

# CHOOSING AN ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY

A GUIDE TO HELP YOU FIND THE PERFECT HOME



## What is Assisted Living and How is it Different from Other Senior Living Options?

There are wonderful communities available for the 55+ senior living with active events for their age group. But, if you or a family member needs care or support, an assisted living community might be a better choice. The four primary types of senior housing options are Independent Living (55+), Assisted Living, Assisted Living/Memory Care or Skilled Nursing.

Assisted living is a residential option for seniors who, for the most part, want or need help with various activities of daily living—such as traveling to appointments, meal preparation, and household chores, but do not need the 24/7 medical care or supervision found in a skilled nursing setting.

Even though privacy and independence are encouraged in an assisted living community, it is a great comfort to know that 24-hour assistance is available on site. A good community develops a plan that meets your needs and accommodates your disabilities, while also giving the freedom to do what you can for yourself.



Most communities provide three meals served daily in a common, large dining area, along with providing assistance with your care needs. Other typical services are housekeeping, laundry services, transportation, activities, exercise and wellness programs, medication management, and access to medical services and staff.

If you or your loved one is facing dementia or is in a transition phase of memory care needs, you will want to find a community offering an assisted living/memory care option.

## A Guide to Choosing a Community

When looking at available Assisted Living communities, you will soon discover there are huge variations. This process of searching and ultimately choosing a community can often seem overwhelming!

As you begin your search, try to remember that the amenities of a community matter a great deal, but, in the final analysis, it is the staff and the residents that truly make it a good fit for you or your family member. You can tell a lot about a community by the people who live and work there. You want a community with an active social atmosphere—where the residents are happy and friendly, and where the staff is caring and warm. Make sure that you sense that the community is a place where you or your family member will not only fit in, but will also be engaged in a person-centered manner and have the opportunity to develop new relationships.



It is important to visit a community and to seek feedback from residents and their families if possible. You can also search on-line for reviews for that specific community even before you set up a tour. With due diligence, you will find that it is possible to find a community that is perfectly suited to your preferences and your needs.

## Some Common Questions to Ask and Things to Consider

Every assisted living community is unique, but there are common questions to ask before, during, and after your visit. The checklist below will help you ask appropriate and important questions as you make a well-thought through assessment for yourself or your loved one.

We would suggest that you discover if the community is owned by a corporation or is locally owned. If it is owned by a corporation, you will want to know how easy it is to contact the corporate offices, and if they have a website where you can research their background, values, reviews and certification. If it is locally owned, you should likewise inquire about their values, backgrounds and certifications.

It is also vital to research reviews by peers and resident families. Are they happy? Have

they had a quality, satisfactory experience? Inquire how old the center is, and if they have ever received any awards or commendations.

During your initial conversation, you should listen to how the community is described. Are the terms more person-centered or more institutional? In other words, are they all about the bottom-line or do they genuinely care about the individuals in their care?

The following is a list of specific things you would need to note or ask about during your first appointment and be aware of during the tour.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

- When you arrive at the community, do you like its location and outward appearance? Is it conveniently located and accessible to medical and other public services?
- As you enter the community, do you sense it is inviting, well-ordered and is the decor conducive to what you or your loved one would describe as welcoming?
- During the tour, do the staff members who are carrying out their various duties, offer a warm greeting and give eye-contact with you when appropriate or do they seem overwhelmed?
- Do you notice if the Executive Director or staff member leading your tour speaks to the residents by name and interacts warmly with them throughout the tour of the community?
- Do residents appear to be happy, content and comfortable?
- Do you sense in your tour that the staff member is free to take opportunity to interact with a resident about how they enjoy living in the community?
- Do the residents seem to be appropriate house-mates for you or your loved one?
- Do you observe that staff members are personable and are interacting professionally with one another and warmly with the residents?
- Are staff members appropriately dressed (preferably in uniforms with their



names clearly marked)?

- Do you observe residents' families/guests visiting the community? Are residents' families allowed and welcomed at any time?

## **ARCHITECTURE AND CAMPUS:**

- Make sure the community's architecture is well laid out for your needs. Is it one floor or has multiple floors with elevators?
- Is the community's appearance more like a neighborhood or an institution?
- Are there handrails available to aid in walking in hallways?
- Is the floor plan easy to follow?
- Would doorways, hallways, and rooms accommodate wheelchairs or walkers?
- Are floors made of a non-skid material? Are carpeted areas firm to ease walking?
- Do the common areas of the community have good natural and artificial lighting that promotes a sense of brightness and cheerfulness as opposed to dullness or sadness?
- Are the grounds and buildings clean, free of odors, and appropriately heated or cooled?
- Does the community have sprinklers, smoke detectors, and clearly marked exits?



