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Evergreen Place Opening Soon In Litchfield

by Mary Galer

Walk through the front doors at the new Evergreen Place, supported living center in Litchfield. You'll find yourself standing in the great room, already decorated for Christmas.

Take a seat in front of the fireplace and curl up with a good book, or perhaps listen to a tune or two on the player piano. Whatever the case, you're sure to find yourself at home.

"We're so very excited to be opening soon," said Marketing Coordinator Angie Tefteller. "It's going to be great."

Part of the Heritage family, Evergreen Place is located at 1015 E. Tyler Ave. in Litchfield, just behind Heritage Manor.

Evergreen Place is designed specifically for older adults who may need assistance to maintain their independence. All income levels will be accepted.

Supportive living is an affordable assisted lifestyle model administered by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Service that offers the elderly (ages 65 and older) housing with services.

The aim of the program is to preserve privacy and autonomy while emphasizing health and wellness.

Evergreen Place features 69 apartments on three floors, including 42 one-bedroom apartments and 27 studio apartments.

Tefteller said the one-bedroom apartments are 515 square feet, while the studio ones have a more open floor plan in 390 square feet.

"Residents will be able to bring their own furniture into their apartment to make them feel more like home," she added.

Some features like blinds are included, but residents are encouraged to bring their own curtains. The facility is even pet-friendly, with one pet allowed per resident, although the residents have to be able to take care of their pets.

Each apartment will also have a kitchenette with a sink, refrigerator and microwave, private bathroom and shower, individually controlled heating and cooling system, emergency response notification system, closets, personal telephone lines and wireless internet.

Kathy Skinner from Short Furniture will also be decorating two model apartments.

In addition, Evergreen Place will include many common areas on all floors (and two elevators to take residents between floors). They will have a beauty salon, a fitness center, laundry facilities, dining room and several living areas.

"Some of our residents will be very active," said Resident Coordinator Sally McCoy.

Two laundry rooms will be available for residents to wash their own clothing, but staff is also on hand for that task.

One feature the staff is very excited about is the Country Store, which will feature "a little bit of everything," such as stamps and stationery, canned goods, paper products and Tylenol or cold medicines. They will even be working with Litchfield Carnegie Public Library to offer large print books, available to be checked out.

Staff members can already see card games being played or puzzles put together. Residents may form a walking group or a quilting club or any other activity that suits their fancy.

Culinary school graduate Kristin Gregory will be the food service coordinator, and will work to provide restaurant-style meals in the dining room. Residents can also order room service for breakfast.

"There are so many options here," said Tefteller.

Nearly half of the apartments are already filled, and residents will begin to move into Evergreen Place on Dec. 8.

"We're ready, and really excited," Tefteller said.

McCoy has already lined up several entertainment groups including Red Hat ladies and preschool singers.

"We have a lot of fun people coming in, and will offer activities to meet all of their needs," she said.

For Director Karla Smith, the key to supportive living is the choices the residents will be able to make.

"They're going to have a voice to let us know what they want to do," she said.

Several of them will form a resident council and meet once a month to discuss food, activities and other ideas they might have about the community.

"This is definitely all about them," Tefteller said. "This is their home."

Smith added that all the activities will be designed around what the residents want to do.

"They will each have an apartment here, but this whole building will be their community and their home."

For more information about Evergreen Place, contact Smith at (217) 324-1500.

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