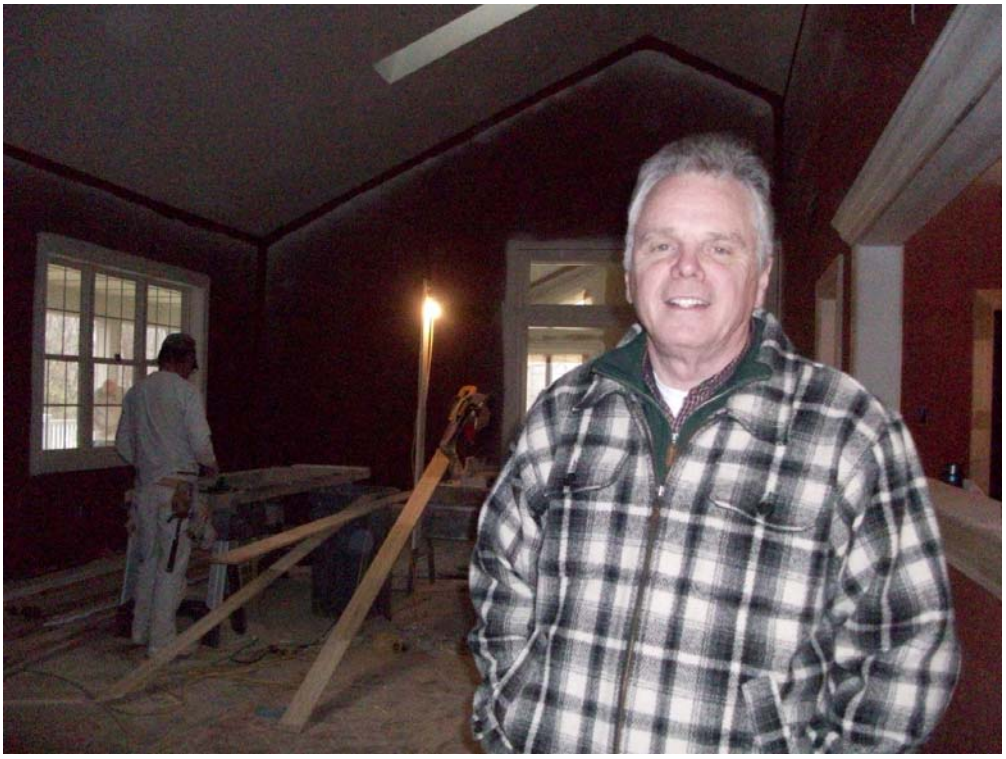
Lourdes Manor

In January 2013, I visited Les Maisons in St. Louis. When construction is complete, Les Maisons will be a four-home assisted living community, specializing in dementia care and aging in place. There are currently two homes operating, Calais Manor and Clermont Manor. Construction was nearly complete on a third, Lourdes Manor, and ground has been broken for a fourth, Lyon Manor. Les Maisons is operated by Dolan Residential Care.



Dolan Residential Care President Tim Dolan overseeing final construction of Les Maisons' next home to open, Lourdes Manor.

During my visit, I met Dolan Residential Care President Tim Dolan. Mr. Dolan began building long-term care homes in 1994, when he couldn't find a place for a family member who needed care. Now they have eight homes in the St. Louis area. He and Dolan Residential Care have been involved in many initiatives to improve the way care is provided for individuals with dementia, including participating in the Alzheimer's Demonstration Project and serving as a member of the Alzheimer's Task Force and Missouri's Alzheimer's State Plan Task Force.

Mr. Dolan was particularly proud of the fact that their homes are built with green technology and to very high standards, meeting the standards required of skilled nursing homes. There are no steps. All of the cabinets are handmade. Central vacuum systems mean less noise. All of the carpets are carpet tiles so small areas can quickly and easily be replaced in the event of a stain. The building design allows all deliveries to come through the back of the building and directly into the pantry so that the residents aren't disturbed.

The driveways are made from porous asphalt that allows rain to drain to the rain garden. He showed me how a water hose can run at full stream onto the pavement and is drained immediately to the rain garden without ever forming a puddle or running off. Surface water goes through a filtering system that makes it drinkable before it goes into the creek.

