



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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Samaritan Place works to implement innovative vision of resident-centred care

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON – It's still under construction, but already the newest Catholic health care facility in Saskatchewan is working on the details of implementing its holistic vision of resident-centered care.

Samaritan Place, opening in January 2012, is now filling leadership roles and staff positions, and recently put out a call for volunteers.



Carter Bannister
Life Enhancement Director at Samaritan Place

Carter Bannister, Samaritan Place's newly hired Life Enhancement Director, said he is eager and excited to begin working with volunteers to help in creating the kind of spirit that is envisioned for the new long-term care home.

Making Samaritan Place as much like home as possible is at the heart of that vision. Plans are to offer a choice of programs, directed by the interests and priorities of the residents, he said. In preparation, he is working to build a network of volunteers and community resources; to be in place by the time the facility opens.

Catholic Health Ministry of Saskatchewan, which owns and operates nine other Catholic health care facilities on behalf of the bishops of Saskatchewan, created a wholly owned subsidiary, Amicus Health Care Inc., to build, govern and operate Samaritan Place in the Stonebridge neighborhood of southeast Saskatoon. The pilot project is a response an urgent and growing need for the higher levels of care for seniors and those who need continuing care.

The faith-based Samaritan Place will implement a number of innovations designed to provide holistic care that respects the dignity of each resident, while striving to help them maintain family and community ties, and as much independence and control as possible, said Brenda FitzGerald, CEO for Amicus.

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“We envision being very flexible in providing a home-like setting,” she said. The design of the facility, with a central gathering space, and different “neighborhoods” identified in the building, will strengthen the idea that this is a home that residents move into, rather than admission to a facility, says FitzGerald.

Staff will be identified as care partners, and as much as possible will take their lead from the residents, Bannister adds.

Samaritan Place will include 56 individual living suites, designed to maximize autonomy and independence. Another 24 units will be specifically designated for those individuals who are at risk for wandering, describes FitzGerald.

But one of the major innovations of Samaritan Place is the plan for 20 double units. These are designed for two people who have different care needs, yet want to remain living together— this might be a husband and wife, siblings, or a parent and their adult child. Even though only one of the two needs Level 3 or 4 care, this ensures that families can stay together, describes FitzGerald.

She stresses the importance of letting individuals know ahead of time that this option will now exist in the Saskatoon Health Region with the January opening. Those interested in this option may require more planning to set it in motion, since it involves two family members, rather than just one, and may involve decisions about what to do with an existing house or apartment.

Just as with other special care homes operating within the Saskatoon Health Region, admission to Samaritan Place will happen through the Client Patient Access Services (CPAS) office in the Saskatoon, stresses FitzGerald. As with other such facilities, rates are set by the provincial government, and are based on the income of the individual assessed as needing long-term care services.

FitzGerald adds that she is excited to see construction nearing completion, and the leadership team and staff that is being developed. In addition to Bannister, leadership roles include Executive Director Juanita Tremeer and Care Services Director Penni Caron. Still to be hired are the Director of Support Services, and the Spiritual Care and Mission Director.

Born and raised in Saskatoon, Bannister has spent the past 15 years working in assisted living and long term care in Calgary and Penticton, BC, including nine years in Las Vegas, Nevada. He has a five-year Bachelor of Science in Therapeutic Recreation and a Diploma in Gerontology.

Bannister’s experience has included starting up programs in several new facilities. “The last three buildings I was at were all new,” he notes. Excited about the holistic, resident directed vision of Samaritan Place, Bannister says that he hopes volunteers as well as residents will find joy and happiness in the new setting. “We want the volunteers to be as much as possible like an extended family.”

The focus on family and community resonates with Bannister right now, since moving home to Saskatchewan as the father of a one-year-old son, he is himself experiencing those blessings as he settles back into the community. “I’m going to be living this too.”

Having this new faith-based home in Saskatoon, with its innovative vision, is extremely exciting, says FitzGerald. “I think that it’s just simply a gift. I think we’re so blessed to have this opportunity.”