

# THINK GREEN

## It Pays To Be Green

Members commit to the green scene





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LeadingAge New York



Mission Statement

*To create the future of aging and continuing care services in New York State.*

Our national partner, LeadingAge, is an association of 6,000 not-for-profit organizations dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging. Together, we advance policies, promote practices and conduct research that supports, enables and empowers people to live fully as they age.

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Founded in 1961, LeadingAge New York represents more than 500 not-for-profit, public and mission-driven senior care providers, including nursing homes, senior housing, adult care facilities, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living, home care and community services providers which serve approximately 500,000 people across New York each year.

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## Big Rewards When You Go Green

In today's tough economic environment, the motivation for going green is no longer simply altruistic. Environmental stewardship is still an important factor and financial incentive is now a key driver. Sustainability initiatives can save natural resources, increase marketability, aid in developing partnerships and attracting additional funding, all leading to a better bottom line that will help further your mission.

This issue of LeadingAge New York *Adviser* spotlights stories of sustainability practices as planned business decisions. Many of the projects featured also satisfy resident wants and needs, and involve them in planning and execution. In some cases, an additional goal is involving the external community. In all cases, it's clear that going green doesn't have to cost a lot and can lead to big rewards.

*“It's clear that going green doesn't have to cost a lot and can lead to big rewards.”*

In the preface article, *It IS Easy Being Green*, LeadingAge NY Housing Policy Analyst Ken Harris outlines some benefits of developing sustainability programs. *Thumbs Up to Rooftop Gardens*, shares the stories of how Wesley Communities in Saratoga Springs and McGraw House in Ithaca implemented gardening programs with differing goals. Thinking small to

achieve big goals is part of Kendal's core mission and in *Small Steps Lead to Big Changes at Kendal Senior Living Facilities* learn how the Kendal Corporation implemented sustainability projects that can serve as a model for long term care facilities.

Two stories illustrate how member and vendor partnerships can lead to big savings. In *Preparing to LEED the way in Sustainability*, Sisters Lauren Van Dermark and Kay Ryan, from Platinum LEED Certified, Shaker Pointe at Carondelet and Robert Bieter of LECESSE construction, outline the process and reasoning behind this senior community's decision to go green. Jon Braman, of Bright Power and Samantha Schoenberger of Selfhelp Community Services also demonstrate how savings can be achieved in *True Stories in Senior Housing Energy and Water Management*. Learn more about alternative energy sources and their impact on the bottom line in *New Energy Options for Aging Services Providers* by Gordon Boyd of LeadingAge NY Endorsed Vendor Energy Next.

We also want your input and feedback. This issue of LeadingAge NY *Adviser* contains a brief survey designed to learn about more member sustainability initiatives. So take a minute to let us know what you are doing to go green.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James W. Clyne Jr.' with a stylized flourish at the end.

James W. Clyne Jr.  
President and CEO



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## Lisa Marcello, Executive Vice President/CFO, Episcopal SeniorLife Communities!



This issue of *Adviser* spotlights Lisa Marcello, CPA, executive vice president/CFO of Episcopal SeniorLife Communities in Rochester, and new member of the LeadingAge New York Services Board of Directors. Lisa is also a graduate of the inaugural class of LeadingAge New York's IGNITE Leadership Academy.

### **What strengths do you feel you bring to your new role as a member of the LeadingAge New York Services Board of Directors?**

My background as a CPA, as well as my work in new business development at Episcopal SeniorLife Communities, has provided me with experiences that are well aligned with the goals of LeadingAge New York Services. I am able to recognize innovative ideas intuitively, but appreciate the need for analysis and assessment to confirm appropriate opportunities.

### **What made you want to pursue this new role?**

I am interested in having an impact beyond the scope of my job. Participating on the LeadingAge New York Services Board of Directors provides me an opportunity to have an impact on the current issues that we in senior services are facing.

### **What is one big idea you have for the future of aging services in New York and do you see LeadingAge New York playing a role?**

The delivery of services will be significantly impacted by changes in reimbursement. I believe that we in senior services need to get involved because it will be instrumental in making sure those changes continue to address the needs of the individuals we serve. LeadingAge New York will continue to influence these outcomes by providing members with an accurate understanding of the politics and big picture view of what is relevant

### **How has your experience as a Fellow in the LeadingAge New York IGNITE Leadership Academy influenced your leadership style?**

As a Fellow of the LeadingAge New York IGNITE Leadership Academy I have a better understanding of myself and my skills (and weaknesses). As a result I am better able to build effective relationships and positively impact outcomes.

*I have a deep appreciation for our seniors and I want to be involved in activities that will positively impact programs and services.*

(See *Welcome Lisa Marcello* on page 6)



Lisa Marcello... (continued from page 5)

**What would you say to others considering the IGNITE Leadership Academy?**

The Academy provides a unique opportunity to grow individually as a leader, while at the same time gaining a better understanding of our industry and developing relationships with peers and industry leaders that are invaluable to the work we do. There are so many benefits of participation that will be with me forever. I highly recommend it!

**Have there been key people in your life who have influenced you?**

There have been many people who have influenced me and helped me to grow. Most significant are those individuals with whom I share the same core values.

**What is one thing that you strive to achieve in your career?**

I strive to be a leader who is genuine, respected and able to help others to grow as individuals and leaders as well. I have a deep appreciation for our seniors and I want to be involved in activities that will positively impact programs and services.

**What are your hobbies?**

Boating, golf and reading.

**Are you reading anything good now?**

I saw Simon Sinek speak at the LeadingAge national conference in Nashville. I am enjoying reading his book, Leaders Eat Last.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

I am excited about the very innovative initiatives that we are working on at Episcopal SeniorLife Communities. In five years I hope to be able to look back and say Wow! We did it! Reimbursement will be more predictable, quality of care will be defined by the seniors we serve and there will be a smaller gap in the services available and the affordability of those services. 🌱



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## Choose Your Green

by Alyssa Lovelace, government relations analyst

It doesn't take much to become discouraged when we hear of political corruption happening in our own State government. Over the past few years, Albany has seen several elected officials indicted on corruption charges, and a governor stepped-down from his post because of misdeeds. If you watch your local news, it's hard to ignore the fact that the longtime Speaker of the Assembly was indicted on Federal corruption charges. In that particular instance, a man by the name of Carl Heastie, a Democrat from the Bronx, became the new Speaker of the Assembly. Speaker Heastie rose to the occasion and moved his somber Chamber straight into whirlwind budget negotiations. The timing couldn't have been any worse, or better, for that matter.

In times like these, I'm often asked, "how can you stand to be involved in politics considering all of the corruption?" My answer is simple: "There's bound to be a few rotten apples – that doesn't mean the whole bunch is spoiled." There's a process in which our laws are developed, and that is where the fun lies. The politics of it is just one piece of the policy and lawmaking processes. Without politics, good laws wouldn't be passed and poorly designed laws wouldn't be prevented from being passed. At the end of the day, you have to decide for yourself – are you green with sickness over the current state of affairs surrounding certain government officials, or will others be green with envy as they see you become an effective advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves? The choice is yours.

As much as I roam the halls of the Capitol and Legislative Office Building discussing LeadingAge NY priorities, lawmakers really want to hear from

the people who are directly affected by a new law or regulation, especially from within their district. They want to know what their constituents think. To assist

*Without politics, good laws wouldn't be passed and poorly designed laws wouldn't be prevented from being passed.*

with that effort, in January, LeadingAge NY replaced its advocacy action tool, Capwiz, with a newer, modern tool known as Phone-2-Action. Phone-2-Action, like Capwiz, allows you to send letters, Tweet and Facebook your lawmakers. You could even do this from your phone. As always, you can still search for your lawmakers contact information, and in the near future, will be able to send memos of support and opposition developed by LeadingAge New York on issues that will have an impact on provider organizations. This tool, like many available these days, is a way for members to easily engage with lawmakers.

Participation in Advocacy Days is still important, but it's only for one day. By engaging in letter writing campaigns or Virtual Lobby Days, you

(See *Choose Your Green* on page 10)



## Choose Your Green...

(continued from page 9)

can still connect with your lawmakers without an additional expense or braving the weather. As we enter into the final weeks of budget negotiations, we hope you will check out Phone-2-Action, and take part in our many advocacy opportunities. Regardless of who your lawmakers are, let them know that you're taking a stand on the issues that are most important to your organization's success, and the quality of life for people you care for.

