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# Health Of Residents A Priority For Local Care Center

**By: Karen Carpenter**  
Making sure that a person stays healthy until the very end of their life is important.

At Valley Care and Rehab in Barnesville it is a priority. Keeping their residents as healthy and happy as possible is important to the staff and owners.

Mark and Debra Rustad purchased the local nursing facility November 1, 2015. Since that time they have been updating the building and making it more comfortable for their residents.

“When people are unable to take care of themselves at home, we step in with 24 hour nursing care,” said Debra. She is the director of nursing at Valley Care and Rehab.

The center provides daily care including dispensing of medication and rehabilitation. For those at the facility for a short stay the goal is to send them home in better shape than they arrived.

For those who will live the remainder of their days at Valley Care and Rehab the goal is to help them feel at home, surrounded by a big family.

The staff and residents form bonds and build a history. “We feel that we have become one big family here,” said Mark. “Sometimes staff serves as surrogate family if our clients don’t have any relatives or they aren’t in the area.”

Staff monitors the health of the whole body of the residents. “We look at every system,” commented Debra. “If they are diabetic we monitor diet. We monitor their skin and feet health, watch diet and see that they get moderate exercise. We analyze the whole person.”

A doctor is available twice a week for regular visits. If someone is having a problem there is a doctor on 24 hour call. Staff constantly observes their charges for any sign of infection or any type of medical difficulty.

“Our facility has maintained consistent staff from aides to nurses,” said Mark. We have been increasing our staff to provide more direct care.”

Staff at Valley Care and Rehab



Debra and Mark Rustad own and manage Valley Care and Rehab in Barnesville. They purchased the facility November 1, 2015. The Rustads give credit to their staff for the success of the care center.

take continuing education classes on an ongoing basis to provide the best care possible.

Valley Care and Rehab has a good staff to resident ratio. They employ 66 staff and care for 35 residents in the facility.

One of the biggest challenges is in the area of mental health. Staff education is continually being updated in the areas of dementia and Alzheimer’s.

“It is a challenge to find mental health services in the area,” said Debra. “Services are extremely limited and resources stressed. It is hard trying to find a psychiatrist that has openings.”

The State of Minnesota has a grant program geared toward mental health. Through that

program Valley Care and Rehab will soon have a psychiatrist coming to the home once a month. Another contact will be made once each month via telecommunication.

Determining an accurate diagnosis will be the first step to getting help and proper medications. The goal is to get the mental health needs met that a general practitioner isn’t

equipped to furnish.

Area pastors provide spiritual health. They come on a rotating basis for weekly services. Of course pastors visit their individual members who are

residents.

“We are trying to maintain the best quality of life,” said both Mark and Debra. “We want everyone to maintain the highest level of ability possible.”

The resident’s family becomes active participants in the care plan when possible. Family is important to maintain stability and to provide staff with the client’s history.

Family is encouraged to stay as long as they want. They can eat with their family member, visit, play games. “Family can even sleep in a chair in the room if they want,” said Mark. “We have a lot of active family support.”

Residents participate in exercise programs led by the activity staff. Range of motion exercises happen as staff is helping with dressing or daily routine. “We want our clients to move as much as they possibly can,” said Debra.

The Area Agency on Aging along with HELPERS leads an exercise class entitled ‘matter of balance’ twice a week at the home. It is a mixed group of residents and community members. They work to exercise and strengthen muscle groups in order to prevent people from falling.

A registered dietician assesses and makes recommendations on weight concerns. The client is interviewed about preferences and likes and dislikes as far as food.

Everything that each resident eats or drinks is charted. Some have small refrigerators in

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Darla Ackerson, left, and employee for Valley Care and Rehab helps clients make crafts during activity time. Mary Ann Thompson, center, and Ray Krier display their finished work. Working on crafts is just one of the many activities that are scheduled at Valley Care and Rehab. The various activities planned keeps the resident’s hands and minds active.