



Press Release

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Business Woman Awarded High Honors for Chamber Member of the Year 2009

Stevenson, Washington, January 20, 2010

At the Annual Skamania County Chamber of Commerce Dinner Meeting Jan 20, 2010, Robin Aman, Director of Rock Cove Assisted Living was awarded Volunteer Chamber Member of the Year for 2009.

Ms Aman has been with Rock Cove Assisted Living since 2001 and has been a community member in Skamania County for over 17 years. Robin was surprised and honored to be awarded and recognized in this way. "Its all about the people that make a community vibrant, not only participating fully in community life but seeking out ways to give back as well", says Aman. Robin is not afraid of helping out where needed. She has either held leadership positions, volunteered, or maintained strong involvement in countless services, programs, and work committee's that serve the citizens of Skamania county including the Parent Teacher Association, Cub Scouts, Block Homes Program, Skamania County Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services, Stevenson Business Association, countless committee's geared to improving the health and safety of our children, Teddy Bear Drive which help supply stuffed animals to local emergency

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Business Women Awarded High Honors

services for children involved in emergency situations, and Community Emergency Response Team, and the Skamania County Fair. Robin shares her passion for engaging in the greater community with everything she does as director at Rock Cove Assisted Living. She is continuously working on efforts to ensure Rock Cove is an active part of the community as well.

Rock Cove Assisted Living is owned by Columbia Cascade Housing, under the direction of Ms. Ruby Mason and the Washington County Housing Authority, and is operated by Concepts In Community Living, Inc.(CCL) a local leader in assisted living management. Since it opened in 1998, Rock Cove has remained committed to serving the elderly and disabled population with high quality affordable assisted living services. Robin's efforts to facilitate stronger ties between the residents at Rock Cove and the greater community outside its doors have included volunteering, collaboration, or sponsorship with just about every community event on city community calendar. Robin has also overseen some new opportunities for resident involvement in the community such as the GOLD program, an intergenerational outreach program which partners with the school system, creating lasting friendships between Rock Cove residents and school students. Stevenson area residents have come to depend on several annual events hosted by Rock Cove such as the Santa Breakfast during Christmas in the gorge and Rock Cove's Annual Wine Tasting Event. " It's important to keep our residents active and involved, not only do they enjoy giving back and having the opportunity to be a part of what's going on, but those that get to know our residents gain a greater appreciation and understanding of a full lifetime lived.

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Concepts In Community Living, Inc. (CCL) and Columbia Cascade Housing are exploring the possibility of replicating Rock Cove's success in White Salmon which currently lacks any comparable options for local seniors and disabled adults.

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The RURAL MONITOR

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Assisted Living Facilities

Assisted Living Facilities Offer Home Away From Home

by Candi Helseth

When Clara Lamb, 88, and Edna Skaar, 90, of Stevenson, Wash., realized they could no longer remain in their own homes, they wanted to stay in the community where they had lived for more than eight decades. Fortunately, they had a viable option. Both women are now residents at [Rock Cove](#), an assisted living facility (ALF) that opened 11 years ago in Stevenson.

"I'm really happy here," said Lamb, who cared for her sister in their home until her sister died. "I got so lonely alone. Now I can be busy all the time when I want to be and I have lots of friends here."

Almost one million Americans reside in approximately 38,000 assisted living facilities, according to the National Center for [Facility Profile](#). While every state has ALFs, availability is more limited in rural areas.

"Assisted living facilities vary widely from state to state because they are governed and regulated under state laws," said Lisa Gelhaus, director of public affairs at the [National Center for Assisted Living](#) (NCAL). "Definitions vary among states concerning what assisted living is and the services that can be provided. What is uniform is that residents in assisted living play an active part in making decisions about their care. Assisted living settings encourage family and community involvement."

ALFs can range from small settings such as five or fewer residents receiving limited services in a provider's personal home to large, ornate retirement communities whose services include high-end options such as valet services, private therapy and coordinated group travel to other states.

Generally, ALFs offer private living space accompanied by a range of services, such as meals, activities, housekeeping, personal care, medication management, and 24-hour supervision and staffing. Residents live independently, choosing daily activities and the amount of assistance they receive.

