

neighborhood

Culture Change



St. John's on the Lake Milwaukee, Wisconsin

When considering the aging process and anticipating our long-term quality of life, how many people look forward to the idea of living in a nursing home? While the original nursing homes were homes where small groups of people resided, the 1960s brought a more institutionalized model into existence. A model that is unappealing to most as they monitor their health and continue to age. Today, there is a movement to eliminate the fear of aging, the apprehension about nursing homes and other long term care alternatives. Health care professionals and designers alike are working to continuously improve the model in order to return to a home atmosphere. This movement is focused on "culture change."

"Culture change" is concentrating on a social model versus a clinical model in creating a supportive living environment for seniors. The goal is to create an environment where residents are empowered and have the freedom to make decisions regarding their daily routine, how they live their lives.

Caregivers will work with the residents and understand their needs so they can make decisions that best suit them. Routines are created based on the residents' wishes and are kept informal like regular home life. The physical environment is residential in nature and less institutional.

Groups or programs such as the Eden Alternative, Green House, Pioneer Network, Planetree Organization and Wellspring have emerged to address culture change and have developed specific models or plans for success. While there are many important components to take into consideration, the physical environment plays a key role in establishing the right atmosphere.

AG Architecture is a full service architectural engineering firm that continues a 40-year commitment to the design of innovative senior living environments. They draw on past residential design experience to address the goals of the culture change movement.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- > **Smith Crossing** is a CCRC located in Orland Park, IL sponsored by Smith Senior Living of Chicago, IL. It opened in 2004 and features 87 independent living apartments. It is being featured as a senior living case study for a tour during The Center for Health Design's — Healthcare Design 2006 (November 4-7 2006 in Chicago).
- > The **Flat Iron Building** is a mixed use project in the Park East corridor designed by AG Architecture. Construction begins summer 2006.



- > Our **updated web site** is coming soon!
www.agarch.com

➤ **NEW COMMISSIONS**

New Construction

A \$38 million CCRC in Des Moines, IA for Wesley Retirement Services, Inc.

Repositionings

Franciscan Village in Lemont, IL

Fairview Ministries of Downers Grove, IL

Additions

Marion Village in Homers Glen, IL

➤ **PROJECTS IN PROGRESS**

Smith Village sponsored by

Washington and Jane Smith completed Phase 1—the construction of an assisted living facility in March 2006. Phase 2 will complete this repositioning project (anticipated completion November 2007).

It includes the demolition of a portion of an existing building as well as the construction of common areas and an independent living unit.

Three Crowns Park, a repositioning

project, is beginning Phase 1 of a new independent living facility and common areas with a new portion of a skilled nursing facility and the remodel of one section of an existing building into a memory care unit. Anticipated completion July 2007.

➤ **AG Architecture** has elevated

Tony Luciano, PE to Senior

Associate. With ten years of experience in mechanical engineering, outstanding people skills, a solid work ethic and accomplished professional credentials, Luciano has been rewarded for demonstrating a superior level of commitment to **AG Architecture**.

Project Profiles

Highland Gardens



Milwaukee received recognition as one of six communities that won World Leadership Awards from the World Leadership Forum. Salt Lake City, Utah; Madrid, Spain; Lagos, Nigeria; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; and Port Elizabeth, South Africa were also recognized by this non-profit organization which highlights work that focuses on urban revitalization, education and the environment. **Hillside Terrace, Lapham Park, Parklawn** and **Highland Gardens** are revitalized public housing projects sponsored by the Milwaukee Housing Authority and designed by AG Architecture. They were cited for their exceptional contribution to the well being of Milwaukee's urban community.

HIGHLAND GARDENS

Project Details:

Number/Type of Housing Units: 114
(106 one-bedroom units/
8 two-bedroom units)

Total Area (Sq. Ft.): 120,001

Total Construction Cost: \$12,715,540

Construction Cost/Sq. Ft.: \$106

Completion: November 2004

Project Recognition:

Wisconsin Builder Top Projects 2004

*Design for Senior Environments 2006
– Citation of Merit*

*Milwaukee – Mayor's Urban
Design Award 2005*

*Named among America's Best New
Development projects by the Sierra Club*

A Universal Project Goal:

The client was looking to create a facility supported by Hope VI funding to “serve the underserved,” a building that caters to the special needs of a diverse population. Whether inhabited by elderly, developmentally disabled or mobility impaired residents, the design of the individual apartments allows each room to offer total accessibility when needed. To further enhance the quality of life, outside

service providers occupy spaces within the building to provide social and healthcare services to support the physical and emotional needs of each resident. The entire facility caters to residents' needs allowing them to live independent and active lives free from accessibility issues.

The Context and Construction:

The design team researched traditional, pre-war multi-family building typology to find a building form that could coexist with surrounding single family residences. They chose a concept that created two 4-story elements that would establish the street edges while framing a community courtyard. The building is located on the center block with new single family residences being constructed in the surrounding blocks within an urban pattern of streets and alleys.

The client wanted to create a building that truly will withstand the test of time, a building that could stand strong within the community for “100 years.” As a result, the construction materials selected needed to exceed normal multi-family construction standards. The solution includes: a fully non-combustible pre-cast concrete and exterior masonry bearing structure covered with a conventional built-up roofing system.

A Green Approach:

Sustainable design principles are incorporated into the building, but it was necessary to strategically evaluate what could be accomplished due to budget limitations.

Highland Gardens Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Culture Change *continued*

The team had to pick and choose elements that would be most helpful to the building. Recycled flooring, a rain garden and a roof garden were some of the major integrated elements. In addition, demolition materials were salvaged and reused when possible. Daylighting was incorporated with windows and skylights in the stairwells and many common areas.

