

Talking Points for Life Transitions Radio Show on 10.9.2019

Intro: My name is Bud Johnson. I am the Director of Marketing and Admissions for Riveridge Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center in Niles, Michigan.

Q: Can you tell us a little about Riveridge?

A: Riveridge Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center is an 84-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation center just off the shores of the St. Joseph River here in beautiful Niles, MI. Riveridge has been serving the Niles community for over 53 years, providing skilled nursing, rehabilitation, dementia care, long-term care, hospice care, and respite stays. We have an amazing staff who believe in working together, and in using a team approach. As the old saying goes, there is truly no place like home, and for that reason, our Riveridge team aims to help our residents feel comfortable during their stay with us. We also aim to ensure residents' families and visiting friends are greeted and feel welcome. We want our first impression to be a lasting one.

Q: What are some of the medical services that you offer?

A: We offer a wide range of medical services including but not limited to audiology, dental, podiatry, immunizations, diabetes care, certified wound care, respiratory therapy, orthopedic care, and transportation to dialysis, as well as in-house diagnostic services such as ultrasound, Doppler, EKG, and x-rays. We also offer IV access and IV therapy, lab services, naso/pharyngeal suctioning, optometry services, oxygen, pain management, psychiatric services, bariatric care, and colostomy care. In addition, we can provide nebulizer treatments and catheter/Foley care.

Q: Riveridge is a beautiful facility. Can you tell us about some of your amenities?

A: Riveridge has a skilled unit with private and semi-private rooms, as well as private suites, for post-acute rehabilitation stays. Our center's therapy room, including an occupational kitchen, is in close proximity to the unit. We also offer transportation to and from appointments. Residents and guests alike enjoy our family room, fine dining options, live music events, holiday events, community field trips, as well as engaging in exercise classes, and visiting our in-house beauty salon and barbershop. We also have an amazing multi-sensory room and a bird aviary that the residents really enjoy. Our campus has two gazebos, one located in our front yard and the other in our courtyard, and provide a perfect viewing area of birds, deer, and other wildlife on our grounds. I would have to say that the comfort in our facility is likened to a home-like environment including the amenities of a Bed & Breakfast stay.

Q: You mentioned a multi-sensory room, can you explain a little more about what that is?

A: Our multi-sensory room is a specially designed room that provides gentle stimulation of sight, sound, touch, smell, and movement in a controlled way to create a soothing environment. Some features include aromatherapy, music, nature scenes, a bubble tube, rope lights, various textures, and a glider chair.

Multi-Sensory Environments are used to boost feelings of comfort and well-being, relieve stress and pain, and maximize a person's potential to focus, all of which have been shown to help improve communication and memory. We also have a mobile sensory cart for visiting residents unable to experience the room.

Residents experiencing conditions such as Alzheimer's, dementia, autism, cerebral palsy, chronic pain, ADHD, stroke, hearing impairment, and developmental disabilities, as well as an end-of-life transition, have been shown to benefit from a Multi-Sensory Environment.

Multi-Sensory Environments also provide overall benefits that include positive emotional memory recall, increased balance, reduction in falls, fewer cases of wandering, improvement in sun downing behavior, better sleeping patterns, as well as better family visits and quality of life.

I highly encourage anyone who is interested to go to our website at www.riveridgerehab.com, and select the care options tab to click on the Multi-Sensory Experience. You can watch a 7 minute video, called Miracle Moments that shows a Multi-Sensory Environment and includes a wonderful testimonial.

Q: Some of our listeners might not be familiar with the services offered in skilled nursing or therapy. Can you explain a little bit about both of those services?

A: Skilled Nursing services are oriented around provision of specialized care for recovery after hospitalization. Our job is to help residents and family members feel at home while receiving individually-focused healthcare. From nursing care and nutritional support for recovery, to the activities of daily living, we focus on an innovative, comprehensive interdisciplinary approach. Services include but are not limited to diabetes management, ostomy care, IV management, enteral nutrition, post-surgical care, and certified wound care.

