



New Trends In Senior Living

Written by Russel Hausfeld • Photography provided by Maple Knoll Communities

As generations of residents at senior living facilities are changing, so too are the trends and expectations of senior care providers.

“Bingo is no longer what they are looking for,” says Megan Gresham-Ullrich, Vice President of Corporate Communications, Marketing and Development for Maple Knoll Communities. “Baby boomers coming in want to do everything they didn’t have time to do when they were busy raising families and working.”

Maple Knoll Communities is a 170-year-old non-profit organization serving over 4,000 older adults (62+) in the Greater Cincinnati area. They offer the full range of retirement services, from independent living to assisted living to skilled nursing care. Gresham-Ullrich spoke with Venue about the ever-evolving trends within the senior living industry and at Maple Knoll Communities.

Technology

Technological trends which would have been unheard of even a decade ago – such as full Wi-Fi campuses – are becoming standard for senior living.

“What we have learned is that our residents have gotten a lot more tech savvy,” says Gresham-Ullrich. “And, if they are not tech savvy, they want the opportunity to become better.”

At Maple Knoll, they have a Knowledge Bar with weekly educational sessions that residents can attend and learn things like how to set up a Twitter account and Tweet, or how to find out about events at Maple Knoll through their Alexa. Cincinnati-based company RoundTower Technologies and the University of Cincinnati are also pairing with Maple Knoll’s residents to develop new technologies and robotics that can help older adults live independently for longer.

Some of these innovations include in-home activity monitors for people with memory lapses, smart home options such as floors which light the way to the bathroom at night, and appliances which can, for example, start a morning cup of coffee from the bedroom.

“One thing we are going to be doing in the next few months is asking residents who are interested if they want to walk a virtual-reality bourbon trail and we will have bourbon tastings there for them, too,” Gresham-Ullrich says. “So, individuals who can’t get off campus are very interested in these experiences.”

Attractions and Activities

Like Gresham-Ullrich said earlier, retirement residents want to get out and do the things they couldn’t do in their 30s. At Maple Knoll’s main campus in Springdale, their Wellness Center hosts three to five activities a day, such as yoga or warm-water pool exercises. And, they have four buses which are busy year-round going to Reds games, plays, symphonies and more.

If residents don’t want to leave campus, Maple Knoll strives to function as a “village within a village.” They have multiple activity coordinators who bring educational speakers, art programming and music to campus. Plus, there are plenty of places to mingle on campus, including multiple salons, a loom room, a woodshop and over 20 established clubs.

Dining

Gresham-Ullrich describes the old-school dining experience at a retirement facility as one item on the menu, served from 5 to 6 p.m. in a dining hall.

“That’s not us,” she says.

Dining options for retirement communities are expanding as demand for diversity and quality increases. At Maple Knoll, there is a sit-down restaurant-style dining option, a grab-and-go cafe with full menu and daily specials, and a full dining room with set menu and daily specials.

“Older adults are not wanting to slow down in retirement,” Gresham-Ullrich says. “They are wanting to pick up the pace and try new technology, get new education and make intergenerational relationships. That is pretty typical across the region of what people are looking for in retirement living.” ❖

If you or a loved one is preparing for retirement and would like to learn more about Maple Knoll Communities, call 513.782.2717 or visit www.mkcommunities.org