

MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR TRAINING PROGRAM COULD TRANSFORM SKILLED NURSING CARE IN MINNESOTA

*Presbyterian Homes & Services, Minneapolis Community & Technical College Receive Major Grant to
Develop Three-Year Apprenticeship Program*

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October 30, 2008 (North Oaks, Minn.) -- The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development has awarded Presbyterian Homes & Services and Minneapolis Community & Technical College (MCTC) a \$400,000 grant to develop and execute a three-year apprenticeship program for nursing assistants that could transform how long-term care is delivered in Minnesota and ultimately, establish the vision for tomorrow's long-term care centers. This program is also funded by the Department of Human Services Performance Incentives program for \$5.1 million. The apprenticeship program will be conducted in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, the University of Minnesota School of Social Work, Ridgewater College, with oversight from researchers at the University of Minnesota Center for Aging Services Management.

Sharon Klefsaas, Director of Care Systems and Executive Director of Service Strategies for Presbyterian Homes, believes the grant will reveal an entirely new perspective on how services should be carried out. "Traditional long-term care is driven by the ease of delivery of services, much like a hospital. This grant will enable the State of Minnesota to conclusively determine if another approach – an approach that puts residents firmly at the center of all services – will measurably improve the health and wellness of those we serve."

This is the largest operational grant Presbyterian Homes & Services has ever received. **There will be a grant-signing ceremony at 3 p.m., November 5, at Waverly Gardens, a Presbyterian Homes & Services senior living community in North Oaks, Minn.** Waverly Gardens recently completed an expansion that doubled its size. Part of that expansion is a new skilled care center that could very well represent the future of long-term care. The center embraces the "Liberty" program where "households" of 15 to 30 people are consistently served by the same staff who do everything from administer medication to leading conversation circles to help residents plan their days. The Liberty Program enables residents to have complete autonomy over how they want to lead their lives – doing what they want to do when they want to do it - just like they did in their own homes.

Over the next two months, this approach to long-term care will be rolled out across all Presbyterian Homes & Services skilled care centers. At nine of their 13 skilled care centers, the grant will provide funding to train more than 600 nursing assistants in the Liberty program. At the end of three years, they will be certified as household apprentices. Certification will require more than 150 hours of class time and 2,000 hours of on-the-job training under the supervision of a mentor – a traditional apprenticeship structure. Key components of study include nutrition and culinary care, environmental and support services, memory care, wellness and fitness, activities, and finally, vital involvement which teaches observation, communication and interaction skills to unveil how residents want to lead their lives.

(more)

“This grant and the Liberty program will help launch nursing assistants to an even higher level of professionalism,” says Jess Niebuhr, Dean of Workforce Development at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. “Ultimately, if the outcomes from this are as positive as we anticipate they could be, we will have established a curriculum of training that will be used statewide.”

To determine program effectiveness, researchers from The Center for Aging Services Management at the University of Minnesota will study outcomes to determine if there is indeed improvement in participants’ physical, mental and spiritual health and overall quality of life. They will also study how the program impacts the workforce.

“I believe what we are doing could systematically transform the culture of skilled nursing centers. The outcomes could be far-reaching – from healthier and happier residents to broader employment opportunities and even increased job satisfaction,” says Klefsaas.

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About Presbyterian Homes & Services

Presbyterian Homes & Services, based in St. Paul, Minnesota, is a non-profit, faith-based organization committed to providing a broad array of high quality housing choices, care, and service options for older adults. Last year they served more than 11,000 individuals within 34 communities throughout the Minneapolis/St. Paul area of Minnesota, in Wisconsin, and Iowa. Since 1955, when its first community was built, Presbyterian Homes has steadily gained a reputation for being an innovative leader concerned with promoting the independence, vitality and well-being of those they serve. For more information, go to www.preshomes.com.

About Minneapolis Community and Technical College’s Division of Workforce Development

The division of Workforce Development at MCTC offers a spectrum of unique continuing education and customized training classes and programs for individuals and employers expanding their skills, making a career transition, increasing productivity, and/or exploring creativity and life long learning. An education doesn't end with a diploma or degree; it prepares you for a lifetime of learning.

MCTC is the most ethnically diverse college in Minnesota. Students speak more than 80 languages; 43 percent are students of color and 30 percent are the first in their family to attend college. A member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, MCTC offers students a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum and more than 60 career and occupational programs designed to prepare people for good jobs in high demand professions. Located in downtown Minneapolis, MCTC enrolls more than 12,000 students annually and is an active partner in initiatives to strengthen the social, economic and cultural vitality of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. For more information about MCTC, please visit www.minneapolis.edu.