

**MOUNTAIN VIEW CARE CENTER
2309 STAFFORD AVE
SCRANTON PA 18505
570-341-0050**

**EDEN ALTERNATIVE
TESTIMONIAL**

SUBMITTED BY: WILLIAM KAMMERER, NHA

MAY 13, 2008



OUR EDEN CULTURE CHANGE!!!

Mountain View Care Center opened on October 8, 1992 as a state of the art skilled nursing and rehabilitation center. We are part of the Community Medical Center Health Care System, and like so many other facilities, the atmosphere was institutional, beautiful and new, but nonetheless, INSTITUTIONAL.

Our census has always remained consistent with an average occupancy rate of 97%. We took very good care of our residents and as a whole most were content. Residents and families were complimentary. During tours, prospective families were happy with the cleanliness and modern look of the center. The concerns verbalized included, how loud and busy it was. No one really commented on what we as the management team were feeling, that we were a great institution but we felt we needed to be the BEST HOME.

We decided as a team to adopt the EDEN philosophy, and what we really wanted was an ELDER based community. We had always known that the elders were our focus, but we were still missing some important elements. When you walked through our hallways, you saw older people sitting in chairs, most were not talking to anyone else, and unless in an activity program, not really participating. We knew that our elders were plagued with loneliness, helplessness, and boredom.

Our transformation was not easy; we had to educate all involved including, staff, elders, families, our regulatory agencies, and the health care system. Our soil warming period took a long time, but was well worth it. Our culture and way of thinking has definitely changed.

Now when touring Mountain View, you see elders sitting in their doorways, (also known as the porch) conversing with neighbors, Elders are in day rooms called, the Bistro or the English Garden, they are busy with individualized activities, or conversing with peers, holding a baby and caressing it's face. Families are visiting, sitting in front of our fish pond or on our walking trail naming the different trees, bird watching or picking blueberries. It is not unusual to see a cat sharing a bed with one of our elders, or a dog waiting to be loved.

Our elders worry about getting out watering the gardens, and harvesting the vegetables. The Elders in our communities meet on a regular basis and are empowered to make decisions involving their care and their home. When it is time to paint or carpet the elders choose colors and time frames for the projects to be completed. They are actively involved in event planning and care schedules. Despite whether someone is here for a short stay for rehabilitation or on a long term basis, one thing echoes almost every satisfaction survey, and comment on tour, that is, Mountain View is definitely now a HOME!!!

One of the biggest changes that Mountain View had to adjust to was the Neighborhood meetings. The neighborhood meeting format and team members consist of elders, staff, families and volunteers. The neighborhood has a Mayor and secretary who facilitate the meetings. Every employee is asked to join a neighborhood base on the need and the employee talents and interests. All decisions are made and voted on at each neighborhood. Mountain View has four neighborhoods, Alcore, Bella Bay, Camelot and Magical Court. The names of the neighborhoods were voted on by the elders and team members that live in that neighborhood. When Mountain View held separate meetings the decisions were made by Administration and the management team because that was the only way we knew. There were decisions that were made without input from elders, staff or families. When decisions are made without input of elders or staff someone is unhappy or it just doesn't work. Once we started including the team members from the neighborhood meetings in the decision making, the atmosphere started changing. Department of Health surveys, satisfaction surveys and employee retention improved.

Recruitment, retention and turnover: How these areas have been affected by the Eden alternative.

- In 1999, we experienced a 73% turnover rate for the entire facility. Licensed nurses had a rate of 41%, NA's 72%; Environmental services 79% and Dietary 93%.
- In 2000, we had a 62% turnover rate for the entire facility. Licensed nurses were at 23%, NA's 45% Environmental services at 98% and Dietary at 141%.

- In 2001, we had a 56% turnover rate for the facility. Licensed nurses were at 24%, NA's at 40% Environmental services at 141% and Dietary at 86%.

To supplement the above vacancies in nursing, we were utilizing agency staff.

When the Eden philosophy was introduced in 2001 we began to see changes occur in our recruitment and retention for all departments that continues to today. Staff that were poor performers and didn't want to embrace the changes decided to leave. Historically, we had 2 nurse aide training classes to increase staff levels. We have been able to reduce this program to once per year. New recruits were able to see the positive physical changes in the facility along with their increased involvement in neighborhoods and towns. The use of picnics, parties and other social activities combining residents, families and staff assisted in improving staff morale, performance, increased retention and improved recruitment. The team approach to care was embraced and reinforced by the Eden philosophy. Staff became more willing to volunteer for various activities.