Since we officially launched Phone-2-Action in early February, 33% of LeadingAge NY members contacted their lawmakers either by email, Twitter or Facebook, nearly 400 times! The city of Rochester takes the win with most advocacy messages sent, followed by Goshen, NY. The person who received the most emails was Governor Andrew Cuomo, who received 58 emails about recent priority legislation having to do with e-prescribing. The bill, which was approved by the Governor on Fri., March 13, delays the implementation of the e-prescribing mandate for one year. The new effective date is March 27, 2016. The e-prescribing mandate is part of the recent Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescribing (I-STOP) law. LeadingAge NY worked with other stakeholders to advocate for the extension so providers can have more time to ensure the necessary systems are in place for the transition.

Direct advocacy by LeadingAge NY members helped make this extension happen. This is something all members should be proud of, and if the statistics mentioned above didn't make you proud to be an advocate in a time when there's plenty of uncertainty in Albany, then I challenge you to send just one letter to your State Senator and State Assembly member on one budget issue that would affect your organization. It is so easy. The letters are pre-written, the process takes under three minutes and your government relations team is always behind you – regardless of the politics happening in Albany. What are you waiting for? 📧

Keep informed and learn more at <http://www.leadingageny.org/advocacy/>

To learn more about what we can do for you, go to [leadingageny.org](http://leadingageny.org).



*The letters are pre-written, the process takes under three minutes...What are you waiting for?*

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For more than 20 years, LeadingAge NY ProCare<sup>SM</sup> has provided a wide range of high-quality, state-of-the-art clinical, administrative and financial consulting services to member and non-member nursing homes, and other aging services providers on a fee-for-service basis.

Among ProCare's many offerings, below are three you should absolutely consider today.

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- The purpose of the MDS coding integrity audit is two-fold. It ensures that:
  - 1) Services captured on the MDS were appropriately supported by medical record documentation; and
  - 2) Service and supports provided to the residents were properly coded on the MDS to ensure that the appropriate level of reimbursement was received.
- One miscoded ADL can cost \$1,500/month x 20 Medicare recipients = \$30,000/month.
- Some RUG groups are obtained by diagnosis alone. Missing documentation can lead to lost revenue.
- The scheduling and timing of MDS assessments can mean the difference between \$600/day and \$160/day.

Any one of these mistakes will impact your bottom line and profits. Can you afford to lose money? Let our trained professionals show you how to ensure that your facility is being reimbursed properly and appropriately and that you're not shortchanging yourself.

#### Dementia Consulting

CMS is implementing a dementia-focused survey process. Surveyors are routinely evaluating the care

(See *Take it to the Bank* on page 12)

*Let our trained professionals show you how to ensure that your facility is being reimbursed properly and appropriately and that you're not shortchanging yourself.*

# SURVEY



## Take it to the Bank... (continued from page 11)

provided to residents with dementia, the training given to staff and the utilization of non-pharmacological interventions.

ProCare consultants can

- 1) Evaluate your compliance with State and Federal regulations and standards;
- 2) Review operating systems (e.g., documentation and policies) of the units in relation to quality resident care;
- 3) Examine the overall unit culture;
- 4) Look at the level of quality and the innovative nature of the units' programs, design, etc.; and,
- 5) Provide recommendations on the physical plant/design features, functional aspects of your facility as they relate to resident behaviors, and the relationship of design to programs and staff interactions.

*One miscoded ADL can cost  
\$1,500/month x 20 Medicare  
recipients = \$30,000/month.*

(See *Take it to the Bank* on page 14)



## COOL INSURANCE MADE SIMPLE.

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## Take it to the Bank... (continued from page 12)

Those suffering with dementia are among the fastest-growing resident populations. Don't be caught off guard with this new CMS implementation. Our consultants know the rules and will help you understand them too.

### Survey Readiness


Our specialists are able to conduct “mock” surveys, educating staff on Federal and State requirements and assisting your facility in developing corrective actions prior to your DOH survey. The consultants will utilize either the traditional or QIS survey process and focus on areas that would have high potential impact on resident care and safety including falls, pressure ulcers, accidents and medication errors.

ProCare consultants provide a comprehensive evaluation of current systems and processes related to clinical and quality of life areas including nursing, social work and medicine. Current CMS remedies including a Denial of Payment for New Admissions (DOPNA) or a Civil Money Penalty (CMP) can cost a facility thousands of dollars. Therefore, correcting potential trouble areas is critical.

You can maximize your resources and minimize your risk when the surveyors come. Let ProCare's trained, professional consultants be your first line of information so you can minimize penalties and protect your limited resources.

*You can maximize your resources and minimize your risk when the surveyors come.*



Contact Elliott Frost, director of ProCare, for more information and discover how “GREEN” your facility can be. Call 518.867.8383 or email: [efrost@leadingageny.org](mailto:efrost@leadingageny.org) today. 

## Electronic Health Records and Medical Malpractice

Often attributed as a partial cause of the ever-increasing cost of health care, medical malpractice claims are a common, and costly, risk faced by health care providers. However, according to recent research, technological developments in the health care industry may be able to lower some of the risk of medical malpractice claims.

Studies have begun to track the effect that the use of electronic health record (EHR) systems has on preventing medical malpractice claims. EHRs allow doctors to quickly scan patients' medical histories, giving them more background information, which leads to a more accurate diagnosis. It also means avoiding duplication of tests and negative reactions between medications. When all of this information is readily available, doctors and nurses can make better decisions about patient health. Better care means fewer mistakes, which in turn means fewer malpractice claims. The clear record they provide of a patient's treatment history also makes EHRs useful in defending against a medical malpractice claim if one is filed.

### Additional Benefits

EHRs may be able to do more than just help prevent claims; they may also get you a lower rate from your insurer. If study results continue to confirm the connection between EHRs and lowered occurrences of medical malpractice claims, insurers may start offering discounts to facilities that implement such systems.

Going beyond the realm of malpractice claims, EHRs also offer a number of other benefits to both your staff and patients. Once implemented, EHRs can streamline many of your existing processes. Charts no longer need to be physically moved from one location to another. With a few clicks, patient information can be brought up anywhere in your facility instantly. This kind of quick access to patient information means information stays up-to-date and is always on hand. This not only makes life easier on staff members, it also means that patients get a high-quality, efficient care.

EHRs make accurate patient information readily available to doctors and nurses, allowing for a more efficient standard of care that cuts down on potential malpractice claims.

### Implementation

Even though EHRs can simplify operations and save money in the long run, the investment of time and money that is required to switch to a new system deters some health care providers. However, the switch to EHRs may soon be unavoidable. Recently there has been an increased

*(See Electronic Health Records on page 16)*



## Electronic Health Records... (continued from page 15)

focus on EHR implementation by Federal regulators. Fortunately, with the push for a more broad adoption of the technology comes a potential increase in available government funding to help health care providers make the switch.

### Electronic Health Records and Medical Malpractice

When you make the decision to transition from paper records to an electronic system, there will be a learning period that goes along with the implementation process. The full benefit of EHRs cannot be realized unless employees are properly trained in how to use them. If systems are poorly implemented, they will not generate the positive returns they are capable of.

Adopting EHRs takes an initial commitment from you and your staff, but in the long run, they can simplify operations and save money all while helping you provide the best possible care to your patients. 🌱

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## Keeping Your Residents Happy Never Felt so Good!



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We bring the benefits of massage to seniors, veterans and the disabled. To inquire about services, please call (516) 883-1390 or email: [marcs@tendertouchforall.org](mailto:marcs@tendertouchforall.org)



## Massage Therapy – It Does A Body Good

Medical science has proven how important human touch is to the well-being of babies. Activity directors and therapeutic recreation directors know from personal experience what a handshake and soft touch can do to boost the spirits of patients and residents.

### But what about massage therapy benefits for seniors?

About four years ago, Marc Silverstein saw a need. At that time, his elderly mother was receiving care in and out of multiple senior care facilities. Among all the services and amenities that were offered, it was the one that was not offered that stood out in his mind. No one offered massages for seniors.

According to the American Massage Therapy Association, a study of seniors with osteoarthritis compared eight weeks of massage therapy to a wait-list control for 68 adults between the ages of 55 and 75 with radiographically confirmed osteoarthritis of the knee. Participants received an hour-long massage twice a week for the first four weeks of the study intervention, then once a week for the remaining four weeks.

In the treatment group, scores for pain improved by 23 points compared to baseline, stiffness improved by 21 points and physical function disability by 20.5 points. These improvements largely remained at a 16-week follow-up.

This and other studies proving the benefits of massage is the reason Tender Touch For All, a 501c(3) non-profit organization, offers rehabilitative and restorative massage therapy for seniors, veterans and people with disabilities at their residential or treatment centers at a steeply reduced cost.

“We are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for underserved populations, in order to make living more enjoyable for them. We love making a difference in their lives,” said Marc Silverstein, executive director of Tender Touch For All.

