

Sunridge Village Retirement Community

Where Everyone Feels Like Family

By Marge Shoemaker

Sunridge Village Retirement Community treats its

residents like family. It is owned and operated by the Richard Anzalone family. To emphasize the image of family in their community, marketing director Michale Kavan arranged for me to meet with a resident, Jackie, and her daughter, Debbie.

Jackie lived in West Des Moines, Iowa, and her daughter lived in Omaha. The 150-mile trip was just long enough to require overnight visits, and Jackie and Debbie decided that Jackie should move closer. Debbie rounded up brochures for several retirement communities she thought would meet her mother's needs, including Sunridge Village. Jackie had worked in marketing in a retirement community, and she knew what she wanted. Her former work in real estate had given her the ability to imagine room size from dimensions and sketches. "As soon as I looked at their brochure, I knew this was where I wanted to go," she states enthusiastically.

What does Jackie like about Sunridge Village? She likes the location: close to shopping, convenient transportation, in a residential neighborhood, and only a few short miles from Debbie's home. "I could tell from the pictures how nice it was, and I wasn't disappointed," she tells me. "We called Michale to reserve an apartment, sight unseen." Debbie adds that she was pleased with her mother's choice: "It was the one I thought she'd like." They both appreciate the simplified pricing schedule. Sunridge Village offers a basic price that includes housekeeping, utilities, meals, free transportation to personal appointments and local attractions, and much more.

No move is without some inconvenience, but Sunridge Village stepped up to help ease the transition. As it happened, Jackie's belongings didn't arrive the same day she did. She toured her empty apartment, got an idea of the layout, made plans for where she wanted to put things...and then wondered where she would sleep. Sunridge Village maintains a fully furnished guest apartment for residents' company (arrangements must be made ahead of time; there is a small additional charge), and it happened to be available. Jackie stayed there until her furniture arrived. "It's nice to know there is someplace where overnight guests can stay, if I ever need it," Jackie says.

Meals are another area in which Sunridge Village really shines. Both Debbie and Jackie rave about Chef Gene and Assistant Chef Alonzo. Jackie says that she is a picky eater but loves the food. "Chef Gene is aware of our tastes and always uses fresh ingredients," she explains. "You can always tell when Alonzo has had a hand in a dish," she goes on, "because he comes out to

the tables and asks how we like it." Jackie serves on the Dining Room Committee and is pleased to report that

"hot food is served on hot plates and cold food on cold plates, just like it should be." That's never an easy task when serving 80 or 90 diners, but it is cheerfully achieved by smiling servers. Chef Gene prepares all meals with the freshest ingredients. "It's real food, not all that pre-prepared stuff," Jackie comments enthusiastically.

Both Jackie and Debbie agree that living at Sunridge Village is like living with a well-mannered family. "Everyone is positive. I think that's Richard's doing," she goes on. "He and the family make accommodations that wouldn't be possible if they were a big corporation."

Debbie agrees. Her mother had a doctor's appointment, and Debbie wasn't

available to take her. "Richard gave her a ride and made her promise to call so he could pick her up. That's family!" she states.

Jackie is also enthusiastic about the activities arranged for the residents. Michale was once an event planner.

"With Richard's blessing," she tells me, "I look at my job as a series of parties for the residents." Holidays receive special consideration, with decorations and special activities. For example, Independence Day will be celebrated with a major fireworks display in the parking lot so the residents can watch from the big windows in the dining room if they don't want to go outdoors. "You know, it really is like a family," Jackie says. "The first day I walked in, a group invited me to play bridge...I love playing bridge." Debbie chimes in, "The whole staff really goes above and beyond what is expected."

Sunridge Village is located at 13410 Blondo Street in Omaha. For more information, call 402-496-0116 or visit their website at www.sunridgeomaha.com.



Resident, Jackie, with her daughter, Debbie

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