

Continuing Communication

Aging Services News

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What Can You Find on the CARF Blog?



CARF recently developed the *CARF Connection* blog to provide readers with unique content on a variety of topics. Articles discuss excellent practices we have seen in the field, strategic observations and information to help with organizational planning and management, and timely resources and updates about CARF accreditation. We encourage you to take a few minutes to explore the articles at www.carf.org/CARF_Connection_Blog. The following two aging services articles were recently posted:

Horticultural therapy: It makes a growing difference



Horticultural Therapist Nancy Snyder works with a resident in the Kieckhefer Strolling Garden

This article provides details on how The Margaret T. Morris Center, an assisted living community in Prescott, Arizona, specializing solely in memory care, has implemented a Horticultural Therapy program. The purposeful and individualized activities in this program have been proven to offer residents physical and psychological benefits. The program implemented by The Margaret T. Morris Center has seen the following resident outcomes and benefits:

- Maintaining or improving fine and gross motor skills
- Maintaining or improving physical stamina
- Increasing socialization
- Increasing sense of self-esteem
- Maintaining or slowing the level of decline in cognitive skills
- Expanding levels of sensory awareness
- Maintaining or increasing a sense of spiritual connection
- Providing opportunities for intergenerational and other community integration activities

Read the full article at: www.carf.org/Horticultural_therapy_blog.

Aging services programming: celebrating 20 years of progress



In recognition of CARF's 50th anniversary celebration in 2016, we are sharing snapshots of each of the fields in which we offer accreditation services.

This article by Managing Director Sue

Matthiesen offers a concise retrospective on the evolution of aging services over CARF's 20-year involvement in the field. It celebrates noteworthy developments in the field during the past two decades, pinpoints CARF's involvement in those developments, and offers insights into what we can focus on moving forward.

In the article, Sue states, "When CARF first entered the aging services field in the 1990s, the percentage of the world's population ages 60 and older was approximately 9.5 percent. Today that share has risen to [more than 12 percent](#) and [may reach 20 percent by 2050](#). The rapid growth of this population—due to the combination of [declining fertility rates](#), [improvements in life expectancy](#), and the aging baby boomer generation—has required a fundamental transformation in how health systems deliver care. This transformation, which is evident in the measurable progression in the field toward integrated, person-centered care, has been the most important narrative I have seen throughout my career."

Read the full article at: www.carf.org/AS_50th_anniversary.

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CARF Welcomes Sue Ahern to Financial Advisory Panel

CARF is pleased to announce a new member to the Financial Advisory Panel (FAP). Welcome to Susan

Ahern, corporate director of finance for ACTS Retirement-Life Communities, Inc. Ms. Ahern joined ACTS in 2000 and has been a CARF surveyor since 2011. She is a certified management accountant and a member of the Institute of Certified Management Accountants. Prior to joining ACTS, she was a regional accountant for a specialty gas manufacturer with facilities throughout the United States and the Netherlands. She earned her bachelor's degree in accounting from Messiah College, and her Master of Business Administration degree in finance from La Salle University.



ACTS owns and operates 23 CCRCs on 21 campuses in eight states. Ms. Ahern oversees all treasury functions and is responsible for the budget process, financial forecasts, state regulatory filings, resident contracts and pricing, and disclosure statements. She is also involved with development activities, which include feasibility studies and due diligence for potential acquisitions, greenfield construction projects and existing community expansions, and related debt financings and debt restructuring.

CARF asked Ms. Ahern to share her thoughts on the top financial considerations, issues, and practices that support quality in aging services and the value that CARF accreditation and her involvement in the FAP brings to her organization. Here is what she had to say:

One of the top financial considerations and practices that support quality in aging services is investment in an organization's physical plant and services offered. For the physical plant, if financially feasible, a good rule of thumb is to invest at least the amount of annual depreciation in capital expenditures each year. Baby boomers want choice and quality. This can encompass items such as multiple dining venues and increased dining hours; larger and varied unit sizes; and healthy lifestyle options such as fitness centers, pools, and healthy food. Choice and quality aren't limited to independent residents. Healthcare center residents desire the same choice and quality. Gone are the days of semiprivate institutional rooms and serving meals off a tray line. Healthcare center residents want tableside service, private rooms, and the ability to set their own schedule. Offering choice and quality to current and future residents comes at a price, usually in increased staffing levels, investment in technology, and increased capital expenditures; but organizations need to keep up with the times. If they don't, the boomers will pass them by.

