

Elderly Services, Inc.

Project Independence Adult Day Care

High Quality and Excellence Are Our Goals

2018 Report on Quality Assurance

April 2019



“I enjoy everything here: the people who work here, all the things that go on during the day and the other people who come. If I didn’t, I wouldn’t come every day!”

-Lorraine Wickland-Combes

Lorraine Wickland-Combes started attending Project Independence when she was still in her 90’s. Her husband had recently died and so she moved to Vermont to be closer to her son. In December, 2018, she celebrated her 100th birthday with her daughter, her son and daughter-in-law, and her Project Independence family. She loves dancing, exercise, the great live music played here, and talking with participants and the staff. Recently she had dinner with some men in their mid-late nineties and they discussed their memories of World War II for over an hour.

It is our mission to make sure that our participants and families feel respected, maintain their dignity, and experience joy every day no matter what their challenges. In 2018 we worked hard to provide the highest quality care to participants, and support and respite for families.

This report talks about how we stay in touch with the needs and wishes of the people we serve. And as always, we want you to let us know how we can do our job better.

This is what we have been working on this year:

I. Quality Help from Your First Call

After signing up to join Project Independence, you or your family member are asked to comment on how well we helped you. In 2018, 45 people (74%) returned this feedback questionnaire.

We were pleased to see good ratings as summarized here:

- a. 98 % said that we returned their call within two days.
- b. 98% were able to enroll in Project Independence as soon as they wished. (One was held up because of delay in state funding.)
- c. 100% received adequate introductory information.
- d. 100% reported that we provided effective help in applying for government funding.

We also received much positive feedback, and have included a few sample comments:

- We were served a nice lunch and had an informative tour of the facility.
- Very blessed by your support and quick enrollment.
- Very efficiently taken care of.
- Everything went smooth and easy. Bill was pleased to get in so quickly and so were we.
- The staff was helpful with everything.
- I can't say enough good things about Project Independence. The people are wonderful. I recommend it to everyone I know with elderly relatives!
- The staff is so kind, caring and is making a huge difference in my dad's life. Thank you!
- I am happy to go to Project, a well-run program every day, caring staff, each person treated with respect and with a loving atmosphere. Bus drivers great too!
- This is a wonderful program. My mother really looks forward to going to "Project."

II. Helping you with Health Concerns

Our five part-time nurses John, Laurie, Claire, Maura, and our new nurse Ann, worked together to help you when you didn't feel well, needed medication or wanted them to talk to a doctor or family member about a medical concern. With many nurses, we've got better nursing coverage. This means not only helping you with your blood sugar before meals, your oxygen tanks, and your medications, but also staying in touch with families, caregivers and doctor's offices to ensure we're all working together to help you feel your best. Nurses now have dedicated time to communicate with doctor's offices twice a year during case reviews to make sure your medications and care are up to date.

We have also upgraded our oxygen delivery and storage so that there's never a worry about running low. Plus, nurses have trained selected staff to assist with changing oxygen tanks. We have improved hydration strategies through the use of Recharge electrolyte drink, as well as encouraging water during bathroom assists and activities. Finally, our nurses now trim toenails in the twice monthly Foot Clinic, so that your feet are healthy and comfortable.

III. Offering You Interesting Programs

In 2018, we continued to offer you a diverse, exciting set of programs led by our dynamic staff and over 100 volunteers who come in every month to share their talents. We've maintained our Bone Builders, exercise programs and walking groups to keep you moving. Ken Schoen took the lead on the activities programming, after Jack DesBois went back to graduate school and Kristin Bolton took on Assistant Director responsibilities. Ken, with the help of Kristin, Betsy Stine and David Tennal, has given the activities program another boost with engaging new volunteers, creating even more fun games (like seated volleyball and rocket shuffle) and supporting the staff to prepare their own programs ranging from famous women in history to Led Zeppelin.

As new staff have joined us, we've been inviting them to lead programs that stem from their interests, from climbing Mount Denali to making cranberry relish. We've also focused on activities led by our participants or that come from their interests, including card games, farming, armed forces memories, favorite pets, and birds. Vans have taken people out for ice cream and hot chocolate, but also to libraries, museums, the college, parks and rivers, the lake, and around town.