Each home has 15 165’ deep wells that provide geo-thermal heating and cooling. Lyon Manor will have four additional wells to support additional space for administrative offices. LED lighting is also used. Amazingly, their electric bill is only $300 per month.

Two of the four homes have backup generators, which could support all of the community’s residents during an emergency. The floors are made from wood, rather than concrete, and each home has a large basement with extra storage space for each resident.

There are security cameras in all public areas with monitors in the bathing room, kitchen and administrative offices. Administration members can also access the cameras from their computers and smart phones.

Site of Lourdes Manor’s future rain garden, which will be filled with Missouri native plants.

Beginning of construction for Lyon Manor.

They have a nursing home administrator and a licensed nurse. Nurses work in the homes Monday through Friday and are on-call 24-hours per day, seven days per week. All caregivers are Level 1 Medication Aides and have received training from the Alzheimer's Association. Other services are brought to the residents. They have a physician, dentist, and podiatrist who make house calls and a hair dresser who visits once per week.

When someone decides to move in, moving services are provided by the home. I was told about a resident who had recently moved in. Her daughter took her out to lunch. While they were out, she became concerned that her daughter was not going to take her back. Even though she had only lived there a short period of time, she already felt at home and wanted to return.

Each home has ten private rooms; an open kitchen and dining room; an enclosed courtyard with a covered patio and walking path; and a family room and sun room, each with a fireplace and large flat-screen television. All rooms have cable television; however, most residents prefer to watch TV with the other residents in the common areas. The buildings are designed so that all rooms have a view of the yard. Residents can go outdoors anytime. There is a camera and chime that lets the caregivers know that someone has gone outside. The porches are used a lot and barbecuing is very popular.

Each resident room has a case outside the door for displaying personal memorabilia.

Residents become like a family and are involved in daily household activities, such as folding clothes, setting or clearing the table, sweeping floors, gardening, picking up leaves, and helping each other. House managers take residents shopping or out for lunch. Family members are also very involved and are a big part of daily life in the home. Some family members spend every day there.

Daily life is pretty typical of a family home. Staff members are flexible and don't have to be focused on tasks. I was told about a couple who like to get up late and how their breakfast is cooked when they get up. A staff member said to me, "we are on their schedule, they aren't on ours." With two full-time activity staff members, they also have plenty of structured activities. Some of the popular activities include visits from professional entertainers, outings to the Rascals' games (local minor league baseball team), attending church services, and watching and feeding the birds. The residents really enjoyed a

recent visit from Steve Davis, a nationally known Elvis impersonator. The activity schedule is posted on their website along with photos from recent activities.

Some homes have pets and others don't, based on the preferences of the residents who live there. I was told that one of the homes has a couple cats. During my visit to Clermont Manor, I noticed a set of food and water bowls but I didn't see the dog. It was mealtime and he was in his crate.

Clermont Manor's dog's food and water bowls. He was in his crate during mealtime.

