

How Naperville **adult day** care bounced back from funding struggles

About a year after delayed state payments nearly caused a Naperville **adult day services** provider to shut down, things started turning around.

Now an organization once known as Ecumenical **Adult** Care of Naperville has a new name, an expanded board of directors, a replenished bank account, a renovated space and an approaching fundraiser.

"It had to happen," board adviser Maureen Wood said of the recent changes, "for us to perpetuate the mission."

The mission of the nonprofit now called **Riverwalk Adult Day Services** is to care for adults 18 and older — mostly seniors — who can't be alone because of physical or mental needs such as dementia or disabilities, Executive Director Laura Milligan said.

The facility inside the Alfred Rubin **Riverwalk** Community Center at 305 W. Jackson Ave. recently has been caring for six to eight adults each **day**, providing lunch and snacks, medication assistance, games, music and interaction for the participants, while giving peace of mind to relatives.

"Our main purpose is to give the caregiver a break and to offer some stimulation and engagement for the seniors," Milligan said. "We try to offer them a different **day** than what they would have at home and socialization with more people, rather than just one caregiver."

The facility used to care for roughly 25 adults a **day**, but at least 10 of them qualified as low-income, with care to be paid partially by the state.

By December 2016, Milligan said the state owed roughly \$40,000, which the center fronted by using nearly all of its reserves.

A donation drive that generated \$20,000 kept things afloat until grants came in last year, but Milligan said the center had to drop its low-income clients.

Last fall, though, the state made nearly all of its late payments, Milligan said. Then \$18,600 in donations came in from the Naperville and Medinah chapters of a club called 100 Women Who Care. Milligan said the organization now aims to serve more seniors in need.

"Anyone that can get here can come here," she said.

With the money from Women Who Care, the organization underwent a \$14,000 renovation to bring in new carpeting, paint, furniture and custom cabinets. The changes brought what Milligan called a much-needed facelift to a space that last saw major renovations in 1990.

As money began to flow, Milligan said she reached out to a business mentoring organization called SCORE for help with visioning and marketing.

Soon, Milligan was recruiting more people to join the board of the 35-year-old organization, especially those with expertise in technology and web design.

A former four-member board now has nine members, all of whom have been promoting the new name, without the confusion of the little-used word "ecumenical," which was a holdover from the organization's founding by a group of 12 churches.

"People were confused about what the word meant," Milligan said about the term, which is used to describe

something that relates to a whole body of churches. "They thought it was actually a religion or a medical term, which it is neither."

For the first time with its new name, **Riverwalk Adult Day Services** is hosting a fundraiser from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, June 2, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, June 3, at the **Riverwalk** Community Center.

A portion of the profit on mattresses sold during the event will be donated back to the center to support the 15 employees who care for **adult** participants and supply the things they need.

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