

Valley Cares to show off new wing

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TOWNSHEND -- Some new residents are on their way to West River Valley Senior Housing.

After years of work and fundraising, administrators at Grafton Road-based Valley Cares Inc. are ready to celebrate completion of a \$2.8 million addition that is expected to help address demand for assisted-living space.

A public open house, which includes tours, is scheduled for 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 30.

"We'll have a ribbon cutting, and we're hoping that many of our funders and partners will be able to join us," said Susanne Shapiro, Valley Cares executive director.

The West River Valley Senior Housing facility includes both independent- and assisted-living apartments. But with a long waiting list, administrators decided to expand the assisted-living complex, which gives residents access to 24-hour staffing as well as help with medications, meals, housekeeping, laundry and transportation.

Some of the dozen new apartments in the 10,000-square-foot, two-story addition have a kitchenette, while others feature a "supportive housing" layout with a full kitchen.

Two days after the open house, several residents will begin moving in.

The expansion also provided space for four new offices, new common areas and new porches, administrators said. There also is a renovated staff room, laundry room, living room, dining room and kitchen.

Wednesday marked "the grand opening for our reconstructed kitchen and dining facilities," Shapiro said.

The project was completed on time, on budget and without any big problems, Shapiro said.

"There are always little kinks here and there," Shapiro said. "But there was no major disruption in our regular services."

She also praised Wright Construction, the Mount Holly-based general contractor on the job.

"The workers have been very mindful of our people having to live life as usual during all the transformations," Shapiro said.

Valley Cares administrators held weekly meetings with residents to keep them apprised of progress on the expansion.

Shapiro said Valley Cares is "committed to providing a quality living experience," and such efforts may be one reason why the facility's assisted-living operations recently received an "Excellence in Action" award from National Research Corp.

"It was based on the results of our annual satisfaction survey of residents and families," Shapiro said, adding that West River Valley Senior Housing was "one of two assisted-living facilities in Vermont to receive this."

The award is based on high scores on the question "What is your recommendation of this facility to others?" It is given to facilities that fall within the top 10 percent of satisfaction scores, administrators said.

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