## **MEDICATION AND HEALTH CARE:**

- What are the policies regarding medication storage, record-keeping, resident assistance with medications, and the on-going supervision and training of staff?
- Is a specific staff member coordinating home health-care visits and other ancillary services from a nurse, physical therapist,



occupational therapist, or hospice? Are there additional charges for any of these services? Is there a list available of these charges?

- What is the specific policy and procedure when responding to a resident's medical emergency?
- Does the community have a Medical Director who is available? To what extent is he or she involved?

## CARE SERVICES OFFERED:

- Does the community have a list of care services available?
- Is there a nurse on staff and is a nurse available on weekends?
- What is the medical and caregiver staff/resident ratio during the week and on the weekend? Are they available to provide 24-hour assistance with activities of daily living (dressing, eating, mobility, hygiene and grooming, bathing, and toileting) if needed?
- Does the community provide housekeeping services in the residents' personal living spaces?
- Are barber/beautician services offered on-site?
- Does the community provide scheduled transportation to doctors' offices and other activities desired by residents?
- How are issues handled on the weekends when full staff is not available?
- Do you sense that the area is secure and what precautions are taken to secure the community at all times?



## HOUSING AND AMENITIES:

- What are the sizes and types of suites available?
- Do residents' suites have lockable doors?
- Are private bathrooms designed to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers?



- Is a model of the apartment or a printed floor-plan available at time of tour?
- What is provided within each suite by the community? Are residents allowed or encouraged to bring their personal furnishings?
- Do all suites have a telephone, cable and Internet access? How are those billed?
- Is a kitchen area provided for resident access to snacks or approved special food items and would they have access to these items?

## **SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

- How are residents made aware of organized activities and daily schedules?  
How does the community encourage residents to participate in activities?
- Are there events specifically planned for residents to get to know each other?
- Are menus for meals accessible to residents ahead of time?
- Are there activities available within the community from resources in the local neighborhood or communities such as, musical events, church related events and activities on specific holidays?
- Does the community allow pets to visit?
- Do volunteers, civic groups, or family members come into the community to help with or to conduct programs?
- Does the community have a ‘file’ of each resident’s interests and life events to better facilitate activities, events and person-centered interaction?



## **FOOD AND DINING SERVICES:**

- Are the meals served in a central dining hall or smaller, more intimate venues?
- Are there efforts made to connect residents in a smaller group for more family like interaction during dinner?
- How do meal menus vary from day to day and week to week?
- What measures are taken and standards kept in how the community provides

three nutritionally balanced meals?

- Are snacks available, and if so, how are the times set for snacks? Is it individualized in any way?
- How or does the community accommodate special dietary needs?
- Under what circumstances would a resident eat meals in their suite?

## **WE INVITE YOU TO TOUR OUR COMMUNITY**

We are fortunate to live in an area of the world with so many wonderful options. As you engage in this quest and consider the best future for yourself or someone you love, we invite you to check us out and take a tour of Camellia Place.

Camellia Place is a distinctive neighborhood-style community conveniently located in beautiful Woodstock, Georgia. We are a new kind of assisted living, committed to adding life to years.

Camellia Place is owned by engaged and committed healthcare leaders. Quality, person-centered care is delivered not only by direct care staff but also through our health and wellness partners. Chef-prepared, meals are served family style in each house. Our abundant activities and opportunities to thrive offer something fun for everyone at Camellia Place.



So call us today. Visit our website or our community for a tour. Bring your check list and check us out. Numerous other satisfied families have discovered life at Camellia Place, and here are a few of their unsolicited reviews:

*“One of the best kept secrets in Cherokee County. The minute you walk on the campus you feel the comforts of home. If you are looking for a new place to call home for your loved one you better hurry because Camellia Place won’t be kept a secret for long.”*

*“Camellia Place is just beautiful, the food is better than my own, and the airy, family-type housing set-up is wonderful, with only 16 residents per home. Thank you Camellia Place, my Mom and I couldn’t be happier.”*

*“I love how the neighborhood concept allows everyone (staff and residents) to form long term relationships.”*

*“There is a lot of personal attention and concentration on detail and having local ownership allows questions and concerns to be addressed quickly.”*

*“I cannot adequately express how happy me and my siblings are with Mom’s care and how impressed we are with the unique model at Camellia Place. Mom has already made remarkable progress and shows significant signs of renewed vitality. The attentive care, kindness, and social interaction have gone well beyond expectation.”*

*“Camellia Place has my deepest thanks and my highest recommendation. Great people. Great model. Great experience.”*



# CAMELLIA PLACE

A CARING COMMUNITY OF DISTINCTION

294 Rope Mill Road, Woodstock, Georgia 30188