



# Innovation at Work

2014 Promising Practices Winners That Are  
Reshaping the Aging Services Industry



**m**atherlifeways®

Institute on Aging



Each year, through the Promising Practices Awards, Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging recognizes organizations that are serving older adults in original and exciting ways. These awards highlight organizations working with older adults in a variety of settings that are moving away from conventional practices by developing and implementing innovative approaches.

For 2014, we reviewed submissions from 30 finalists from 20 states, representing the most diverse and highest quality entries we've seen in recent years. Winners were selected based on their innovation, the outcomes presented, and the replicability of the practice.

Sharing these promising practices reinforces our commitment to encouraging innovation and creating Ways to Age Well<sup>SM</sup>. Our wish is that these innovations will benefit the senior living industry as a whole, as other organizations adapt the ideas and transform them into best practices.

# Table of Contents

## WINNERS

**4** **Central Baptist Village:**  
Designing a New Approach to  
End-of-Life Care



**6** **Jefferson's Ferry Lifecare  
Retirement Community:**  
Harnessing the Powerful  
Benefits of Touch

**8** **Jewish Association on Aging:**  
Transforming Adult Day Services into  
Nighttime Memory Care



**10** **Wadsworth  
Soprema Senior  
Center and Cafe:**  
Serving More

Older Adults through a Unified  
Community Center

## HONORABLE MENTIONS



**12** **Presbyterian  
Villages of  
Michigan:**  
Breaking Ground

on a Groundbreaking Community for  
Older Adults



**13** **Sarasota Bay Club:**  
Bringing Volunteer  
Opportunities to  
Residents

**14**  
**Submit your own!**

How to submit your organization's  
innovative practice for a 2015 award

# Designing a New Approach to End-of-Life Care



Photo courtesy of Central Baptist Village

*The Chrysalis Room includes areas and amenities for the comfort of family members and other visitors, including a sleeper sofa.*

## **CENTRAL BAPTIST VILLAGE** Norridge, Illinois <http://cbvillage.org>

This not-for-profit, midsize Continuing Care Retirement Community saw a need for an end-of-life experience that honored and comforted residents and their families—and found a comprehensive and thoughtful way to fulfill that need.

Central Baptist Village (CBV) administrator Dawn Zimmerman was inspired by a presentation called “Creating Sacred Space for Dying” by gerontologist Loretta Downs. Dawn wanted to transform the end-of-life experience for residents at CBV by adopting a new philosophy, enhancing the environment, and facilitating culture change through a proven process of organizational development.

CBV had architects transform an existing semi-private room into the Chrysalis Room, a serene, comfortable, and spacious room dedicated to the final transformation. Staff assigned to the room have been trained and empowered to fully embrace the end-of-life experience and to make it as meaningful as possible.

Family members, staff, and other residents are invited to participate



Photo courtesy of Central Baptist Village

*Lighting and colors in the room were carefully selected to impart a feeling of serenity and calm.*

in the end-of-life process for individuals. All community members are welcome to visit the Chrysalis Room and sing, pray, hug, cry, share memories, and go above and beyond as needed. This new emphasis allows staff to honor the resident who is dying in addition to providing a high standard of palliative care in a comfortable, home-like setting.

By providing the Chrysalis Room, CBV will have fewer residents transferred to a hospital for end-of-life care, because they provide a compassionate alternative with strong emotional support, palliative care, and clinical expertise.

Dawn says, “Some long-term care communities have private rooms and/or private accommodations for hospice patients. We have more than the room: We have well-established procedures supported by a deep commitment from the entire staff for the ritual of keeping vigil. This program is highly replicable in any long-term care setting.”

## Build Your Own Chrysalis Room

### Lay the groundwork:

Implement a change management strategy to help get managers and staff on board with the new philosophy. Central Baptist Village used John P. Kotter’s eight-stage process for managing change, which is outlined in his book *Leading Change* ([www.kotterinternational.com](http://www.kotterinternational.com)).