“Tender Touch For All provides massages on-site at assisted living facilities, skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers, senior centers, and any location where seniors may reside or be treated.”

Geriatric massage is a form of massage designed to meet the needs of the elderly, he said. It involves the use of the hands to manipulate soft tissues of the body to improve blood circulation, relieve pain and increase range of motion. In addition, geriatric massage addresses the psychological and physiological aspects of aging and its associated diseases.

(See *Massage Therapy* on page 19)

*“The therapy results in an improvement in range of motion, posture, body awareness, skin color, and muscle tone, and provides a social outlet and caring touch for lonely or isolated seniors which can even relieve anxiety and depression,”*

– Marc Silverstein, executive director  
Tender Touch For All





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## Massage Therapy...

(continued from page 17)

“The therapy results in an improvement in range of motion, posture, body awareness, skin color and muscle tone, and provides a social outlet and caring touch for lonely or isolated seniors which can even relieve anxiety and depression,” Silverstein said.

“A typical session lasts 15 minutes per resident and 3 hours for the facility. The program is offered totally free to residents, and the minimal cost is usually covered by the facility itself, or alternatively by a corporate sponsor, or by a private foundation grant,” he said.

Programs can occur in any sectioned off space within the facility as long as it's large enough for a single resident to sit or recline and the Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT) to stand. It should preferably be dimly lit and allow for the playing of soft, soothing music, in order to emulate a spa-setting as much as possible.

“Tender Touch For All massage therapists are all licensed and trained specifically in gentle, therapeutic massage for the senior population – massage that requires a little extra tender loving care, cognizance of health issues and the client's mobility, using techniques designed for aging skin and muscles. They know everything from the proper touch to the most comfortable position and they are trained in the physiological, psychological and sociological aspects of aging,” Silverstein said.

The program has received excellent feedback from both senior care professionals and residents/patients.

“The Hebrew Home at Riverdale is excited to offer our residents' therapeutic massage through Tender Touch For All. Residents and their family members report great satisfaction with the Tender Touch For All Licensed Massage Therapists,” said Mary Frances Thaler, associate administrator, The Hebrew Home at Riverdale, Bronx.

“LMTs are selected based on their caring, compassion and professionalism. The relaxing and calming massage, along with the friendly visit, enhances the quality of life for our residents. Tender Touch For All is consistently providing dependable, reliable and courteous service,” Thaler said.

(See *Massage Therapy* on page 20)



## Massage Therapy...


(continued from page 19)

Her thoughts were shared by Maytha Ramirez, assistant activities director, Willow Towers Assisted Living in New Rochelle, who said, "I'm happy someone thought about providing this service to the aging population. We all know how much they suffer from chronic pain, arthritis and other injuries and for them to get out and get a massage is nearly impossible, and usually unaffordable. I am delighted that you are providing such a great service.

"My residents really look forward to the day the massage therapist is scheduled to attend. They like the one-on-one attention. The LMTs are very professional, friendly and gentle with the seniors in my group. They go the extra mile to make them feel comfortable. Thank you for providing such a delightful service," Ramirez said.

Residents enjoy the service, Silverstein said, so much so that the only complaint is they want it offered more often.

"I think we should have it every week. It makes me feel great. I just wish it could continue forever!" said Irene Goldsmith, 80, resident of Somerset Gardens Senior Living, Plainview, NY

"It does my body good. I feel very relaxed. I love it. I'd recommend it to anyone," said Maxine Flynn, 90, resident of Affinity Skilled Nursing & Rehab, Oakdale, NY 

For further information, please contact Marc Silverstein, executive director, at (516) 883-1390 or Email:

[Marcs@tendertouchforall.org](mailto:Marcs@tendertouchforall.org)



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## New Energy Options for Aging Services Providers

Renewable energy in the form of solar and hydroelectric projects may soon be available to nursing facilities, local governments and others to control costs and reduce our reliance on foreign oil and natural gas.

New initiatives are being offered in New York through new rules adopted last year by the Public Service Commission (PSC). The rules are presently being reviewed and reconsidered, but most facilities in eastern New York and the Hudson Valley stand to benefit in any case.

Renewable energy suppliers SolarCity Corp. (Nasdaq: SCTY), with local operations in Albany, Elmsford and Hauppauge, New York, and Gravity Renewables, Inc., of Boulder, Colorado, with local operations in Saratoga Springs, Leeds and Stuyvesant, New York, have been contracted by Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance (MEGA) through a competitive procurement process, and are presently offering both renewable hydro and solar energy options to qualified non-profits, including LeadingAge member facilities and local governments statewide.

The new program was made possible by a net metering bill sponsored by Senator Elizabeth Little and Assemblymembers Anthony J. Brindisi, Kevin A. Cahill and Jose Rivera and signed into law by Governor Cuomo in 2012. The program will also benefit from Governor Cuomo's NY-SUN Initiative, which provides \$100 million per year to fund solar projects.

These renewable generation facilities will not only provide economic value to energy consumers, they will also help to develop "distributed energy resources" that the PSC is seeking in order to ensure electricity is more reliable and resilient, particularly during and after storms and in periods of high demand. The PSC is looking at innovative approaches to bringing energy consumers closer to the process of redeveloping the grid.

Two examples of new PSC initiatives now under consideration are microgrids and community choice aggregation.

*(See New Energy Options on page 22)*





## New Energy Options... *(Continued from page 21)*

Microgrids are local electric distribution networks that provide greater reliability, and also contain independently dispatched generation sources, whether renewable or not. Critical health care facilities will become a target player in the development of microgrids in coming years, as utilities, communities and institutions collaborate to identify “critical load” and make plans. Funding for planning and development is available through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

Community choice aggregation will allow local governments to competitively bid on behalf of their residential and small customers. This process will bring energy suppliers opportunities to serve large numbers of such customers through one procurement, thereby lowering customer acquisition costs and passing savings back to the consumer.

*(See New Energy Options on page 23)*



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*-Broadlawn Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Amityville*

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Email: [efrost@leadingageny.org](mailto:efrost@leadingageny.org)



## New Energy Options... *(Continued from page 22)*

“The recent State initiatives will allow our participants to meet their sustainability goals, while stabilizing and reducing energy costs, promoting green economic development and creating jobs,” said Ron Feldstein, executive director of MEGA. Feldstein praised the new renewables program as “setting the stage for a new market in sustainable, affordable, renewable electricity across the State.”

Nursing facilities will have the opportunity to enter into agreements, up to 20 years, for renewable energy. The preferred providers will make all the necessary capital investments, and secure any Federal and State incentives that are needed and available. The energy generating units do not necessarily need to be located at the same site as the energy user; they can be anywhere in the same utility territory and electric market region, under the PSC’s rules. So a small hydroelectric project in the North Country could conceivably serve a nursing home in Central New York; a solar farm in the Capital Region could serve a facility in any county in that area.

“Up to now, our customers have been able to support renewable electricity only by purchasing ‘Renewable Energy Credits’ or RECs which support generators hundreds of miles away,” said Gordon Boyd, principal in EnergyNext, Inc., LeadingAge New York’s endorsed energy consulting firm. “Now a facility can be a more direct user of the energy produced from new renewable sources right in their local area.”

“We are excited that our clients can play a role in leading the way for health care, nursing and municipal facilities across New York State to encourage and purchase renewable power,” Boyd continued.

“With a large base of over 200 institutional customers, we hope to foster the generation of a significant amount of renewable power while saving money and creating new jobs.”

“Solar is win-win-win for municipalities here in New York,” said Leon Keshishian, SolarCity’s regional vice president. “Any facility can control costs and meet their sustainability goals with clean solar energy. New York, under the leadership of Governor Cuomo, has taken the right steps to build a clean energy economy and give consumers better energy choices – and this partnership is a direct result of that leadership.”

Solar City in 2014 announced the development of a major plant in Western New York to manufacture solar panels.

*(See New Energy Options on page 24)*

*“With a large base of over 200 institutional customers, we hope to foster the generation of a significant amount of renewable power while saving money and creating new jobs.”*

– Gordon Boyd, principal in EnergyNext, Inc.



## New Energy Options... *(Continued from page 23)*

“New York is fortunate to be home to a large number of small hydroelectric plants” said Ted Rose, CEO of Gravity Renewables, the program’s preferred hydroelectric provider. “Many of these plants have been around for decades but have fallen on hard times, suffering from chronic underinvestment. Thanks to New York State’s remote net metering law, customers can provide crucial support to revitalize these community assets, while receiving price stability and even savings on their energy bills. Gravity is thrilled to have this opportunity across the State to restore these historic assets.”

