

Nursing home fundraising effort tops \$195,000; Staff, residents feel positive about their future

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Friday, 02 March 2012 19:09 - Last Updated Friday, 02 March 2012 19:22



Nursing home staff and residents gather around the nursing station. Pictured here (left to right) are Sam Sutherland, Erma Kitt, Lisa Kisinger, Stacy Troutman and Lucille McBride. According to Kisinger, Heritage of Wauneta nursing home administrator, the relationships developed between staff and residents make for a better quality of care for nursing home residents.

By Sheri Hink

The Wauneta Breeze

The effort to save the Wauneta nursing home continues. As it has been seen in comments from locals and in letters to the editor from those who have moved elsewhere, the Wauneta nursing home is more than just a business or an employer or a home to our elderly. Wauneta's nursing home is part of the community's identity and an important asset.

As of Tuesday morning Waunetans near and far have contributed \$195,674 to the effort to save the nursing home.

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This outpouring of financial support is proof positive of the generosity of the people, businesses and organizations of Wauneta, both past and present, and of the importance of the nursing home to the community as a whole.

There are two groups of individuals that are particularly effected by the outcome of the effort to save the nursing home: the 32 residents and 54 staff members at the home.

Anxiety among staff

Heritage of Wauneta Administrator Lisa Kisinger reports that there is a high level of anxiety among staff members regarding the outcome of the effort to save the nursing home.

Whereas, the residents have shown no signs of having any stress about the upcoming changes. The comment most often heard by Kisinger from the residents is, "God provides. He's taken care of me all these years and He'll continue to take care of me."

Staff members have two main concerns surrounding the hoped-for transition this summer. First, will they have a job on July 1, 2012. The hope is that the nursing home will transition from being a Vetter Health Services facility to a Village of Wauneta facility at midnight on June 30, 2012.

The second primary concern of the nursing home staff centers on what sort of benefits package the Village will be able to offer.

"Vetter's has a wonderful benefits package," says Kisinger. The staff are concerned about if and what sort of health insurance will be offered when the Village assumes management of the facility.

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Kisinger fears that the nursing home will lose staff members if the Village is not able to offer health insurance.

Amazingly, the nursing home has lost no staff members since the announcement that Vetter Health Services will cease their operation of the nursing home on June 30, 2012. This fact shows the dedication of nursing home staff members to the residents of the nursing home and the facility itself.

Positive attitude prevails

Despite their anxiety, as a whole, the staff feels positive about the upcoming closure of Heritage of Wauneta and hoped-for reopening of the facility under a different name under ownership of the Village of Wauneta.

Kisinger says this positive attitude is possible because of the evidence that the people of Wauneta are behind the effort to save the nursing home.

When a staff member comes to her with concerns about the transition she tells them, "If there's any way possible, it's going to happen." Kisinger says the support from the community has meant a lot to the staff during this time of change.

Kisinger, who started working at Heritage of Wauneta in 1999 as the office manager and later assumed the role of administrator in 2008, says she's dedicated to seeing the nursing home staff and residents through this transition.

"I would certainly like to stay on as administrator after the Village of Wauneta assumes ownership if they will have me."

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Kisinger has her own concerns for the nursing home as negotiations continue between the Village of Wauneta and VHS. First and foremost is the nursing home's need for a vehicle to transport residents.

Although the nursing home takes advantage of Chase County transit vans whenever possible, not all residents of the nursing home are able to get to and from appointments without staff assistance. Therefore, a nursing home van is of the utmost importance to the daily operation of the home, explains Kisinger.

She also hopes that the nursing home will be able to continue to offer scholarships to high school graduates and to offer tuition reimbursement to staff members who are taking classes to help them further themselves professionally.

Providing excellent care

Heritage of Wauneta has been given four out of five stars in Medicare's Quality Measure rating. This measure is a means for potential residents and family members to compare nursing home facilities.

A 4-star overall rating indicates that Wauneta's nursing home is above average on health inspections, nursing home staffing and quality measures. These ratings are based on data that each nursing home is required to submit.

Heritage of Wauneta recently received results from a satisfaction survey completed by residents and their families. The results of the survey are proof positive that the staff of the nursing home are making an impact in the lives of the residents.

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One hundred percent of family members and nearly 100 percent of residents indicated that they would recommend the facility to others and that they were satisfied with the facility and care overall. The survey results also show that residents and their family members feel that the staff is respectful and cares for the residents.

Survey respondents rated the nursing home as excellent, good, fair or poor on each survey item. The chart below shows resident and family member responses on select survey items. Full survey results are available from the nursing home.

SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS		
	Excellent or good	
	Residents	Family
Recommend to others	94%	100%
Overall satisfaction	94%	100%
Respectfulness of staff	95%	100%
Safety of facility	100%	100%
Commitment to family updates	94%	94%
Care concerns of staff	100%	100%
Resident-to-staff friendships	94%	96%

“We don’t just hire a ‘warm body.’ You can train anyone to do a task, but you can not teach someone compassion. So, we don’t just jump at the first applicant for a job, we try to find the right person for the right job,” explains Kisinger.

She goes on to explain that the nursing home has not used agency labor, nursing staff who work for short periods to fill staffing needs, for over 10 years. Kisinger says this fact means that the residents are receiving better care from staff who know them and know their needs, likes and dislikes.

Contribute to the cause

As mentioned previously, the overwhelming support of current Waunetans and Waunetans-at-heart is the reason the campaign to save the nursing home has seen such great success.

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If you would like to contribute to the effort to save the nursing home you can do so by sending your contribution to The Wauneta Village Office, P.O. Box 95 Wauneta, NE 69045, with Nursing Home noted on the memo line. Donations can also be made via credit card online at www.savewaunetanursinghome.com.