

Dunlap Specialty Care Celebrates Seasons Memory Care Certification

Dunlap Specialty Care recently celebrated an important milestone in its commitment to caring for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, earning the Care Initiatives Seasons Memory Care Certification.

The achievement was recognized during a Certification Celebration and Open House at Dunlap Specialty Care, giving community members an opportunity to celebrate with staff and learn more about the specialized memory care services available locally.

The Seasons Memory Care Certification is an internally developed and administered Care Initiatives program based on nationally recognized memory care standards. The program establishes quality standards for memory care services and promotes a consistent, resident-centered approach to caring for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

Achieving certification required Dunlap Specialty Care to demonstrate excellence in several areas, including clinical care, education, environment, activities, dietary services and interdisciplinary team collaboration. Team members completed specialized dementia education and training, implemented standardized care processes, participated in audits and met a series of quality benchmarks.

For Ruth David-Jones, Administrator at Dunlap Specialty Care, pursuing certification was about ensuring the facility is prepared to provide specialized care as the need for memory care services continues to grow.

"As the number of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia continues to grow, we wanted to ensure we were providing the highest level of specialized care possible," David-Jones said. "Pursuing certification reflects our commitment to delivering compassionate, person-centered memory care close to home."

The certification effort involved staff throughout Dunlap Specialty Care, including nursing, social services, dietary, activities, housekeeping, maintenance, therapy partners, leadership and the facility's designated Memory Care Program Coordinator. Regional clinical leaders also provided education, resources, auditing and support throughout the process.

Staff members received specialized dementia education focused on understanding the progression of dementia, recognizing individual resident needs, communicating more effectively and creating meaningful opportunities for engagement. Training also focused on tailoring activities, dining experiences and everyday interactions to each resident's abilities, preferences, life history and stage of dementia.

The certification process also resulted in enhancements to the physical environment and care practices at Dunlap Specialty Care. Those include dementia-friendly wayfinding features, secured indoor and outdoor walking paths, specialized activity programming, individualized care planning, environmental safety measures and structured processes for admissions, assessments and ongoing care reviews.

David-Jones said memory care requires an approach that goes beyond meeting an individual's physical needs. Dementia can affect communication, problem-solving, emotions, behavior and daily functioning, and each person experiences the disease

differently. Care therefore needs to be personalized, adaptable and centered around the individual's history, interests and needs.

On an ordinary day at Dunlap Specialty Care, that philosophy can be seen through structured routines, personalized activities, meaningful engagement and supportive social interactions.

Residents participate in activities tailored to their abilities and interests through the facility's "Head, Hands, and Heart" dementia programming model. Staff engage residents through conversation, walking programs, sensory experiences, music, crafts, reminiscence activities and other opportunities throughout the day. Safety is also a priority, with secured environments and staff members specifically trained in dementia care techniques.

David-Jones said one misconception surrounding dementia is that it affects only a person's memory. Dementia can also affect communication, problem-solving, emotions, behavior and daily functioning.

Another misconception is that people living with dementia can no longer enjoy meaningful experiences.

Dunlap Specialty Care staff see residents continue to benefit from social interaction, purposeful activities, relationships and opportunities for engagement when care is tailored to their individual strengths and interests. That person-centered approach is at the heart of the facility's memory care philosophy.

For Dunlap and surrounding communities, having specialized memory care available locally also means families may not have to travel long distances to find appropriate care for a loved one.

"Having memory care available locally allows families to access these services without needing to travel long distances," David-Jones said. "It provides peace of mind knowing their loved one can receive compassionate care close to home while remaining connected to family, friends, and their community."

The recent Certification Celebration and Open House recognized the work of the entire memory care team while also giving the public an opportunity to learn more about dementia care and the specialized services offered at Dunlap Specialty Care. The celebration included a ribbon cutting, remarks from organizational leaders, recognition of team members, tours and refreshments.

David-Jones said she hopes those who attended left with a better understanding of both the specialized support individuals living with memory loss need and the care being provided locally.

The goal, she said, is for families and community members to recognize that quality memory care is about more than safety and meeting physical needs. It also focuses on preserving dignity, purpose, relationships and quality of life.

While earning the certification provided a reason to celebrate, the work does not end with the designation.

"Certification is not the finish line," David-Jones said.

The Seasons program includes ongoing education, annual audits, continuous quality improvement and regular reviews of resident needs and services. Dunlap Specialty Care plans to continue building on the certification through staff training, engagement with

local families and community partners, and efforts to enhance the quality of life of those it serves.

David-Jones said she is especially proud of how the Dunlap Specialty Care team embraced the certification process and the work staff members do each day.

“We are incredibly proud of the dedication our team demonstrated throughout the certification process,” David-Jones said. “Our team embraced additional education, implemented new practices, and worked together to strengthen the care experience for residents and families.”

But the accomplishment, she said, ultimately comes back to the people the facility serves.

“Most importantly, we're proud of the relationships they build with residents every day and the compassion they bring to their work.”