

Board & Care Quality

F O R U M

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Meaningful Activity for Residents: Resident and Home Operator Perspectives

Beginning in our January/February 2008 issue, the Board and Care Quality Forum has focused on the importance that meaningful activity has for the health and well-being of residents, regardless of age or disability. The Encarta Online Dictionary defines “meaningful” as something “adding significance, meaning, or purpose to somebody’s life.” Activities for board and care home residents—including those offered in the home as well as those provided in the larger community—can be examined and evaluated on the basis of these elements: Do activities offer residents an enhanced sense of the significance of their lives? Do they increase the sense of meaning of their existence? Do they add purpose to the residents’ days?

In our last issue, professionals from the fields of mental health, social service, and advocacy offered their perspectives and thoughts about what makes activities meaningful for board and care home residents. In this issue, we feature interviews with residents discussing the activities they enjoy and what makes those activities meaningful to them; we also include interviews with home operators discussing their feelings about the importance of activities for residents and sharing their ideas and best practices.

Lisa Cooley and her business partner, Mrs. Karyn Baker, have owned Sherwood Pines Residential Care Facility in Veneta Oregon, just outside of Eugene, for two and a half years. Ms. Cooley holds a degree in human development from the University of Colorado and was an elementary school teacher in Colorado; she then moved to Oregon where she took a job as Human Resources Manager for the company “Good Neighbor Care,” which primarily served persons with Alzheimer’s disease. Continuing her education, she received her administrator’s license and served as an administrator at Good Neighbor Care for seven years. When the company was purchased by a large conglomerate, Ms. Cooley and Mrs. Baker, who worked at Good Neighbor Care for fifteen years and worked with people who had dementia, decided to purchase their own home. Sherwood Pines can serve up to fifteen adults at a time and assists residents with a range of diagnoses, including dementia, brain injury, mental illness, and multiple sclerosis. Both Ms. Cooley and Ms. Baker believe in Resident Directed Care and believe all people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect as viable individuals.

In your opinion, what makes an activity, whether in your home or in the community, meaningful to residents?

“It has to be centered around what is important to that person. It is something they have enjoyed doing in the past and that they enjoy doing now. It is something that

**Sherwood Pines Residential Care Facility,
Inc.
Veneta, Oregon**

Lisa Cooley, Co-Owner

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