

# Bethel Park senior living facility opens on 'pay-as-you-go' basis

Thursday, July 09, 2009

By Mary Niederberger, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Rebecca Droke/Post-Gazette photos

The back patio space at Paramount Senior Living, an assisted living housing complex in Bethel Park.

Joe and Martha Dorsey have lived in various assisted living and nursing facilities in the area. But as they watched Paramount Senior Living at Bethel Park being built over the past year, they decided it offered what they didn't find in other senior residences.

"Here we have more space, and they have extensive activities," said Mrs. Dorsey, formerly of Whitehall. "And we are close to two daughters and grandchildren."

The Dorseys are among the first handful of residents to move into the \$20 million complex that opened in June. As of this week, about 30 residents were expected to be moved into units.

The facility, located on Baptist Road, holds 120 beds, with 15 independent living apartments, 77 assisted living units and 28 units for people with dementia.

Units range in size from studio to two-bedroom apartments and from 600 to 1,000 square feet.

There are five nursing stations in the facility, which will be staffed with nurses around the clock. Its executive director, Patti Haines, is a registered nurse.

The center is owned and operated by Bethel Park resident Jay Cox. He also owns Paramount Senior Living at South Hills on Knoedler Road in Baldwin Borough, which provides assisted living and dementia units, and the Worthington at Adams, in Butler County, which is exclusively for dementia patients.

Mr. Cox said he is bringing a new concept in senior living to the Bethel Park residence, one that offers services to seniors on a "pay-as-you-go" basis rather than requiring an initial upfront investment for continual care.

In continuing care communities, residents often are required to make a major investment, sometimes as much as several hundred thousand dollars, to buy into a community. In return they are promised lifetime care at whatever level they may need: independent living, assisted living or skilled nursing care.

But Paramount is a rental community, with independent living units starting at \$1,800 a month. That fee includes rent, utilities, meals, housekeeping and activities.

As residents age and may need additional services, including home health and hospice care and skilled nursing and rehabilitation services, they can be purchased through a subsidiary of Paramount.

"Our philosophy is that anyone can live here, and we will bring the services to you," Mr. Cox said.

Residents who move in initially to independent living or assisted living units can stay in those units if they develop the need for more services.

"There will be no need for them to move if they don't want to," Mr. Cox said.

The exception would be for dementia patients who would be required to move to the secured unit on the third floor of the complex.

Because there is no long-term obligation on the part of the residents, they are free to move out at any time, if they so choose, or to purchase nursing and rehabilitation services from other vendors.

Mr. Cox said he created the subsidiary company that will provide the auxiliary services because he wanted to be able to control the quality of services provided to residents at his facility.

In the past, he said he had worked with outside vendors to provide the services, but found a wide range in quality and philosophy among them.

The center holds a large, formal dining room where residents are served their meals as well as a small family-sized dining room that can be used by residents for such occasions as family birthday parties.

There also will be a cafe/coffee shop area where vendors will sell food and coffee to visitors or residents. The area will be equipped with Wi-Fi for visitors who may need to keep track of work or school responsibilities while there.

There is also a large activities room, a beauty shop and a lounge area, where happy hours are held on Fridays.

Mrs. Dorsey said she has enjoyed the happy hours and a concert given recently by a young woman who played the baby grand piano that sits at the entrance to the complex.

"I thought the piano was just for looks. I didn't know I would get to hear someone play it," she said.

Bethel Park

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**First published on July 9, 2009 at 12:00 am**

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