

8/25/11

CEO's Blog—*The Person Behind the Face*

I learned an important lesson early in my career when I would read the obituaries of recently deceased residents of our Seniorsfirst communities. I learned just how little I really knew about the person behind the face.

Oh sure, I may have known the resident's name and probably had met their son or daughter a time or two. I may have had the pleasant opportunity to have had some conversation with the resident as I visited in the households or participated in a resident activity. Depending on the resident, it was very likely that I was privy to some other specific data about their medical history, current behavior tendencies or personal care needs. But did I really know them?

Too often we fall into the trap of "knowing" our residents only by the way they live their life today. Time and age may have robbed them of elements of their independence and health, requiring them to adapt in ways that threaten the identity of the person they once were.

Yes, I learned this lesson when I would read an obituary full of life-long accomplishments, active pursuits and a fulfilling life that often defied the person I thought I knew.

Behind that aged and sage face was a teacher, businessman, doctor, nurse, banker. Not that long ago they were world travelers, first-time authors, avid golfers or gardeners. Somewhere in their past are those wonderful childhood years, first loves, marriage, children and grandchildren. Their lives are as full as they are unique and each has an amazing and wonderful story to tell if we take the time to listen.

Thankfully, at Seniorsfirst we not only take the time to listen, but we take the time to ask. The relationships that develop between residents and staff are not only built on the person they are today, but the person they have always been. Resident routines and activities are established following their life-long pursuits and preferences. Of course, there are compromises and limitations brought on by aging, but it doesn't change the person inside or take away the person they have become over a lifetime.

At our Valley Manor retirement community, we take great pride in the cultural and learning pursuits that our residents continue to pursue. If time and age are slowing them down, it sure is hard to tell based on their active schedules and fulfilling lives.

At our Assisted Living Cottage and Adult Day Program, every resident and client is uniquely supported in a manner that recognizes their individual needs, preferences and lifestyle. Ensuring a safe and caring home where every individual can feel loved, respected and able to live in the manner they choose, is our primary objective.

At Kirkhaven, we don't let the nature of one's frailty or age detract us from this same objective. Our residents are all unique, but they all have the same desire to live meaningful lives in the manner they choose and as independently as possible. Our role is to foster this desire by seeking out their preferences and learning to know the *person* behind the face.

— Jim DeVoe



A GIANT Sunflower took root in Kirkhaven's lobby last week!

Airigami artist Kelly Cheattle (pictured with resident) and her partner Larry Moss constructed one of their three-dimensional balloon sculptures to help promote the Sage Project herb sale on the courtyard during the Park Avenue Festival last week. The flower should stay in bloom for a couple weeks, so stop by and see it!

Thanks for Sage Project Success



On behalf of Cilla and I, we would like to thank everyone for their help on the Sage project. The number of tasks that had to be done and were done by all of you pitching in was amazing. Great team work! Thanks for watering, transplanting, assisting residents, gluing tags, planting seeds, transporting plants, arranging resident events, working at the Musicfest, bringing

residents to the Sage events, putting stickers on pots, watching over the seedlings, working at the Park Ave Fest, setting up the courtyard tents and tables (Bill, be sure to thank maintenance and housekeeping that do not have e-mail), setting up, making signs, bringing plants from home, purchasing supplies...and watering, watering, watering, watering!

We do not yet have the final “numbers”, but I do not think we broke even this year. Although it was never our goal to make a profit, the amount we bring in helps to subsidize the project. The Sage Project is good marketing in the community and provides a meaningful project for the seniors, and some fun team-building with the staff.

We had great traffic for the Park Ave Fest and a lot of folks came into our courtyard. Many bought plants and many visited with our residents. I could tell that most of the residents that were on the courtyard were enjoying the activity – and despite the threat of rain, the weather held.

We sold about two-thirds of our 340 plant inventory. The remainders have been moved to the Valley Manor greenhouse. Joan Batzold has a lead on a not-for-profit that might be interested in purchasing some, and she is reserving some to start a “kitchen garden” at Valley Manor. We still have Sage Project aprons left, which staff may purchase by contacting me.

Special thanks to Airigami’s Larry Moss and Kelly Cheattle for donating their time and building our giant sunflower in the Kirkhaven lobby. The residents loved participating. Kelly also donated her time and talents to our logo design and aprons.

Cilla and I are willing to take it on again, so give me your feedback! We will continue to fine tune our business plan and see where we can be more cost-effective next year.

—Cassandra Tilliman,
Director of HR

Kirkhaven PT Welcomes New Therapists

Please welcome our new therapy employees!

