

LUTHERAN INTENTIONAL VILLAGE OF UPPER PINELLAS (LIV-UP)

Aging-in-place and living at home is the preferred and sometimes only alternative for persons in the last quarter of life. ALOA is currently exploring the feasibility of initiating a partnership with several Lutheran churches in Upper Pinellas to form, design, and operate a Lutheran Intentional Village.

An "intentional village" isn't a physical village but rather a group of people who join together to provide services and support that enable older adults to stay in their homes while managing the transitions of aging.

The concept of a Lutheran Intentional Village is largely based on the Beacon Hill Village model launched in 2001 by a handful of Boston residents who didn't want to move into assisted living. However, instead of a neighborhood organization, churches would serve as the foundation of the Lutheran Intentional Village. Church facilities would be utilized and congregations involved as volunteers.

There are few examples of faith-based total support systems for persons aging in place other than institutions, or private retirement communities. While many churches desire to help their aging members in many ways, most individual congregations are not equipped to begin to answer the needs. A cluster of churches working together and using volunteers of all ages, could be an answer.

Typical components of an "intentional village":

Services often provided by "villages":

1. Referral resource (including household, financial, and health)
2. Parish nurse/geriatric case management
3. Spiritual and end-of life planning
4. Pastoral, legal, and financial counseling
5. Social activities, music, games, and meal service, such as weekly breakfasts or daily luncheon
6. Trips and travel, transportation, employment referral
7. Companion and caregiving respite
8. Home modification, and more

Management and staffing, volunteers, facilities:

1. Paid staff as needed but heavy emphasis on volunteers
2. Extensive use of churches facilities for resource centers, office, social activities, learning, technology, music, tutoring, fellowship, eating, memorial gardens, celebrations,
3. Possibly some residences/apartments on the property (shared homes, etc.)

Costs and financing:

1. Grants, membership dues, gifts and bequests, fees for service

Status of this project:

This concept is currently being researched by a task force of interested Lutherans in Upper Pinellas. The intent is to make contact with several churches that are in close proximity and assess whether there is sufficient interest in partnering with each other to start a model program. Start-up funding from sources such as Together-in-Mission and Thrivent will be explored along with other foundations and social agencies.

References: www.beaconhillvillage.org
www.vtvnetwork.org : The Village-to-Village Network provides excellent resources (examples of documents, business plans, insurance requirements, etc) and offers consultations for starting a "village".

If you, or your congregation, are interested in exploring this concept at the local level, please contact:

Doris Hanson (ALOA): heldor@aol.com

Margo Walbolt (ALOA): margo.walbolt@mac.com