

HOLY CROSS SISTERS TO TRANSFER SPONSORSHIP OF BELL TOWER RESIDENCE



L-r: **Kris McGarigle**, Bell Tower Residence Administrator; **Bob Siebel**, President of Carriage Healthcare Companies, the manager of WISH. **Sister Pat Cormack**, Holy Cross Sisters Provincial; **Stephanie Sherman**, Carriage Healthcare Companies, Chief Operating Officer; **Kirsten Pedretti**, Carriage Healthcare Companies, Chief Innovation Officer; **Cindy DeMoye**, Carriage Healthcare Companies, Chief Financial Officer.

The Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross of Merrill, WI and Wisconsin Illinois Senior Housing, Inc. (WISH) are pleased to announce that they have signed a Letter of Intent for the transfer of sponsorship of Bell Tower Residence Assisted Living in Merrill, Wisconsin. The Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross believe this is an important next step to secure the ministry of Bell Tower Residence and further believe that this move will help to ensure the continuation of Bell Tower Residence into the future.

For the past 28 years, the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross have been proud to sponsor and operate Bell Tower Residence, the first assisted living facility in the region, and ensure access to quality elder care for residents in Merrill and surrounding communities. Given the aging of the Sisters and taking seriously the motto of their founder, Theodosius Florentini, who said “the need of the times is the will of God,” the Sisters believe a transfer of sponsorship at this time will maintain the viability and ensure the future vision of Bell Tower Residence for the community, residents and staff.

The Sisters completed a lengthy process of evaluating options for shifting sponsorship and received positive responses from multiple parties, each of which presented a strong opportunity for the Sisters to consider. After prayer and careful deliberation, the Sisters have determined that WISH is a very appropriate organization to continue Bell Tower Residence’s legacy and further its mission.

“We carefully considered the close correspondence of values articulated by WISH with those of both the Sisters and Bell Tower Residence. As we continue to live at Bell Tower that is very important to us,” said Sister Pat Cormack, provincial of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross USA province.

The Sisters and WISH are collaborating closely to ensure a seamless transition for residents, staff and families. Following the transition, the Sisters will remain actively engaged at Bell Tower and within the community. The Sisters will also continue to maintain the Holy Cross Chapel and provide mass and worship services for the Sisters and residents of Bell Tower Residence and for their families. Additionally, the Sisters will continue to reside at Bell Tower Residence and at the Sisters’ Residence and will maintain their provincial offices, both of which are located on Bell Tower Residence’s campus.

WISH is looking forward to adding Bell Tower Residence to its family of senior care facilities and to serve the Merrill community.

“WISH is honored and humbled that the Sisters have chosen to partner with us to assure the long-term viability of Bell Tower Residence. We hope to honor and respect the almost 100-year contribution of the Sisters to the community of Merrill and the surrounding area, and commit to making decisions that reflect that mission. The opportunity to become a contributing member of the Merrill community is exciting, and while we appreciate that all of health care is in a period of great transition, we embrace our responsibility to not lose sight of our fundamental goal of providing care and services that honor the mission of the Sisters,” said Robert Siebel, CEO of Carriage Healthcare Companies, Inc., WISH’s management company.

The two organizations are currently finalizing the agreement, which will also include transfer of Bell Tower Residence’s campus, and will then seek all necessary regulatory and canonical approvals. The transaction is expected to close during the second quarter of 2019.

About Wisconsin Illinois Senior Housing, Inc.

Wisconsin Illinois Senior Housing, Inc. (WISH) is a not for profit organization controlled by a seven-member Board of volunteers. Founded in 1989 with a single facility in Illinois, the mission of WISH is to serve elderly and disabled individuals by providing quality housing, health care and other services to enhance the lives of those we serve. Today, WISH operates 18 senior care facilities, including eight skilled nursing facilities, nine Community Based Residential Facilities (assisted living facilities), and one Residential Care Apartment Complex (assisted living facility) in Wisconsin and a skilled nursing facility in Illinois. Additionally, WISH operates two home health agencies and a home care agency in Wisconsin. Since its inception, all of WISH’s facilities have been managed by Carriage Healthcare Companies, Inc., based in Lakewood, CO.