

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HEALTHCARE CONSTRUCTION EXECUTIVE REVIEW



innovation





Claremont Manor

Members of this community will benefit by having a 59-bed, state-of-the-art skilled nursing facility, as well as a large outpatient physical therapy center, close to home.

According to Executive Director Martha McGaughy, maintaining the character and unique flavor of the small town surrounding Claremont Manor has been a goal while upgrading the facilities there.

Located on a 16-acre campus in Claremont, Calif., this facility employs 165 people.

McGaughy said an original aspect of the expansion is that “it originated as a result of a fundraising effort on the part of the residents for a skilled nursing facility.” Residents raised an initial \$150,000 challenge gift. During the next nine years, residents and former residents, the latter through their estates, raised an additional \$5 million.

This gives the project considerable local support.

“We worked very hard with the architectural team, the contractor and the city to make sure the campus maintained its original flavor,” she said. That “original flavor” includes red brick buildings and architectural columns.

Project Manager Jeff Carlisle and Project Executive Jim Allison of Turner Construction Company said the new construction is in the works. It includes eight independent living facilities consisting of 14 apartment units, single- and multi-unit cottages, and multi- and single-car garages; adding 16 new units to an existing assisted living facility to double its size; an infrastructure upgrade; and construction of a new

38,000-square-foot skilled nursing care center.

McGaughy said members of the community benefit by having a 59-bed, state-of-the-art skilled nursing facility, as well as a large outpatient physical therapy center, close to home.

“It’s going to really modernize this campus,” she said. These additions will permit Claremont to “keep in the heart of the market for the future.”

While it was known from the start that local support was a key advantage in the process, McGaughy said over time it’s been confirmed “keeping residents involved in the process is the most critical thing.” To that end, weekly Friday meetings keep residents



informed about construction changes on campus for the coming week and give them the opportunity to voice their concerns. “That has really ended up being the saving grace of this process,” she added.

The challenges are many. They include extensively revamping a 50-year-old campus while maintaining 100 percent resident occupancy. Some residents have had to move. In addition, since as-built drawings were not available for most of the campus, it’s been a hit or miss process discovering where utilities are buried.

“We’re always digging up stuff,” Allison said. “To a great extent, nobody really knows where all the underground stuff is.” That’s changing as they move along in the project, he added.

However, it’s caused a few problems with keeping the infrastructures going while demolishing part of the campus.

For example, McGaughy said, the campus once went for three days with only intermittent run-

ning water. The solution? The facility footed the bill for bottled water, and, during the rare times the water was on, residents were notified so they could flush their toilets.

The most unique aspect of the project, according to Allison, was dealing with construction on a fully developed retirement community for those 55 and older.

“In order to build the first in a number of new facilities, we had to demolish part of the existing facilities on campus,” he said. They’re about 22 percent done with the Cambridge Apartments.

Allison said they had to interrupt the campus routine, yet maintain some kind of normalcy for the residents.

“Keeping access safe is a challenge,” he said.

“I think we have a really good relationship with all the parties,” he added.

He, too, thinks the weekly resident meetings have been a key factor. “Those have been very success-

ful in keeping the manor residents involved.”

The design and construction team also meets weekly.

“This project has been a real collaborative effort,” Allison said. He gives a good deal of the credit to Intelisyn Corp. which, as construction manager, has done “an excel-

lent job of facilitating everybody’s opinions and keeping the job focused.”

He said a significant commitment was made to value engineering as a means to keep the project on budget. That process took about six months.

And Allison says they’re constantly looking for ways to get the things residents really want into their homes. For example, cherry wood-finish cabinets, originally thought to be too expensive, could be put into the bungalows with money saved from other areas. Furthermore, the team tries to resequence projects in order to make the duration of construction as short as possible and to keep the campus running.

Major equipment added includes a new emergency generator. New electrical service was installed for part of the campus and the fire and security systems on the new portions of the campus were upgraded.

“One thing my construction staff has learned is an appreciation of working on a site with senior residents,” Allison said. “I think they’ve learned a lot about dealing with people of an older age.” ■

— A.S.

FACTS & FIGURES

Name: Claremont Manor

Location: Claremont

Owner: A distinguished member of The Internext Group, Inc., Burbank

Type of Project: Expansion of facilities at a retirement community including infrastructure upgrades, new independent living facilities, new additions to the existing assisted living facility and a new skilled nursing care center

Architect: The Steinberg Group, Los Angeles

Construction Manager: Intelisyn Corp., Manhattan Beach

General Contractor: Turner Construction Company, Los Angeles

Size: 130,000 square feet (new construction)

Cost: \$17.6 million (construction costs); \$21 million (total costs)

Construction Time: The 24-month project began Aug. 2, 1999.