



Issue #11 August 22, 2014

Bringing Them Back Home—Monarch Suite

The vision for bringing home to the Monarch suite was created by and for everyone who uses the space: staff, residents and families. More than in any other area, the Monarch staff team was extremely positive and helpful in working through options, to make the design for our highest-care living area come alive. The original design was functional but left much to be desired otherwise. We had a few chuckles and “what were they thinking?” moments about our current layout, like why is the shower room in the dining room and the dirty utility room at the front door???, etc. Then we got down to work.

More than anything, we wanted families to feel at home and have private spaces for visits, because so many of them spend long hours with their loved ones on Monarch. We wanted the experience for the residents and visitors to be a delight to the senses. We wanted the space to be a continuous reminder of the gentle joys of life—music, bird song, water sounds, living plantings, smells of baking. It took ingenuity, but I think our new design is a winner!

Like the other suites, our living and dining spaces will be in the front of the home, with bathing moved into the resident room areas. Guests will enter into a foyer/parlor with a soothing water wall, which leads into an expanded dining space with a baking kitchen. The airy dining room opens onto the terrace, which is trellised for multi-season comfort. The day room is artfully divided into small seating areas, to create a more normal room scale, and provide private conversation nooks for family visits. Focal points include aviaries and aquariums, art, a music area, a formal version of our Star Room and a small area for video screenings. We created a private family living room, which can also accommodate overnight guests. Spa bathing, warmed towels and larger beds will enhance residents’ down time. And our staff will appreciate the sensible rearrangement of their task areas, so they can more easily provide better care.

Susan Farris, Executive Director

PS—the mural will find a new home somewhere in the center! We’ll keep you posted....