IV. Providing You Delicious and Nutritious Food

We love making you delicious, nourishing and well-balanced meals! We enjoy the challenge of accommodating your dietary needs and preferences, working within the nutritional guidelines of the agencies that provide our funding, while making the meal a highlight of your day here. We appreciate you stopping by and talking with us about the food we're making and how we're making it. Thanks to volunteers Susan Q Montgomery, Marilynn Lang, Don Peddie and Liz Holm for all the dishes washed, food prepped, and for their good cheer!

Though Sandy Pominville retired, head cooks Amy, Geetha, Missy and Sue kept the good food coming, with a lot of help from the many other staff in the kitchen. We continued to serve favorites like shepherd's pie, lemon lulu cake and maple carrot slaw. We've also gotten adventurous with innovative new dishes like pumpkin rolls, roasted roots with thyme, chicken piccata, and chocolate cheesecake. We were fortunate to find Susan Pratt, a talented chef who loves to teach us her secrets to delicious food while she cooks. We've invested in some more commercial grade equipment to be more efficient, like better knives and food processors. And we made needed repairs to the walk-in cooler and freezer.

V. Driving You in Comfort and Safety

Every week in 2018, 24 drivers, driving 98 trips Monday through Saturday, gave rides daily to and from Project Independence every day to 80 of you. Paul Vachon retired in 2018, and Pam Barrows filled his shoes, with the support of Eric Covey and Rodger Hamilton. They keep track of names, schedules, routes, and a variety of transportation issues.

Our aging transportation fleet consists of 10 vans and 2 cars. We bought three new vans this year to replace ones we had to retire in 2017. Our vehicles are very well maintained by our very own Olin Kimball and Jeff Scott as well as local mechanics.

Our new van shed keeps six of our vehicles free of snow and ice and helps keep our drivers and elders safe.

We gained friendly, personable new drivers (Carol, Don, Jeff, Randy and Ted) to help fill the gaps in our routes after some drivers retired. We also posted a new Driver's Board so that drivers would be sure to have the most up-to-date information about dropping you off and picking you u.

We continue to comply with the government requirement that our drivers undergo periodic random alcohol and drug testing, including pre-employment testing of each new driver. Eric, Pam and Rodger also oversee the many rides and drivers we request from ACTR. We urge you to let us know how your rides and drivers are doing.

VI. Keeping our Building and Grounds Inviting

We have maintained our gorgeous building with quarterly visits from our interior touch up painter, Deb, who refreshes our look throughout the year. We installed better lighting for the sunporch, nook, kitchen and the upper floor. To keep you comfortable, we continue to improve the thermostat system. For energy efficiency and comfort, we installed heat pumps in the kitchen and the great room so when the hot and humid weather hits us this summer we can keep cooler.

Outside, you saw Lydia and John caring for our beautiful gardens and landscaping. During your walks you probably noticed something in bloom throughout the growing season. We grew some tomatoes, cucumber and basil for the kitchen and plan to create a full herb garden for the kitchen next summer.

VI. Community Partners Appreciate What We Do

In 2018, we sought feedback from some of our community partners including the Veteran's Administration, Counseling Service of Addison County, Addison County Home Health and Hospice, and UVM Health Network Porter Medical Center. Their glowing reports attest to the hard work we do together to support elders in the community.

Laura Smith, Veteran's Administration

"Elderly Services/Project Independence is helpful by providing care and supervision for the veterans as well as social opportunities, activities and health assessment. Attending Elderly Services Inc. allows veterans to decrease isolation, increase peer support and allow caregivers to have a respite from in home care.

"The benefits and strengths of our programs include staff who are very caring and enjoy their work, meals which support overall health and medical oversight for at-risk individuals. Some of our veterans would be in nursing homes without your program and other adult day programs."

