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FEATURED

Chesterwye opens doors to new home

By KRISTIAN JAIME Kjaime@chespub.com Aug 29, 2018



Caretaker Samantha Newcomb, left, shows resident Anthony Wheatley, center, and nurse Charnise Ryans the large flatscreen television in the living room of the new home.

KRISTIAN JAIME

STEVENSVILLE — With a cut of a ribbon, the Chesterwye officially opened its new fully ADA compliant home for four special needs tenants on Tuesday, Aug. 21.

The 3,000-square-foot home, at 325 State Street, includes four bedrooms and three private bathrooms, a kitchen with adjacent pantry, a spacious living room, a private office for staff, a large porch with a wheel chair ramp, and driveway space for a fully accessible van.

“The county heard the need for this project and, in some cases, that cry is silent,” said County Commissioner Mark Anderson. “But we answered with a majority because it was the right thing to do, and the county is glad it’s here.”

The entire floor plan for the home provides wider hallways, easily accessible bathrooms and bedrooms equipped with a track system along the ceiling to make transporting the tenants that much easier with the help of a lift.

The unveiling represents a partnership between Queen Anne’s County, the county’s Housing and Community Services, the Chesterwye Center Inc., the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Rural Maryland Council, and the Secretary of Maryland Department of Disabilities.

“For many folks, the Chesterwye is their family,” said Wheeler Baker, Chesterwye board president. “We try to give as many people as we can a good life and to facilitate the things necessary for their well-being. Although there’s obstacles and problems, we have a great staff and we work through them.”

The intention of the project was to provide a level of relative independence for the newest residents of the home given their medical diagnoses. DHCD provided the grant funds for the house, Charlotte Davis of the Rural Maryland Council paid for the ceiling track system, and District 36 Del. Steven Arentz oversaw the project.

Private contributions provided additional support for the organization as a whole. The Maryland Disabilities Administration is the primary funder, but still expects an estimated 25 percent of the operating budget to originate from the private sector.

“Every parent wants their children, no matter their age, to live in a safe house where they are taken care and every child wants to grow up with some independence. The Chesterwye makes that possible for those who need more medical care. This is a great project and a great day,” said Cindy Stone, director of the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Demographic data compiled by the Chesterwye Center Inc. notes the average age of its patients is 61 with 16 men and women depending on wheelchairs or walkers for mobility. Clients of the organization work, volunteer and participate in more than 20 local businesses and organizations.

With more than 100 full and part-time positions, the organization contributes more than \$4 million in wages to the local economy.

“When we got the application for this program we were excited,” said Charlotte Davis, executive director of the Rural Maryland Council. “We wanted to fit capacity and improve quality of life and this certainly fit the bill. We also wanted to leverage additional resources with other funds. Gov. Hogan and the Maryland General Assembly also made some funds available.”

The organization, through its residential program, provides living in 10 private houses built or adapted for adults with developmental disabilities. Such residents receive assistance from Chesterwye’s direct support staff.

“Providing opportunities for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to participate meaningfully in all aspects of life aligns with the administration’s mission to change Maryland for the better. It promotes equality of access, choice and opportunity,” said Carol A. Beatty, secretary of Maryland Department of Disabilities.

More information on the Chesterwye Center Inc. and its host of programs is available at www.chesterwye.org or 410-827-7048.