

ENRICHING SENIOR LIVES

We've expanded our memory care unit to better serve the community

There's BIG NEWS at Lions Gate—We have expanded our Safe Haven memory care community!

As the CEO of Lions Gate, it is my privilege to announce that this community expansion means we can offer our outstanding care to more seniors than ever before. By reallocating space within our building, the Lions Gate community now has more than doubled the number of private apartments that make up our tight-knit memory care community. I'm proud to say that Lions Gate has always had its own memory care community on campus, and it is an integral part of the full continuum of care that we offer our residents.

"We made it our mission in 2022 to expand our Safe Haven community," said Meredith Becker, Lions Gate COO. "Estimates vary, but experts report more than 7-million people aged 65+ were diagnosed with memory loss in 2020. As the large Baby Boomer population ages, it is estimated that more than 9-million Americans could be diagnosed with memory loss by 2030 and nearly 12-million by 2040. As an award-winning care provider for seniors, we wanted to make sure we were doing all we could to address the growing need for residential memory care by allocating more space on our campus to our own memory care neighborhood. Our expanded memory care community footprint features the residents' private apartments, each with a private bath, as well as a community living room, two activity areas, a restaurant-style kosher dining room, and a secure outdoor courtyard. While change and growth has been our goal for the past year, the one thing that will never change is the personalized care that has always been at the heart of our memory care community. Our residents, their families, and our staff form an unshakeable bond that really sets our memory care commu-

nity apart. And now with the expanded community capacity, we're looking forward to ringing in a new year by building long-lasting friendships with new residents!

As a new year begins, families may be considering new options in how to best care for



DAVE THOMPSON
CEO Jewish Senior Housing
and Healthcare Service

their loved one with memory loss. I wanted to devote this column to sharing insights from the memory care experts on my staff. Hopefully, this conversation will help some readers on their journey to find the right-fit care for their loved one.

Let's start by learning how to determine when your loved one is ready for memory care.

"Many people with memory loss can live on their own during the early stages of the disease, especially if a family member provides regular support," said Annette Langelo, an LPN on the Safe Haven care team. "But there will come a time when your loved one requires more care than you can properly provide at home. Here are some questions to help you determine if you should consider moving a loved one into a memory care community. These questions are from information provided by the Alzheimer's Association:

- Is the health of the person with memory loss or my health as a caregiver at risk?
- Are the person's care needs beyond my physical abilities?
- Am I becoming a stressed, irritable, and impatient caregiver?
- Am I neglecting work responsibilities, my family, and myself?
- Would the structure and social interaction in a memory

care community benefit the person with dementia?

If you've answered "yes" to a number of these questions, perhaps it's time to investigate what memory care communities can offer. Let's start by defining the difference between Memory Care and Assisted Living.

"Assisted living offers residents assistance as needed to maintain their independence," said Phil Popper, Lions Gate's Assisted Living sales and marketing director. "Memory care is designed to provide a structured environment with set routines to maximize engagement and lower stress for people with memory loss. The care team at Lions Gate that works with our memory care residents are specially trained to deal with the unique issues that are part of memory loss. Memory care communities can range in size from just 10 apartments to almost 100 apartments. When your loved one resides in a tight-knit memory community like Lions Gate of 30 apartments or less, to me that translates into a better continuity of care where the care team builds long-term relationships with residents. That continuity of care gives families so much reassurance. They know exactly who to call when they have questions or concerns, and they sleep well at night knowing that the care team treats their loved one like family. It's really a beautiful thing when you see the trust and affection that builds between a family and the care team. That is not something you find in every memory care community. Many on the Lions Gate care team choose to invest their entire career here because they feel they make a valuable contribution and connection each day."

While those with memory loss require guidance and structure in activities of daily living as well as help with cognitive and social engagement, caregivers can't overlook the need for medical resources. While not all memory care communi-

ties have medical resources on site, Lions Gate has a robust slate of medical professionals right on campus.

"Lions Gate's Safe Haven memory care community is unique in that the memory care community itself is small, yet it resides on the Lions Gate campus, which is a Life Plan Community," said Meredith Becker, Lions Gate COO. "That means the full continuum of care is available to all residents, including our memory care residents. Our Safe Haven care team includes a doctor, nurses, and aides. Lions Gate residents also have access to a full slate of doctors with office hours on site, including a gerontologist, dentist, podiatrist, dermatologist, optometrist, and audiologist. Residents looking for mental health support can work with a licensed therapist, and if they need any type of rehabilitative therapy, Lions Gate has a short-term Rehab Center on site that includes a rehabilitative care team addressing all physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and respiratory therapy needs. Lions Gate also has a social worker on staff, and families can meet with her at any time to discuss the care their loved one receives here. Not many memory care communities have such an extensive medical team at their disposal."

For individuals with memory loss, an important part of a personalized care plan beyond the daily living care and medical care, is the portion of the plan that focuses on active social and cognitive engagement. "Cognitively-appropriate activities play an enormous role in enhancing the quality of life of a memory care resident," said Julie Schaffer, activities director for Assisted Living and Safe Haven at Lions Gate. "We have a full calendar of activities that keep our memory care residents socializing and entertained. We also have a cantor on staff who conducts weekly religious

services for our memory care residents, a weekly 'Jewish Wisdom' class, and we celebrate all the Jewish holidays here."

"We have so many wonderful programs that address cognitive deficits," said Lisbeth Hernandez, Safe Haven activities coordinator. "Our OmiVista Mobi unit engages residents with memory loss via sensory stimulation. The advanced technology creates an interactive projection on a tabletop or floor. It's a multi-sensory experience that encourages active engagement through motion. The residents love it! We also have our new Memory Music Program. We have MP3 players, each filled with a specific genre of music. We created catalogs of jazz, swing, big band, classical, klezmer, opera, Eastern European music, and Asian music. It's so encouraging to see residents connecting to the music that is meaningful to them and finding joy in the moment. The therapeutic benefits of music are so powerful for memory care residents. Sometimes music is the best medicine!"

As we wrap up this overview of residential memory care, I want to reassure families that are caring for a loved one with memory loss at home that we see you and we understand your journey. Sometimes the best choice is to partner with a residential memory care community so that the time you spend with your loved one becomes about enjoying the moment and not all about shouldering the caregiving responsibilities. Take the time you need to consider what is best for your family.

Wishing everyone a happy and health new year.

Want to learn more about Lions Gate's Safe Haven memory care community? Contact Phil Popper to book an in-person tour: Call (856) 679-2397 or email PPopper@lionsgateccrc.org ▲ dthompson@LionsGateccrc.org