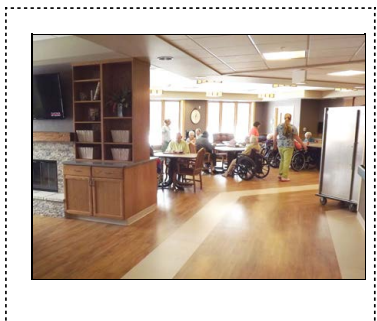


New memory care unit opens at ICMCF

Written by Jerry DeRoche

Tuesday, April 01, 2014 10:56 AM



A hardwood walking path leads residents around open social areas in the Willow Living Center memory care unit. (submitted photo)

CRYSTAL FALLS—As the population of Iron County, the state of Michigan and the country as a whole ages, the demand for medical care for the elderly population expands.

One of the most vital aspects of medical attention for elderly patients centers around dementia care. And to help meet that need locally, the Iron County Medical Care Facility recently opened its new memory care unit, the Willow Living Center.

Administrator Chester Pintarelli said the need for an expansion of the previously named Chickadee Lane had become clear.

"We were turning down anywhere from three to five residents a week that needed placement, and we couldn't take them," Pintarelli said. "So a lot of local residents had to go elsewhere, or try to, for another closed, secured unit like this."

Willow Living Center will expand the number of beds designated for dementia residents from 24 to 44 when the new unit is completely up and running. Some residents began moving into the new unit on March 13 and the relocation is expected to be completed by early May.

The project began in the fall of 2012 after about a four-year process of discussion, study and planning.

"What we did is spend a lot of time researching as we were moving forward to make sure we were meeting the needs of our residents," Pintarelli said.

Some of those needs centered around designing a living space that help memory-care patients feel less agitated and more at home. So Willow Living Center has a soothing feel to it, complete with color schemes of green, brown, gray and burgundy that don't cause overstimulation.

The center also has a hardwood-floor path around the unit that helps residents feel safe and keeps them from becoming lost. Also, because of the wander risk of dementia residents, the unit is secured.

"The path goes around in a circle, so they don't get to an exit and try to get out," explained Kim Mastie, director of nursing. "Lots of them try to find exits because they think they need to go to work or go home or take care of kids. They're trying to find a way home."

The exercise also decreases agitation and helps the residents walk off excess energy.

As the residents move around the new unit, they can also take in a bevy of old photographs provided by the Iron County Historical Museum and the Harbour House Museum.

The photos from days gone by aid memory recall in the residents and can provide a pleasant sense of nostalgia. Photos lining the walls of the unit include pictures of dirt-road main streets, the various mines that dotted the county, farms, classrooms and churches.

"The residents love them and so do the families," Pintarelli said. "They spend a lot of time looking at them. It's something that the residents can relate back to."

"Like anyone else, they react to nice things on the wall or a warm environment," said Staci Donati, diversional therapy director. "They might not say so directly, but in their mood it will show."

"They might say, 'Boy, that's pretty, I like that.'"

Willow Living Center is comprised of semi-private rooms, large living and dining areas, large-screen TVs that can show relaxing videos and fireplaces.

Numerous large windows throw light throughout the unit, which has nurses' stations at each end and a dietary services and kitchen area in the middle.

Once the temperatures rise, the residents will be able to enjoy a secure courtyard with a gazebo.

To design the space, ICMCF worked with the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners of New Jersey. The council also provided training in dementia care to the staff.

In turn, four ICMCF staff members are certified to train the other workers on the unit.

"Another thing unique to this unit is that we're going to be the only unit in Upper Michigan and northern Wisconsin where all the staff will be certified in dementia care," Pintarelli said.

"Housekeepers, dietary workers, nurses and nurses' aides ... anybody working in this unit will be certified."

Pintarelli also noted that the unit is scheduled to appear in a feature story in the NCCDP

Yooper Land Realty Co.
One East Genesee St., Iron River, MI 49935
(906 or 888)265-9422 info@yooperlandrealty.com

Feature Listing
MLS: 1050545

PHOTO GALLERY
VIEW and BUY photos.

Subscriber Login

Username Password

Remember Me

E-Editions

Wink's Woods
1225 West U.S. 2 Crystal Falls, MI
906-875-3750
Hours 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - 7 Days a Week
Mention this AD & receive
15% Off
Your Purchase

Find us on facebook.

Most Popular

- New website for Reporter
- Obituaries 3-2-2011
- Subscription Rates

newsletter, which reaches the nationwide National Alzheimer's Association, when the unit is completely finished. He's looking forward for that date.
"I'm very happy with it. I'm getting anxious now because there has been some unforeseen construction that needs to be finished.
"We're just excited to see this project coming to a close so that we can offer additional services to our citizens, to keep folks at home and not have them drive great distances elsewhere."

- [Advertise](#)
- [Obituaries 2-23-2011](#)

Add comment

Name (required)

E-mail (required)

Website



1000 symbols left

Notify me of follow-up comments



Refresh

Send

JComments

Sitemap

Sections

- News
- Our Community
- Sports
- Outdoors
- Opinions
- Obituaries
- Classifieds
- Special Editions
- Photo Gallery

Information

- About Us
- Advertise
- Contact Us
- Meet the Staff
- Subscribe
- Community Links
- Classifieds
- Archives
- Forms

Affiliates

- The Ada Herald
- Bolivar Bulletin Times
- Dearborn County Register
- Delphos Herald
- Eagle Print
- Falmouth Outlook
- Monroe County Beacon
- Paulding Progress
- Putnam County Sentinel

Affiliates (cont.)

- Ohio County News
- Rising Sun Recorder
- Star Gazette
- The Business Journal
- The Harrison Journal
- The Journal Press
- The Times Bulletin
- Vilas County News-Review
- Waushara Argus