

Memory care center highlights improvements at Stamford retirement complex

By Paul Schott | *March 27, 2017*

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Carrol Houser, 87, poses inside his private room at the Edgehill Retirement Community in Stamford, Conn. on Tuesday, March 21, 2017.

STAMFORD — The needs of today's senior citizens continue to evolve — and so have the range of services offered by one of the city's largest retirement communities.

Representing a landmark project in its 19-year history, the **Edgehill center** at 122 Palmers Hill Road completed earlier this year a \$21 million expansion and renovation. The upgrades include a new memory-care wing for residents who have Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, an expanded skilled-nursing facility with more private rooms and improved independent-living accommodations.

"Our residents come in independently and live in independent-living apartments," Christopher Barstein, Edgehill's executive director, said in an interview last week. "And as needs arise, they can move onto a traditional assisted-living environment, and they can move onto a skilled-nursing environment. But what was missing was that dedicated, specialized memory-care environment."

Covering 15,700 square feet on Edgehill's third floor, the "Harbor Wing" memory-care center contains 22 apartments. Harbor Wing also includes a dining room, activities area and two patios.

Certified dementia practitioners staff Harbor Wing. They assist residents throughout the day.

"I like living here a lot," 87-year-old resident **Carrol Houser** said during an interview last week. "They are very friendly."

To maintain and strengthen Harbor Wing residents' cognitive capabilities, "Journey Stations" aim to engage them in a memory or take part in activities that interest them. Those stations include a sewing machine, fishing rod, tackle box, art brushes, paint and a canvas.

More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, which represents the sixth-leading cause of death in the U.S., according to the Alzheimer's Association.

Demand has grown nationwide for memory-care centers such as Harbor Wing because of the extent of care required by seniors with dementia, said Dr. **Patrick Coll**, medical director of senior health at **UConn Health** in Farmington.

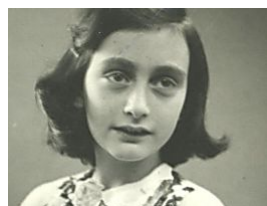
"For folks who need continuous supervision, if they have a family that has time and resources, often we'll see families who'll work it out among themselves to be there for 'Mom' or 'Grandma,'" Coll said. "But for some folks that's not an option, because they're busy with work and other commitments, and that's why these residential options are now available."

Edgehill also made extensive changes one floor down from Harbor Wing. As part of the overhaul of its second-floor skilled nursing facility that covers about 24,000 square feet, Edgehill increased the number of private rooms from four to 42. The skilled nursing center now has 46 beds, compared with 60 before the renovation.

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