Amy Curtis, Addison County Home Health and Hospice

"ESI is extremely helpful to our clients and their families because it is a well-organized and smoothly run program where participants can receive socialization, medication management, proper nutrition and oversight in a fun and stimulating environment. As an agency we rely heavily on ESI to support our clients in their

desire to remain in the community for as long as possible. We often utilize ESI for clients on Moderate Needs and Choices for Care and have seen many situations where a client's attendance at PI has truly made the difference in their ability to remain in the setting of their choice.

“The benefits and strengths are medical oversight, proper nutrition, socialization, supervision. It is apparent that the staff are very respectful and conscientious about providing the specific care each client needs and things are individualized as much as possible while still keeping the daily routine of such a large program running smoothly.

“I find all of the staff at ESI that I deal with to be very helpful and, if someone cannot answer my question, they always refer it to someone who can. It is always helpful to have communication about the clients we share as well as those who may be next to be served jointly by our agencies. I think ESI is doing a great job!”

Laura Ethier, Care Coordinator, UVM Health Network / Porter Medical Center

“I can't say enough good things about Elderly Services. I believe Elderly Services serves an important part of our community, and I have no qualms about referring patients and/or their families to Elderly Services. I love the care and compassion patients and their families find at Elderly Services, and everyone I've ever talked with are incredibly knowledgeable about the needs of the elderly. I love having a resource to call. I don't really have any suggestions for improvement.”

Peter Lebenbaum, Counseling Service of Addison County (CSAC)

“Elderly Services and Project Independence are immensely helpful to CSAC. We have referred clients who themselves are served by ES as well as concerned family members who are unaware of the services you offer. In most instances clients and their families gain in resilience and regain hope as a significant support is added to family life. The social life of the elderly client is expanded exponentially with new friendships and they are able to continue to live with their families. Your program excels in the variety of experiences you offer and in the creativity of your staff in meeting the needs of project participants. Our perspective is that participation in PI is a powerful treatment for depression.

“I think it might be useful to schedule regular (perhaps quarterly) reviews with relevant CSAC staff, (adult outpatient, elder care clinician, and perhaps our emergency team,) to facilitate referral and develop relationships with staff. Many of our relevant staff have not been inside the PI building.

“We struggle with assessment and treatment, as well as problems in referral for elderly clients who present with symptoms suggesting of either/both dementia and mental illness. I imagine this might be an issue for you as well. Sometimes these clients and especially their families get shuffled from one place to another in search of a useful diagnosis. Perhaps together we could facilitate a more comprehensive and family friendly assessment process for these complicated presentations.”

VII. Vermont Department of Aging Feedback Survey

You can read in attachment A, a summary of our 2018 questionnaires required by the Vermont Department of Aging. We are certified as an Adult Day Center by the state of Vermont. Thank you to 54 family members/caregivers, for your helpful responses!

VIII. Volunteers Who Share Their Time

Throughout 2018, 24 floor volunteers joined us each week to help in sports games, go on van trips, dance, create crafts and share their time (over 80 hours each week!) and many talents with us here at Project! We had volunteers ranging in age from 1 year old, to 94 years old. Each volunteer brought joy and generosity that brightened our day. In addition to our weekly floor volunteers, we had volunteers teach us card games (Pokeeno, King Pede, Cribbage, and Poker), help in the kitchen, assist us in organizing our elder college (ESI College) and prepare our mailings. We even had four-legged volunteers who stopped by for a visit! We continued to have ongoing visits from groups of student volunteers join us including Mary Hogan's 5th graders, the Beeman Elementary School students, the Ark Pre-School as well as Mary Johnson Day Camp.

