A Calming Presence at Vincentian de Marillac

Innovative environment uses lights, colors, sounds, and scents to stimulate and relax

When residents experience the anxiety or fear often associated with dementia, Vincentian seeks to be a calming presence, easing tension and creating an environment that promotes comfort. At Vincentian de Marillac, staff is using an inventive new approach in the form of a portable multi-sensory environment. Made possible through a grant from the Portiuncula Foundation, the portable multi-sensory unit can be used in residents' rooms, small group settings and individualized therapy programs.

When in use, a combination of projectors, stereo equipment, scents and visual stimuli engage all five senses in a relaxing, tension-free environment. Fears are eased; anxiety is reduced. Activities and nursing staff are trained to identify residents who might benefit from the experience. Residents' responses are monitored, and the results are encouraging.

“It's fascinating to see the relaxing effect on residents' faces as they interact with the different elements,” said Aimi Long, Encore Services Director. “We knew from the very first time we brought this out that it would be a big hit with our residents.”

Memory Lane Welcomes Residents

The first residents are settling in to Memory Lane, Vincentian Personal Care’s newly opened memory care community at Vincentian Home. The spacious, open design provides residents with familiar settings in a safe environment. Residents enjoy time outside or on enclosed porches connected to each room.

Memory Lane immerses residents in décor, entertainment and themes that evoke memories of their early adulthood. Research shows that this environment stimulates the mind and promotes calm for individuals with dementia.

Space is available. To take a tour or learn more call 412-366-1039.
The word innovation comes from Latin, meaning renewal. It’s a buzzword that has gained prominence in recent years. But for Vincentian, innovation has been woven into the fabric of our ministry since the very beginning.

Consider Catherine Spalding. In 1812, she founded a congregation of Sisters to educate Kentucky’s youth. Growing from a one-room schoolhouse, the ministry expanded – Mother Catherine even opened the first Catholic school in Louisville. By the 20th century, members of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth were engaged in two colleges, more than 30 high schools and over 100 elementary schools. Today, our SCN Family is an international congregation with diverse ministries in five countries.

Here in Pittsburgh, the Vincentian system traces its roots to 1924 when a need arose for senior care. In response, the Sisters opened the 24-resident Holy Rosary Cottage in McCandless. Today, we serve hundreds of residents, providing a continuum of care in the North Hills, the South Hills and the City of Pittsburgh.

Our innovation continues. We’re re-purposing physical spaces – Marian Manor’s former basement is now a state-of-the-art rehabilitation center. We’re also developing new approaches to senior care at Vincentian Personal Care’s Memory Lane. And, at Vincentian de Marillac, we’ve improved daily activities such as dining services. Indeed, Catherine Spalding’s pioneer spirit remains alive and well throughout our Vincentian system!

Why is improving care through innovation so important to us? It comes right from our SCN Mission Statement, as it is said in Latin, Caritas Christi Urget Nos – The Love of Christ Impels Us.

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**Marian Manor Charity Golf Classic Raises $70,000**

Thanks to all who made the 14th Annual Marian Manor Charity Golf Classic a success!

Our residents are blessed to have a circle of friends who yearly donate time, talent and treasure to make Marian Manor a better place.

Elijah (left) — Marian Manor’s youngest supporter — enjoys the dinner program.

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**Tributes Abound!**

The first memorial trees and benches are among several appearing throughout the Vincentian ministries — all thanks to your generosity!

Visitors to the Vincentian Home courtyard garden can now spend a few minutes with “Uncle” Joe Kasunich. At the Vincentian Villa clubhouse, a memorial tree stands brightly at the entrance. And, commemorative benches can be seen at Marian Manor. These special trees and benches provide a meaningful way to remember those who have touched the lives of the Vincentian family.

Uncle Joe’s bench sits in the very spot where the longtime farmer enjoyed and helped form Vincentian Home’s courtyard garden. Likewise, the vibrant color of Sr. Mary’s tree welcomes residents and visitors alike at the Vincentian Villa clubhouse.

Limited naming opportunities remain at each of the Vincentian ministries — Marian Manor, Vincentian de Marillac, Vincentian Home and Vincentian Villa. We can help you find the perfect spot for your fitting tribute. Call 412-548-4056 today to learn more.

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**A Reflection on the SCN Mission**

“We have an opportunity to be with people during times that are full of joy. We are also with people during times of sorrow, as we surround others with love and comfort. I believe this is the beginning of heaven on earth…. I know that this time in my life is filled with God’s love.” – Sister Carol Clasgens, SCN, who passed away at Nazareth Home in Louisville, Kentucky in September.
Love Birds Sing at Marian Manor
Two couples recently celebrated very special wedding anniversaries — all with a little help from their friends.

