



A LITTLE HELP, A LOT OF INDEPENDENCE

As older Americans live longer in good health, their continuum of care needs continue to evolve. This is particularly true in the area of retirement housing, where the need is growing for options between fully independent living and assisted living. Many older adults are capable of maintaining their dignity and independence for a long time if a few extra services are available.

As individuals age, they sometimes lose the motivation to maintain proper nutrition and hygiene. Community living with the provision of three meals daily, opportunities for moderate exercise, and housekeeping assistance can make the difference between living independently in an apartment and entering an intermediate care facility.

At Resurrection Retirement Community, an independent living facility on Chicago's northwest side, the Garden Annex provides an independent living environment with additional services. The unit is a residential model rather than an assisted living facility that provides nursing care.

EASY LIVING DESIGN

In the Garden Annex, residents enjoy a residential ambiance, and the focus is on "easy living" rather than assisted living. The Garden Annex is a 37-apartment unit within the 473-apartment retirement community. Located on the first floor of one wing of the retirement complex, it offers



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Retirement Community Advances The Cause Of Aging With Dignity

BY SR. MARY PAUL, CR

residents special assistance in caring for themselves and their apartments. The Garden Annex has its own activity area, dining room, and patio so residents do not have to navigate the expansive retirement facility for many daily activities.

Garden Annex services include three meals a day in the common dining room, laundry service for household linen, and weekly maid service. Each apartment has a private bathroom with a walk-in shower. Residents furnish their apartments, but carpeting and drapes are provided.

Summary Sometimes the elderly need only a little extra help to make it on their own. When this is the case, it behooves providers of healthcare and social services to meet those needs and allow these individuals to maintain the dignity of independent living as they age.

At Resurrection Retirement Community, an independent living facility on Chicago's northwest side, the Garden Annex fills this niche in a unique model of independent living with additional services. Services include three meals a day in the common dining room, laundry service for household linen, and weekly maid service. Residents enjoy varied activities, exercise sessions, and socialization with friends and neighbors. They also have access to such amenities as daily religious services, a library, a beauty salon, and banking facilities.

To live in the Garden Annex, prospective residents must meet certain physical and mental criteria and be able to function somewhat independently. In contrast to assisted living facilities, the Garden Annex does not provide nursing care or assistance with personal care. However, residents may take advantage of the continuum of care offered by Resurrection Health Care Corporation. They are afforded access to a medical center, a long-term care facility, and physicians' services.



These apartments do not have kitchens, and cooking is not permitted; however, many residents have small refrigerators for beverages and snacks.

Residents in the Garden Annex range in age from 72 to 97. They enjoy varied activities tailored to their interests and capabilities; exercise sessions to improve vitality and well-being; and socialization with friends and neighbors in a pleasant, comfortable, and secure environment. Other amenities include daily religious services; a library; on-site laundry, beauty salon, and banking facilities; transportation to Resurrection Medical Center and physicians' offices in its professional building; and discounts and free delivery of prescriptions from the apothecary at the hospital and local pharmacies.

CRITERIA FOR RESIDENCY

Residents must be able to move about independently, either with or without mechanical assistance. Residents also must be able to get up and get ready for bed by themselves, remain oriented to time and place, eat meals in the common dining room, behave in a socially acceptable manner, administer their own medications without reminders, and be willing to participate in activities.

Garden Annex residents must have two or three close friends or relatives in the area who can be called in an emergency. These individuals should also be available to drive them to doctors' appointments or other errands, assist with personal laundry or other chores, or stay when they are not feeling well.

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Residents and their families need to understand both the opportunities and the limitations of the facility. To ensure the Garden Annex is an appropriate choice, residents enter the unit on a trial basis. During this time, staff closely monitor them to determine whether they are capable of maintaining the required independence. The Garden Annex supervisor and Resurrection Retirement Community's resident care team continually assess the residents' continued ability to function in their apartments. If they determine a resident is no longer capable of maintaining the required degree of independence, the staff helps find other appropriate living arrangements where the individual can obtain the necessary care.

Although the Garden Annex is often an attractive option for aging individuals needing additional assistance, some find it difficult to admit they can no longer function with total independence, and some families need reassurance that this is not a place for sick people.

A CONTINUUM OF CARE

In contrast to assisted living facilities, the Garden Annex does not provide nursing care or assistance with personal care. Residents may arrange for home health services on a fee-for-service basis after surgery or hospitalization. Residents at the Garden Annex can receive a full continuum of services through Resurrection Health Care Corporation, which includes Resurrection Medical Center and Resurrection Nursing Pavilion, a skilled nursing facility. The convenience of the hospital across the street, the nursing pavilion four miles away, and physicians in all specialties in the immediate vicinity gives added peace of mind to residents and their families.