Communicate with staff members that they are empowered to care for dying residents in a meaningful and respectful way. Give them the emotional space to unleash their natural instincts and abilities.

### Create the room:

Find a room or area you can transform into a Chrysalis Room. CBV incorporated special furnishings and amenities you might consider:

- comfortable décor featuring soothing colors and nature-inspired artwork
- an eastern window view with filtered light, overlooking a natural setting
- a specialized bed for enhanced comfort and positioning
- a flat-screen TV and audio system to fill room with soothing images and sound
- a sleeper sofa for families to rest on or spend the night
- a countertop for displaying sentimental photographs and memorabilia
- a chair with ottoman at bedside and additional chairs for visitors
- a refreshment station
- Internet access for visitors, and puzzles and games for children

### Monitor it:

Implement a system of capturing notes and comments to track reaction to your new room. Central Baptist Village monitors the effectiveness of the Chrysalis Room through interviews, solicited and unsolicited feedback, letters, and one-on-one conversations.

Other data you might track: number of residents transferred to hospital or off-site hospice for end-of-life care; general resident and family satisfaction scores. 🌱

# Harnessing the Powerful Benefits of Touch

**JEFFERSON'S FERRY  
LIFECARE RETIREMENT  
COMMUNITY**  
South Setaukey, New York  
[www.jeffersonsferry.org](http://www.jeffersonsferry.org)

Karen Brannen, president and CEO of Jefferson's Ferry, was concerned about the effects of loneliness on residents who have lost a spouse or who may not receive regular family visits, and wondered whether a systematic program of increased touching would boost a sense of well-being in residents.

So the Continuing Care Retirement Community kicked off the Embraceable You campaign, with guidelines to ensure a program of affectionate, caring, and appropriate physical contact (aka hugs) between staff and residents. They began with a pilot program, where volunteer staff and residents participated in a systematic program of increased hugging and touching, to determine if these activities led the participants to experience a greater sense of well-being—a term covering lifestyle categories such as “interest in doing things” and “feeling energetic.”

The official campaign, which included 200 residents who opted in, was launched with great fanfare, and included a staff flash mob and other engaging activities. Embraceable You ultimately generated more than a whole lot of hugs: those residents who



Photo courtesy of Jefferson's Ferry

*Every participant in Embraceable You—both residents and staff—opted in, ensuring everyone was open to being hugged.*



Photo courtesy of Jefferson's Ferry

self-identified as “high contact” (touching someone or being touched three or more times a day) showed a slight increase in positive indications of well-being after the campaign—and a whopping 97% of them reported “not feeling depressed,” compared to 86% before the campaign.

“Embraceable You represents an easy-to-implement model for a more holistic approach to the care of older adults. The undeniably positive effects of touch are as old as the human experience, but sadly, too many older adults suffer from an absence of regular, affectionate touch,” says Karen. She adds, “[I am] not aware of this program operating elsewhere. One of the great benefits of Embraceable You is that it can be implemented at a low cost and with relative ease.”

## Embrace Your Own Hugging Campaign

### Lay the groundwork:

Ensure that everyone participating in your hugging program opts in. Use wearable stickers or buttons to identify those who are willing to be hugged.

Train participating staff members with specific instruction in hugging “rules of engagement” which clearly outline the types of tactile communication permitted.

### Roll it out:

Give staff, residents, and family members a heads up that the campaign will be kicking off, then start it with a splash. Jefferson’s Ferry devoted a day to the start of Embraceable You, which included:

- a flash mob of staff members appearing in common rooms, parodying the hit song “Call Me Maybe” with its version of “Hug Me Maybe”
- distribution of “Hug Me Maybe” pins to identify those residents who were willing to be hugged
- hug booths where anyone could ask for a hug
- hallway huggers walking the corridors

Jefferson’s Ferry also extended a program of touch to their skilled nursing area, hiring a massage therapist and turning bathing into a spa experience with nice lotion and warmed fluffy bath towels and robes. An awareness of tactile communication has been built into the community’s orientation program.

