Neighborhoods

We’ve heard some great news from Town & Country Health and Rehab in Minden, LA. (http://www.townandcountryhealth.com/). Their National Night Out (http://www.nationalnightout.org/) celebration won a first place award from Minden’s City Council. Each of Town & Country’s five neighborhoods had its own celebration. Their participation in National Night Out is a reminder that even if you live in a nursing home, having a sense of community both within the nursing home and in the greater community is essential for identity, meaning, purpose, relationships and, yes, fun.

It has me thinking about neighborhoods (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neighborhood). Truth is, for many nursing homes, the Neighborhood Model is the way they go. The Neighborhood Model focuses on community, relationships and a sort of graceful living that comes when the stage is set for spontaneous gatherings and activities. People know each other and look out for each other. (In fact, those operating in the Household Model should not ignore the neighborly relationships between households and with the greater community outside the facility.)

The Neighborhood Model is more than just calling a hallway a “neighborhood.” A neighborhood pools its resources to make positive things happen. John McKnight and John Kretzmann of Northwestern University and the Asset Based Community Development Institute have developed a system for neighborhoods to get the most out of what they have. From the website (http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html), the ABCD Institute spreads its findings on capacity-building community development in
I have come to depend on and treasure the people in my neighborhood even though we are acquainted just because we happen to live in close proximity. Some of those people are now my dearest friends. If it is possible here, where people leave the neighborhood for hours or even days at a time and can hole up in their own houses for similar periods of time, it can certainly happen in a nursing home.

Once all the resources are out on the table, interdependent relationships can start to take form. This means that everyone – staff, elders, family – both give and receive care and friendship. The Pioneer Network’s Declaration of Interdependence (http://www.pioneernetwork.net/documents/DeclarationofInterdependence.pdf) says this: “As human beings, we live by and through cooperation with others- it is our destiny. In spite of the emphasis placed on being independent, in reality we are all interdependent. The nature of our cooperation with others changes as we grow, mature and age. These relationships form the basis of all true communities. Therefore, we seek to understand and possess the skills necessary to be interdependent in healthy, productive ways.”

I would also humbly recommend the information and activities in the Good Neighbors Action Pact workbook (http://www.actionpact.com/wb-gn.html). I wrote it because I happen to live in a thriving neighborhood, Washington Heights (http://www.wis.net/www.washingtonheights.com/resources.htm), on Milwaukee’s west side. I have come to depend on and treasure the people in my neighborhood even though we are acquainted just because we happen to live in close proximity. Some of those people are now my dearest friends. If it is possible here, where people leave the neighborhood for hours or even days at a time and can hole up in their own houses for similar periods of time, it can certainly happen in a nursing home.
Neighborhoods, continued

Here are just a few facilities operating in the Neighborhood Model

Baltimore, MD

**Levindale**
<http://www.lifebridgehealth.org/levindale/>

**Jewish Convalescent**
<http://www.lifebridgehealth.org/jewishconvalescent/>

New York, NY

**Elizabeth Seaton Pediatric Center**
http://www.setonpediatric.org/

Freeport, IL

**Provena St Joseph**
<http://www.provena.org/seniors/home_stjosephcenter.cfm?id=28>

Avilla, IN

**Provena Sacred Heart**
<http://www.provena.org/seniors/home_sacredheart.cfm?id=26>

New York, NY

**Kateri Residence**
<http://www.chcsnet.org/kateri.html>

I really encourage you to make community or neighborliness a priority and cornerstone in your culture change. It’s one of the easiest things you can do to change your culture because it is already there, you just need recognize it and put it to good use. Start with the elders, they’ll show you how it’s done.