

Pathways to Greatness
A Recognition Program for Aging Services

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For further information contact:

Nancy E. Rehkamp, Principal

nrehamp@larsonallen.com

www.larsonallen.com

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CPAs, Consultants & Advisors
www.larsonallen.com



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Background

Sponsored by LarsonAllen and the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA), the *Pathways to Greatness* initiative is a program that seeks to define the primary attributes of high quality aging-services organizations and recognize providers for their excellence. Its purpose is to educate the field about the attributes of greatness and how to achieve them while allowing recognized organizations to enhance their reputations in the community.

The program is the compilation of stories about exceptional organizations as they move toward realizing their Quality First goals, as well as inspirational leaders who create caring and accountable cultures where residents and staff flourish.

Pathways to Greatness – 2008 key findings

The applicants articulated tremendous commitment to advancing the field of aging through demonstrated leadership, leading-edge programs and services, and participation in educational and research efforts. Many of the applicants were also moving forward with the implementation of technology both to better serve residents, but also to improve operations, clinical quality, and efficiency.

There are a number of innovations and superior processes to highlight from this recognition program; however, the key findings from a review of all the applications are as follows:

1. Most of the applicants had financial results in the top quartile of performance.
2. Strong and visionary leadership is present in each applicant organization.
3. Most of the applicants had customer and employee satisfaction survey results.
4. Applicants were distinguishing themselves by investing in and developing their employees.
5. All applicants articulated a strong social accountability to their local communities.
6. The metrics for measuring superior performance in aging services are still evolving.
7. Innovation and creativity were hallmarks of the applicants both in terms of new program development, but also in redesigning operations.
8. Significant focus and improvements are being made in clinical quality.

2008 Pathways to Greatness Recognition Recipient: Jewish Geriatric Services, Inc. of Longmeadow, Massachusetts

The 2008 *Pathways to Greatness* recognition recipient is Jewish Geriatric Services, Inc., a comprehensive, integrated aging-services provider offering a wide spectrum of programs located in Longmeadow, Massachusetts. The array of services offerings include skilled nursing facility, assisted living, HUD housing, medical adult day health program, primary care physician practice, home health care, hospice, wellness, dementia services, and an outpatient rehab center. Care for residents is integrated across programs and sites of service through the Jewish Geriatric Services chronic care model of nursing, which includes case management.

Key organizational attributes and practices leading to greatness

The Jewish Geriatric Services, Inc. has been reinventing its services and programs to meet the needs of a diverse resident population and the changing aging-services environment. An overview of the initiatives leading to their *Pathway to Greatness* includes:

- Comprehensive chronic care model adapted from the MacColl Institute for Healthcare Innovation, which includes case management that is initiated on admission to the campus.
- *Journey to Nursing Excellence* program developed as a way to retrain and attract clinical staff. The program is sponsored by the American Nurses Credentialing Center and is executed through six shared governance councils that strive to increase staff input and influence, improve clinical quality, and improve employee satisfaction.
- Participation in the *Nursing Improving Care in Health Systems for the Elderly (NICHE)*, sponsored by New York University, is also critical to their clinical excellence focus.
- Progressive culture change program developed around hospitality principles and integrated with the chronic care model. The culture change initiative is designed to increase staff responsiveness and sensitivities to customer preferences.
- Sophisticated strategic planning and execution process that is the central focus of board and management meetings.
- *Research Scholar In-Residence* program to develop and disseminate aging-services research. Broad and active involvement in research efforts by staff at all levels.
- Transitioned the role of the board into a greater strategic and philanthropic role through changes in governance structure and processes.
- Strong community support as demonstrated by the fundraising support and volunteer hours and contributions.
- Strong measurement system that includes an equal focus on customer and staff satisfaction, clinical performance, and financial and operational results.

Jewish Geriatric Services, Inc.'s senior management and board are committed to improving the quality of care and quality of life for all those they serve. The demonstration of the AAHSA Quality First principles can be seen in resident centered care, chronic care management programs, research efforts, customer service excellence, the use of technology, and the board's focus on employee development and empowerment. Jewish Geriatric Services, Inc. has been able to meet its mission and advance the services and care provided through a dedicated, loyal workforce and the generosity of their many donors. Alan Rosenfeld, President and CEO, says, "Jewish Geriatric Services, Inc. is blessed to have the dedicated staff, donors, management, and board that allows the organization to progress down the *Pathways to Greatness*, and to create an environment where serving elders is a labor of love."

Conclusions

Many of the *Pathways to Greatness* applicants indicated that they participated in this program as a way to continually improve their organizations and to further assess them, not necessarily for the recognition. Their hard work and the stories they will be sharing with the field will allow many other organizations to learn from their experiences.

The applicants for the *Pathways to Greatness* recognition have demonstrated that the journey has many routes and that progress may not occur steadily, but that the field is committed to making the lives of older adults better. The stories and examples of leadership, innovation, and dedication to doing good things every day will provide encouragement and motivation for many.

For further information about the program, please contact Nancy Rehkamp at nehkamp@larsonallen.com or visit www.larsonallen.com/healthcare.