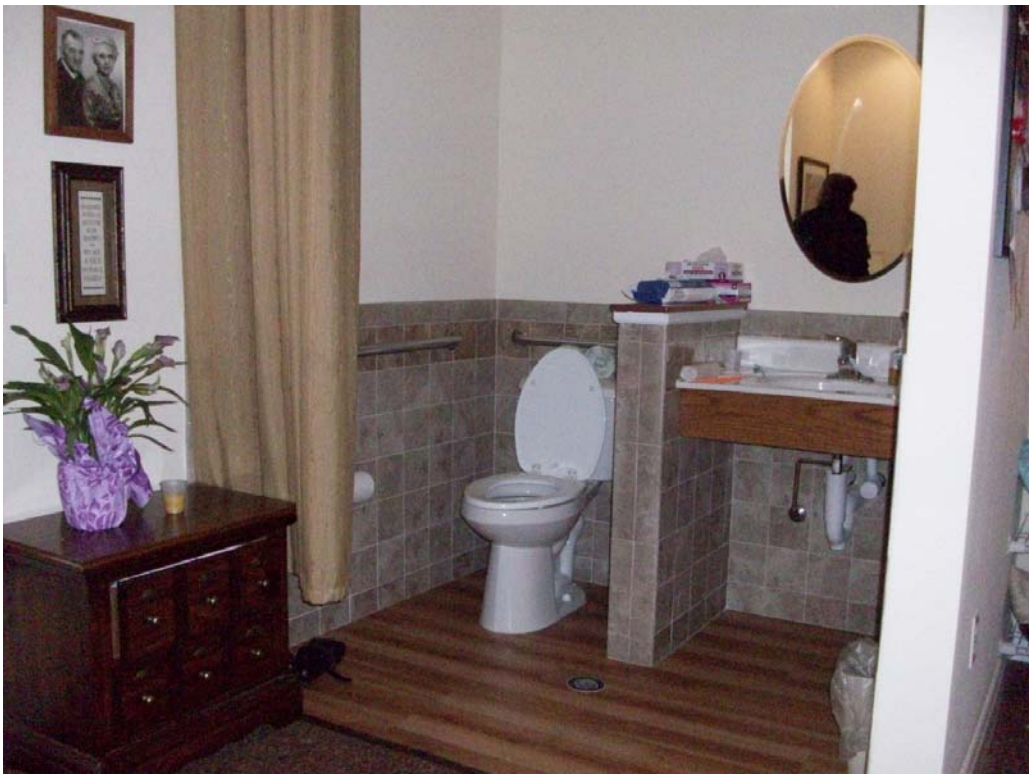
Clermont Manor's open kitchen.

Menus are prepared by a dietician, but all staff members are trained in food preparation and have the flexibility to prepare whatever residents want. Staff members eat with the residents, which helps to remind some residents to eat. The central kitchen and dining room are open at all times. Residents and visitors can help themselves and meals are free for visitors. There are safety mechanisms in place to protect residents who need assistance with the appliances. The open kitchen and family style dining setting stimulates appetites and encourages residents to eat well. Weight loss is not a problem they have to deal with. Some residents also enjoy helping in the kitchen.

Residents, staff, and family members enjoying lunch at Clermont Manor.

Each resident room is equipped with a closed and an open closet.

Resident rooms are designed with subtle features that provide residents with dementia the dignity of independence that they likely would lose sooner otherwise. Each room has a closet with a door as well as an open closet. Each evening, caregivers assist residents to choose their clothes for the next day. The clothes are then hung in the open closet so that they are in plain view and the closet with the door is closed. Seeing the clothes hanging in the open closet cues the resident to put the clothes on without having to ask for assistance.



Three-walled restrooms make access easy, while still providing needed privacy.

Resident rooms include private restrooms. Though there is no door, the room design still provides visual privacy from the hallway in the event that the resident's room door is open. This allows the restroom to be easily found and cues residents to use the restroom and extends their independence. There is a privacy curtain if needed.

Bath tubs have electronic controls that allow the tub to be tilted for ease of entering and exiting and comfort during bathing.

Each resident's personal hygiene items are stored in the bathing room closet for convenience.

Caregiver Senella Baldwin

I had the opportunity to sit at the Calais Manor dining room table and visit with Caregiver Senella Baldwin. Ms. Baldwin grew up in St. Louis with five brothers and one sister. Her mother, who is now retired, was a nurse at Homer G. Phillips Hospital.

Ms. Baldwin graduated from Beaumont High School and received her Level 1 Medication Aide training at Forest Park Community College. She is planning on furthering her education and becoming a registered nurse. Right now she is focusing her attention on her job and her three children.

She has worked for Dolan Residential Care for nine years. She has previous experience at another long-term care home. She really enjoys working at Calais and likes that the residents get more one-on-one time there.