Like Lamb and Skaar, three-fourths of all ALF residents are female and most residents are elderly. Most residents need assistance with approximately two daily living activities; for instance, 64 percent need help with bathing and 39 percent with dressing, according to NCAL.

ALFs offer wide variety of services

Almost all ALFs include meals among standard services. At Rock Cove, residents are served three balanced meals a day and can supplement meals using the kitchenettes in their apartments. Skaar says she likes having someone else do the cooking and dish washing. Lamb enjoys the social aspects of having meals with other residents.



Edna Skaar, center, celebrates Mardi Gras Days with Rock Cove residents Joe McEvoy and Marilyn Vensel.

Rock Cove strives to keep residents engaged physically and emotionally, Rock Cove Director Robin Aman said. Daily exercise classes, Tai Chi, line dancing and chair yoga improve strength, balance and mobility. Facials and footbaths are not only enjoyable, but also help ensure healthy skin. Musical entertainment, games, planned events and community activities encourage social interactions. Residents also engage in intergenerational contact through activities such as tutoring in local classrooms, hosting Easter egg hunts for preschool children and offering the facility as a meeting place for Girl Scout troops.



Rock Cove residents built and rode on their space shuttle float in the Skamania County Fair parade. Floats built by residents and staff have won first place awards for the last five years.

Residents are free to come and go as they wish. Lamb attends Rock Cove's morning exercise class but also enjoys going for long walks and visiting friends in the community. Skaar participates in several planned activities and on Sundays she goes to the church she has always attended. She still gets together with church friends to quilt every week, too.

"I think one of the biggest benefits of assisted living is that we assist most of our residents with their medications," Aman said. "It really helps them live healthier because they're taking their meds correctly and at the right times. Our staff is very aware of our residents' needs and when they notice any change in their condition, we contact their doctor. And we have a part-time nurse on call 24 hours a day."

Since residents are receiving care and services related to their physical health and specific medical needs, Gelhaus said, they are more likely to delay entry into a nursing home. Assisted living does not replace nursing home care where residents have medical issues that require skilled nursing care. Nor do all ALFs provide medication management or medical-related services.

In fact, it is very difficult to specifically define ALFs. States may license the concept under the term "assisted living" or at least 15 other terms that essentially also fall under assisted living definitions. Some states have specific care conditions that must be administered to qualify as an ALF and some have care conditions that are not allowed under the ALF definition. Some states allow for unlimited personal services and help with activities of daily living, and even allow limited nursing care or special waivers for more continuous nursing care. Other states are more restrictive.

Overcoming barriers in rural areas

Rock Cove is professionally managed by [Concepts in Community Living, Inc.](#) (CCL), which has helped develop or manage ALFs across 30 states. CCL, which began operations in 1989, has particularly focused on developments in smaller communities. While land is less expensive in rural areas, there are significant barriers for rural developments, CCL CEO Mauro Hernandez said.

"Poverty rates are often higher and people can't afford to pay so that makes it difficult to sustain rural facilities," Hernandez noted. "We've experienced a shortage of nurses in some areas. In Hines, Oregon, it once took us eight months to hire a local nurse while we rotated in nurses from our other facilities to fill that void. If states want ALFs to serve their rural people, they're going to have to adopt policies that make ALFs more attractive for developers and more accessible to lower income residents."

Oregon and Washington have a long history of encouraging providers to serve lower income people through legislation impacting Medicaid reimbursement policies, Hernandez said. They also have provided below-market interest loans to support rural development. Hernandez added that there have been some recent setbacks due to state budgetary problems.

Rock Cove is the only assisted living facility in Washington's Skamania County. Almost all of Rock Cove's residents have lived in that area most of their lives or have family members living nearby. If these residents can no longer have their needs met by ALF services, the next step is a nursing home. And there is no nursing home in Skamania County.



Rock Cove, the only assisted living facility in Washington's Skamania County, houses many long-time residents.

"It's hard for them to be further away and harder for family members to visit them," Aman said. "This is their home."