Wonderful Staff for Your Care and Enjoyment

Hiring loving, good-natured people is key to the quality of Project Independence. In 2018 we were blessed to have a large core of staff who have worked here for many years; we also said good-bye to many who retired. We welcomed over 10 wonderful new employees- both year-round new staff and students who work seasonally. Staff education is a vital part of making our program the best it can be. Here are the sessions our staff attended:

a. In-House Trainings

- ❖ Challenging Behaviors of Participants
- ❖ Special Needs and Issues at Mealtimes
- ❖ Disarming Negativity
- ❖ Participant Opportunities to Help: In the Center and On the Vans
- ❖ Drug and Alcohol Training
- ❖ What to Do When Participants are Unkind: Leading from the Heart
- ❖ Toileting with TLC
- ❖ Protecting Your Body While Assisting Participants
- ❖ Individual Care in Our Group Program
- ❖ Short Staffed: Stresses and Positives
- ❖ Medical Emergency Policy
- ❖ Understanding Activity Planning
- ❖ Coordinator Role
- ❖ Drivers' Roundtable

b. External Trainings

- ❖ 2018 Gerontology Symposium: Caregiving for Persons Living with Dementia
- ❖ Being Mortal: Film Screening and Discussion with Diana Barnard, MD
- ❖ CACFP & Summer Food Service Program, 18th Annual Conference
- ❖ Remembering, Forgetting and Protecting the Aging Brain

- ❖ Bone Builders: New Instructor and Refresher Courses
- ❖ CPR/AED, First Aid Course and Recertification
- ❖ Internal Family Systems Therapy
- ❖ Drugs Don't Work Here: What Every Employee Needs to Know about Drugs in the Workplace
- ❖ Coding and Billing for Mental Health Services
- ❖ Department of Veterans Affairs and VHA Office of Community Care: Overview
- ❖ Positive Approach to Care (PAC): Six Pieces of the Dementia Puzzle
- ❖ Building a Community of Dementia Care Partners
- ❖ Managing Multiple Projects, Objectives and Deadlines
- ❖ Decision Making and Leadership
- ❖ Mindful Anger: The Art of Transforming Difficult Emotion into a Powerful Therapeutic Tool

IX. Learning from Unfortunate Incidents

Each year we maintain an Incident Log in which we record minor or major crises or events related to the safety of our participants and staff. Supervisors and staff discuss the incident and decide if we should change any practices going forward. Each unfortunate incident is seen as an opportunity to learn and improve how we run our program. A summary of 2018 incidents is listed here:

- 24 participant falls (or bumping into something): all described as “gentle falls” with no injuries (falls occurred at PI, on the van, or at a participant’s house going to or from the van)
- 6 Participant falls, bumps or near-falls that resulted in minor scrapes or bruises
- 2 Minor Vehicle Accidents: no injuries
- Staff member fell in the parking lot
- Participant threw his seatbelt off and hit another participant with the end of it: no injury.
- Participant grabbed another by the wrist: no bruising or injury

X. 2019 Quality Assurance Goals

Here are the goals that we'll be working on in the coming year:

Nursing & Health

- Evaluate role of nursing in family support

Participant Care

- Continue training on safety and helping skills in escorting and seating PI participants
- Evaluate systems to assure table setters and servers receive good information and supervision regarding participants’ dietary needs and social interaction
- Promote hydration throughout the day
- Provide ongoing training of many new part-time staff joining us in 2018 and 2019

Activities and Programming

- Attentively manage and give positive feedback to hundreds of entertainment volunteers

- Provide individual and group support and training for activity leader staff
- Cultivate enthusiastic team approach to program planning and create succession plan for activity leaders and activity planners.
- Develop additional team members to support Ken in his new role.
- Experiment with ways to communicate programming changes broadly and quickly.

Kitchen

- Develop innovative menus that get participants excited about their meals while promoting physical comfort (digestion, elimination).
- Provide additional training on cooking skills and ServeSafe
- Use fresh herbs from the on-site herb garden
- Coordinate menu planning among several head cooks to be more efficient, create variety in meals throughout the week, capture creativity and improve communication.

Transportation

- Gain funding for and purchase an all-wheel drive car for safer winter driving
- Evaluate and adapt routes as new participants enroll
- Assure strong transportation planning staff and driver staff

Environment, Buildings, Grounds

- Continuous interior painting
- Explore approaches to wet and snowy boots to preserve our wood floors
- Identify repair needs in 3 buildings
- Develop strategy for walker and wheelchair use and placement during activities
- Enhance small group discussion (parlor) and library spaces
- Modify lighting in lower dining room for games
- Add ceiling fans to better circulate air in dining room and great room
- Create new herb garden for the kitchen
- Replace worn-out furniture

Social Work

- Experiment with family caregiver training
- Promote counseling as valuable aid to PI participants, PI families, and community members
- Improve referral/inquiry tracking and statistics
- Improve outreach/serve more people

Do You Have Any Comments or Suggestions?