Compared to the several years our current turnover rate has decreased dramatically. Our current turnover rate for licensed nurses is 2%, 10% for NA's, Environmental services 6% and Dietary 5%. Also, we have not used any agency personnel since 2001 to supplement our staffing. Implementing the Eden alternative, along with other wage and benefit changes, have led to better recruitment, higher retention and a better morale and work performance by staff.

The biggest change of all is that we are now a home and our Elders are cared for as individuals. We do this by eliminating the three plagues of long term care loneliness, helplessness and boredom. Our vision is to create paradise.

PERSPECTIVE

The Sunday Times

Nursing Home Treatment First-Rate

Editor: Recently, your newspaper ran a great expose on nursing homes in the area. Some of the reports were certainly less than complimentary and some were downright degrading.

Over the years I have had visited quite a few nursing homes in our area, and while most I have seen try to do a decent job, I will agree there are a few facilities where I wouldn't want to place my pet dog. However, I would like to comment on my own personal experience.

Early this year, I was faced with the decision to seek full-time skilled nursing care for my husband. The only facility I was considering was the Mountain View Care Center, 2309 Stafford Ave. Fortunately, they were able to accommodate my husband.

From my initial telephone call to determine how to proceed with his admission to his final days, the staff members at Mountain View were the kindest, most compassionate and caring people I have ever met. This includes everyone from the administrator, director of nursing, supervisory and nursing staff, aides, therapists, activities directors, office, maintenance, dietary and house-keeping personnel.

My husband received the finest care during his nine-month residency and in his final days was allowed the dignity and comfort he justly deserved. I was so happy he was able to remain at Mountain View and not transferred to a hospital.

No one wants to look forward to spending their declining years in a nursing home, but if that is what the future has in store for me, I hope there will be room for me at Mountain View Care Center.

VIVIENNE W. YAGGI
Scranton

Dear Bill,

As an active member of the Nutrition Risk Team at Mountain View Care Center, I would like to take this time to acknowledge the effectiveness of this group for the nutritional well-being of our residents.

Our team meets monthly to discuss ways in which we can assist our residents in leading fuller lives through a dining program that offers socialization, appetizing home style meals in a friendly atmosphere. We constantly strive to make changes to our program in order to maintain the optimal nutritional status of our residents.

Through the years, I have witnessed an improvement of the quality of lives of our residents because of our compassion and respect for the residents who we serve. Through our collaboration and teamwork I believe we have made Mountain View Care Center a great place to live.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shirley Hoover". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Shirley Hoover
Nutrition Risk Team member

To Whom It May Concern:

Working in an Eden Alternative Center has completely changed our opinion of nursing homes. Prior to witnessing and experiencing the Eden Alternative, we held the old fashion conception of a nursing home as a sterile, hospital-like environment where our elders carried out the remainder of their lives. Now that we have seen the difference and become active members of the Eden Alternative, we can honestly admit that our opinions have greatly changed.

We now understand that Mountain View Care Center is where our elders have come to live and enjoy their time while having the extra bit of assistance the outside community was not able to offer. We are an extension of each individual elder's family as each elder is an extension of each individual staff member's family. There have been many opportunities for elders and staff to come together and form one family unit. As a family, both elders and staff work together on teams and in neighborhoods to shape Mountain View into a center our elders can truly call home. It is a pleasure to work with our elders to generate and implement policies to form a comfortable living environment. Our elders also show us a thing or two about having a good time and enjoy planning parties, such as our annual Mardi Gras extravaganza and Valentines Day Sweetheart social, watching movies together, sharing creative ideas for arts and craft projects, cheering on our favorite football teams at Monday Night Football get-togethers, throwing a baby shower for one of our expectant mothers, and hosting fabulous theme parties in each neighborhood during our 10th anniversary celebration.