### Monitor it:

Once your program is underway, check it from time to time to ensure staff retain their training on hugging “rules of engagement,” offer nonparticipant staff and residents the opportunity to join in, and continue to collect feedback on the program, whether formal or informal. 🌱



Photo courtesy of Jefferson's Ferry

*Embraceable You launched with quite a splash. Hugging booths (or elbow-bump booths) and Hallway Huggers helped get the word out.*

Watch a video about Jefferson’s Ferry’s Embraceable You online at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWg5tLUHJv4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWg5tLUHJv4).

# Transforming Adult Day Services into Nighttime Memory Care



*Individualized plans of care will be developed for older adults with dementia in the Nighttime Memory Care Program.*

**JEWISH ASSOCIATION  
ON AGING**  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
<http://jaapgh.org>

Jewish Association on Aging (JAA) provides adult day services in Pittsburgh, but determined there was a need for overnight respite care as well. As memory care professionals are aware, older adults with Alzheimer's Disease or dementia can exhibit

“sundowning” behaviors such as anxiety, agitation, and pacing. By designing Pennsylvania’s first-ever Nighttime Memory Care Program, JAA plans to offer family caregivers overnight respite as they provide specialized care aimed at alleviating symptoms associated with sundowning.

The overnight program will offer stimulating nighttime activities in a specially designed setting; residents can participate in arts

and crafts, exercise programs, entertainment, cooking, music therapies, etc. throughout the night. Activities will not be scheduled in advance, but will be individualized to meet the needs of the participants. When a participant gets sleepy, reclining sleeper chairs are available. Dinner and breakfast, plus snacks, will be provided.

The goal of the program is to reduce participants’ nighttime anxiety, restlessness, and agitation



*Some older adults with dementia are just as active—or more active—in the middle of the night as they are during daylight hours.*

through engaging activities and structured interventions, and staff will develop plans of care to meet the individualized needs of each participant.

“The JAA was faced with operational challenges surrounding the fact that no business plans/models were available for use. The JAA had to retrofit the Adult Day Service Program for nighttime participants,” says Mary Anne Foley, JAA’s vice president of Home and Community Services. “The comprehensive Nighttime Memory Care Program will have a profound impact on the JAA’s ability to improve the quality of care for Pittsburgh’s growing older adult population.”

## **Dream Up Your Own Nighttime Care Program**

### **Lay the groundwork:**

The JAA had to create a new business plan/model for their program because they could not find an existing model; you may have to do the same.

Determine the number of older adults you can serve and your hours of operation. JAA offers flexibility within the 10 hours they are open for families to drop off and pick up older adults.



*For organizations that already provide adult day services, nighttime care may entail some fundamental changes.*

Your funding must cover staff (including leadership, an LPN/program supervisor, and program assistant/activity aide) and training, meal costs, activity and operations supplies and equipment (which may differ from those used in daytime activities), enough sleeper chairs for your number of participants, and wall partitions to create a quiet space.

Structure the space with sensory-stimulating items and lighting to minimize behaviors inherent in sundowning.

Set up referral programs/partners with area organizations that serve older adults with dementia and their family members.

### **Implement it:**

Once participants begin to attend regularly, create individual plans of care designed to reduce nighttime restlessness, anxiety, and agitation through activities and structured interventions.

Continue to provide activities that are purposeful and interactive for daily activities for productive engagement, while understanding that some participants may prefer to rest or sleep at times.