*MEGA is a Local Development Corporation established more than 16 years ago to serve local governments by group purchasing of electricity, natural gas and other energy products and services. It presently serves 34 county governments and more than 260 municipalities, including a number of county nursing facilities.*

*SolarCity® (NASDAQ: SCTY) provides clean energy. The company has disrupted the century-old energy industry by providing renewable electricity directly to homeowners, businesses and government organizations for less than they spend on utility bills. SolarCity gives customers control of their energy costs to protect them from rising rates. The company offers solar power, energy efficiency and electric vehicle services, and makes clean energy easy by taking care of everything from design and permitting to monitoring and maintenance. SolarCity currently serves 14 states and signs a new customer every five minutes. Visit the company online at [www.solarcity.com](http://www.solarcity.com) and follow the company on Facebook & Twitter.*

*Gravity Renewables is an owner, operator and developer of small hydroelectric power plants in the United States. Gravity Renewables brings long-term, cost-effective clean energy to electricity consumers, helps conserve and restore historical sites, and promotes educational and recreational opportunities in the communities it serves. Gravity Renewables currently has 31 MW of hydroelectric projects operating and under development across the United States, including projects in New York. For more information please visit [www.gravityrenewables.com](http://www.gravityrenewables.com) or contact us at 303.440.3378*

*EnergyNext, Inc. is a buyer’s agent consulting firm, and managed this procurement for MEGA. EnergyNext is based in Saratoga Springs and has managed group energy buying programs for business and government groups since the beginning of energy restructuring in the late 1990s. Principals are Gordon Boyd and Eugene Salerni. [www.energynext.com](http://www.energynext.com). Or 518-580-9244.*





## It IS Easy Being Green!

by Ken Harris, *LeadingAge New York*

Increasingly, Senior Living Communities (SLCs) are incorporating sustainability and “green” initiatives into the fabric of their building features and community programming. Economic, environmental and social benefits often drive the decision but, Leah Horwitz, chairperson of Kendal at Ithaca’s Resident Sustainability Committee may have said it best: “It’s our grandchildren’s lives we are trying to protect. It’s not too late for our generation to make meaningful changes for the environment.”

### Benefits of Developing Sustainability Programs

A growing trend in senior living communities is to add programming that centers on wellness-focussed living that includes environmental or “sustainability” programming. There are many benefits to focusing on sustainability – including adding building features that decrease current and future energy use, taking advantage of Federal and State funding to modernize building systems, and allowing SLCs to market to a growing number of residents (and their families) looking to living in an environmentally friendly community.

Specific benefits for SLCs adding sustainability features include:

- Achieving operational savings in energy use;
- Creating opportunities for Federal and State funding for building upgrades;
- Promoting stewardship of resources and the environment;
- Furthering their community mission;
- Assisting in developing community partnerships;

*(Continued on page 27)*

Take  
this  
survey

Share your organization’s green initiatives with us and we will share them with others. Let’s prove *It IS Easy Being Green* once and for all!

Complete a couple of questions and help another member make meaningful changes and move in a greener direction toward savings.

Click [\*\*HERE\*\*](#)

## It Is Easy Being Green... *(Continued from page 24)*



- Promoting the health of residents, staff and visitors;
- Focusing on wellness programming; and
- Increasing marketing advantages.

**Below are some specific benefits of adding sustainable features and programs into senior living communities:**

### **Operations Savings and Benchmarking**

One of the first steps in developing a successful sustainability program is completing a thorough assessment of all energy and water systems and developing a benchmarking system to track building use. Education on energy and water saving for both staff and residents can result in significant savings. Understanding how and when energy is used can assist in becoming more energy efficient. Energy and water use assessment can be as simple as tracking monthly usage on a spreadsheet and purchasing an online energy benchmarking and consumption

management tool that provides detailed systems analysis data. In addition, local laws may require multifamily properties to track energy use. For instance, starting in 2011, all buildings in New York City over 50,000 square feet are required to submit an annual energy benchmark. Also included in the requirement are properties with two or more buildings that total over 100,000 square feet and are on the same lot.

### **Federal and State Funding**

Federal and State funding incentives can increase the return on investment (ROI) of including building sustainability features. These can include programs through the United States Department of Energy (DOE), the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA), New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Renewal (HUD) and the (U.S.) Department of Health. Depending on the type of senior housing, funding or incentive programs can be


*(Continued on page 28)*



available for incorporating sustainability programs. For instance, through the Better Buildings Challenge, the DOE and HUD partner with multifamily leaders committed to cutting energy waste across their portfolios and providing their energy savings data and strategies as models for others to follow. In addition, several energy savings programs are available for SLCs through NYSERDA, including the Multifamily Performance Partners program that serve as energy advisors with the knowledge and experience to design and oversee comprehensive energy efficiency upgrades.

### **Stewardship of Resources and the Environment**

Many not-for-profit, mission-driven, SLCs include environmental conservation within their community benefit statements. Being stewards of the earth and environment and providing a healthy environment is a vital part of their identity and promise to their residents and to the greater community. Two examples are the Kendal Corporation with two Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) in New York – Kendal at Ithaca and Kendal on Hudson – and The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in Albany.



*Federal and State funding incentives can increase the return on investment (ROI) of including building sustainability features.*

In 2008, the Kendal Corporation adopted a Sustainability Statement that reads:

*“Kendal, as a leading not-for-profit provider of senior housing and services, has an opportunity and societal obligation to demonstrate leadership in supporting and promoting environmental stewardship. Kendal communities will strive to conduct their activities in an ecologically sound, socially responsible, and economically prudent manner. Kendal communities will support the concepts of sustainability in their operations and resident life initiatives.”*

*(Continued on page 29)*

## It Is Easy Being Green... *(Continued from page 26)*

Each Kendal community reports on 13 sustainability metrics being tracked in all their CCRCs. In addition, Kendal at Ithaca has a Resident Sustainability Committee that is a critical driver of all sustainability programming and decisions.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet formed a Home/Land Committee in 1993 to raise awareness among members of the Province about issues that were especially pertinent to the earth and the environment. One of the greatest achievements of this initiative is the Green Hospitality Center and Shaker Pointe at Carondelet retirement community in Watervliet. It's the first SLC to obtain Platinum LEED certification in New York State.

Several other members are incorporating sustainability programs, both large and small, into their communities.

### Community Partnerships

Developing sustainability program in SLCs provides an excellent opportunity to create community partnerships. These partners can include municipalities, schools, businesses and sustainability coalitions. New York State and several municipalities are providing resources for developing "green" programs. Most schools, including grammar schools, high schools and colleges, have sustainability programs and committees. Some SLCs are partnering with these entities for developing intergenerational sustainability programs. Developing these partnerships have several benefits beyond the sustainability programming including increasing name recognition of the senior living community.

### Sustainability programs currently being deployed in senior living communities include:

- Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certification;
- Intergenerational sustainability programming;
- Recycling programs;
- Clothing, furniture and electronics donation drives;
- Resident sustainability committees;
- Resident participation in energy and water conservation efforts;
- Non-chemical lawn and garden applications;
- Organic gardens & planters;
- Permeable paving and sidewalks;
- Solar lighting and purchasing;
- "Farm to table" dining and composting
- Transportation with hybrid and electric vehicles;
- Purchasing EnergyStar appliances
- "Eco" fairs;
- Switching to energy efficient LED bulbs

*(Continued on page 30)*

## Health and Wellness Benefits

Another benefit of developing sustainability programs is that a core mission of environmental programs is a focus on health: health of the earth, health of the community, and health of the individual. Developing sustainability initiatives can have a positive health benefits for SLC residents. For instance, on aspect included in sustainability practices is the use of non-toxic products, including:

- using zero volatile organic compound (VOC) paint, stains and other products;
- using “green” housekeeping products;
- using low (no) toxic pest management products; and
- Ensuring high quality air exchange.

Studies have shown that seniors involved with a “greater cause” like developing sustainability programs for future generations can bring “purpose” to their lives. A study conducted by the Rush Memory and Aging Project followed almost 1,000 people (age 80, on average) for up to seven years and found that the ones with high purpose scores were 2.4 times more likely to remain free of Alzheimer’s than those with low scores. Simply having purpose appears to have a potent ability to improve and extend lives.

Several SLC have embraced incorporating all aspects of wellness for their residents and sustainability programming fits nicely

into this trend. The Highlands at Pittsford has established the “Seven Dimensions of Wellness” that extends beyond traditional exercise and healthy eating initiatives. The seven dimensions include the social, intellectual, physical, emotional, occupational, environmental and spiritual lifestyle at their community and sustainability initiatives pertain to many aspects of their wellness activities.

