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Increasing Social Connectedness and Engagement through Multiple Digital Channels

Longwood at Oakmont
A Presbyterian SeniorCare Network Community

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Categories

Reduced Social Isolation
Reduced Feelings of Loneliness
Increased Resident Engagement and Satisfaction
Increased Social Networks
Increased Quality of Life
Increased Staff Efficiencies
Increased Staff Communications and Engagement
Increased Family Engagement

Organization Name

Presbyterian Senior Care Community: Longwood at Oakmont

Organization Type

Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC)

Organization Description

Longwood at Oakmont stands apart from Pennsylvania continuing care retirement communities for its strong resident-centered philosophy. For example as a resident, you're a member of the Longwood Residents Association, whose dynamic committees help set the tone and pace of community life.

Project Description

Longwood at Oakmont is focusing on social engagement and connectedness for residents, staff, family, and prospects by enhancing interaction through digital communication channels. Longwood is leveraging Touchtown's integrated suite of engagement technology to provide information to residents, staff, families, and prospects through a variety of media including in-room TV's, digital signs, interactive kiosks, printed calendars, and interactive apps called Longwood Access Online (MyLAO).

LeadingAge® CAST
*center for **aging services technologies***

The LeadingAge Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST) is focused on accelerating the development, evaluation and adoption of emerging technologies that will transform the aging experience. As an international coalition of more than 400 technology companies, aging-services organizations, businesses, research universities and government representatives, CAST works under the auspices of LeadingAge, an association of 6,000 not-for-profit organizations dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging.

For more information contact:

MyLAO enhances social engagement and connectedness by providing community members easy access to information such as activity calendars, dining menus, resident directories, staff information, transit schedules, messages, and much more!

Here is a [video](#) that features Longwood at Oakmont and their residents using MyLAO.

Socialization Modality

Social Network, Photo Sharing, Event/Activity Sharing, Life Stories, Digital Signage, Community Apps, Activity Calendar, In-House Television Channel, Games, Exercise, Facilitated Communications and Conversations.

System Embodiment

Tablet, Desktop Computer, Laptop, All-In-One Computer (Kiosk), Smart TV, Fixed Touch Screen, Smart phones (coming by EOY 2017).

Business Model

Private Pay

Implementation Approach

The Resident Technology Committee at Longwood at Oakmont led the implementation of MyLAO. The committee is comprised of a passionate group of about 8-10 residents that worked with the Touchtown staff to implement the MyLAO app.

The Resident Technology Committee regularly provided feedback to Touchtown to enhance MyLAO. This feedback was vital to the success and resident adoption of MyLAO. For example, the initial organization of the app icons had the most utilized apps located on the second page. The Resident Engagement Committee made some suggestions and the apps that were utilized the most by the residents at Longwood were moved to the first page.

Note: Because of Longwood's proximity to Touchtown, the Resident Technology Committee also regularly advises Touchtown on its overall user experience and functionality. They are an integral component of Touchtown's development process. For example, the Committee commented on early designs of Touchtown's upcoming Smart Phone support (which has to be usable by 80 year olds), and recently reviewed the initial QA release.

Outcomes

The tools in MyLAO are designed to increase social engagement by allowing residents to maintain their independence and receive on demand-access to community information. Additionally, the technology project itself helped to increase social engagement and connectedness at Longwood at Oakmont. Overall attendance in physical wellness activities increased by 28% within 18 months. According to resident, Janis Ramey, "We've done this project (with Touchtown) as a group and have become good friends. We've had many opportunities to meet and interact with other residents that we don't normally see or talk with." The group has become well known in the Longwood Community. They hold regular office hours on Friday afternoons in the lobby to help answer resident technology questions. They are even seeing more and more residents using Kindle eReaders.

Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

One of the challenges when implementing a solution like the MyLAO app, has been helping residents to relax and allow themselves to learn how to use the app. Seniors do not want to be forced to do anything, including learning and using new technology. It's important to the success of your project to allow residents to learn it at their own pace.

Lessons Learned/Advice to Share with Others

The tools in MyLAO are designed to increase social engagement and connectedness by allowing residents to maintain their independence and receive on demand-access to community information. An important lesson from MyLAO is that you need a good team to implement and you need a resident champion. Longwood's resident champion is Ray Heuser. Ray is on the Resident Technology Committee for Longwood at Oakmont and has worked with computers since the 1960's.

According to Ray, there are two types of residents at Longwood: Residents who used to be great with technology and now don't care to admit that it has gotten away from them. Ray's advice to share is to ease those residents into new technology. The second is residents that have never used technology at all and are extremely reluctant. Ray's advice to share is, "don't force new technology on them. They have to learn at their own pace."

Additional case studies

[Lifespire](#)

[Oaknoll](#)

[Clermont Park](#)