We are honored to be afforded the opportunity to work with our elders to make Eden flourish at Mountain View. Through the team and family approach that Eden advocates, we continue to learn everyday from our elders, including what it was like to have lunch with Eleanor Roosevelt while fighting for women's suffrage. Words cannot express the feelings we experience when we see that we, in turn, have given something back to our elders, whether it be companionship or delight in beating the pants off one of their social workers in the weekly Scrabble game. We look forward to working with our elders and staff to continue to create and maintain paradise for our elders.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Geniele D' Aiello and Kimberly Klimasauskas in cursive script.

Geniele D' Aiello and Kimberly Klimasauskas
Social Services

Editor, Scranton Times/Sunday Times
Penn Avenue and Spruce St.
Scranton, PA 18501

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Auxiliary of MountainView Care Center would like to state that it has been our distinct pleasure to observe the interaction between staff and residents of MVCC for as long as it has operated. We know that the caring staff is dedicated to providing quality care for the elderly and disabled who rely on them for security and care. There is zero tolerance for abuse and neglect.

Further, the facility has in place a system of measuring and monitoring quality. It is rooted in the belief that they must be able to understand which care practices result in clinical and psychological improvement. They are committed to continuous self-testing in order to produce the best possible outcomes for people.

As auxiliary members, we volunteer our time and energy to contribute to the quality of life of MountainView Care Center residents. We are proud to be part of an organization that treats every single person as a unique individual with separate hopes and dreams, not just medical conditions. We see the daily effort to deinstitutionalize the institution and are pleased to be part of that process. It is gratifying to know that our hard work, in partnership with MountainView Care Center's philosophy for delivering care, have succeeded in creating a safe haven where humor and joy prevail in a place called home. Thank you.

Auxiliary
MountainView Care Center
2309 Stafford Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505

It is with eagerness and great pleasure that I share with you our experience at Mt. View Care Center. My mother in law was a resident at Mt. View for six months following a hospitalization for her lack of interest and ability to eat. When diagnostic studies in our local hospital ended it was suggested to us that she either return to her assisted living facility, which we realized she was not self sufficient enough to do, or go to a hospice unit due to her inability to eat.

As a family we explored alternatives and chose Mt. View Care Center.

The day we arrived we were received with a warm welcoming spirit that continued from that day until our last day. Mom was assessed and food presented in a consistency that she could eat so she thrived and enjoyed months of life in a way that she had not for years. She participated in activities and developed wonderful caring and trust filled relationships with care givers that enabled her to feel safe, connected, cared for and valued. She had always enjoyed pets so the presence of the cats and dogs also brought her great joy and rekindled many wonderful memories.

We enjoyed our daily walks and developed a routine that seemed consoling to her on days when she was restless, confused or scared. The option to visit the chapel to sit by the fireplace and the dining room in the evening when it was empty to just sit and relax with the sound of the waterfall were great diversions and provided a place of peace and quiet time.

Our ability to enter Mt View at any time, as her home, also provided peace for us as family. Beverages and snacks greeted you as you entered and every staff person extended themselves to us as if we were family, always showing us gracious hospitality. Instead of the social isolation that Mom endured due to diminished capacity to independently participate in activities in assisted living while at Mt. View she received the encouragement, and nurturing support of staff to participate in therapy and fun filled social activities that tremendously impacted her quality of life in countless positive ways. My only regret was that I did not find a reason to bring her there years prior to that point to enjoy years of good life instead of the months she had there.

My promise to her was that I would always keep her comfortable. To honor that promise I shared with her team that the only question I would ask of them was "is what we want to do today going to contribute to her comfort" for any aspect of her plan of care. Each day was a new adventure on our journey but being grounded by that question and accomplishing that as our goal the team supported me totally in honoring her wish.

I believe that staff are guided by wise leadership that treasures the worth of each person for the unique creation that they are and that they support the staff to partner with the elder and their family on their journey, making the most of every day that they are given. There is a feeling of genuine human caring for other human beings that transcends all else.

In Mom's last days all staff were incredibly kind and compassionate toward her and all of us as a large family. They provided pain management, comfort measures for her, support and refreshments for us and could not have been more attentive. As I sat in the chair with her the last two nights a young staff person came to me to ask if I would like to hold her new puppy so I would not feel so alone and sad.

To know that someone you love has received that kind of care is truly a gift like no other.

The staff's capacity to give of themselves has created in me a debt of gratitude that will never be repaid. You cannot ever thank people enough for caring for and about those that you love.

I will be forever grateful that we walked with Mt. View on our journey with Mom.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie Conley