

Town Topics, Wednesday, June 20, 2012

Full Array of Services for Older Adults At Brandywine Senior Living at Princeton

Princeton is fortunate to have many choices of living arrangements for older adults. From independent to assisted living to long-term or continuing care, the options are abundant.

Choices can diminish for older people generally, notes Ellen Reid, Director of Community Relations at Brandywine Senior Living at Princeton. "We offer our residents a variety of opportunities and flexibility at Brandywine, and they appreciate these choices."

IT'S NEW To Us

Brandywine Senior Living at Princeton opened in October 2011 at the former site of Buckingham Place, 155 Raymond Road. Brandywine, which operates 24 senior living communities in five states in the mid-Atlantic and northeast U.S., purchased Buckingham Place's assisted living and memory facility. The Buckingham Place adult daycare program is still in operation at the Raymond Road location.

As a leading provider of quality care for older adults, Brandywine offers assisted living, including nurses on-site 24 hours every day, as well as a special "Reflections" program for patients with Alzheimer's Disease and Alzheimer's-type conditions. It also provides short-term respite care and rehabilitation care.

Life-style Choices

The entire Buckingham facility was renovated, with new decor, featuring the Brandywine signature green and gold colors, as well as new artwork. 124 residents can be accommodated in comfortable studio or one-bedroom apartments, with a number featuring kitchen-

ette including refrigerator/freezer, and microwave.

The attractive outdoor landscaping offers colorful gardens and plantings, and walkways for residents.

Life-style choices, including activities, trips, flexible dining times, abound at Brandywine. "We have all-day restaurant dining, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.," points out Ms. Reid. "This is a program unique to Brandywine and enables residents to select whatever time they wish to eat."

In addition, there is a private dining room in which residents can entertain friends and family for special dinners or parties.

These opportunities for choices help to validate the residents as individuals, adds executive director Holly Minnis. "They decide what they want to do. It's up to them."

And, indeed, there is much to do! A library stocked with best sellers, game room with pool table and slot machine, activity room with arts, crafts and cards available, book club, exercise, computer, cooking and art classes, gardening areas, daily on-site movies, as well as outings to museums and theaters are all available.

Residents also have the opportunity to act in the monthly plays held at the center, notes Stephanie Gaber, Director of Activities/Escapades Producer. "Curtain Calls is our once-a-month drama program. The residents audition to be in the play, and then they perform it for the other residents, family and friends. They love this!"

"There is so much for people to do here. They love our 'Let's Make a Deal' wheel game held twice a month, and there are real 'card sharks' for bridge, poker, and 21. We also have intergenerational programs with children from area

schools and organizations. These are very popular, and the residents enjoy being with the kids."

Special Events

Special events, such as residents' birthday parties, theme parties, and Valentine's Day parties for couples (a number of married couples live at Brandywine) are other amenities, she adds. "We had champagne, a strolling violinist, and the couples renewed their vows on Valentine's Day."

Entertainers, including "Seniors Entertaining Seniors" come to the center, and trips and outings are also available. "We go to museums, concerts, movies, theater, and to area places, such as Drumthwacket, Bainbridge House, Grounds for Sculpture, Terhune Orchards, Morven Museum and Gift Shop, and restaurants."

In addition, amenities and services include basic cable TV, complimentary transportation to medical appointments in the area, weekly housekeeping (towel and bed linen service), full service beauty salon and barber shop, personal mail boxes, and a bistro with beverages and snacks available 24/7.

Residents are typically in their seventies up to 100-plus, with a median age of 82 to 83, notes Ms. Minnis. Brandywine gives them the opportunity to remain in their apartment, even as their health needs may change.

"Doctors, including primary care physicians, podiatrists, dentists, and wound care specialists, visit weekly, and we also have a psychiatrist and psychologist on-site. If someone needs a home health aide or ultimately, hospice care, this can be arranged. There are different levels of care available, and our team puts a health plan together for the residents, and continues to



SENIOR SERVICES: "We are trying to create an atmosphere of home and an opportunity for residents to age in place," says the staff at Brandywine Senior Living Center at Princeton. Shown (left to right) are residents Gloria Pyne, Theresa Farkas, and Doris Bishop, taking part in the "Roots of Love" horticulture class.

monitor their situation.

"Everything is as convenient as possible," she emphasizes. "If they have an appointment with their doctor here, they don't have to wait or drive to an office. It's so much easier for them and their extended family. There is also a wellness center with portable X-ray and lab work service. Physical therapy is available. All our residents' needs are met. Their apartments are checked every day to make sure everything is all right."

Motivated and Engaged

"We offer an opportunity for people to be independent, and at the same time not to have to worry about cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, and housekeeping, etc.," points out Ms. Reid.

The Brandywine staff makes it all possible, and sets the tone, note the administrators. Most staff members have been with Brandywine or Buckingham Place for many years. "We are set apart by our staff," notes Ms. Minnis.

"The staff here is the best clinical staff I have ever seen. They are highly motivated and engaged. They really care about the residents. It takes a certain kind of person, and our staff members are patient, caring, and capable."

"In addition, prior to anyone being hired, they are subject to a complete and thorough screening and background check. This is extremely important for the welfare of our residents. We want them to have the best care possible, and they do."

Deb Shane, Brandywine Senior Creative Director, stresses the importance of continuing training and education for the staff. "We have ongoing education, emphasizing new ways to learn and grow, and there is always something new happening. We want to keep things fresh, as we strive to make a difference in the residents' lives."

"I feel we are making a difference in their lives," says Ms. Reid, and that dif-

ference can extend to the entire family, she notes. "When families come in to talk with me, they can be in crisis. It's amazing what people are juggling today. I am so pleased we are able to help and share these moments in their lives."

"I originally worked in long-term care," adds Ms. Gaber. "There was very little assisted living then. This has been a big change, and also, the opportunity for activities has really changed. There are so many options and kinds of stimulation offered now. This is so important."

"I love coming to work," she continues. "Older people have stories to tell and a history to share. We have fun together. It's wonderful when someone says they had such a good time at an event or outing. I walk away with a really good feeling."

For further information about Brandywine, call (732) 329-8888. Website: www.brandycare.com.

—Jean Stratton