## Marketing Advantages

Having a sustainability focus in a SLC can provide a marketing advantage. Seniors (and families) are increasingly seeking “innovative” senior living environments that address wellness, technologies, health care and environmental programming. Marketing sustainability can identify your SLC as a caring, health conscience and forward-thinking SLC.

During tours residents can be shown that the community has a commitment to continuous involvement in healthy living and environmentally friendly initiatives.

As more SCLs adopt sustainability initiatives, Kermit the Frog may be encouraged to know that it’s much easier to be green these days. 🌱

Resources: NYSERDA Multifamily Performance Partners: <http://www.nyserdera.ny.gov/Business-and-Industry/Housing-and-Development>



## Small Steps Lead to Big Changes at Kendal Senior Living Facilities

by Leigh Ann Keefer, *LeadingAge New York*

As you step foot onto any Kendal Senior Living facility you'll be captivated by the abundance of wildflowers, birds and butterflies – a soothing vista of natural beauty. What you won't see are the many decisions made during the planning stages that are all designed to ensure that the flowers are the correct species that will attract the right kind of insects and which, in turn, attract the right kind of birds. Each piece of the ecosystem has been carefully planned to keep it healthy and flowing smoothly.

Building environmentally friendly structures has become more than a fashionable trend and more of a necessity. Many long term care facilities have embraced green practices in order to provide a better environment, not only for the earth but for their residents as well. What was once thought to be a very costly and lengthy process can be broken down into small steps that can really add up to big results.

Thinking small to achieve big goals is part of Kendal's core mission and the organization serves as a model of how long term care facilities can pave the way for sustainability projects. To find out exactly what goes into the process of creating green initiatives that are cost-efficient and sustainable, from beginning to end, *Adviser* writer Leigh Ann Keefer sat down with David Jones, from the Kendal Corporation.

The following is summary of key points David considers vital to a successful outcome.

In 2008, the Board of Directors for the Kendal Corporation wanted the organization to develop benchmarks around four main initiatives, one being sustainability. To accomplish this, leadership convened a group of residents, board members and staff from the entire Kendal system and started to talk about how to move the initiatives forward. According to David Jones, **leadership was the first step in making it happen.** "An organization is rare if it can move this forward without leadership supporting it. Having an executive or board that is passionate for it can go far in terms of helping to excite and energize organizations," he said.

**The next step is an educational process.** Leaders must be sure all staff and residents understand how the organization defines



(Continued on page 32)

sustainability, on its own terms. Kendal released a sustainability statement to help everyone understand what is meant when the organization talks about sustainability and why it is important.

**After that, it is time to start setting achievable goals** to get your organization on the track to being successful. At Kendal, Mr. Jones worked with facilities directors and they suggested between 25 and 30 sustainability initiatives that were tossed around then narrowed down to the 13 most important. To refine and narrow the initiatives to a more manageable number, David said that criteria was developed for choosing the final goals that ultimately measured ideas for initiatives on whether they could reasonably be accomplished and if there was already work happening in that particular area that could be built upon. Then **they set the timeline for accomplishing these goals.** It was planned that each Kendal system would be addressing 10 of these initiatives by 2010 and all 13 were to be addressed by 2013.

Once an organization has a game plan on what it needs to do to move forward with its goals of environmental sustainability, **it is important to keep the momentum going through accountability and assessment.** The Kendal Corporation achieves constant momentum by having a meeting every three months, with the designated team, in order to go over how each community is doing on its initiatives. These meetings cover relevant topics and one person from each community will report what they have done in the last quarter that might be of interest to those in the other communities. This keeps the team members focused and moving forward on their sustainability strategic plans and keeps initiatives from sitting on the back



burner. The Kendal Corporation is committed to continuous process improvement to keep people involved and support these goals.

Not only has Kendal designed an effective strategy to manage its sustainability initiatives but it has completed a number of them as well. A Kendal facility in Pennsylvania has achieved a gold LEED certification on a building project that involved 44 resident cottages. During construction, the company took steps to determine the most cost- and energy-efficient way to heat these cottages. Four different tests involving geothermal, heat pump, furnace and AC units were performed and then they evaluated to discover the cost benefits of each. Based on their results they were able to pick the best option for their certification. As part of the continual assessment and improvement process mentioned earlier, this activity was then used as a topic in a quarterly meeting and reported to the committee to ensure that everyone would understand the benefits. It also reinforces the idea of starting with small changes. By simply paying attention to the number and location of windows, lights and thermostats in new building projects, they can have a large impact on the environment.

When it comes to environmental sustainability, there is no doubt that the Kendal Corporation has been leading the way and can offer valuable lessons to other communities as they seek to become more environmentally friendly. It can be as simple as a finding set of willing hands and defining some small steps to create a better environment. Start today! 🌱

## Preparing to LEED the way in sustainability

**W**hat is a LEED certification? The term seems to float around new construction sites more and more these days and it is becoming a well-recognized achievement. But what exactly does it mean and why should you consider it for your future building projects?

LEED, stands for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design. It is a certification program that recognizes best-in-class strategies and practices for “green” buildings. For a building to receive LEED certification, the projects must satisfy specific prerequisites, which earn points to achieve different levels of certification. The rating system consists of four certification levels – from Certified (the lowest), to Silver, Gold and Platinum (the highest). The scale is based on five categories: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources and indoor environmental quality. LEED certified buildings are becoming a much more appealing option for construction sites because they save

money and resources while having a positive impact on the health of residents and promoting renewable, clean energy.

*Adviser* spoke to Sister Lauren Van Dermark and Sister Kay Ryan, from one of the leaders in LEED certification for the long-term care industry, Shaker Pointe at Carondelet, along with Robert Bieter of LECESSE construction, about the process and reasoning behind their decision to go green.

In 1994, the Sisters of St. Joseph at Carondelet, the sponsors of Shaker Pointe, started a coalition for land preservation that quickly grew into a mission for sustainability. This coalition turned into what is now their homeland committee and the sisters went with their guiding philosophy that the decisions made today will take into consideration the future for up to



*(Continued on page 34)*

Sister Lauren Van Dermark, CSJ; Hon. Paula A. Mahan, Colonie Town Supervisor; Sister Kay Ryan, CSJ at the groundbreaking for Shaker Pointe at Carondelet





The Carriage Building, Shaker Point at Carondelet



the seventh generation, so that it is consistently recognized that what is done now has tremendous impact on upcoming generations.

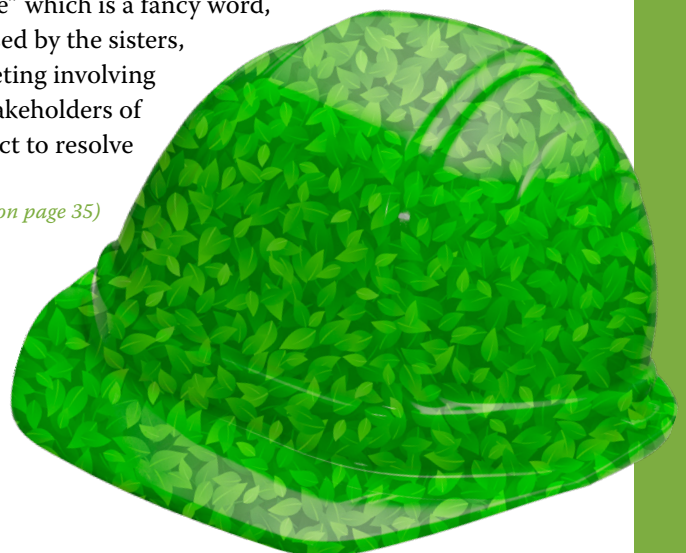
What made the sisters choose LEED? According to Sisters Kay and Lauren, they knew right from the beginning that LEED was the right choice, and that they were not going to aim for the bottom. Sister Kay explains, “I think that for the sisters, going for the highest [LEED certification] that we could possibly get was really important, because not only do we have a homeland committee, but we have a congregation chapter that talks about environment, and sustainability as the goal. We started saying we do not want the lowest but rather see how high we could go.” This is where the decision to choose the right team for the job became important. The sisters chose to work with LECESSE construction, KDA architects, and Steven Winter Associates (SWA), to make their LEED visions

a reality. According to Sister Lauren, “Other than [LECESSE’s] excellence in senior building, and their reputation, LEED certainly did help us to say ‘yes, this is the construction management that we want for Shaker Pointe.”

