occupation, family composition both current and past, and interests are added into a profile in the medical record system. This information is then accessible on the hand-held devices utilized by the nursing Team Members who may interact with the Resident.

In addition, Whitney will also compile these Resident details for each new Resident into a "Getting to Know Me" profile sheet. Each of these Resident-focused sheets are placed in binders, which are sorted by hallway and easily available for nursing Team Members. In fact, because some of this information is not sensitive in nature, and therefore not considered protected health information by HIPPA, these details can also be shared with other members of the care team. In Cedar Brook, this often includes Team Members from the Culinary, Housekeeping, and Floorcare departments. By sharing this knowledge, we are placing emphasis on person-centered care and increasing the opportunities for the Residents of Cedar Brook to develop rapport with the various Team Members. Residents feel more at ease as they re-encounter these Team Members who are generally involved in the daily functioning of the Community, and the Team Members can engage the Residents in meaningful conversation as they take pride in their daily tasks. This is a prime way in which the Team Members working in Cedar Brook strive to normalize life for the Residents and continually exemplify the Willow Valley Communities' MORE values: Make a difference, Own excellence, Respect relationships, Enhance wellbeing.

## Questions or Comments:

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