Rehabilitation can include physical, occupational and speech therapy services if you're recovering from a stroke, fall, or any other health condition requiring rehabilitation. Our therapy department provides a variety of services for our residents. Our team will gain a clear understanding of each individual's personal goals, as we are committed to returning our residents to the highest possible level of function and independence. Utilizing state-of-the-art programming and advanced modalities, our team has the education and experience to help residents meet goals through physical, occupational and speech therapy services.

Q: How does a family know when it's the right time to start looking into a skilled nursing facility?

A: I personally believe it's never too early to start looking at skilled nursing centers. There may come a time when a family or caregiver recognizes that the level of care needed for a loved one surpasses what is possible at home. If both medical and personal care needs become too great for a family or individual caregiver to administer, then it is time to consider alternative living arrangements for the loved one. Additional help is often needed after a recent hospitalization or due to a chronic illness that is worsening.

A Skilled Nursing Facility is an option to consider depending on the level of care required. Chronic illness that is worsening is a reason to consider long-term care in a skilled facility; however, short-term skilled nursing care is also available. For instance, if your loved one needs temporary higher levels of care after

a hospitalization, then a skilled facility can provide rehabilitative care to return the patient to home, or to an independent living community or an Assisted Living Facility.

Admittedly, choosing alternative living for a loved one can be a stressful experience simply due to recognizing that your loved one has reached this point of care needed in his/her life. It is also a time when the family or individual caregiver admits to having limitations. Learning as much as possible about skilled facilities, assisted living facilities and independent living communities in your area of choice will help greatly to ease worry and help dispel any misconceptions about this transitional time in your loved one's life. Knowing and accepting that levels of personal grief and periods of adjustment are a part of the transition process will also help everyone involved be more confident in the decisions that are to be made.

Riveridge is here to help with that process. We work hand-in-hand with the hospitals, assisted living facilities, and other skilled nursing facilities because at the end of the day it's about making sure that each and every person receives the adequate assistance and care they deserve.

Q: What is the process if someone wants to come take a tour of Riveridge?

A: We are happy to schedule a tour by phone or through our Contact page on our website www.riveridgerehab.com. We are also happy to give a tour even if it is not scheduled. Either I or our wonderful receptionist Paulina will gladly give our guests a tour. Tours are free, and provide an opportunity for guests to ask questions they may have. We recognize that this can be a difficult time and we want to be here to assist in any way possible.

Another good way to visit our center is to attend one of our events that we host every month. All of our events are open to the public. These are great opportunities to come in and see our facility, speak with our staff, and have some fun at the same time. All of our events are child friendly and usually consist of snacks, raffles, and games.

Q: Do you have any upcoming events in October?

A: Yes, we have a trick or treat party on October, 29th from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Once again, this is open to the public and absolutely free. This will be a fun and safe event to attend. Children will be able to trick or treat inside our facility, play games, have a snack, and enter a coloring contest. We will also be raffling off prizes for the adults, too. It's going to be a great time and a lot of fun. RSVP's are encouraged so we can plan accordingly. To RSVP you can call 269-684-1111. If you want to see our upcoming events you can always visit our website at www.riveridgerehab.com. We feature new events in our rotating banner at the top of our website's home page.

Q: When admitting to a skilled nursing facility, whether it is short or long-term, what kind of items will be needed or should be packed for a stay.

A: Most importantly, it is recommended when you are admitting to a facility that all family heirlooms, large amounts of cash, and items of great value should be left at home. We would feel horrible if something of great value were to be broken or get lost. Items that we do recommend to bring include comfortable clothing that is easy to take on and off, splints, braces, or orthotics that are currently being used, any assistive device that you use at home such as a wheelchair, walker or cane for assessment by our therapy department, soft-soled rubber or athletic non-skid shoes.

With the recent change in weather and temperature we would also recommend a sweater, vest, or jacket. Residents are encouraged to bring in knickknacks, family photos, artwork, a calendar with family events, or any items that will make them feel comfortable during their stay. Our website features a What to Pack Checklist that you can download and print to assist with packing.

