

Maryknoll Hostel is operated by Catholic Care of the Aged and provides care to 40 residents. The home, located in Port Macquarie, New South Wales, has produced high level outcomes for residents through effective corporate governance and innovative approaches to improving resident lifestyle.

The home fosters an environment of open communication, in which formal and informal comments and complaints are welcome. Residents and relatives are impressed by the caring attitude of management and staff, and residents are regularly consulted on matters of care and service provision.

Staff retention strategies

Maryknoll has taken a high-level, pro-active approach to the industry-wide challenges of staff employment and retention. Comprehensive staff orientation and development programs are in place and staff skills are tested through education projects. There is an emphasis on the transferability and portability of training. In-house staff training is provided to a high standard, and meets many of the requirements for the TAFE Certificate Level III Aged Care. In conjunction with TAFE, Maryknoll now provides training to external students in aspects of the Certificate Level III Aged Care.

Staff welfare is recognised through a comprehensive manual handling training program and a subsidised health and fitness program. Since the project commenced in 2000, workers compensation costs have reduced by over \$200 000, and hours lost due to workplace injuries have reduced.

Staff feedback is used to review management approaches and led to the establishment of a staff recognition and reward incentive scheme. The program is based on nomination of staff for awards by their peers, residents or relatives.

A trust fund has been established to allow Catholic Care of the Aged to make above-award rate payments to staff to ensure staff retention in a competitive environment. Other initiatives to assist with the retention are the support for staff development, an employee assistance program, fitness program and incentive program, pastoral care and counselling services.

Overnight trips commenced in 1999 with the aim of continuing residents' interaction with the community, providing activities to individual residents, and encouraging the involvement of their family. Residents choose their destination, are consulted during the general planning and their feedback is acted on. Seventeen residents have gone on trips accompanied by staff, volunteers and relatives. Residents' satisfaction with the trips is consistently high, and the trips have been increased from annual to twice yearly. Suggestions for improvement are discussed at follow-up meetings with individual residents, and changes are made according to their feedback.

Swimming classes and walking program

Maryknoll has implemented a range of activities dedicated to improving residents' mobility, health and well being, and increasing their involvement in the community. Before residents take part in activities programs, risk activity assessments are completed to manage their requirements, needs and preferences.

Residents attend swimming classes at a local heated indoor pool equipped to hoist residents into the water. A bus with wheelchair access is used to transport residents, and volunteers and staff provide assistance. As well as an improved sense of well being and fitness levels,

residents comment that they have benefited from improved sleep, relaxation and enjoy the opportunity to socialise. One resident has conquered a life-long fear of water and loves floating in the pool.

A walking program has been established with two levels of ability to encourage residents to exercise, and enhance and maintain mobility. Results show that resident falls have decreased by half over the two years since the program began.

In response to resident feedback, a resident and her daughter commenced teaching **ceramics classes** at Maryknoll following resident feedback. The classes foster creative talents and residents are kept active, enjoy the classes and are proud of their work.

Improved living environment

In 2001 the home initiated a project to paint a mural on an external wall to improve the view from residents' rooms. Residents chose the subject and size of the mural (a rural landscape), and after extensive consultation with residents, an art teacher and students from a local high school painted the mural. The project facilitated inter-generation contact between residents and students; residents held a morning tea for the teacher and students to show their appreciation.

The **partnership run** is an organisation-wide project that enables residents and relatives to maintain contact with the community by providing a bus service to pick up and return people to the home, nearby churches, or the home of relatives and friends. The partnership run has been in operation since 1999, and pick-up lists show an increase in use of the service from eight people in May 1999, to 23 people in May 2003.

A state government-funded **waste minimisation project** was adopted to reduce waste. The project was conducted in conjunction with a waste management firm and the local council. A review of general waste disposal led to a reduction of 120 litres of waste per day. The benefits of the project include a reduction in costs by reviewing practices, such as purchasing of food and food waste, and improvements for the environment through the reduction of landfill.

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