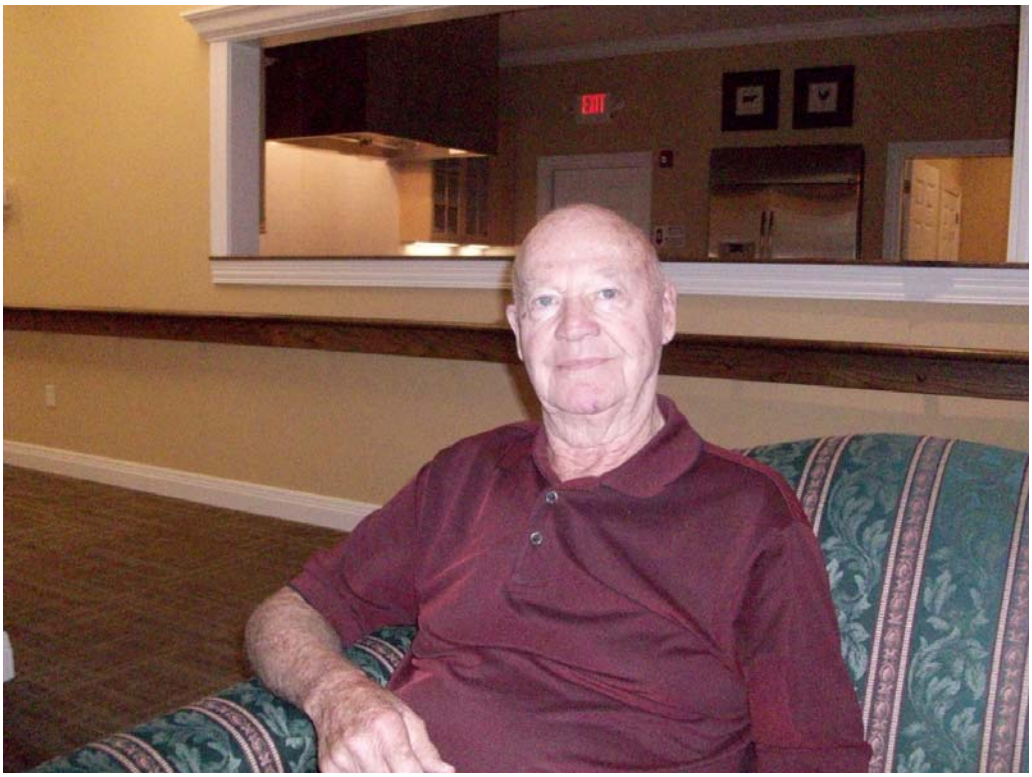
As a caregiver she does everything, including activities, laundry, cooking, and housekeeping. She works 12-hour shifts and wouldn't change anything. Residents do what they want to do. Her daily routine usually includes helping residents get up and get ready for breakfast in the morning. She helps with breakfast, passes medications, and spends time reading and talking with the residents. There is also a supervisor and two other caregivers on duty with her. Everyone knows what needs to be done and they all pitch in to get it done. Caregivers have consistent assignments, so they know the residents they care for. "Person-centered care is nothing new here. It has been the same since I have been here."

Resident Ardell Thompson

I also met Resident Ardell Thompson. Like Ms. Baldwin, she has also lived in the St. Louis area all of her life. She lived near Barnes Hospital as a child. Her father worked as a lineman for Union Electric, then as a manager. Her mother worked for Mayfair and Lennox Hotels.

She got married when she was 21-years-old. Like her father, her husband also worked for Union Electric. She was a secretary at Barnes Hospital for a German Doctor who came to the United States after World War II. He was an arthritis specialist. She took notes as he examined patients. Her children used to play ball where Les Maisons is now. She and her husband had been married nearly 30 years when he passed away.

She has lived at Calais Manor for three years and enjoys life there. Her favorite things to do are participating in the planned activities and taking walks outside. She can eat breakfast anytime she wants. She prefers to get up early for breakfast. That is what she has done all of her life. She said she is satisfied with her life and wouldn’t change anything.



Resident M L West

After visiting Calais Manor, I went to Clermont Manor where I met 80-year-old Resident M L West. Mr. West was born and raised in Colorado. He loves the outdoors and the Colorado Mountains, where he spent many years as an Air Force instructor. He took pilots and flight crew members into the mountains and taught them how to live off the land and get to safety in the event of a crash. Mr. West was also married and had two children, but his wife passed away many years ago.

He enjoys living at Clermont Manor. He likes the other residents, “They are good people.” He also said the employees are “good people” and helpful. He still enjoys the outdoors, where he spends a lot of his time. He likes to walk. It helps him to keep his balance. His daughter also takes him on outings weekly. His favorite thing to do is visit the river.