



EVERY DAY IS “INDEPENDENCE DAY” AT STONERIDGE

“IT’S NOT PERFECT, BUT IT’S PRETTY DARN GOOD”

...Carol, Resident for 3 ½ years

by Rona Mann Photos Courtesy of StoneRidge



They sat around a conference table, and for more than an hour they just couldn't stop talking. And laughing. And sharing stories. But that's the way it is here. What's all the excitement about? Current events? Grandchildren? The weather? None of the above, for these vibrant, intelligent enthusiastic residents wanted only to talk about their home, StoneRidge. When people make the choice to move here they are moving to an exciting new home offering them in most cases, more independence, much more activity, and more enjoyment than the communities they left behind.

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Mary, a former hospital administrator, made the move seven years ago and has never looked back. Originally from Glastonbury but having owned homes both in Pawcatuck and Cape Cod she decided, “It was simply too much to take care of.” So she sold her properties and came to StoneRidge “where there is so much to do. I swim, I enjoy the speakers, I’m on committees, the food is excellent, and I’ve made many new friends here. I did a lot of research before making the decision. I just didn’t want to go to a place where the residents looked infirm and weren’t lively. At StoneRidge, from the moment I came in, I saw independence-healthy, engaged individuals, and most of them have exciting backgrounds, multiple interests, and are lively, happy people. Best of all, everyone listens here. We listen to each other because there’s so much to learn, and the administrative staff listens to us and allows us to set policies, make suggestions that have positive results, and lead our own committees and activities, collaborating when it comes to making decisions.





Indeed! The one thing we heard over and over from both Jamie Cornell, Director of Marketing and Sales, and the residents themselves is that it is the people who live at StoneRidge who carve out the policies, the programs, and the successful running of this community. The Community Life Team comprised of StoneRidge staff members constantly listens, surveys, and takes their direction from the residents so they can work together cohesively. A perfect example of this is the resident who came forward saying he was having difficulty enjoying movies because he couldn't hear that well. The team investigated and responded by purchasing a hearing loop and having it installed under the new carpeting in the auditorium where movies are aired and live programs are presented. The loop creates an electromagnetic field which the receiver in hearing aids picks up. It then converts it to audible sound that is delivered right to the ear of the person or persons in the room wearing the aids. This then helps to cut out background noise and allows the person to clearly hear communications as though they were being spoken up close.



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Other resident-initiated requests resulted in a brand new bocce court and a pickleball court, both proven to be huge hits. There are teams, there is open pickleball, and even those who don't play are coming to watch. “The crowds have been great,” says another contributor around the table, Audrey. Audrey is a former substitute teacher who together with her husband, Bill, a marketing executive, made the decision to make StoneRidge their home three years ago and have never looked back.

Even though they have family in the Greater Mystic area, had a boat here, and were very familiar with the coast, the restaurants, and the shops, it was still a big decision. “We looked in the Hartford area first,” Audrey says, “but we had really bad marketing experience. People didn't get back to us when we called, there was no follow-up, it just wasn't friendly. We were invited to a seafood tasting here at StoneRidge and were intrigued with the place and greeted warmly by the people.” Audrey is an enthusiastic gamer. Doesn't matter what it is from jigsaw puzzles to Scrabble to the canasta group she started, if you've got a game going, Audrey wants in!

Then there are the committees. Many residents belong to well more than one such as marketing, recreation, welcome, health & wellness, culinary, finance, food and beverage, employee appreciation, and the resident-run library, just to name a





IT'S NOT THE YEARS IN YOUR LIFE THAT COUNT, IT'S THE LIFE IN YOUR YEARS.

—Abraham Lincoln

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few. They can also sing with the chorus, play billiards, write memoirs, swim, create art, or just swap stories at Happy Hour in the pub.

Each of the residents around that table speaks to the fact that making a transition from your present home wherever it may be to your new home at StoneRidge is not always easy. Carol adds, “Some people traverse it differently than others. Some jump right in, others need support.” And is there ever support here at StoneRidge!

“Start with ‘Wonderful Ken’ Audrey enthuses, at least that’s what I call him.” Wonderful Ken runs Caring Traditions, one great idea for seniors who are relocating. Part of more than 300 locations nationwide, Caring Traditions can handle packing and unpacking, decluttering, downsizing, clean-outs, space planning, and even conducting online estate sales and auctions, all of which contribute to a smooth transition. “Ken actually took pictures of everything in my closets and drawers, so when we got to StoneRidge they could go exactly in the same place. He even photographed the inside of the refrigerator!” Audrey laughed.

It is an emotional ride anyone goes on when they make a transition, but the StoneRidge staff, residents, and partners can’t do enough to make it a smooth one. Jamie Cornell said, “We surround ourselves with partners including a social worker on staff who reaches out to all new residents.” Mary says that the in-house Community Connection composed of



residents makes sure everyone meets new people and has new friends to sit with at meal times if they’d like. Every night in the dining room there is a Hospitality Table much like the captain’s table on a cruise ship. New residents are invited to sit there and meet others, and each floor has a “floor friend,” someone newly minted residents can call upon to ask questions, get assistance with chores, or just have someone with a smiling face and a willingness to help in their corner.

One look at the monthly calendar, and you easily see there are many resident-led activities in addition to those planned by the staff. When Bill and Audrey finally made the move, Bill thought all he’d have to do all day was just sit around and read books. “Was I wrong!” he laughs. “We immediately made new friends and shared new experiences, and there is so much to do here.” Audrey added, “We tell people, don’t wait! Move to StoneRidge sooner than later,” and literally all the others at the table nodded in agreement. “I tell everybody that!” Carol added.

There are 36 raised flower beds in the residents’ garden on the grounds at StoneRidge, and Bill has happily taken on the job of making the compost which he thoroughly enjoys. Matter of fact, he proudly wears the title of “The Compost King” among the gardening crowd.

With its ideal location between New York and Boston, StoneRidge is just minutes from the Mystic Village, Mystic Aquarium, Mystic Art Museum, downtown shopping, Mystic Seaport, and the beautiful coastline, so residents and their visitors love the proximity.

Thanked for their time and their forthright comments, the group headed for the door. It’s a door that opens wide every day to committee meetings, duplicate bridge games, watercolor instruction, poker in the pub, quilting, movies, pickleball, tai chi, lectures, shopping trips, fitness classes, daily meditation, and meals, drinks, and activities spent with old friends and new. The only thing they appear to lack is the time to do it all. Just ask Bill, he hasn’t had much time to read, but he’s sure loving life at StoneRidge where it’s always Independence Day.

