

TigerPlace celebrates 10-year anniversary



Don Shrubshell/Tribune

Marjorie Skubic, right, director of the University of Missouri Eldertech Team, explains fall detection technology used at TigerPlace to University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, center, and Kari Lane of the MU Sinclair School of Nursing during an open house at TigerPlace on Saturday.

By ALICIA STICE

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Eric Minturn, executive director of TigerPlace, wants to change the way people think about long-term care for aging adults.

TigerPlace, which celebrated its 10th anniversary yesterday with an open house, is a unique partnership between Americare and the University of Missouri Sinclair School of Nursing.

Americare runs all aspects of TigerPlace except for nursing care, which is provided by the nursing school. Nursing students also come in several times a week to provide care, such as foot and hand massages, to residents.

This partnership and TigerPlace's focus on providing individualized treatment gives residents access to cutting-edge

technology and care that helps them enjoy a higher quality of life, Minturn said.

“To understand what we do, you almost have to understand the traditional model of care,” he said.

This traditional model often means placing residents into one of three categories of care: Independent living, assisted living or skilled nursing, Minturn said. At TigerPlace, residents do not need to move from one room or facility to another as their medical needs change.

To achieve this, researchers with the MU College of Engineering have developed fall detection technology that helps keep residents safe, and the MU School of Veterinary Medicine provides animal care, such as walking dogs or cleaning litter boxes, that makes it easy for people to keep their pets.

The latter was particularly important to resident Lee Boyle, 90, when she decided to move to TigerPlace five and a half years ago with Rags, her Shih Tzu.

“Other places said” pets “could come, but they didn’t look as nice as this place,” she said.

Minturn said the staff at TigerPlace believes allowing residents to care for their pets can greatly improve their quality of life, so they do everything they can to make that possible.

University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin and nursing school Dean Judith Fitzgerald Miller spoke at yesterday’s open house and praised TigerPlace officials for their work with residents as well as the learning opportunities provided to MU students.

“The other important thing here is that 1,200 of our students have been here and learned from the experience,” Loftin said.

Americare also announced it soon would be opening a sixth Columbia location.

Minturn said the details on the new location are not yet finalized, but it is planned for southwest Columbia. Americare hopes to break ground on the facility sometime in the next year, he said.

Minturn said moving forward, he hopes more assisted-living providers can adopt a philosophy similar to what is practiced at TigerPlace.

“In a sense what we’re hoping for is awareness,” Minturn said. “We’re hoping the traditional model of long-term care opens up their view to some of the different approaches we try here.”

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