

# health & Fitness

## From Institution to Home

The Glen plans to emulate Penn. facility

**S**hreveport's The Glen Retirement System is in the midst of a 1-1/2-year-project that will change its Village Health Care from "institution to home."

The Glen Retirement System has already begun what it calls an "organizational and physical transformation," and the process will ultimately be an 18-month project, said Linda McWaters of The Glen.

"It's more than renovations; it's a change in attitude," she said. "We've been looking at this for several years and researching, looking at other organizations."

One organization to take on this same people-centered focus is Garden Spot Village of New Holland, Penn. The facility's chief executive officer, Steve Lindsey, spoke at The Glen Oct. 21 about the transformation Garden Spot made. The Glen Retirement System will look to make similar changes.

"If we saw the value in people even after we age and maybe get a few wrinkles, I think we would be a better society," Lindsey said. "What we're going to hear about today I think starts to bring value back into the life of people who need a little support in their life."

Lindsey said in Garden Spot's transformation of its skilled nursing program, the organization focused on three "R's."

Those three elements are "renewal, redesign of the environment and reframing

the organization," he said. "In order to make a deep culture change, you have to have all three involved."

Garden Spot Village did so by establishing "households" that house about 16 residents.

One main goal of a people-centered program is to renew the spirit of the people and recognize their individuality, Lindsey said.

"We have started to get more comfortable in allowing people to take more risks," he said, and allow residents to make decisions about bedtime, breakfast and activities. "I firmly believe when you lose your sense of purpose, you lose the will to live."

The new focus also renews the spirit of the staff, Lindsey said. "Living in a deep culture-changed environment, there's an opportunity for give and take," he said.

The new environment gives caregivers the opportunity to reconnect with their desire to help people, he said.

Lindsey compared Garden Spot's original skilled nursing program to a rooster trying to be a peacock, as it wanted to be a home but still had a hospital-like environment.

Skilled nursing facilities are "focused on a very sterile environment, keeping things clean, keeping them efficient. And that works very well for the hospital because people are only supposed to be there for shorter periods of time," he said. "But if you think of skilled

nursing where people are going to be living for longer periods of times – maybe the rest of their lives – you don't want to live in a hospital environment all the time.

"Traditionally, what we've tried to do in skilled nursing is just polish and dress it up and you put in the grand foyer with the big chandelier or the fancy artwork on the walls, plush carpet, whatever it is, but that doesn't make it home. It just makes it a really attractive building."

Garden Spot Village redesigned the environment by providing places for privacy, rooms such as a kitchen and an opportunity for outdoor spaces by having porches, patios or back yards. "It just makes for normal life when you have all of that available," he said.

In the old environment, long hallways, clutter, med carts and nurses' stations contributed to a hospital-like environment. "None of that is familiar. We don't have any of that in our homes," Lindsey said. "We really worked hard to get rid of this and re-create home."

With areas such as a dining and living room, visitors are free to mingle outside of the residents' individual bedrooms.

Reframing means decision-making can happen individually and collectively within each household, Lindsey said. "Each of the households has its own team," Lindsey said. "They really get to know elders they care



for, the families, and they get to know each other." In this environment, the residents are empowered, Lindsey said.

While what The Glen will look like after construction is finished may differ in various ways from Garden Spot's final version, the goal remains the same for both facilities, Lindsey said.

"The Glen's mission statement is similar [to Garden Spot's statement]: to enrich the lives of older people through housing, health care and services," he said.

McWaters said The Glen's plan includes six households, which will serve an estimated 14-25 residents each.

Staff is already in training to make the transition from institution to home, McWaters said.

– Sarah Crawford