KDA Architects are also very involved in LEED initiatives and so they were the next perfect fit for Shaker Pointe. Then they decided to work with Steven Winters Association, who fell nothing short of their LEED reputation. According to Sister Lauren, “what you do is look for an agency that is experienced and knows about LEED and putting it together. Steven Winter Associates is the one that’s known in this area and we have been extremely satisfied with them.”

After the choices were made, the next step was having the first “charrette” which is a fancy word, fondly used by the sisters, for a meeting involving all the stakeholders of the project to resolve

*(Continued on page 35)*




## Preparing to LEED the way... *(Continued from page 34)*

conflicts and create solutions before the project even starts. This is one of the most, if not the most, important pieces according to Sister Kay, “in addition to hiring the project team we had a meeting of the construction managers, engineers, HVAC personnel, etc. in preparation to say ‘if you are going for LEED these are the things that you need to put into place – from the type of materials the architects ordered to the design of the HVAC, plumbing and insulation systems.’” The charrette is so important because this is when you would decide what level of LEED you want to achieve, according to Bob. “It makes a difference, because if you want to achieve a certain level then there is a certain amount that you need to do and obviously if you are going for the highest level it is the most involved.” The sisters had their minds made up on going for the highest certification they could and with the building process in place, it was then time for the inspections to make sure everything was going according to plan. This is where the sisters pointed out that it is important to be in a partnership with your construction agency and make sure that your extra time and efforts are put into place properly and adhered too in order to get the best rating possible on inspections.

The construction team was also focused on recycling during this project as it adds points to the certification. Shaker Pointe worked with Waste Management, which logged the tonnage of all the materials used and sorted during production. These separated materials are then weighed against the percentage of what is needed to achieve for how much of the waste is recyclable. “So if we have 100 tons of waste and 40 tons is recyclable we tell Steven Winters Association and we get a point value for that,” says Bob.

With such a precise certification, there can also be many challenges that arise, and the sisters wanted to emphasize that a good team can be invaluable in mitigating challenges. They could not praise LECESSE and SWA enough for the help that they provided in the paperwork process. “They will help you endlessly with your New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) paperwork and make sure that it is submitted properly, which can offset your costs in the end,” says Sister Kay.

If the idea of LEED certification has been floating through your mind for an upcoming project then maybe now is the time to consider going forward. The benefits of building green are worth it in the end. 




## Making a Difference One Banana Peel at a Time

by Leigh Ann Keefer, *LeadingAge New York*

Converting plant waste and organic matter into compost has a number of benefits for the environment. Composting helps keep vegetable matter out of landfills. In addition to keeping landfills from filling up prematurely, composting minimizes the pollution they create, helps minimize landfills' contribution to climate change, feeds and improves the soil and minimizes the need for chemical fertilizers in some areas.

Susan, a resident at Avila Retirement Community, is passionate about the benefits of recycling. When Susan began living at Avila, she was determined that her new home should practice composting and other activities that could help to improve the environment so she began educating staff and the administrator to help everyone understand the benefits of composting.

After conducting some research, the retirement community came to understand the value of composting and believed that off-site composting was the best option. They turned to Empire Zero to help implement and maintain their composting program. Empire Zero offers an easy to use compost-recycling service where large totes are filled with composting material on site and are exchanged for empty totes when filled. The composting material is taken off-site and composted at a composting facility. The only work for Avila staff and residents is simply remembering to place materials that can be composted into the correct bin. It's that simple!

According to Empire Zero, the key to a successful compost-recycling program is education, cleanliness and having realistically achievable goals. Composting is such a simple and easy way to convert your organic matter into something other than trash. Small steps like this can lead to environmental growth on a larger scale. With the continued guidance and education on the importance of this to staff and with the help of Empire Zero, Avila has been able to make progress in the green movement one banana peel at a time. 



### Compostable Matter Only

#### No Plastic of any Kind:

Portion Cups  
Butter/Margarine Cups  
Gloves  
Wrap

#### And No:

Wax Bags  
Pink Towels  
Hair Nets  
Styrofoam  
Foil





## True Stories in Senior Housing Energy and Water Management

*Jon Braman, vice president of strategic initiatives, Bright Power*

*Featuring: Samantha Schoenberger, director of housing development and sustainability for Selfhelp Community Services*

### Are you throwing money out the window?

In November 2013, as New York began its descent into winter, Samantha Schoenberger, director of housing development and sustainability for Selfhelp Community Services, began to get a lot of heating complaints from one of her seven senior housing facilities. Residents were calling, reporting problems. Building staff visited units and verified something was wrong. But not what you might think – the apartments were **too hot**. A look at heating metrics in Selfhelp's EnergyScoreCards, an online benchmarking tool, provided to Selfhelp by Bright Power, confirmed that consumption at the property was higher than it should be.

Schoenberger reacted quickly, visiting the property and embarking on a thorough inspection of the boiler and heating control systems with the building

maintenance supervisor. After several hours of investigation, checking each system set point, reading the heating control manual and talking on the phone with the heating control manufacturer, Tekmar (**Figure 1**), Schoenberger had diagnosed the problem. The heating system did not have what is called an 'Outdoor Reset,' that is, it was not reacting to outdoor temperatures, sending very hot 180 degree water around the building constantly on cold and mild days alike. While a new control would be required to automate the solution, Schoenberger immediately created a simple chart with instructions for the super on how to make these adjustments manually based on outdoor temperature.

Does this kind of thing have any real impact? By the time summer of 2014 arrived, after one of the harshest winters in recent memory, Schoenberger's simple, no-cost change had saved over \$5,000 at the property (**Figure 2**).

*(Continued on page 38)*



*Figure 1*

Figure 2



Overheating is a common problem in multifamily buildings and can lead to substantial energy waste. If you see a building with open windows in the winter, you can bet it's overheated and money is literally flying out of the window. Solutions can be expensive. Low-cost and quick solutions, as shown above, may exist but typically require an attentive and experienced energy manager to identify. Overheating can be difficult to spot across a portfolio while sitting in a central office. Overheating does not lead to violations. Residents are less likely to complain if it's too hot than if it's too cold. In other cases, residents may suffer cold temperatures in silence if past complaints have not been addressed. Energy problems can persist for years, wasting a lot of money that would have been better spent on improving the building, providing services for residents or simply maintaining quality affordable housing and care for seniors.

### So how did Schoenberger and her team find and address the problem so quickly and effectively in the story above?

Looking more closely at the story, we can see critical steps involved:

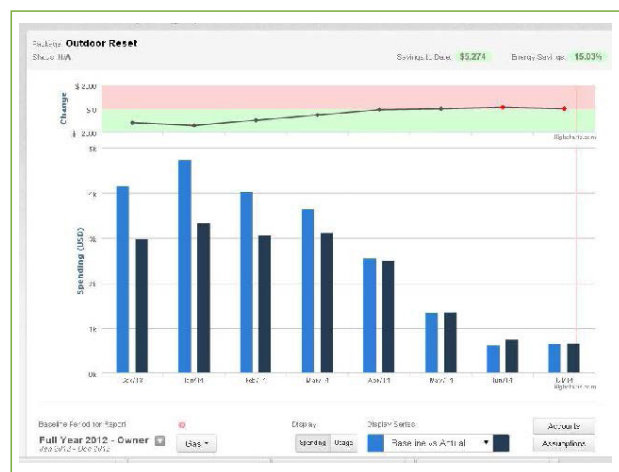
- 1. Find.** Complaints about overheating were only captured because residents had been notified to write any heat concerns, including overheating, on a standard work order form, and were reminded of this in a monthly facilities

newsletter. Maintenance staff had been trained to verify heating complaints by visiting a unit and recording actual temperatures, and to confirm operation of the heating equipment. Actual consumption data for each property was available at any time through the online EnergyScoreCards tool, a service provided to Selfhelp by Bright Power. While this system had taken some time to institute across the portfolio, by the time the autumn of 2013 arrived, the system was working smoothly.

- 2. Fix.** Once Schoenberger arrived at the property to troubleshoot, other challenges presented themselves. Experience with past weatherization projects and training in building science, enabled Schoenberger to methodically troubleshoot heating system controls at the site, consult the manuals and call the manufacturer on questions she couldn't answer herself. This process took several hours, but resulted in a successful diagnosis and a low-cost fix.
- 3. Follow.** Finally, ongoing tracking of gas use in EnergyScoreCards allowed Schoenberger to look back and see the impact of the change. In this case – significant! It's worth noting that EnergyScoreCards has a weather normalization function that allowed Selfhelp to quantify the actual benefit even during a cold winter when gas use would have been expected to be higher than normal.

(Continued on page 39)

Figure 3



## True stories... (Continued from page 38)

This is an example of what we call energy management (and it works for water too). No single product, project or person can comprehensively keep your buildings comfortable, safe and efficient over the long-term. It takes a holistic team approach.

