

REGENT PARK

Two Wichitans Join Forces to Improve Long-Term Care

Story by Laura Roddy | Photography by Michelle Adams

Tim Buchanan and Brian Warren have a long history in Wichita in a once relatively new field, assisted living. "We competed in a lot of different markets," Warren said.

In fact, they both opened assisted living homes on the same weekend in Derby in 1992 about 200 yards from each other. "In those years," Buchanan said, "there was no assisted living housing yet in Kansas and there was no license or ready zoning classification to seek from city officials."

Warren said that Foundation Properties rehabilitates 75 percent of its admitted patients back home. The goal is to have residents obtain the optimal level of self care and independence.

"Forget everything you know about a nursing home," Warren said, "because we did and designed an entirely new concept of skilled care."

For example, at Regent Park Health Care and Rehab there will be two core neighborhoods for residents with a bistro, laundry, wellness desk, living room and a private dining room. The goal is a more intimate feel.

In the skilled nursing section, every resident will have a private care suite, with Wi-Fi, digital TV and private bathroom. Residents can order off the menu with 24-hour room service if they choose or enjoy dining with friends in the dining room – gone is the cafeteria style of other nursing homes.

"We call it elegant care," Warren said. "It's on the resident's terms, their choice. ... Twenty-five years ago, the only choice the resident had in a skilled-nursing home was whether they wanted the bed by the window or the door. We've come a long way."

In 1980, a 100-year-old resident was an anomaly. "Today," Warren said, "it's not unusual to have a 75-year-old who is on Facebook and wouldn't dream of not being able to check in with the grandchildren online."

"The rehab center will be especially impressive," Buchanan said. It will be set up with a mock brownstone apartment with training steps, a full kitchen and bathroom and a full-size car so residents can practice all the aspects of daily living they will need for independence again.

"The reality is that many people stay at home too long," Buchanan said, "Not benefiting from a supportive social environment that research says leads to a more independent life."

Buchanan started out in residential design and development. He ended up finding his way to assisted living after doing mission trips in Haiti and looking for an opportunity to have a greater impact in changing people's lives.

"It was night and day the type of difference we could make in people's lives in long-term care," Buchanan said. Buchanan and Warren both love Wichita and raised their families here. Although technically competitors in the field of long-term care, they have had decades to develop mutual respect. "We keep pushing the envelope, leveraging our 25 years as long term care owners." Warren said.

"We just keep refining our product, incorporating the best approaches to long term care."



Tim Buchanan and Brian Warren

Over the next couple of decades both men continued growing in the business, although Buchanan focused more on retirement, assisted living and memory care and Warren with skilled nursing and assisted living concepts.

Now, Buchanan's Legend Senior Living and Warren's Foundation Properties are joining forces on a new concept, called Regent Park. It will open off 13th Street between Webb and Greenwich in March 2012. It is meant as a continuation of care to Legend's Regent Retirement Community and offers assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing. "There is a strong need for a continuum of care so the residents can move seamlessly from one level to another," Warren said.

Buchanan noted that sometimes there is a couple where one spouse may need skilled care for a time and Regent Park is perfect for that.