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Loretto Memory Care Neighborhood is the First of its Kind in Central New York

Syracuse, NY (April 30, 2019) – Imagine riding in an elevator, the doors open and you step into a vibrant village where people are walking in the park, visiting the salon and barber shop, and the “roads” are free of pot holes. The eleventh floor at The Cunningham, Loretto’s residential floor for people with advanced-stage dementia and Alzheimer’s, is this place.

The Cunningham’s advanced memory care floor on Loretto’s main campus has been completely renovated to meet the needs of those requiring skilled-nursing care and their families. The renovation, which took 3 months to complete, represents the completion of the first phase of Loretto’s \$11 million investment in memory care services announced in 2018.



“The revived space at The Cunningham is the only one of its kind in our region. We are very proud of the space we have created for our most acute memory care residents and their loved ones,” said Kim Townsend, president and CEO for Loretto. “The renovation allows residents to receive the best in dementia and Alzheimer’s care while living as independently as possible and allows residents and their families to truly live in the moment.”

The once traditionally designed clinical space has been transformed into a neighborhood focused on providing excellent care while allowing residents to maintain a sense of freedom in a safe environment. The space incorporates innovative technologies and design representing a cutting-edge approach to memory care including:

- Special flooring that mitigates fall risk and is gentle on joints, wayfinding cues to make walking more enjoyable and allowing residents a level of independence,
- Elevators and doors camouflaged with images of landscapes and familiar home scenes to trigger memories, redirect residents and keep them safe,
- Softer lighting, upgraded scent system and calming colors to address sensory needs,
- A neighborhood-feel complete with gathering areas that reflect park settings and a working salon/barber shop,
- Upgraded window treatments to optimize use of natural light,
- And new technology – headphones and computers to provide various options for residents to benefit from calming music and interactive games, and mechanized dogs and cats that meow, stretch and bark, all help to stimulate memory and reduce agitation.

“Loretto has implemented wonderful changes and it feels like home,” said Sheri Freyer, whose mother in law Diane West is a resident. “Now when I visit, we enjoy walks in the park and activities along the way that make our interactions more meaningful. Even on the dreariest days, I come here and it feels like sunshine. There’s also plenty to do for family members of all ages making it more pleasant for visits. It really warms my heart.”

It’s not just the residents and families who are reaping the benefits of the new space, employees are benefiting from expanded access to resident care tools and boosted morale.

“The space itself is bustling and full of energy from residents and their families. The renovations have enhanced the way we deliver care and increased quality of life for our residents while boosting staff morale,” said Tom Schattinger, director of operations for Loretto. “By providing employees with additional tools for care, we have improved their ability to interact with residents clinically and socially which is good for everyone.”

What’s Ahead

The changes at The Cunningham are only the first phase of advancing memory care facilities in Central New York. Loretto working on the Center for Aging Excellence at The Nottingham, including a new living community dedicated to residents living with dementia. An additional 20,000 sq. ft. of space in the Center will provide classrooms, offices and common spaces to support continuing education for staff and family on the care and treatment of those with dementia, as well as to accommodate partners advancing the latest research studies.

Additionally The Heritage, the first residential program of its kind in Central New York created to care for those with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias, will undergo renovations to incorporate the latest designs and technology to support residents with dementia.

Complete details for the project are available at www.lorettocny.org/memorycare.

About Loretto

Loretto is a leader in comprehensive healthcare services in Central New York. As the fourth largest healthcare provider and the sixth largest employer in the region, the 2,500 exceptional people at Loretto's 19 locations deliver extraordinary care to close to 10,000 people of all ages, income levels, and care needs in Onondaga and Cayuga counties each year. From adult day programs and short-term rehabilitation, to the home-like settings in its assisted living communities and skilled nursing facilities, Loretto is actively investing in its employees, in medical research, and in new technologies to improve care in our community, Making Every Day Extraordinary. Loretto: Exceptional people. Extraordinary care. For more information on Loretto, please visit lorettocny.org.

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