••BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT••

Brookdale Assisted Living means home

By Katherine R. Dougan

"Homey" is the word Michael ("Mike") Ryan, the executive director partner of Brookdale Clinton, uses to describe the Senior Living Facility on Northside Drive. Residents at the assisted living facility are comfortable, and don't hesitate to stop by Ryan's office to chat.

During the interview for this story, residents strolling by Mike Ryan's office poked in their head to say 'hello," and called out to him as he walked by. He knew all of the residents seated in the hallway by name, and stopped to chat with every one as he passed by in the hallway, where residents sat together in small groups in comfortable chairs and on sofas, waiting for the afternoon bingo game to start.

"Go down there and check out the scene," a lady in the group said to a gentleman.

With seating areas throughout the facility as well as screened porches, there are lots of places for residents to gather and visit. The hallways are wide and inviting, with small arrangements of chairs and a table offering a place to rest. The facility is decorated in soothing, soft pastel colors, and features windows on the facing a large pond on the back side of the property. The large dining room has chandeliers, plenty of comfortable seating, and a spectacular view of the pond through tall windows across the back of the room.

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"Our residents are as young as 62 years old to age 99," Ryan said, adding that thirty military veterans are also living at the facility.

The facility boasts ninety-seven apartments, which can house up to one hundred and eight people with couples. The apartments include studios, as well as one- and two-bedroom units. There's also a chapel onsite.

"It's a great meeting place for residents and staff," Mike Ryan said.

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Michael Ryan

Many who work at Brookdale, including Ryan, were emotionally touched by their grandparents and great-grandparents, so they have an affinity and love for working with seniors, Ryan said.

"You must have a passion to do this job," said Mike Ryan. "Also necessary is a cognizance that employees basically work where the residents live, so employees need to behave as if they are in somebody's home, and they do."

The building has been at its lakeside site for twenty years and was built by Baptist Hospital. Emeritus Trace Pointe purchased the building from Baptist, and, four years ago, Emeritus merged with Brookdale to create an Assisted Living Facility for seniors, with a Memory Care area for Alzheimer's patients.

Mike Ryan said there's a lot more than bingo going on at the facility. Brookdale's Community Connections newsletter lists a full calendar of activities every day, with activities beginning at 9 or 10 in the morning, and continuing until the early evening. Residents can choose from shopping outings, live music, movies, cookie baking, board games, puzzles, fitness, checkers and brain teasers, to name a few. Morning devotions are offered, as well as First Baptist Church-TV services on Sunday morning.

Brookdale strives to make residents feel at home. Residents can pick their paint color, flooring and appliances for their apartments, to personalize their space and make it their own.

"I love working for Brookdale. I like the support we get," Ryan said, adding that Brookdale is the largest senior living company in the country. The Clinton facility currently has ninety-three residents.

"We are here to keep Mom and Dad as independent as possible. Residents can have as much or as little help as they need." Nurses and staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Mike Ryan admits that sometimes residents are reluctant to leave their homes and move into a facility at first, because it is unknown to them.

"But when they come back from a day trip or a visit to someone outside of the facility, they always say: 'It's

••INFOBOX••

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Hours: Office is open 8 a.m to 5:00 p.m., but telephone is staffed 24/7 for round-the-clock calls.

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