

Helping the Senior Set Stay Active

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

Shelli Dankoff – Media Relations Program Manager

The number of Americans living with Alzheimer's is growing, with an estimated 5.5 million people age 65 and older suffering its effects. That doesn't include those under age 65 who have younger-onset Alzheimer's or those dealing with other types of dementia.

As the numbers grow so does the need to care for people with dementia because they are living longer with the disease.

SOT Jackie Bowers – Manager, Senior World Services – OSF HealthCare

(Social isolation is a big factor right now for seniors, especially those who have dementia or Parkinson's, or have had a stroke. Where do they go out, where do they engage? Over 11 million seniors in the United States are socially isolated, so programs like this are giving them a sense of purpose, they have a place to come, a place to be engaged, a place to feel like they belong to. You get to use your creative side, but we're also exercising their brain every day and we're exercising their body because if you don't use it you're going to lose it. :31)

Jackie Bowers is the manager of the Senior World programs for Peoria-based OSF HealthCare. The downtown Peoria location recently underwent an expansion and remodeling of the 20-year-old facility. The updates include additional bathrooms with total lift capabilities, low sensory rooms for clients who need a break from all of the stimulation, a remodeled kitchen, and more.

This bigger space will allow the staff to care for up to 70 people a day, most of whom are there four-to-five hours a day, many three times a week. The average client spends four years in the program, which has a goal of preventing premature institutionalization for those affected by dementia and other diseases.

Jackie Bowers has spent 37 years caring for seniors. She's seeing increasingly younger people coming to them for services.

SOT Jackie Bowers – Manager, Senior World Services – OSF HealthCare

(When you think of adult day program senior thinking maybe individuals only in their 80s and 90s. We have individuals that are here in their 60s who have early onset dementia, maybe had a stroke or early Parkinson's disease, or a traumatic brain injury. We are going to see this a lot younger than what we did. :20)

Bowers says having a safe place to spend weekdays not only gives seniors a sense of purpose – as witnessed by the artwork created by clients proudly displayed throughout the facility. It's also good for the caregivers who can go to work or take a break and not worry about their loved one.

The nursing care provided at Senior World is also a bonus.

SOT Jackie Bowers – Manager, Senior World Services – OSF HealthCare

(We have the activities, we provide meals, but we also provide nursing care - nursing opportunities - to keep them healthy. They are being assessed constantly, in the eye of somebody. What we want to prevent is hospitalizations because many of our clients have a lot of co-morbid illnesses that it could really be detrimental to them. :24)

Learn more about adult day services offered through OSF HealthCare [here](#).