### Is your organization set up for energy and water management? Here are some questions to ask:

- Do you have systems to benchmark consumption and spending?
- Are there protocols and training for maintenance staff?
- Is there ongoing and clear communication with residents around energy and water issues?
- Do you have an inventory of building systems and records of renovations and repairs?
- Is there periodic reporting on savings and trends to executives?
- Is there someone at your organization - like Schoenberger - with the experience and capacity to identify, implement and track fixes big and small? If not, do you have a plan to acquire or outsource that capacity?

### Down the drain?

Is it possible that one of my properties spends more than it should on water? Could it be that some use two or three times as much? How would your CFO, executive director or residents and their families feel learning that thousands, if not tens or hundreds of

thousands of dollars had been wasted on needlessly high water or energy bills?

When Selfhelp first began to benchmark energy and water consumption, it became clear that some properties were spending too much on water. In the New York City area, some properties are on “frontage” or a flat rate billing program for water. The flat rate program charges an average per apartment cost. If a property’s actual usage is below the assumed average per unit rate, real savings can be had just by switching to metered billing (**Figure 3**). Two such properties were identified in Selfhelp’s portfolio.

Before switching to metered billing, however, Bright Power and Selfhelp installed their own meters to verify consumption and look for leaks. This was a prudent step – after the switch Selfhelp would be subject to higher charges based on consumption, so leaks or inefficient fixtures would have been a real cost.

Once current consumption was verified, Bright Power and Selfhelp embarked on a three-step process:

- Perform detailed surveys and upgrades of water fixtures at the two sites to reduce consumption;
- Work with the city to switch to metered billing; and
- Monitor water use on an ongoing basis to ensure it stays low.

Water upgrades in this case went beyond installing efficient toilets, shower heads or faucets, some of which were already in place. Testing revealed that many toilets were using

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significantly more than rated – 2.2 Gallons Per Flush (GPF) on a toilet rated 1.6 GPF, for instance. Along with new fixtures, repairs included new flush and fill valves, tub diverter replacements and fixing apartment leaks. These upgrades in combination with the rate switch produced savings of more than \$50,000 in the first quarter. In this case, the large financial savings just from the metering switch enabled the physical upgrades to be paid for out of savings – with no up front cost to Selfhelp.

At the same time, Selfhelp implemented a water repair program. Each time a super enters an apartment for routine repairs, the toilets and faucets are inspected for any unreported leaks or drips. Small leaks can go unreported by tenants since they may not impact their daily life. It will take ongoing monitoring, communication and attention from staff to ensure water consumption is maintained or decreases over time and does not creep back up.

### Where to start?

Even with successful examples like those above, energy and water management can be daunting. Small organizations may not have dedicated staff to oversee energy and water. Monitoring and prioritizing actions across a large portfolio presents other challenges.


A first step for most organizations is benchmarking, or the process of comparing energy and water consumption and spending to peer buildings, and to your own buildings over time. Benchmarking can be done with basic property information (e.g. square footage, units and number of bedrooms) and utility bills – no new hardware or onsite engineers are required. Only a few years ago it was difficult to find any information on typical energy and water use

in senior properties, but that situation is changing rapidly. In 2014 Portfolio Manager, the EPA's free online benchmarking tool, released a 1-100 score for energy efficiency in multifamily buildings.

The EnergyScoreCards proprietary database itself has data on over 500,000 units of housing. Collecting bills can be a hassle, but online tools such as EnergyScoreCards can automatically retrieve utility data from many providers and automate analysis and reporting which previously would have to be done in spreadsheets.

If you're new to benchmarking (or haven't had great experiences in the past) here are five questions to ask of a benchmarking tool or service:

- 1) How much will it cost in terms of money and staff time to gather the necessary information and get started with the tool?
- 2) Does the service include sufficient support from a knowledgeable energy analyst?
- 3) Are weather- and price-normalized metrics provided so I can see changes in performance and not just weather?
- 4) Will the reporting capabilities provide info for both the property and management levels in my organization?
- 5) Does the provider have experience with senior housing?

If done right, benchmarking will tell you how your buildings are performing now and provide insights on the best opportunities for improvement. 



## A Green Thumbs Up to Rooftop Gardens

by Leigh Ann Keefer, *LeadingAge New York*

**G**ardening can be one of the most rewarding and enjoyable outdoor activities available, no matter what the person's age. It creates a connection with nature and communion with those that share the joy with you, and the fruits of your labor can be quite sweet indeed. Whether beautiful flowers or a basket of large, juice tomatoes, the rewards are endless. For the residents of senior living communities, gardening is a rewarding activity allowing them to enjoy the beauty of nature in their own backyard.

**McGraw House, Ithaca** is a six-story, T-shaped building with 105 apartments for seniors. When McGraw house was first envisioned, John Reps, Board member and Professor of Planning at Cornell, had the insight to suggest adding a rooftop garden where residents could garden or simply enjoy the outdoors and a stunning view of the surrounding Ithaca hillside. Since the building would ultimately occupy most of the property, leaving very little outdoor space for resident use, finding room for green space was critical.

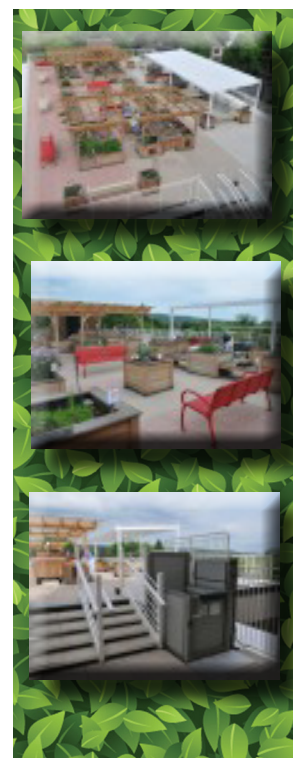
Recognizing the need during the planning stages was critical because the roof had to be built using special specifications to support the weight of a garden as well as residents. The rooftop gardens were opened in 1971. In its original construction, the roof deck contained about 20 planting boxes and could be reached only by climbing stairs. It was quickly realized that they were inaccessible for residents with mobility issues.

The rooftop garden was renovated in 2012 and ultimately doubled the number of garden boxes, including boxes set at a variety of heights to accommodate people

who preferred to garden sitting or standing. The new design also added storage bins and a wheelchair lift so the deck would be accessible to all residents, regardless of mobility.

The new McGraw House rooftop garden is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year and the gardening boxes are a hit! Residents love that it gives them a place to garden that is secure, protected from animals and provides access to sunlight on regular basis. Gardening boxes are assigned to participating residents in March, with many keeping the same box from year to year. Sometimes there are vacancies and residents can have two boxes at a time to use.

Additionally, there are hanging baskets and humming bird feeders for the residents who still enjoy the beauty but prefer a less hands-on approach. Residents buy their own flowers, herbs and vegetables for planting. Carol Mallison, Executive Director of McGraw House, says that it is a lot of fun to be a part of, and that the residents like to have an informal competition for the largest tomato. It is small things like this that bring residents together and remind them what it feels like to be home again.



*(Continued on page 42)*

### Wesley Senior Care Community in Saratoga Springs

is another facility that involves residents and community members in gardening. The garden was started by a long-time Saratoga resident, Susan Bokan, who had become smitten with gardening after she grew an assortment of vegetables at her home. As a fan of local, healthy foods, she wanted to start a community garden that would be readily accessible to gardeners who otherwise wouldn't have access to a garden because of the challenges of living in a city.

Wesley made many attempts to start a garden but struggled with finding funding and land. With the help of Susan, they were able to raise more than \$10,000 from contractors and building supply companies to make the dream a reality.

The garden has become so popular among the residents of the Wesley and greater community that people have to apply for the boxes through a lottery system. Out of 50 boxes available, about 15 go to the residents of the Wesley community, and the remaining boxes go to the community residents. The boxes require a \$25 annual fee, which allows the members of the community to come onto the property and grow vegetables and

flowers to their hearts content. This minimal fee helps pay for the extras that are needed, and marketing assistant Nikki Williams tells us that in the spirit of community people will sometimes share their seeds with others in an effort to spread the wealth.

The gardens are all organic and to support the garden Wesley's on-premises Café saves food for composting in the gardens. Once a month, in the summer, the community holds a garden party with food and drinks, and at the end of the season, they host a harvest dinner where people bring food to end their gardening season on a delicious note.

