

Music to their ears

The renovation and expansion of a cramped facility brings residents more privacy and service options, and the operator a healthy cash flow



Photos: Community Living Solutions



By Holly Petrovich

Holton Manor's recent \$8 million facelift allows residents to enjoy their privacy while creating a welcoming and comfortable environment.

Built in 1980, the previously untouched Wisconsin skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility was the perfect candidate for a renovation. The facility had 60 beds with minimal common space, and almost all residents shared bedrooms and bathrooms with up to four people.

"We needed more space," Holton Manor Administrator Heather Bartell said. "We wanted to offer private rooms to all residents with their own spas."

Approximately 45,000 square feet later, Holton Manor now has four households divided by population: two long-term care households, one short-term rehabilitation house and

Thirty-five-year-old Wisconsin's Holton Manor has been revitalized by moving to a household model. The renovation now gives residents more privacy, as well as access to a wellness pool and other therapy amenities.

one memory care house. Each sub-unit occupies a corner of the facility, and now residents can enjoy their own private rooms.

Aside from the additional 32 rooms, Holton Manor also created a new 1,300-square-foot physical therapy room that includes a wellness pool. Aquatic therapy is conducted in the pool, but residents and community members also may use it recreationally.

Other rehabilitation services include physical, occupational and speech therapy, restorative and respiratory therapies and inpatient and outpatient therapy. Since the big addition, the rehabilitation department's revenue has tripled, and Bartell said she expects that to continue increasing.

In order for the renovation to happen, Holton Manor had to acquire a big tract of land, according to Duane

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1 Expect delays, especially in the winter when workers might need to take frequent breaks to warm up.
- 2 Renovating an entire facility does not happen overnight, so have patience and take time making decisions.
- 3 Although it can be a stressful time, remember to remind residents, staff and yourself to have fun with it.

Helwig, vice president of design at Community Living Solutions, the company behind the remodel. The city of Elkhorn, WI, was able to sell a piece of land for the provider to work with, but it still was not enough.

"We had to buy a property that was a former music store, Holton Company, which we ended up modeling part of it after," Helwig explained. "That was probably our biggest challenge."

Because the facility was so small to begin with, moving residents around during construction was difficult, Bartell said. All residents had semi-private rooms until their new rooms were ready, which allotted for constant transition.

Although the project was completed in December 2014, most of the groundwork was done the previous winter, which happened to be one Wisconsin's coldest, Bartell noted.

"Trying to lay foundations in December and January was hard," she recalled.

Despite the inevitable complications, both Helwig and Bartell are thrilled with the final product.

"You never know what you're going to cross, all kinds of little challenges," Helwig said. "I don't think I would have done anything differently, though."

After enjoying the expansion for six months, Bartell still loves watching residents' faces light up when they see their private bedrooms.

"The space really flows well and it's very homey," she said. "It was just a wonderful building that we are able to share with our residents and that's what it's all about." ■