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about your Activities Department and the different types of activities that are offered to your residents?

A: We have a great Activities Department! Kathy and her team do a great job of keeping the residents active and engaged in different activities like Bingo, Bunco, Tic Tac Toe, Ball Toss, Penny in the Pot, Trivia, Uno, Movies, Table Volley Ball, Fitness Fun, and Wii Bowling. Wii bowling is an absolute blast! I have yet to win against any of our residents, but we always have tons of fun. There is also a coffee club where residents enjoy coffee and pastries while reminiscing about historical events. We also have an ice cream social every week. Kathy is very accommodating so if there's an activity that residents would like to have on the calendar then she will make it happen.

Q: What Medicare Advantage and Commercial providers are you contracted with?

A: That's a great question and an important question that I get often. We are contracted with Aetna, BCBS Advantage, Cigna, Coventry Health Care, Humana, McLaren Health Plan, Meridian Health Plan, Priority Health, and United Healthcare. We also work with Medicaid, Medicare, and P.A.C.E (which stands for Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly). Again, our website, www.riveridgerehab.com, provides this list, as well.

Q: What if a person isn't sure what insurance coverage they have.

A: I have actually seen this a lot lately. Patients don't know if they have Traditional Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan. I think it's very important that they know what plan they have and what benefits are offered to them. If anyone listening isn't sure what coverage they have, what their benefits are, or are just curious to learn more, then they are more than welcome to come in and sit down with our Business Office Manager Erica, or they can call our facility at 269-684-1111. We are happy to help you navigate healthcare.

Q: Can you tell us something about you facility that many people might not know?

A: One thing that many people might not know is that we are a Grace Healthcare supported facility. Grace Healthcare Support Services is based out of Chattanooga, TN and supports 24 facilities nationwide. Riveridge is very grateful to have their support in our daily operations. I spoke with Ashley, Grace Healthcare's Vice President of Strategy and Culture last week and they are extremely honored to be supporting partners with Riveridge.

Q: Does Riveridge have any employee recognition programs?

A: Riveridge does have a couple of different employee recognition programs. We have our Employee of the Month Award. This is an employee that is picked because they stood out from his/her peers throughout the whole month. We also have a CLASS Acts program. CLASS stands for Compassion,

Leadership, Attitude, Safety, and Service. We have CLASS Acts cards at the reception desk for residents, family members, and staff to recognize employees demonstrating excellence.

Riveridge also does a great job of recognizing departmental employees during nationally celebrated holidays. What I mean by that is this week is actually National Healthcare Food Service Week and National Physical Therapy Month. Employees in both of these departments at Riveridge have been recognized for their outstanding work and commitment. We appreciate all of our employees. Happy employees equal happy residents.

Q: How long have you been at Riveridge?

A: Tomorrow will be one month. [Bud, I would expound with something personal here.]

Q: What would you say that your favorite thing about Riveridge is so far?

A: I don't honestly know if I could pick just one. I love the fact that we are in a cul-de-sac near the river. It gives us an opportunity to see deer, squirrels, birds, and other wonderful wildlife that you wouldn't see in the city. I also love our staff. We have an amazing administration, nursing, dietary, activity, maintenance, and housekeeping staff. Everyone wants what is best for our residents and we are always on the same page. This is the first place I have worked where there isn't a breakdown in communication. It's honestly a breath of fresh air to have such skilled co-workers. Our Administrator Susan is absolutely amazing to work for and the residents love her. Last but not least, our residents. We have a very diverse and eclectic group of residents. I love sitting in the dining room and listening to their stories.

Q: Riveridge's motto is "Serving you from our heart." What does that mean to you?

A: I love our motto. I think it fits us perfectly and isn't just a catchy tag line, but something that resonates with each and every one of our employees.

To me personally, it means that I have to take care of each and every resident like they're my own loved one, and to ensure that their well-being is put above my own and that they are happy each and every day.

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