



ST. FRANCIS WOODS
SUPPORTIVE LIVING

Concentrate *on Life*



By Alexander Germanis

Anyone who sits through the credits of a movie will see the shocking number of people who did nothing to actually create the film, but instead *supported* the people who did. Directors, producers, actors, and others all enjoy the help of aides, drivers, and assistants who handle many of the more mundane tasks of work so those directors and actors can, in turn, concentrate on their main job.

While having such support at work may be a luxury most people do not enjoy, having similar assistance in performing basic activities of daily living is something many people *need*.

At St. Francis Woods Supportive Living in Peoria, the tireless staff helps the residents with those necessary tasks so the residents can, in turn, concentrate on living enjoyable lives.

One of a Kind

Once the home to the Franciscan Order in the area and situated in the woodlands of Peoria, St. Francis Woods is now home to a supportive living community of seniors.

Supportive living and assisted living are virtually identical with the noted exception that supportive living communities accept seniors who may only have a low income and/or Medicaid with which to pay.

Regardless of the title, the same level of care as assisted living is available in supportive living. Twenty-four-hour nursing care is available at St. Francis Woods, with other methods being employed to ensure the safety and continued health of its residents: medication reminders, a personal response system in case of emergency, assistance with the activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing, and a program of wellness promotion.

The level of care is always performed while keeping the desired continued independence of the residents in mind. St. Francis Woods Administrator Kacinda Helfers elaborates: "We have active seniors here, seniors that do not need total nursing care, just a little support."

St. Francis Woods is as independent as its seniors, in a way. With no sister facility in the area, St. Francis Woods is independently owned, not



beholden to the changing rules or cookie-cutter aesthetic established by a corporation or large chain. The community, like each resident who calls it home, is truly an individual.

Independent but Not Inconvenienced

As supportive living differs from assisted living by a technicality, St. Francis Woods residents also enjoy all the amenities typically associated with independent living communities, only with, as Kacinda adds, “a little bit more support.”

“We offer meals, snacks, transportation, 24-hour hands-on nursing care, activities, a salon, trips to grocery stores, and banking needs,” she lists. “We have our own store in-facility for convenience, cable, utilities, internet, and land lines for those who do not have a cell phone.”

Supportive definitely does not mean lacking independence. Residents can come and go as they please, roam the building, and decorate their apartment as they see fit.

Those who wish to express their freedom to worship can also find a home here. “Although we are not affiliated with any particular religious denomination, we still provide a chapel with services that welcome all,” Kacinda says. “I feel this is what makes us different in a great way!”

The list of amenities continues, the biggest being Bingo, with three games played per week. For the off days or those whose tastes skew Bingo-free, there are also exercises, games, outdoor adventures, arts, crafts, and trivia. Ladies can enjoy getting their nails done and vendors and musicians often visit to share their skills with the residents.

Fulfilling social needs is a major part of staying healthy, of course, particularly for the senior population. “Aside from all the activities we offer, they also all eat together in the dining room for all meals,” Kacinda explains. “They are free to go to each other’s apartment if invited. If there is a trip to the store, they go together. With the warm weather coming we are starting a garden club. They also get together once a month for resident council. We have friends and family nights which involve music, socialization, food, and beverages. Depending on the month, we will hold





a party, like Easter in April, Valentine's Day in February, St. Patrick's Day in March. Their birthdays are celebrated. There's so much more."

Family Makes it Home

More than trips to stores, holiday activities, or arts and crafts activities, there is one aspect to St. Francis Woods that creates the truly home-like atmosphere the residents enjoy on a daily basis. "In all senior care facilities there is a team of employees that work together to make that community what it is," Kacinda points out. "We have an extremely low turnover which in return makes the residents feel safe and comfortable. The staff know the care that is needed for each resident. This means the quality of care is being implemented."

Whether they are engaged in medical service, financial service, health and lifestyle, or facility maintenance and room upkeep, the staff of St. Francis Woods is what earns the most praise from the residents.

"Everyone seems very happy," Kacinda shares the compliments. "We have a positive energy at the facility and the residents are impressed with how well we work with the residents and their families."

Of course, the sweetest music the staff hears are the oft-spoken words: "This place feels like a home."

Quid Pro Quo

For Kacinda, being in service to those who need it is something toward which she always aspired. "I have always had a soft spot for the elderly population. I knew early on that I wanted to help take care of those who could not care for themselves," she shares. "To me, providing an environment where they can thrive and have the quality of life they deserve is everything."

Although the many who do the work behind the scenes often go forgotten, that does not make the work they do any less important or any less rewarding. Joy has been found by helping others find happiness in their own lives.

"All of the diverse personalities put a smile on my face," Kacinda has discovered. "Their life history and how they contributed to society is very intriguing to me."

"As we all age we never know the hand we will be dealt," she concludes. "What I mean by that is, we never know how much time we have on this earth. Just because we get old does not mean life ends. Every aspect of a person's life is important. With that being said, St. Francis Woods gives our residents the opportunity to live their lives at the fullest doing the things that make them happy."

St. Francis Woods Supportive Living is located at 3507 North Molleck Drive in Peoria, Illinois. If you would like to schedule a tour of our community and see what St. Francis has to offer you or a loved one, please call us at (309) 688-0093 or visit us on the web at www.saintfranciswoods.com.