### **Monitor it:**

For the sake of securing support of your program, you may choose to continually evaluate measures such as needs assessment, quality of life, caregiver burden, sleep quality, and dementia resource utilization. 🌱

# Serving More Older Adults through a Unified Community Center



*The meal voucher program used at Soprema Senior Center and Café ensures that older adults get their choice of fresh meals.*

## WADSWORTH SOPREMA SENIOR CENTER AND CAFÉ Wadsworth, Ohio

[www.wadsworthcity.com/  
the-city/departments/  
center-for-older-adults.html](http://www.wadsworthcity.com/the-city/departments/center-for-older-adults.html)

Based on Mather LifeWays award-winning Café Plus concept, the Soprema Senior Center and Café offers a blend of traditional programming for older adults, paired with new life enrichment and wellness opportu-

nities for community members of all ages. Soprema's underlying mission is to ensure the highest quality of life possible for older adults by offering a wide range of activities and services that focus on health and wellness, information, engagement, intergenerational connections, and volunteering.

Soprema opened in March 2013 and was an instant hit with young and old alike; today, more than 3,000 older adults are members.

Programming reveals a creative blend of social, recreational, educational, and health/wellness focuses—all complimenting the tasty offerings in the Café. Older adults can participate in traditional day programs like cards and games—and they can also opt for innovative programs such as a digital photography class, intergenerational technology classes, fitness programs designed for older adults, and caregiver support groups.

Soprema Café also serves as the Title III (Older Americans Act) congregate meal site for older adults, using an innovative voucher program to offer fresh, healthy food.

Soprema relies on collaboration and partnerships with other local organizations, sharing staff and resources across a multi-generational campus that includes Wadsworth High School and the town's community center. Important connections also include the hospital and library, and agencies that serve the developmentally disabled. Through the partnership with the Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Soprema provides employment training opportunities to persons with disabilities. Through the generosity of its many partners, Soprema Senior Center membership is free.

“The Soprema Senior Center and Café has attracted the interest of service providers in Ohio and beyond,” says Nancy Likens, director of the Café. “Many leaders of programs for older adults have visited the Center with the hope of gleaning knowledge to replicate the Café concept in their own communities.”

## Rethink Your Own Community Offerings for Older Adults

### Lay the groundwork:

Establish partnerships with other organizations to potentially consolidate offerings or share space. If you want to offer employment or training to those who are disabled, also form partnerships with local agencies that serve that population.

Work with your local government agencies to find new ways to serve low-income older adults: The community of Wadsworth implemented a meal voucher program that allowed older adults to discreetly get free, freshly prepared meals in the café rather than receiving a free frozen meal as they had been getting.

### Implement it:

Determine fresh and contemporary programming to appeal to recent retirees, which will help you move away from traditional “senior center” activities.

Open the café portion to the entire community to attract people of all ages; this will also appeal to older adults, who are drawn in by the café and then explore the programs and services.

### Monitor it:

As with any traditional senior center, operating a café calls for continual evaluation of all areas of your café and programming, including number of older adults served and their ages. 🌱



*Friendly intergenerational staff and volunteers ensure all visitors get a warm welcome. The community's popular Courtyard Café was relocated to the new center, providing a terrific outdoor venue.*

# Breaking Ground on a Groundbreaking Community for Older Adults



*The Rivertown Neighborhood will serve over 1,000 older adults, family members, and community members.*

**PRESBYTERIAN VILLAGES  
OF MICHIGAN**  
Southfield, Michigan  
[www.pvm.org](http://www.pvm.org)

Rivertown Neighborhood is an innovative concept supported by Presbyterian Villages of Michigan (PVM), United Methodist Retirement Communities, and Henry Ford Health System, with the goal of providing a unique model of housing and services to serve low- to very low-income older adults, many with chronic and debilitating health conditions.

The only living campus for older adults of its kind, the Rivertown Neighborhood includes an array of services and areas: 80 units of affordable assisted living; the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) where residents are transported from their homes

and receive medical care, nutrition services, and daily activities; 50 affordable independent apartments for older adults; the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Green Houses®, in which 10 to 12 older adults live together in a family-like environment supported by an empowered staff; a Life Enrichment Component/Center, which would serve as the heart of the Neighborhood and provide programming to improve health, reduce isolation, and draw in the greater community; and an adjacent, accessible Community Park.

