

St. Bernards Villa opens assisted living, memory center

written by Sarah Morris |

JONESBORO — St. Bernards Villa, which offers memory care and assisted living in Jonesboro, was built to offer people another alternative to their housing needs.

Brian Rega, director of senior services/housing, said the facility was received "overwhelming" support.

"For people who have memory care issues or are in a higher need of assistance, the only option to them was the nursing home," Rega said. "Not that there was anything against nursing homes, but they provide a service and unless you need full-time care you should have options."

The families coming in are in situations that they are caring for someone and need to know there is something out there to help, Rega stated.

St. Bernards Villa is located on 28 acres at 2217 West Parker Road and is the only assisted living facility in the region to offer a separate, safe and secure Memory Care Center.

The facility has 45 assisted living level two apartments and 30 apartments in the Bill Rainwater Sr. Memory Care area, which is named for a longtime Jonesboro businessman and community leader. It has seven fully furnished suites for respite stays and short-term rehabilitation.

A 432-square-foot, one-bedroom apartment with a patio is \$3,995 monthly in the assisted-living unit, while a studio apartment is \$4,500 monthly in the memory care unit. Other room sizes, including two bedrooms, are also available.

In the coming weeks, Rega said the facility will slowly begin accepting patients as well as applying for a waiver so residents can apply to live at the facility instead of a nursing home.

An open house for the facility was held in June. Pat Coleman and Joyce Mills, both of Jonesboro, were among the attendees out of curiosity.

"We just wanted to see what was available because you never know when you may need it," Mills said.

Coleman agreed, saying she was most impressed with the memory care unit because it was needed.

The memory care center uses a neighborhood concept that allows residents to live in smaller, tight-knit houses for 15 to 18 people who live together, have meals together, participate in activities together and are supervised by their own regular staff.

All staff will be certified in dementia care, and St. Bernards has partnered with Team Elliott Education of Orlando to bring its Lifelong Learners Hall of Fame and Movements of Brilliance programs to Jonesboro. These programs use technology, creative arts, music, motion and sensory stimulation to engage residents.

“We don’t want you to be in your room,” Marilyn Hummelstein, St. Bernards Foundation president, said. “We want you to come out and be engaged.”

The facility will also have a card parlor, theater built as a safe room, chapel, beauty/barber shop and spa, country store, ice cream parlor, a therapy pool with a treadmill built into the floor and a physical therapy clinic that can be used by the community as well as by residents.

Area medical providers will also be able to see residents on site. Different primary care physicians and specialists will rotate services so residents do not have to leave “home” to see a doctor.

The 83,000-square-foot facility uses a color theme to help its future residents remember what each room’s use. The various color themes include green walls designating sitting rooms and orange walls for activity rooms.

“It is all designated to help jog memory — the shadow boxes, geography maps and color walls,” Hummelstein said.

St. Bernards Villa created 30 to 35 new jobs.

For more information, contact Rega at (870) 932-8141 or brega@sbrmc.org, or go online to stbvilla.com.