

Northwesterly Assisted Living Community

Only the Best for Grandmother!

by Marge Bennett

Why would two brothers and a cousin ages 29, 30 and 34 purchase a senior living community?

Because they want to make sure it is the best for their grandma!

That is the story behind brothers Scott and Tony Kantor, and cousin Bradley Dubin.

Their mission:

To do all they could for their grandmother, Ruth Tischler.

Their company, Bloomfield Senior Living, operates five seniors housing facilities, including the 91-unit Northwesterly Assisted Living Community in Lakewood.

The acquisition was part of a professional mission with personal overtones.

"When it became evident that our 89-year old grandmother's health declined and she needed daily living assistance, our close-knit family confronted the dilemma of where she should live, and began the search for the perfect senior living community," reported Dubin during a visit to the Northwesterly last month.

"Her health and our personal search certainly inspired our mission and impacted how we wanted to run Northwesterly and our other communities - in a manner that would make her proud," said Dubin.

The search led Dubin and the Kantor brothers on a path that eventually tapped family resources to acquire five independent and assisted-living facilities, as well as care centers for those with Alzheimer's and dementia.

Their parent company, Kandu Capital LLC of Birmingham, Mich., has made five property acquisitions through 2010 in Indiana, Ohio and South Carolina totaling 306 units, all formerly owned by Sunwest Management, Inc. The company focused on the Midwest because of their roots and the Southeast because of demographics.

The Northwesterly, with a \$1 million renovation almost completed, reflects the prototypical mission of the grandsons: To offer a combination of personalized services and easy access state-of-the-art amenities at their facilities to make healthy assisted living almost effortless. Updated common areas, brand new and modernized furnishings, spacious, remodeled suites with month-to-month rents, no buy-in fees and no long term leases underscore personalized care that include three meals a day, 24-hour on-site support staff, transportation, housekeeping, laundry and linen service, a full calendar of life enrichment activities, exercise classes and wellness programs, assistance with activities of daily living, individualized care plans, medical assessments and evaluations and more. The Northwesterly team and residents are ecstatic about the improvements and stated that the Northwesterly will now be an even better home.

"We have a vastly different operating style from the prior large corporate owners. We are very hands-on, intimately involved in operations and believe that long-standing professional relationships, reputation, resident satisfaction, high standards of care and revolutionized health care programs are top priorities," said Scott Kantor who is overseeing daily operations at Northwesterly and ensuring the improvements are to his family's perfection and there is no disruption to the resident's daily routine. Kantor added that "Northwesterly is more than just a senior living community, it's a lifestyle and we are a family. We take a modernized lifestyle approach to health care, and can't wait for our residents, Lakewood and the surrounding communities to see our unique care by design."

Combining personal mission with professional vision makes for a unique approach to excellence in the senior living industry.

"This is not a story about one family, one grandmother or one assisted living community. This story is about thousands of families, thousands of grandmothers and thousands of communities," reports Dubin.

"We were looking for the special assistance our grandmother needed and the individuality, independence and privacy she still desired. It had to be more than an institutionally disguised profit-driven business. We were searching, with a sharp eye, for her new home, a lifestyle, and a place that could deliver the personal attention, socialization and platinum care she deserved," said Dubin.

The family-owned company has been in the seniors housing industry since 1965, primarily as a nursing home owner. Building upon the family's impeccable reputation, stability and decades of experience, this personalized mission into independent living, assisted living and Alzheimer's care made for a natural transition that makes sense for both family and the family business.

"There is a shift toward assisted living from skilled nursing care," said Dubin in Crain's Detroit last month. "It is a more modern and less-expensive approach to health care." Dubin added, "while the third-generation of our family has shifted focus, our family's principals, mission and values continue to play an integral role in every decision and both the first and second generations of our family are actively involved."

Experts predict a boom in the senior housing industry because the number of people age 65 and older will more than double to 87 million by 2030 from about 40 million today, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Dubin and the Kantors discovered first-hand the experience many Americans face when making the best decision for a loved one.

"My cousins and I began assembling the yellow post-it notes that had been plastered everywhere from our bedside tables to our office desks, the frayed napkins covered with chicken scratch and random newspaper clippings, magazine



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articles and blogs that had been graffitied with our neon yellow highlighters. Little did we know that while brainstorming for grandma's perfect new home years earlier, we would unknowingly come up with innovative ways to establish communities like the Northwesterly as the perfect new home," he said.

Bloomfield's five communities include the 56-unit Autumn Glen and 55-unit Autumn Park assisted living communities in Indianapolis; the 81-unit Riverside at Belfair Retirement Community in Bluffton, SC, an adjacent 23-unit memory care wing at Riverside at Belfair that Bloomfield is scheduled to open in the fall; and the 91-unit Northwesterly Assisted Living Community in Lakewood. The family also continues to own and operate a legacy portfolio of senior living communities on the West Coast. Director of Finance, Tony Kantor, adds that Bloomfield is a very liquid company and our family has a long-standing philosophy of operating with no debt, so our residents, their families and our staff can feel comfortable we will be around now and 40 years from now. Accordingly, we paid all cash for Northwesterly and the South Carolina properties and very conservatively financed the Indiana properties. Further, we have a strong belief of re-investing back into the communities, and owning and managing them for generations." The family's million dollar remodel of Northwesterly is just one example of their grand plan to continue improving Northwesterly over the coming year.

"While our journey took us from finding the perfect fit for grandma to running communities like the Northwesterly in a manner that would make her proud, your journey to find the perfect home away from home for your loved one will be equally successful with careful planning," concludes Dubin.