Assisted living fills a gap that allows America's growing senior population to maintain independence by relying on assistance, which, in turn, helps them maintain their independence even longer. It's no wonder that the popularity of ALFs continues to grow.

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NCB Development Corporation and American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging Team Up to Offer Award

December 21, 2000

Washington, D.C. Many seniors go without needed services or families struggle to fill in because of the lack of affordable assisted living, a residential environment that allows seniors to maintain maximum independence and dignity while providing needed supportive and health-related services. This is beginning to change, as pioneers like Rock Cove Assisted Living Facility, High Lookee Lodge and Macdonald Residence overcome financial challenges to bring affordable assisted living within reach of low-income seniors.

"I like living at Rock Cove," says Beauluh Elgin, an 85-year old resident. "If I get into any mishaps, I can get help 24 hours a day. My [apartment] is always clean, my foods are made, and I've made a lot of new friends."

Recently recognized by NCB Development Corporation (NCBDC) and American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA) for their exceptional work to make high quality assisted living apartments and services available to low-income older persons, the awards specifically recognize affordable projects that succeed in helping frail seniors maintain their maximum independence, privacy and dignity. With the elderly population growing at a rapid pace, the need for senior care is unprecedented, and the demand for affordable assisted living is exceptional.

With over 10 million households of people 75 and older in America today, assisted living has become a booming business, with companies vying to build deluxe accommodations to provide for affluent consumers. Yet, of this population of older Americans, over 6 million have incomes below \$25,000, too little to afford to live in most assisted living residences. Creating more affordable assisted living projects is the only way to help ensure quality of life for these low-income seniors. However, the development of these buildings is not easy and takes determination and expertise.

"Seniors shouldn't be faced with an impossible choice between going without needed services or moving away from friends and family to find an affordable residential community offering privacy and individualized services. Affordable assisted living gives seniors a real chance for maintaining a good quality of life when they can no longer live at home," said Robert Jenkins, vice president of NCBDC. "Developing affordable assisted living is a complex process, but the programs and expertise exists to help communities remove barriers and develop their own assisted living projects for low-income seniors."

NCBDC and AAHSA focus on promoting affordable assisted living across the country. They work with developers and policy makers to establish affordable assisted living as a viable option. In their first ever recognition of affordable assisted living development, NCBDC and AAHSA have granted three innovative and affordable project awards for excellence.

"We created this award not only to find examples of the excellent work in affordable assisted living, but also to prove that it is possible to provide high-quality assisted living at an affordable price," said Ruth Gulyas, AAHSA. "These buildings passed very stringent qualifications to receive these awards, and they were rewarded for their work to provide frail seniors with an excellent place to live at an affordable price."

In Oregon, Rock Cove Assisted Living Facility and High Lookee Lodge tied for first place in the Rural Affordable Assisted Living category, each receiving an award for their work in developing superb affordable assisted living facilities in rural communities. Also in Oregon, MacDonald Residence received the first place award in Urban Affordable Assisted Living, with Penn Home in Pennsylvania winning the honorable mention. The winners must use the award proceeds to benefit their facilities.

These facilities are outstanding models of affordable assisted living. For example, Rock Cove Assisted Living Facility, a 30-unit assisted living facility in Washington State, was created in response to an unmet need for decent housing and services for elderly of all income levels who were not able to live at home, but who did not need continuous skilled nursing care. Half of the units are targeted toward low- and moderate-income seniors. Working in collaboration with partners, Rock Cove Assisted Living overcame challenges posed by the site and community members to obtain the financing needed to make the facility affordable to low-income elderly.

NCBDC's Coming Home Program's demonstration project launched in 1992 and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation promotes the development of affordable assisted-living for seniors who have incomes of less than \$25,000. Under this program, NCBDC provides predevelopment loan funds and development expertise. Coming Home has also developed an effective template for assisted living financing, partnering, housing, services, even architectural design which can be modified to fit the needs of the sponsor.

AAHSA is the national organization of nonprofit long-term care and senior housing providers. At the core of the work of all of AAHSA's members is a mission to serve older people by providing the means for them to live with the greatest level of self-determination, dignity and independence possible.