

Five Star Club Offers Stellar care for Dementia Patients



Licensed for 35 participants, the goal of the Five Star club's programming is to keep patients mentally and physically stimulated throughout the day by offering personalized care plans and a variety of activities including card games and exercise classes. The only non-profit provider of adult day care to Coachella Valley seniors with Alzheimer's disease and other organic brain diseases, Eisenhower Medical Center's Five Star Club has been providing compassionate care to clients for more than 23 years.

Licensed for 35 participants, the goal of the Five Star Club's programming is to keep patients mentally and physically stimulated throughout the day by offering personalized care plans and a variety of activities including exercise and dance, bingo and card games, theme parties, arts and crafts, animal therapy visits, and a fellowship group, plus a well-balanced lunch and two snacks. Toileting and bathing assistance and referrals to other community services are also provided.

"We have a very social, user-friendly and relaxed environment here," says Stacy Smith, RN, BSN, PHN Manager of Eisenhower Medical Center's Five Star Club. "Our services are offered in a nonmedical setting so our clients feel comfortable participating in a 'club' setting. The walls are painted with rich colors, and all sitting surfaces look like fabric, but are easy care vinyl. The Five Star Club is a place for individuals to come and enjoy the day. It is like coming to a senior center, but they receive supervision and assistance."

The Five Star Club has a roster of 80 to 100 clients at any one time. The Club also accepts clients in wheelchairs. "Some clients come once or twice a week, others come all five days. I also have my snowbirds," says Smith. "It is my job to make up the schedule a week in advance and make sure that everyone has a spot."

The Club's staff of seven is specially trained and ensures a five-to-one client-to-staff ratio. "Our staff promotes a no-fail environment and really cares about each member's well-being. Negatives like 'don't,' 'can't' and 'no' are not part of our communication with our memory-impaired clients," says Smith. "We use compassionate communication. We do not argue with clients. We redirect them. We join their reality. For many dementia patients, every time they ask a question they genuinely think it is the first time they are doing so. Our goal is always to keep them calm and happy by redirecting them away from any answers or subject matter that might be upsetting to them and to continually offer our support."

The Five Star Club also offers support for caregivers through its free, weekly two-hour support group held during Five Star Club hours. "I lead our support group which is an Alzheimer's Association support group that is sponsored here at the Five Star Club. Caregivers of non-club members are also encouraged to participate in the group," says Smith.

The Five Star Club is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Transportation is available on fully ADA-compliant SunDial buses.

For more information about the Five Star Club, or to schedule an appointment for a club visit, call 760-836-0232.