It seems like gardening is catching on within senior care and living facilities. Gardening is a fun way to enjoy the outdoors, get moderate exercise and participate within the community while literally enjoying the fruits of labor. It also allows elderly residents to feel more at home and enjoy nature while doing something that they might otherwise have abandoned when making the life transition into a senior care facility. It is a great way to get them involved, whether a resident is sociable or more reserved, gardening is the perfect way for everyone to go green! 🌱





## Why Build Green?


If you're a consumer, it's hard to not notice that Green is in. Manufacturers are constantly promoting the environmental friendliness of their products. Green construction has also increased significantly over the last 10 years, but the questions remain; is there a real benefit to seniors from Green construction, what does it really cost and are there any tangible marketing advantages? Recent hard facts shed light on these questions.

Since 2008, LECESSE has constructed 12 LEED certified communities. Client polls show how the buildings are performing and the effects on their marketability. The benefits of building green are very straight forward; higher energy efficiency, improved wellness and, perhaps most significant, comfort. These LEED certified buildings average 25 percent better performance than standard energy code. On a recently constructed Independent Living Unit (ILU) project of 71 units, this translates into \$3,350 per month in gas, electric and water savings...forever. LEED buildings utilize low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) products and better air filtration/ventilation; a real benefit for seniors who have compromised respiratory function. And the LEED Homes program places a premium on reducing outside air infiltration. This reduces unwanted drafts and cold spots in the buildings making residents more comfortable during the long New York winters.

So what do residents think of this? Is there a defined marketing advantage? The answer to this is universally clear. Seniors are motivated by health and wellness (sound like a familiar theme) and therefore believe building green is a great idea and will choose a green building over others right up until they have to pay more for it. The good news for New Yorkers is, they don't have to pay more.

There was time when United States Green Building Council (USGBC) had a "one size fits all" green building rating system known as LEED NC. It was a great start, and a very applicable rating system for high-rise office buildings in urban settings. Unfortunately, it was also a very expensive rating system to employ particularly when applied to low rise residential senior housing projects in rural settings. That has since changed and now the USGBC has multiple rating systems for specialized project types that are more applicable and affordable. For our industry, the USGBC recommends the LEED for Homes Multi-family rating systems and which allows us to use that system for all levels of care including assisted living and skilled nursing facilities. This seems to be a little known fact in the health industry. Without getting into the details of this rating system, it is very well aligned with standard senior housing industry practices and development. Many points in this system are achieved "automatically" during these projects making implementation and development very affordable.

*(Continued on page 44)*



For that recently constructed 71 unit ILU wing which received a gold rating in LEED for Homes, LEED registration, certification, consulting and construction premiums totaled \$1,550 in

additional costs per unit. Now the really good news: the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA) offers incentives for green multi-family construction and those

currently average \$2,000 per unit. So in the end you can be green, improve your residents' wellness and your bottom line.

***Now that's building smart!*** 



This issue of **LeadingAge New York Adviser** marks a change in how the **Noteworthy** section is presented. In an effort to include as much member news and as many photos as possible, the new look will feature pictures and links to press releases submitted by members and other partnering organizations. All member press releases will be posted as soon as they are received to the **LeadingAge New York** web site and the link will also be included in the next issue of **Adviser**.

## MEMBER NEWS

# NOTEWORTHY



**THE WARTBURG**

Wartburg's puppetry program helps Alzheimer's and dementia patients.

Jennifer Hunnicutt named director of nursing for M.M. Ewing Continuing Care Center at UR Medicine's Thompson Health and the center's medical adult day program, The Brighter Day.

**M.M. EWING CONTINUING**



**CARE CENTER**



Girls Scouts Earn Badge at Presbyterian Residential Community

(See Noteworthy on page 46)





Arlene Q. Vermynen elected to Board of Directors of St. Johnland Nursing Center in Kings Park



Adult Medical Day Care Program raises funds for Woodhaven

## MEMBER NEWS

# NOTEWORTHY

Jefferson's Ferry volunteer squad helps neighbors in need. Assisted living and skilled nursing residents give back to the community

## RIVERSPRING HEALTH

*RiverSpring Health Overnight Program featured on Kaiser Health News–Awake, And Safe, All Night Despite Dementia*

*Please enjoy Dan Reingold's newest blog, "A New Brand with a Century of History" about the exciting launch of RiverSpring Health.*

*A Day in the Life of Serene, therapy dog extraordinaire*







JEWISH HOME LIFECARE

On Dec. 15, singers from Manhattan's Times Square Church sang holiday songs with elderly residents of Jewish Home Lifecare's Sarah Neuman Center in Mamaroneck.

## Jefferson's Ferry

*Jefferson's Ferry wins national award for organization-wide wellness program "Embraceable You"*

## MEMBER NEWS

# NOTEWORTHY



Jefferson's Ferry

Jefferson's Ferry voted Best of Long Island in two categories: named Best Retirement Community and Best Assisted Living.

(See Noteworthy on page 48)

Presbyterian Residential Community names  
Debra Hemming new home care supervisor



## MEMBER NEWS

# NOTEWORTHY



Presbyterian Homes Foundation announces new Board members



Wartburg hires Catherine O'Mahoney  
for community outreach

## THE PRESBYTERIAN HOME & SERVICES

*Presbyterian Residential Community raises funds for AHA*

*Presbyterian Homes & Services appoints Keith Roach new  
Board member*

*Presbyterian Homes Foundation celebrates donors*

(See Noteworthy on page 49)



Heritage Village Retirement Campus & Heritage  
Ministries Management Company names  
Sara McKotch 2014 Employee of the Year

## HERITAGE MINISTRIES

*Heritage Green and Heritage Park celebrate 20 years with  
Heritage Ministries*

*Wrap It Up! Heritage Ministries raised over \$1,800*

*Heritage Ministries raises money for employee's daughter  
recently diagnosed with bone cancer*



**HERITAGE MINISTRIES**

## ST. JOHNLAND NURSING CENTER



## Jewish Home Lifecare

*Blue Hill Troupe's performance  
of "Patience" will benefit Jewish  
Home Lifecare*

*Jewish Home Lifecare's Sarah  
Neuman Center to hold Seminar  
on innovations in long-term  
care: the Green House® model*

Residents at St. Johnland Nursing Center  
have begun a new season of art classes

(See Noteworthy on page 50)

## LeadingAge WNY

*LeadingAge WNY announces scholarship opportunity*

### St. Peter's Health Partners

*Longtime area geriatrician Dr. Michael Wolff  
named chief physician for continuing care,  
St. Peter's Health Partners*

David V. Pomeranz elected president of  
the Board of Directors of LiveOn NY



OTHER PARTNER NEWS

NOTEWORTHY

LEADINGAGE NEW YORK NEWS



Now accepting applications for the IGNITE  
Leadership Academy class of 2015-16

For more information on advertising  
contact [cdegen@naylor.com](mailto:cdegen@naylor.com)



To feature your news items with LeadingAge  
New York send press releases to Kristen Myers  
at [kmyers@leadingageny.org](mailto:kmyers@leadingageny.org)

(See Noteworthy on page 51)

## Welcome New Primary Members

### Primary Members:

Fort Hudson Certified Home Health Agency, Inc.  
VNA Homecare Options, LLC

### Affiliate Member

Andrew Winakor, National Medtrans Network  
Retiree, Dennis Conway

### Associate Plus Members:

Joseph Tomaino, Grassi & Co.

### Associate Members:

Bruce Call, American Health Tech  
Diane E. Meier, Center to Advance Palliative Care  
Keith Smith, Hillyard New York  
Neil Stern, Senior Planning Services  
Emilie Williamson, Senior HousingNet, Part of the Realtor.com Network

# LEADINGAGE NEW YORK NEWS NOTEWORTHY

## Upcoming Conferences and Educational Events

### **April 16-17, 2015**

ADHCC Annual Conference  
Courtyard by Marriott Saratoga Springs

### **April 21-22, 2015**

Housing Professionals Annual Conference  
DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton Syracuse

### **May 18-20, 2015**

LeadingAge New York Annual Conference & Exposition  
The Saratoga Hilton & Saratoga Springs City Center, Saratoga Springs

### **Preparing for ICD-10: Are you ready?**

- Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation, New Hyde Park - **May 27**
- Carondelet Hospitality Center, Latham - **June 17**
- Monroe Community Hospital, Rochester - **June 18**

### **Sept. 1-3, 2015**

Financial Managers Conference & Exposition  
The Saratoga Hilton & Saratoga Springs City Center, Saratoga Springs

### **Nov. 16-18, 2015**

Directors of Nursing Services/Directors of Social Work Annual Conference & Exposition  
The Sagamore Resort, Bolton Landing

Leading-U is offering many audio conferences and seminars. Check out our line-up by [clicking here.](#) 