

# TRENDS IN: LTC DESIGN



## **Drab, sterile nursing homes are a thing of the past.**

Today's generation of seniors demand living spaces that not only reflect their active lifestyles, but also include the comforts of home.

We've taken a look back at our Architecture & Design columns to showcase some of the biggest trends in design of senior living communities.

MULTI-PURPOSE SPACES

ENTERTAINMENT

CAFÉ DINING

FAMILY STYLE

WELLNESS

# CAFÉ DINING



## The Gallery Café at The Watermark at 3030 Park, Bridgeport, Conn.

[DESIGN BY ESPOSITO DESIGN ASSOCIATES. PHOTO BY RICK SCANLAN]

Long-term care residents, especially those living in independent and assisted living, want options. Most residences have kitchens, giving them the choice of cooking at home, eating in the dining room, or grabbing a bite at the café. The flexibility of café dining offer a less-structured, bistro-like setting that is open throughout the day. Residents and their friends and family can drop in at any time they want, for just a cup of coffee and a bagel, or a full meal. Providing a comfortable, communal atmosphere like this promotes healthy eating habits and encourages residents to be more social. Amenities like café dining can also give you a competitive edge when marketing your community. ■

# MULTI-PURPOSE SPACES



## The piano lounge at Edgemere in Dallas, Texas

[DESIGN BY THREE ARCHITECTURE. PHOTO BY MICHAEL WILSON]

**M**ulti-purpose spaces can be used for any number of functions, from group activities to private parties. Every facility should have a multi-purpose space that is flexible enough to accommodate whatever occasions arise. One of the most important and overlooked design elements of a multi-purpose room is the availability and accessibility of storage space. Storage areas can be used to house tables and chairs, for example, that can easily be set up and removed. The flooring in multi-purpose areas should be versatile, such as vinyl or low-pile carpeting, that is adaptable and easy to maintain. Incorporating versatile spaces like this into your facility will make it easy to adapt to the ever-changing needs of the community. ■

# FAMILY STYLE



The country kitchen at Hanna HealthCare Center at Longwood at Oakmont in Verona, Pa.

[DESIGN BY REESE LOWER PATRICK SCOTT ARCHITECTS. PHOTO BY LARRY LEFEVER PHOTOGRAPHY]

**T**he neighborhood model has been a trend for some time now in long-term care communities. Instead of one large dining hall, facilities are building several smaller dining areas throughout the facility. The family style kitchens are more intimate and can minimize confusion and noise, and encourage socialization. In neighborhood kitchens, residents and staff members often work together to prepare meals. More than just providing a home-like atmosphere, the goal is to make the residents feel that they truly are at home. This approach focuses on giving residents more independence, autonomy and dignity than in a traditional nursing home setting, leading to a greater sense of community and even a better work environment for employees. ■

# ENTERTAINMENT



## The W Room at The Watermark at 3030 Park, Bridgeport, Conn.

[DESIGN BY MERLINO DESIGN PARTNERSHIP. PHOTO BY ALAIN JARAMILLO]

**T**oday's long-term care residents are looking for amenities they might find in an upscale hotel. From the furnishings in the community to the variety of activities offered, hospitality and customer service are the new expectation. The key to entertainment is atmosphere and variety. Design a space where residents can do everything from mingling at happy hour to playing games. The Nintendo Wii gaming system has been a big hit with seniors since it debuted in 2006. The W Room at The Watermark at 3030 Park is a gathering place where residents can play cards, watch sporting events on the flat screen TV or have a drink at the bar. ■

# WELLNESS



The pool in the wellness center at The Watermark at East Hill, Southbury, Conn.

[DESIGN BY ESPOSITO DESIGN ASSOCIATES. PHOTO BY KEN STABILE]

**W**ellness programs are moving into the spotlight in long-term care, as more seniors focus on eating better and exercising. The growing acceptance of wellness by residents means that long-term care facilities must also embrace the wellness culture. A comprehensive wellness program engages residents across all six wellness dimensions, including physical, social, emotional, vocational, intellectual and spiritual. Fitness is a big component of wellness, but programs should further address vocational and emotional needs with creative outlets like art studios or galleries. As for the spiritual component, many facilities have multi-denominational chapels or worship centers. Communities that create multi-dimensional wellness programs are more likely to have better outcomes, both clinically and financially. ■