

Hohensee prefers rural facility

Written by hebronjournal

Wednesday, 06 March 2019 14:23 - Last Updated Wednesday, 10 April 2019 19:38

Kent Hohensee became the chief executive officer of Blue Valley Lutheran Homes a little over a year ago and is shaping a team by bringing people like administrator Doug Chos for the Care Home and Lynne Gibson's return to Courtyard Terrace.

"Doug came from the Stromsberg area. He's done well. Lynne is a great fit," Hohensee said. In January, he brought in Amanda Beam for director of nursing, and Melissa Brown is training for social services.

"It's hard to make changes in your first year. You have necessary changes, but not major changes. I'm still getting acclimated," he said.

He identified a leadership base with existing employees because long term care is a customer service industry.

"The work that is done in long term care settings — it is hard work," he said. "Residents are like family. We're all here to work in their home. That mentality has to be there."

Blue Valley's philosophy has always been to treat everyone with a Christian value approach.

"We work for them," Hohensee added.

Hohensee deliberately went into long term care after researching the field — he first interviewed a Good Samaritan board member and after researching, started classes. His degree was broad, and Hohensee narrowed his focus.

"The networking with other administrators in the industry is what I really enjoyed," he said.

In an industry that's tied to more regulations than nuclear power plants, Hohensee's goal remains: to give residents personable care.

Remodeled rooms include simulated wood floors and furniture from residents' homes to give them a boost to enjoy life. A new era in long term care will issue in private rooms with their own bathrooms.

Some residents at Blue Valley have been there for years while others stay for rehabilitation and leave. The facility offers physical and occupational therapies.

Activities are also important.

"All three buildings do a wonderful job of planning activities," Hohensee said. He is currently in a Wii bowling tournament at Courtyard Terrace as he described a resident who defeated him.

"She beat be bad and then I found out her and her husband used to bowl three times a week," he said. "I'm getting challenges after that match. It does feel like home."

It always comes back to the higher standards care facilities are held to.

"Not everything is going to go as planned, but we try to do the best we can for each person every day," he said. "Even if they feel like they're confined, they can still do things."

To understand resident concerns better, Blue Valley uses the Abaqus customer service model, and interviews the resident if possible and families, and contributes staff observations for data analyses to identify possible flaws.

It's a proactive rather than reactive model with data to make proper changes.

"We look for trends. The program is actually through a company that helped create the state surveys. We have a state surveyor doing training on the program," Hohensee said.

Blue Valley works closely with Thayer County Health Services as well. Hohensee meets regularly with hospital CEO David Burd. Electronic records further the relationship between the two facilities.

Although Hohensee works on statewide healthcare issues — he sits on the Nebraska Hospital Association's government relations committee and the reimbursement committee for the

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Nebraska Health Care Association — he prefers facilities in small towns.

“I feel like in larger communities, I would struggle to get to know families and residents. That’s just not me. I am more personable, he said.

Hohensee commutes from Beatrice and will be moving to Plymouth area. He attended the Southeast Community College program for nursing home administrators and also had training at the Wilber facility. Hohensee has a background in nursing home and skilled nursing facilities in Pawnee City and Rockport, Mo. At one point, he was licensed in three states.