I don't think I can stress enough the importance of CARF accreditation, not just for the ACTS organization, but for any organization that qualifies for accreditation. It is so important to have a neutral party come in, evaluate the organization, and give its stamp of approval. This tells the public, not only do we think that we're good at what we do, it's supported by our CARF accreditation. CARF accreditation is also a wonderful journey. No organization is perfect so there's always room for improvement. Going through the

accreditation or re-accreditation process provides a great opportunity to ask the CARF surveyors what they've seen as a best practice and offers the possibility of implementing it at your own organization. Who doesn't want to be the best at what they do?

My involvement with the FAP affords ACTS the opportunity to provide input and be at the forefront of change in several areas such as developing financial tools and financial ratio benchmarks; defining business improvement processes and performance measures; and increasing organizations' knowledge through seminars, webinars, and articles. It's a good feeling to know that our organization's voice is heard and represented on the FAP.

For more information about ACTS Retirement-Life Communities, Inc., please visit www.actsretirement.org. For more information about CARF's FAP, please visit <http://carf.org/About/FAP>.

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Coaching Corner: Promoting the Value of Your Accreditation



Over the years, CARF International has seen organizations use creative and unique marketing and promotional approaches to enhance the value of accreditation. Approaches range from including the CARF logos on websites, brochures, and print materials to clever ads that prompt consumers to ask about accreditation when they are selecting a senior living community.

Individuals riding the DC Metro this winter/spring have seen ads for a Maryland CCRC geared toward adults who are helping their parents make a choice about senior living. Those on the west coast are noticing ads in the newspaper posing a thought provoking question – “if you wouldn't consider attending a college that isn't accredited, why wouldn't you expect the same from a senior living community?”

How do you promote the value of your accreditation? The CARF Publications and Communications unit has developed a variety of materials to assist you with anything from developing a news release to designing a marketing plan. Take a look at the tools available on the “Promoting your accreditation” page (www.carf.org/Resources/PromotingYourAccreditation) of the CARF website to assist your organization in promoting the hard work and accomplishment of achieving accreditation. On the page you will find CARF logos, embedded videos, complementary brochures, online promotional items, and a comprehensive guide to promoting your accreditation. In the recent *CARF Connection* blog article by CARF Publications Specialist, Ian Gilbert, titled “The ins and outs of choosing and displaying the CARF seal of accreditation” (www.carf.org/CARF_seal_usage), accredited organizations can learn technical tips for incorporating the CARF seals in their online and printed materials.

In addition to promoting the value of accreditation to consumers, do you promote your accreditation to your insurance providers and lenders? Doing so might just save your organization some money! Insurance providers are interested in whether an organization is accredited and they regularly contact CARF and utilize the CARF website to verify this information. Lenders are also interested in this information to determine an organization's fiscal responsibility. CARF's financial planning and management standards help to reassure financial institutions that accredited organizations adhere to established accounting principles and business practices. Visit the "Welcome lenders" webpage (www.carf.org/lenders) and provide it or the resources it contains to potential insurance providers or lenders to help market your accreditation.

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2016 Aging Services Educational Opportunities

Achieving and Maintaining CARF Accreditation in Aging Services - Canada

Attend this interactive, two-day training session to learn valuable tips and tricks for getting organized, planning for an on-site survey, and managing outcomes. Emphasis will be placed on areas in which organizations most often need guidance to conform to the standards.

June 21–22, Mississauga, ON

[Register here](#)

Webinars

June 14

Ahead of the Curve: Expanding the Reach of Medical and Health Services with Technology

This exciting webinar series explores the challenges, opportunities, and current uses of new and dynamic technologies in the provision of a wide variety of medical and health services. Designed to benefit direct service professionals and administrators, the "Ahead of the Curve" webinar series addresses the critical issues surrounding the integration of technology in the provision of medical and health services.

[Register here](#)

November 3

An Introduction to CARF Aging Services Accreditation

This webinar will familiarize participants with CARF, the benefits of CARF accreditation, and the survey process for organizations of all sizes. This

introductory presentation is designed for Aging Services providers that are not currently CARF accredited or would like to become familiar with the CARF accreditation process.

Register by emailing canadainfo@carf.org or calling (888) 281-6531, extension 3009.

For questions, please contact the CARF Education and Training Unit at (520) 325-1044 or toll free (888) 281-6531. Online registration is available at www.carf.org/events two to three months prior to an event.

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If you have suggestions for content to be included in a future issue of Continuing Communication, please email the editor, Tonya Tobe, at ttobe@carf.org.

Please include the **carf.org** domain on your safe-senders list to ensure Continuing Communication and other important emails from CARF Aging Services are not blocked by spam filters.

If a lender is interested in the systems you use to manage risk in your organization, support management competencies, measure outcomes, and foster sound business practices, please direct the lender to www.carf.org/lenders. The website includes language geared toward lenders, a five-minute webinar to educate them about accreditation for your organization, and a downloadable factsheet with key information about CARF.



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