



WHAT'S WORKING WEDNESDAYS - APRIL 23, 2014
GARRET FALCONE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HERON POINT
RESIDENTS AS MARKETERS

Garret Falcone, Gini Bean and Kathy Sanderson from Heron Point in Chestertown, MD talked about the ways in which residents of their CCRC community expand the work of the staff marketing department.

An approach that Heron Point uses that was new to Garret when he arrived at Heron Point was the use of residents as weekend marketing staff-extenders. One of the residents with particular marketing sensitivity serves as the coordinator of a cadre of residents who take weekend on-call. If a person interested in the campus needs to schedule a weekend tour, or if folks simply drop-in when out for a drive, the on-call residents provide the tour and familiarize the visitors with the campus and what life is like at Heron Point. This saves marketing staff from needing to work weekends.

The resident who coordinates the program recruits other residents she thinks might have a gift for the work. They are then trained with tour routes and talking points and are equipped with brochures and marketing materials. While they do not discuss the specifics of financial arrangements with visitors, they are well-versed regarding life in the community and may even invite visitors to see their own apartments or rooms.

The coordinator is responsible for the calendar of on-call volunteers, who agree to be on-call from 10am to 4pm on weekend days. In recognition of their service they are provided with lunch tickets.

This group of residents is also on hand for more formal marketing events on and off campus. They help to organize the events, serve as hosts and share their experiences. They, like residents who volunteer in other capacities, attend the special dinner held annually for resident volunteers.

Of course, residents are also great sources of referrals. When a resident refers a friend or family member who becomes part of the Heron Point community, both the referring resident and the new resident receive monetary compensation.

Participants on the call shared their experiences with residents as marketers. One campus tried the approach of compensating for referrals, but the residents were against that approach, so it was ended. Others stressed the value of engaging people on the waiting list at events with current residents. At one community a lovely wine and food tasting event for residents and prospective residents was especially well-received.