Mary Lou Littlefield said she’d do it all over again with her husband of 65 years, Bob, during a rousing ceremony culminating with a dinner from the bride and groom’s favorite restaurant. Tabitha, the Littlefield’s favorite waitress from Scoglio’s, even came to serve the food at the private meal. Three generations of the family joined in the celebration, including great-grandson Liam. Fr. Kris Stubna, Pastor of the couple’s parish, led all in a blessing and renewed the Littlefields’ vows. Then, the group shared memories and celebrated with dessert and entertainment.

Just a few weeks later, Ken and Earleen Schneider celebrated their golden anniversary with friends and family.

Sr. Christina Marie Janusek led those gathered in a prayer and gave a reading of 1 Corinthians, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.” Afterward, Marian Manor’s own Chef Dan prepared a special dinner for the bride and groom’s 50th anniversary. A cake complete with roses was shared with all.

A busy professional with decades-long involvement at Vincentian

Dr. Rosemary Hanrahan Edwards has been part of the Vincentian family for nearly 30 years, since her great aunt was a resident Vincentian Home in the 1980s. Dr. Edwards’ parents also chose to reside at Vincentian Home, drawn by the care from the heart provided by the staff and Sisters. Rosemary is a volunteer, board member and key supporter of Vincentian’s ministries. Dr. Edwards recently took a few minutes to share her perspective on the Vincentian family.

Q: Has Vincentian changed since your parents were residents back in 2005?
A: As a system, Vincentian is learning a lot about our aging population, with more research and breakthroughs in areas like dementia. We’re helping people live to their potential and feel connected to the world. Our senior care communities are more than just a place where your family member goes to spend the last couple years of their life. It’s about a system that supports families.

Q: Is Vincentian different than other health care organizations?
A: The Catholic identity distinguishes Vincentian. As people are facing crucial times in their lives, there’s a lot of comfort that comes from being in a faith-based environment. That was really important to my parents and my aunt. The presence of the Sisters was also very comforting to them. Vincentian has some very kind and wonderful staff who knew my parents very well, who probably knew things even I didn’t know.

Q: In addition to your physician practice, you’re a very busy person. You’ve recently attained a master’s degree in Public Health and you’ve written a book. You’re also heavily involved in charitable work in Haiti and elsewhere. When you were asked to join the VCS board, what made you decide to give your time and treasure here?
A: I wanted to have an impact and help the Vincentian system be the best it can be. Our aging population is very vulnerable, so we feel protective of our loved ones. Part of the reason I’m on the board is because I think senior care is a very important part of medicine right now. A big issue in our country today is helping people who are living longer and facing issues that people didn’t face before. There is a real need for systems like Vincentian.
Tales and Tails at Vincentian

Fun was had by all at this year’s Vincentian de Marillac Annual Picnic! Activities included lunch, free sno-cones, a raffle and more. Special thanks to staff and volunteers.

Vincentian de Marillac resident Mary Bencsics visits with 12-year-old Buzz during International Dog Week. The veteran canine volunteer enjoys his time with the residents.

Alabaster Children’s Theater performed Frozen at Marian Manor. Frozen is the story of Anna, a fearless optimist, who sets off on a journey to find her sister Elsa, whose icy powers have trapped the kingdom of Arendelle in eternal winter.

Duquesne students participated in GRANDfriends Days at Vincentian Home. The event included training on visitation — and communication tips for volunteers. Afterwards, students engaged with residents in their preferred activities.

VIP Award Winners Announced

Give a big round of applause to the fall 2014 winners of the St. Vincent and St. Louise award, which recognizes those who exemplify the VCS mission. When it comes to meeting the highest standards of compassionate, dignified care, these employees are “VIPs” — “Vincent In Practice.”

**Daniel Ober**
Nurse Aide
Vincentian Home

**Claire Salvatore**
Activity Assistant
Vincentian Personal Care

**Akelea Tillman**
Nurse Aide
Vincentian de Marillac

Christmas Cards on Sale Now

Vincentian’s annual Christmas card is now available! This card was lovingly designed especially for us by Sr. Marie Becker, SCN. A package of 15 is $10. To order by phone or email, contact Laura at 412-548-4056 or foundation@vcs.org.

United Way or Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Supporters

Please consider designating all or part of your gift to one of the Vincentian system’s five participating ministries — codes are to the left. For more information, call 412-548-4059 or visit www.vcs.org/make-a/gift.

Thank you to all of our donors!

Your continued support of our ministries throughout the year makes a world of difference to our residents!