

Board & Care Quality

F O R U M

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Meaningful Activity for Residents: Professional Perspectives

Most board and care homes offer some type of activity or recreation within the home for residents, and many also encourage or arrange for resident involvement in activities outside the home. While activities can be an enjoyable way to pass the time, their impact on adults--including adults who live in board and care homes--goes far beyond amusement.

For the greatest positive impact on resident life and well-being, activities that are offered in board and care homes should be meaningful. The Encarta Online Dictionary defines "meaningful" as something "adding significance, meaning, or purpose to somebody's life." Activities that are meaningful offer these things to residents: an enhanced sense of the significance of their lives, increased meaning in their existence, and added purpose to their days.

In this and the next issue of the Board and Care Quality Forum, our features will explore the many facets of what constitutes meaningful activity for residents. This issue will focus on perspectives offered by professionals in the health, mental health, and human services professions as they share their own definitions of meaningful activity and describe why it is important to the health and well-being of board and care home residents. In the March/

April 2008 issue, our feature will include interviews with home operators and residents who will be discussing their best practices and experiences with meaningful activity.

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"Your work is to discover your work, and then with all your heart, to give yourself to it."

Buddha (563 BC – 483 BC) *Founder of Buddhism*

"What mankind wants is not talent; it is purpose."

Edward G. Bulwer-Lytton (1803 – 1873) *British politician, poet, and critic.*

As one can see from these quotes of long ago, work--and purposeful work in particular--is part and parcel of what it means to be human. This need to have a purpose and to see the "fruits of our labor" transcends culture and time; it is a universal need for us all. The desire to be engaged in purposeful work and to contribute meaningfully

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