Thank you for reading this report. Please talk to the staff on the Quality Assurance Committee with any comments or questions: Kristin Bolton, Joanne Corbett, Eric Covey, Dana Perzanoski

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Attachment C: Family Feedback Survey Summary, Dec. 2017/Jan. 2018

Dear Project Independence Family,

Would you be willing to take the time to fill out the enclosed survey, required by the Vermont Department of Aging? We have included a return envelope for your convenience. Thank you!

Sincerely, *Joanne Corbett*, Executive Director

1. How helpful is the break/respice you receive by having your loved one at Project Independence?

- Excellent = 47
- Good = 7
- Fair = 0
- Poor = 0

2. How would you rate the quality of care provided by Project Independence?

- Excellent = 51
- Good = 5
- Fair = 0
- Poor = 0

3. In what ways is Project Independence helpful to you as a caregiver?

- Gives me time for myself = 41
- Time for my job = 24
- Reduces my stress = 41
- Helps me to talk over care issues with staff = 16
- Other = 7

4. The staff at Project Independence/ESI treat me with respect and courtesy.

- Excellent = 52
- Good = 4
- Fair = 0
- Poor = 0

5. What can we do to better meet your needs? Or the needs of your loved one at Project? *(please use the back if needed)*

Name (optional) _____

Attachment C: Family Feedback Survey Summary, Dec. 2017/Jan. 2018

- ♥ *We can all improve at something, but I don't know what you could do better. You do an amazing job- thank you!*
- ♥ *It's a wonderful place and I'm so thankful that my mom can spend time there. Everyone is incredible! Thank you!*
- ♥ *Project gives me precious alone time with my children. I honestly can't think of anything PI could do beyond what they're already doing. They make my life so much easier and help me navigate paperwork and family issues that come up with my clients. I would be lost without their services. As a caregiver, they help keep me sane and functional. Thank you Project Independence!*
- ♥ *Can't think of anything more. Thank you.*
- ♥ *We are more than satisfied!*
- ♥ *You're doing fine.*
- ♥ *PI gives me time to do household and property chores.*
- ♥ *I wouldn't change anything. You're awesome.*
- ♥ *Keep up what you are doing. It really helps my wife more than me.*
- ♥ *You go above and beyond- being there for everyone! I have had many people over the years go to ESI and it has always been the best care and I have the utmost respect for you. It is a hard job and staff do it with respect, thoughtfulness and caring for all. Great people there!*
- ♥ *It would be helpful on snow days to update your open/close status along with bus pick up instead of having to call each time to find out.*
- ♥ *You need to work on transportation. Meals are fair at best. Need to work on quality of food. Doesn't seem to be a whole lot of effort in meals.*
- ♥ *I love everyone there!*
- ♥ *So very pleased with everything.*
- ♥ *I can't think of anything you could improve!*
- ♥ *I'm so happy to know she is enjoying herself there.*
- ♥ *PI gives me time to clean mother's apartment*
- ♥ *Project Independence does a superb job in meals, activities, caring and keeping us informed.*
- ♥ *Thank you for the excellent care- it gives us a few hours and we don't have to worry about him.*
- ♥ *The program is great! My father loves going and now his brother is going with him. You guys are fantastic with your guest (presenters). Thanks so much for helping with his care!*
- ♥ *You are doing a wonderful job- so thankful to have the help of Project Independence. It has been such a big help and Dick loves going.*
- ♥ *Offer support group more than once a month.*
- ♥ *Thank you for everything all the staff does for everyone in your care.*
- ♥ *You are perfect!*
- ♥ *The best program in Addison County! I wish my clients would go more.*
- ♥ *You all do a great job*