



Photo of Saint Joseph Villa lobby mosaic by Julia Henke

An exciting transformation is underway at Saint Joseph Villa as it embraces the *culture change* movement happening in senior living facilities throughout the nation. The goal is to transform the culture of aging based on the philosophy of person-directed care and service.

The culture change movement transforms nursing home and assisted living care from the traditional institutional model to a more home-like community based model. The model honors values and wishes of nursing home residents and those working directly with them. The focus shifts to give residents more control over their daily lives. While residents have had individualized care plans for many years, systems of care are often set up to maximize efficiency, not to address the unique needs and desires of each resident. Take, for example, residents' rising times and bathing schedules. The person-directed model gives the residents greater control over their daily lives. They decide when they want to be in their room, what time to get up, when to eat, bathe, sleep or participate in activities.

"For such a transformation to occur, we need an all-encompassing process of both education to enlighten our minds and formation to enlarge our hearts and a process that will involve everyone," says **Sister Dorothy Aprich SSJ**, Executive Director of the Villa.

Assisting the Villa is Action Pact, an organization considered leaders in this movement of transformation. Over the next two years, Action Pact will help facilitate the culture change process at the Villa. Collaboration with a Steering Team is part of that process. The Steering Team commissions various action teams to focus on specific issues for the purpose of enhancing the quality of life for all who live and work at the Villa. "This process involves cultivating the leadership qualities in every person and empowering our staff to be leaders in their area of responsibility," said Dorothy. "When staff members feel empowered in this way, they have a greater sense of ownership and a deeper sense of commitment."

Sister Betty McVeigh SSJ, Social Worker Assistant, is a member of the Steering Team. "The Steering Team consists of approximately 24 members of the Villa community. The Team includes administrators, sister-residents, and staff representatives from various departments including housekeeping, CNAs, maintenance, nursing, dining services, activities and social services," said Betty. "The Steering Team is appropriately named as we are truly on a journey through

culture change to a heightened meaning of being a *home* for our residents. Although culture change in nursing homes and assisted living homes is a national trend, the focus here at the Villa is a unique one. The Villa community embraces not only Sisters of Saint Joseph who live in a retirement/assisted living setting and who experience community life on the 4th through 7th floors, but it also includes both lay men and women, as well as Sisters on our two skilled care floors (2nd & 3rd). We are Mission driven as we become more and more resident-directed.”

Betty believes the involvement of Action Pact is critical to the successful shift to person-directed care. “Action Pact, the organization hired to assist us in the process of growth, is a very positive aspect of our journey,” said Betty. “The facilitators, especially Megan Hanna, have raised our awareness of important components of *home*, taught us the skills involved in culture change, allowed time for reflection, created group experiences, offered support, and have helped us to stay on target. The three Rs of culture change which we are moving through are: Renewing the Spirit, Reframing the Organization, and Renovating into Home.”

Villa resident and Steering Team member **Sister Marie St. Leger SSJ** is honored to serve on the team. “Everyone on the Steering Team is committed to the Villa and to transforming it to a more home-like atmosphere,” says Marie. “One action team has to do with daily pleasures—things that you enjoy at home such as sleeping late, having a late breakfast, or fixing a snack when you wish. These things can be part of daily living at the Villa. It has been exciting to learn what amazing things can be done. Food service is already changing. Menus are provided daily for our meal selections and the food is served on each floor. Fewer people are taking trays in their rooms.

Real neighborhoods are emerging. It’s wonderful!”

“This is a unique time in our history, both in our congregation and in our nation. As more and more of us enter our retirement years, various kinds of supportive services are needed to enhance our quality of life,” said Dorothy. Today is an ideal time to make such a transition. The Congregation has approximately 835 members, of whom the median age is 74 years. Over the

next 20 years, the Villa will be home to more sisters. “Our experience of living our mission through prayer, community life, and ministry has changed greatly over the years. Our sisters coming to live at the Villa today have very different expectations, needs and desires than in the past. Our goal is to create an environment of home/community in which our residents want to live and, by having the supportive services they need, will continue to live life to the full.”



Pictured at top: from left, Dorothy Apprich SSJ chats with Marie St. Leger SSJ in the Villa Lobby.

Pictured at Bottom: Betty McVeigh SSJ meets with Villa Residents.

Photos by Julia Henke