Residents who are hospitalized at Resurrection Medical Center and then require nursing home care either temporarily or permanently are given priority for beds at Resurrection Nursing Pavilion. Any time a resident needs nursing care, staff members facilitate placement at the nursing pavilion or another skilled-nursing facility.

INDEPENDENCE WITH SECURITY

In the Garden Annex, each apartment is equipped with a Lifeline security system, an emergency call system linked to a central switchboard that beeps an atten-





dant and indicates the apartment number when a resident pushes a call button. Two attendants are on duty during the day; one during evenings, nights, and weekends. Most are certified nursing assistants, although this is not a requirement and they do not function in any nursing capacity.

Attendants check on residents routinely throughout the day—resetting the Lifeline buttons every 12 hours, distributing evening snacks, observing the apartments for potential problems, and checking more frequently than usual if they know someone is not feeling well. Mealtimes, exercise sessions, and activities also provide staff daily opportunities to monitor residents. Family members are notified immediately if any problem arises.

The atmosphere of the Garden Annex is far removed from that of a nursing home. Attendants wear street clothes, and residents are free to explore the spacious grounds and to come and go as they please. When residents leave the premises, they sign out and list the name of a person accompanying them.

FINANCIAL APPEAL

The fee structure in the Garden Annex is another asset. Residents pay no entry fee, only a monthly rental fee, which includes all services provided. They are responsible for their own telephone and electric bills. The Garden Annex costs considerably less than a skilled nursing facility. Monthly fees are approximately one-third the cost of the cheapest semiprivate room at Resurrection Nursing Pavilion.

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A TRADITION OF COMMITMENT

Resurrection Retirement Community opened in August 1978 in response to needs for senior housing. A meeting of community residents in 1976 indicated a growing enthusiasm for the project, and more than 500 applications were received. The Sisters of the Resurrection viewed this as an opportunity to extend their commitment to the elderly population on Chicago's northwest side.

The need for such housing is evidenced by the facility's 90 percent occupancy at its opening and consistent continuing occupancy rate of 97 percent. In its nearly 15-year history, the facility has expanded three times, growing from 232 apartments to 473. Today, it is the fourth largest Catholic retirement housing facility in the nation.

The Garden Annex, which opened in September 1989, was the final phase of construction at the retirement community. In a large retirement complex, to "age in place" and maintain their independence, some residents need more services. Hence the Garden Annex was developed. About half its residents transfer from the general independent apartments. They find it more acceptable to continue living on this campus.

Residents thrive in the community spirit of the Garden Annex. The socialization and support afforded by an "extended family" of residents and staff, coupled with adequate nutrition and activity, enhance their well-being and alleviate or offset health problems. □

UNIQUE PERSONALITIES, COMMON BONDS

Residents come to the Garden Annex from apartments at Resurrection Retirement Community or elsewhere. Although their backgrounds and their needs may vary, they all find comfort and security in their new home.

- Margaret, 95, was an original resident of Resurrection Retirement Community. After 14 years in a regular apartment there, she moved to the Garden Annex after surgery to improve circulation in one foot. Although she has less space in this apartment, she finds her new surroundings comfortable and enjoys visiting with her friends and neighbors upstairs. Aside from declining vision, she has no complaints. She maneuvers easily with a walker and participates regularly in exercise sessions. The former librarian now "reads"

with talking books and keeps up with the outside world through her radio.

- Martha, 85, came to the Garden Annex in the summer of 1991. She previously lived with family in a Chicago suburb and sees her family frequently. But she says life at the Garden Annex is much more peaceful than in a household of active teenagers. She comes and goes as she pleases and does her own laundry and personal chores.

- Lillian, 78, was an original Resurrection Retirement Community resident and the first occupant of the Garden Annex. As her ability to remain independent declined, she requested a move to the new facility and eagerly awaited its opening. The additional services permit her to continue a comfortable life in a familiar setting with longtime friends

nearby.

- Fr. Robert, 83, came to Resurrection Retirement Community seven years ago. He has undergone two surgeries at Resurrection Medical Center and spent nearly three years at Resurrection Nursing Pavilion on two separate occasions. During one lengthy stay at the nursing home, he gave up his apartment. Fortunately, the Garden Annex was open to welcome him back to the retirement community when he was able to leave the nursing home but still needed some assistance. The retired priest, who walks with a cane, still celebrates Mass at the retirement community. He also leads exercise classes, plays cards with his friends, and enjoys musical programs at the facility.