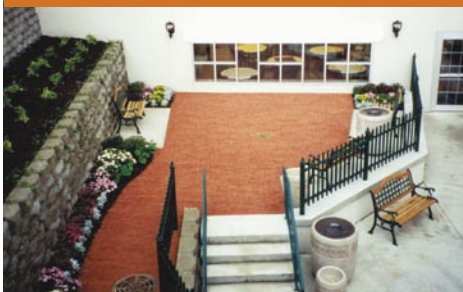
Hillside Terrace



Parklawn



Lapham Park



“There is a distinction between a social model and a clinical model,” comments Gene Guskowski, principal at AG Architecture. “We see it as a variation of a single family residence, but have to think about how we can expand it for a greater number of people. You have to accommodate a large number of people while still keeping it homelike.”

AG identifies the key culturally-accepted components of a homelike setting:

A place to sleep and keep your belongings – a bedroom to personalize

A place for personal hygiene – a bathroom

A place to cook and sustain yourself – a kitchen

A place to socialize – a living room

Regardless of square footage, these are the components that make up a home. The question is how to maintain a homelike environment when serving 10 or 12 residents. For AG, the challenge is expanding the occupancy or size of the facility while still maintaining the home setting.

AG finds the critical components in developing the plan to be:

The scale of the spaces

The interconnectivity of spaces

The use of natural light

When working on new construction there is more freedom to define the spaces and create different patterns. However, when working with an existing building the challenge is carving the needed space out appropriately based on the existing floor plan.

According to Guskowski the size of the spaces are important, in particular the scale. The size of the rooms should be similar to those we have become familiar with in a typical single family home.

In addition, the interconnectivity of spaces and the ability to lead the residents is important. “The most basic idea is to distinguish between stop and go spaces,” describes Guskowski.

“It is critical to easily and clearly get people to a destination but then to make that space cozy and inviting once they have arrived there. A stop space, like a small parlor or family room, is one where you can focus on an activity of conversation or just observe the world and people around you. Natural light and abundant availability of exterior windows further help to enhance the cozy feel we have become accustomed to in our favorite rooms in our homes.”

At the same time the needs of the operational staff must be addressed. It is crucial to maintain the cozy home appeal for the residents, while providing caregivers quick visual access to keep an eye on all of the people. “We think this concept can be creatively balanced to be mutually inclusive rather than exclusive,” comments Guskowski.

AG continues to challenge and explore the topic of culture change. The goal is to create “rampant normalcy,” while facilitating a smooth transition in lifestyle and independence from the home to the new environment. They continue to refer to a typical home and examine how to translate key components of the house into a large facility. For example, a typical home has an individual entry. How can the plan be developed to simulate the entry with details such as the door, doorbell, porch, light and mailbox? According to Guskowski, “These are some of the clear identifiable features of a home. This is normal life.” The question is how to replicate these distinct characteristics in a nursing home setting.

While the “culture change” movement has made great strides in the evolution of the nursing home, there is still more research to collect and options to explore. With the largest portion of the population reaching the “senior” designation, there is no doubt that a variety of senior facilities and communities will be redefined. AG Architecture looks forward to another 40 years of exploring the innovative design of senior environments.

GETTING TO KNOW

Joseph Silvers

AG Architecture offers a staff of skilled professionals that bring knowledge and experience to every project. Each employee has an interesting background that gives him or her a special place on the AG team. We want you to get to know our team.



Joseph Silvers, or as we call him, Joe, has a diverse educational background including a Bachelor's Degree in Music. His interest in architecture, in particular the works of Frank Lloyd Wright, led him to UW-Milwaukee to receive his Masters Degree in Architecture. In 1979, he started working with an earlier generation of AG Architecture on housing and senior living projects. After five years he moved on to gain experience in commercial and bank work with other firms in town, but

he returned to AG. Today, Joseph celebrates 11 years with the company. A registered Wisconsin Architect, Silvers is transitioning into a managerial role within the firm, but continues to bring his expertise in senior living environments to clients on a daily basis.

When Silvers isn't leading his staff and working for the best interest of the client, he is spending time with his family. The father of three sons, he also finds time to tinker on the piano, garden and if at all possible, play a little soccer.

What does he want for his clients?

"I'd like to see them happy. I want to meet their needs and find the best way to get them what they want," comments Silvers.

What does he like about AG Architecture?

"It's not my way or the highway; we aren't about egos here. We work with the client and the contractors to solve problems. The client has needs, wants and ideas. We listen to them and work with everyone on the team to figure out the right solution," describes Silvers.

What do co-workers say about Joseph Silvers?

"Joe is very, very knowledgeable. He cares not just about whether we as a company are putting a decent product together, but that the end user has a building and spaces that are thought out. Joe has a way with his workstation, too. The piles upon piles of clutter are arranged just so. Joe's dedication to his clients is obvious, in that when clean-up day arrives, he is always "out of the office" at some meeting or job site, making sure the client is satisfied."

Marty Wicklund – AG Architecture

What do clients say about Joseph Silvers?

"I have enjoyed working with Joe on three CCRC repositioning efforts. Joe is very detail oriented, honest and fair when dealing with the multiple issues that arise when undertaking these complex projects. Joe likes to get things done the right way the first time. Joe is soft spoken and unassuming; he is humble. He always runs things by us before making any major decisions. Personally, I think it is hard to find people with better character. I would highly recommend him for future LCS development work."

Omar Barrientos – LCS Development

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