Many of these will be housed in the former Parke Davis Pharmaceutical Campus on the Detroit riverfront, and altogether the completed Rivertown Neighborhood will serve over 1,000 older adults, family members, and community members.

## **Advice for Running Your Own Community Buildout**

Valuable lessons and insights learned to-date from Rivertown Neighborhood:

- The success of a collaborative process will be determined in great part by the shared values of the partnering organizations.
- Being bold will be necessary to turn an innovative concept into reality.
- Relationships and the ability to convey the project's vision are essential to gain community and philanthropic support.
- Obstacles and roadblocks are an inevitable part of the process; however, with a common end-goal in mind, creative solutions can be found.
- Project activities and plans may take more time to accomplish than originally anticipated. Be prepared through careful contingency planning.
- Tell your story! This has to be a continuous part of the development, implementation, and sustaining phases so others can also become impassioned by your project mission and choose to support it, or learn to replicate it in their own communities.
- Always celebrate project successes, no matter how small or large. Keeping the team focused in a positive way will always produce better outcomes. 🌱

# Bringing Volunteer Opportunities to Residents



Photo courtesy of Sarasota Bay Club

*Each resident was matched with a student for the duration of the program, and many lasting friendships were formed.*

**SARASOTA BAY CLUB**  
Sarasota, Florida  
[www.sarasotabayclub.net](http://www.sarasotabayclub.net)

At Sarasota Bay Club, an independent living community, several residents expressed interest in volunteering onsite because driving to other destinations was becoming a burden. Some of these residents had been teachers or tutors, and the community's activity department was looking for an intergenerational program that would benefit both residents and local children.

The solution: The Bay Club Kids Intergenerational Reading & Art Program, a summer program that teamed older adult volunteers with seven- and eight-year-old girls. Sarasota Bay Club partnered with Girls, Inc., an agency serving local at-risk youth, and the Community

Foundation of Sarasota, which provided financial support through a grant.

Throughout the summer, 10 girls visited the community every Wednesday for one-on-one reading and art programs. Having an opportunity to volunteer in their own home fulfilled the residents' need, and having access to the support and encouragement of mentors fulfilled the children's need.

Questionnaires indicated that after completing the program, the students felt more confident about their reading skills, they enjoyed reading with their partners, and they planned on continuing reading for pleasure. Many of the residents expressed a feeling of well-being as a result of enjoying the company of a young, attentive child.

## Building Blocks for Your Own Intergenerational Program



Photo courtesy of Sarasota Bay Club

Sarasota Bay Club shares some of the valuable lessons and insights they learned:

- Determine the specific goals and interests of residents regarding activities or programs, and build your content around that.
- Determine the number of residents who want to participate, which will dictate the scope of the program.
- Arrange logistics with your partner organization, including transportation and liability issues. Set clear roles for responsibilities of each organization for the children participants.
- Ensure the activities are something students will enjoy. Sarasota Bay Club added an art component to reading to keep students engaged.
- Advertise the program internally and externally to enroll future participants and promote your community. 🌱

Mather LifeWays is a 70+- year-old unique, non-denominational not-for-profit organization that enhances the lives of older adults by creating Ways to Age Well<sup>SM</sup>. Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging is its research and education area of service and is a global resource for information about wellness, successful aging service innovations, and educational programming. Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging has been recognized nationally for best practices and commitment to quality in the senior living industry; the Institute's most recent recognition was the LeadingAge 2014 Excellence in Research and Education Award.

*Learn more about the Institute online at [www.matherlifewaysinstituteonaging.com](http://www.matherlifewaysinstituteonaging.com).*



**Nominations will open in July, with a submission deadline in September 2015.**

**For details, visit [www.matherlifewaysinstituteonaging.com/promising](http://www.matherlifewaysinstituteonaging.com/promising).**

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