Shannon Warden, Speech Language Pathologist, began Monday August 15 and will be here Monday through Friday, approximately 4 -5 hours per day. Although she is new to Kirkhaven, she has been serving as a SLP at other Freedom Therapy Homes in the community and brings a great deal of energy and experience to us. Referrals can still be made the same way as previously, and she can be reached at the email address of SLP@seniorsfirst.com.

Carol Ray, Physical Therapy Assistant, had her baby on Wednesday, Aug. 10—a healthy girl weighing in at 6 pounds and 14 ounces named Lia Nicole Ray.

Greg Lombard and Terri Tubolino, both PTAs, will be filling Carol’s 40 hours a week here at Kirkhaven until the middle of November. Greg is here primarily until the beginning of September, and then Terri will be here full-time. Some of you already know Greg; he works every Saturday morning for us in the therapy department.

Thank you for welcoming them and helping them feel a part of the Kirkhaven family!

—Laura Leistra



SAVE THE DATE!
SEPTEMBER 15
(Time to be announced)

Kirkhaven is having a tailgate party to kick-off the football season! We'll be having food and good ole fun. Dress down in your favorite team apparel. More information to follow, so stay

New Hires



Kanisha Bailey	LPN	Kirkhaven
Lashanda Bell	CNA	Kirkhaven
Shereen Bennett	LPN	Kirkhaven
Keisha Wright	CNA	Kirkhaven

Proud Papa!



Eric O'Connell, Director of Operations at Valley Manor, became a very proud papa in May, when wife Alicia gave birth to Liam Joseph O'Connell. Now two months old, Liam is growing tall like his daddy.

2011 VM RES/STAFF PICNIC WINNERS!

(Who knew we had so much talent!!!)

Watermelon Seed Spitting Contest: *Scott Maar*

Horseshoes: *Angela Wright*

3-Legged Race: *Anne DiCesare & Keith Adler*

Sack Race: *Angela Wright*



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1	Shalonda Bradley	per diem CNA, Kirkhaven
	Renae James	LPN, Kirkhaven
2	Heidi Blake	CNA, Kirkhaven
	Cynthia Floyd	Housekeeper, Kirkhaven
3	LaTriece McCullough	per diem CNA, Kirkhaven
4	Timesha Nathan	per diem CNA, Kirkhaven
	Deidre Thompson	per diem CNA, Kirkhaven
8	Chantel Davis	Housekeeper, Kirkhaven
	Hirity Kidane	Server, Valley Manor
	Amy Mueller	Billing/Payroll, Valley Manor
9	Shirley Stokes	Resident Aide, Valley Manor
10	Brent Coward	Maint. Tech., Valley Manor
	Ryan Gillman	Sec/ES Ass't, Valley Manor
	Marie Lee	CNA, Kirkhaven
	Bonita Williams	Spvsr Env. Svcs, Valley Manor
12	Patricia Cornish	per diem RN Spvsr, Kirkhaven
14	Lisa Phillips	Ass't Dir. F&NS, Kirkhaven
15	Thomas Alletto	Sec/ES Ass't, Valley Manor
	Jennifer Brown	per diem RN, Kirkhaven
16	Scott Maar	VP Finance, Kirkhaven
	Danielle Singleton	F&NS Aide, Kirkhaven
17	Jasmine Adams	F&NS Aide, Kirkhaven
	Morin Coleman	per diem CNA, Kirkhaven
	Lori Wyatt	F&NS Aide, Kirkhaven
19	Paula McKnight	Rec. Therapy Ass't, Kirkhaven
20	Habiba Abdi	CNA, Kirkhaven
	Clarence Hall	F&NS Cook, Kirkhaven
	Jane Scott	per diem RN Spvsr, Kirkhaven
21	Jolene Schweickhard	Admissions, Kirkhaven
	Zenebu Tafere	CNA, Kirkhaven
25	Alexis Barton	per diem CNA, Kirkhaven
23	Sophia Adams	CNA, Kirkhaven
	Lilliana Ruiz	Server, Valley Manor
25	Elaine Hiscock	Dir. Pastoral Svcs, Kirkhaven
	Brenda Johnson	Housekeeper, Kirkhaven
	Frank Parsons	Maint/Apt Prep, Valley Manor
	Ivia Rivera	Dir. F&NS, Valley Manor
26	Orapin Choktrakunchai	CNA, Kirkhaven
27	Vanessa Ruiz	Housekeeper, Kirkhaven
29	Voncia Brown	per diem LPN, Kirkhaven
	Sharon Cash	F&NS Aide. Kirkhaven