

# Alden Courts of Huntley memory care center opens

Short-term rehabilitation, independent living spaces to open soon

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By **DREW ZIMMERMAN** [Email Follow](#)

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Huntley Mayor Charles Sass said it has been quite a journey since village staff first saw plans for the Alden of Huntley senior living community about five years ago.

“We knew immediately that this was something that would benefit our residents and the Huntley community,” Sass said. “Alden deserves to be congratulated on their determination and hard work to bring this senior community to reality.”

The doors now are open for the Alden Courts of Huntley Memory Care Community, which is right next to the Alden Estates of Huntley Short-Term Rehabilitation center, which is expected to open soon. The community is on a 15-acre site on Regency Parkway.

Emily Rickman, administrator at Alden Courts, said everything in the facility was designed with memory care in mind. Amenities in the main lobby area include an aviary, movie theater, beauty salon and food counter where treats such as ice cream and cappuccino will be served during a “happy hour” portion of the day.

The interior walls and nursing scrubs both feature the color green, which is both a calming color and one of the most visible colors in the spectrum, said Jennifer Stelter, operations director of clinical programming.

Stelter said patients also are offered a number of activities designed for tactile stimulation, such as puzzles and gardening. Paintings embellished with three-dimensional decorations also are placed throughout the hallways for patients to interact with.

“Some facilities are just trying to be pretty,” Stelter said. “We’re not trying to be pretty. We’re trying to use our environment to its maximum capacity.”

Everyone down to housekeeping and culinary staff takes a Certified Dementia Practitioner course, which requires an initial 16-hour training course followed by 12 hours of annual training.

“We are all helping to support and take care of residents and their families, so it’s important that everyone has that knowledge in our facilities,” Rickman said.

Victoria Wolpoff, vice president of marketing and public relations for the Alden Network, said what separates Alden of Huntley from other assisted-living communities in the area is the memory care support services for those who may require rehabilitation after surgery or an extended hospital stay.

Wolpoff said community members without memory care needs told her they have had to go as far away as Wisconsin for post-surgery rehabilitation that doesn’t use memory care.

“A lot of places would not take them because they do not meet the memory care needs,” Wolpoff said. “It’s a much more complicated treatment plan.”

But now, individuals with memory care issues such as dementia and Alzheimer’s disease will receive physical, occupational or speech therapy combined with cognitive learning.

Alden Courts currently houses two residents, but Wolpoff said she expects many more people move in over the next few weeks.

Staff held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Alden Courts on Thursday. Rep. Steven Andersson, R-Geneva, said during the ceremony that there always is talk about the exodus of Illinois citizens because of the state’s instability.

“It’s places like Alden, like this, who have said, ‘No, we’re going to double down, we are here and we’re going to invest in the community,’ ” Andersson said. “So my thanks go out to them for their willingness to commit to the state of Illinois, to make this a better place and to bring people here as opposed to driving them out.”

Huntley Horizon Independent Senior Living Community is targeting a September opening, Wolpoff said.

The extensive project was made possible through assistance from the Illinois Housing Development Authority, McHenry County, BMO Harris Bank and ComEd.

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