

Dementia nurses win recognition

By RAUL GARCIA | Staff Writer | Posted: Monday, February 22, 2016 11:35 pm

HARLINGEN — The applause was long and loud for nurse Elizabeth Lugo and 41 other nurses who were being recognized for being certified dementia care practitioners.

“It’s very exciting because we are looking to improve the life of our residents,” Lugo, education specialist at Retama Manor, said Monday. “We are providing a better quality of care for our residents.”

In response to the growing number of dementia diagnoses in the elderly, the Retama staff has developed an expertise in caring for the population that has lost memory, who often become agitated and are without appropriate care and experience a diminished quality of life.

RetamaManorNursingCenter has become a local “go to” skilled nursing facility specializing in dementia care.

They offer the latest in music and art therapy as well as engaging in the effort to reduce the use of medications.

Lugo said the staff has seen an improvement in the quality of care using the new techniques.

The nurses completed education and training through the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners.

“It educates them on what is dementia and how do we prepare for it,” said Jeff Trait, senior administrator at Retama Manor.

Retama Manor is the home of 154 elderly people and employs 65 staff specialist nurse aids.

An estimated 5.3 million Americans of all ages have Alzheimer’s disease as of 2015. An estimated 5.1 million of those people are 65 and older.

Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr. took time off the campaign trail to visit the local nursing facility in Harlingen Monday.

Lucio accepted a certificate of appreciation for his leadership on senior health care issues and extended his own appreciation to Retama staff, newly educated and trained to provide the latest strategies in dementia care.

“This is one of the most exemplary operations anywhere in the state,” Lucio said. “I’m very proud it’s in the very heart of my senatorial district.”



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