



THE STAFF AT COUNTRY LIVING ARE EAGER AND READY TO SERVE THEIR RESIDENTS (backrow) Cassie Davison CMA, Meagan Taylor CNA Dietary Accounting Housekeeping, Shannon Corbin Dietary, Janet Hermann CMA, Jodie Lambert Head Dietary, Kati Vogts Dietary (frontrow) Kris Sinn CMA, Tammy Leiker Director of Nursing, Kenya Lear Executive Director, Michelle Kralik Housekeeping and Dietary, Rose Lasater Certified Activity Director, Ashley Evel CMA, TJ Smith CNA Maintenance and Dietary, and Dexter the Dog

COUNTRY LIVING

Local ownership causes Lyons business to boom

BY RYAN CARLSON

In today's world most see business success and profit in large corporations, but for one Lyons business it's the exact opposite.

For the small town, locally owned business model Country Living in Lyons has become somewhat of an icon. When the business opened in 2010 it was part of a large nationwide group of assisted living centers. About a year ago however, that completely changed.

Country Living's current Director Kenya Lear has been with the company nearly two years. When she first arrived things were bleak. However, through a group of local investors and countless hours of Lear's personal time and energy, the company has now become a success. Local investors include individuals in the Rice County area along with a few from Larned. Gone is nationwide network the assisted living facility first belonged to, but what has replaced it has turned out to be far better. "Being locally owned has a lot to say about a small town," said Lear.

The assisted living facility has a capacity of 18. Eleven months of hard work has filled that capacity to where today there is only two available rooms. When the business first went locally owned there were only 13 rooms filled. "For the first time in history we are almost filled to capacity. I definitely believe in being locally owned and being a small town business. This business has definitely seen the perks of that type of situation," said Lear.

Country Living has almost fulfilled their short term goal of completely filling the building. Now they can focus on their long term goal of hosting a memory care building. That building will be built on land north of the facility. It will provide services to individuals who need a transition to more intensive care. Lear said her investors said that goal could be met in as little as a year. "We thought it would take three years to even get back on our feet, so that's awesome," she added.

Country Living not only provides it's residents with a roof

over the head, they also give them a family atmosphere. Part of that atmosphere includes entertainment. Some of that entertainment includes a wine-and-dine event for Thanksgiving complete with turducken. After learning that no one had heard of such as thing, Lear thought it was a new experience she could share with the residents and their families. "They really enjoyed it," said Lear.

The assisted living facility holds a homemade ice cream social every June. In 2016 that ice cream social focused on the "Men in Blue" paying tribute to local law enforcement officers.

Country Living offers a big Christmas dinner for residents and their families. The staff provides entertainment by dressing up in wacky costumes that make them look like Santa's elves.

Though seasonal events are frequent, there is also monthly events as well. Once a month Country Living Certified Activity Director Rose Lasater provides a men's pie event. Women hold their own event with a monthly ladies brunch. Finally once a week a group of ladies from around the community goes to Country Place to play bridge.

The resident pet for the facility is a dog named Dexter. Though he is protective, Dexter also has a playful side as well. Once a week employees donate a dollar to wear jeans to work. Eventually one had the bright idea of teaching Dexter to carry the dollar in his mouth to Lear's office. Now both residents and staff enjoy watching Dexter take a dollar to Lear and get a treat in return. "How many other dogs do that," said Lear.

Lear has 16 employees who are dedicated to service and care. Five of those employees are full time, and the rest are part time. The two employees that have been at Country Living the longest are Registered Nurse Leiker and Certified Activity Director Lasater. Tammy has been with the company for five and a half years and Lasater started two weeks before the assisted living facility even opened it's doors. Lasater focuses

heavily on entertainment, frequently taking the residents on outings.

Country Living provides several services to it's residents. Those include personal care, house keeping, frequent activities, and small errands. For all that service, individuals pay one flat fee per month, unlike other facilities in Hutchinson and the surrounding area in which each costs an extra monthly fee. In fact, County Living has been able to stay cheaper than their competitors by as much as \$2,000 a month. "It's been an amazing year," said Lear.

Country Living OF LYONS "Assisted Living Services"



Country Living is a place with a family atmosphere, fun activities, service and care.

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