



100 Woodland Pond Circle
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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HUDSON VALLEY CONTINUING CARE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY SKILLED NURSING FACILITY FIRST IN THE NATION IN 2018 TO ACHIEVE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN 'LGBTQ HEALTHCARE EQUALITY LEADER' STATUS



NEW PALTZ, N.Y., March 28, 2018 – It should be no surprise to those familiar with the Hudson Valley of New York, that the premier continuing care retirement community in the region would place great focus on marrying the highest levels of hospitality and long term care with inclusivity for all its residents, staff, and stakeholders. Most recently, these combined efforts have resulted in the skilled nursing facility at Woodland Pond at New Paltz being named a “Healthcare Equality Index LGBTQ Healthcare Leader” by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Nationally, for 2018, Woodland Pond boasts the only such skilled nursing facility as part of a continuing care retirement community that has achieved this highly coveted honor.

“Woodland Pond at New Paltz values inclusivity and person-centered care fundamentally, and the fact that we have accomplished what no other continuing care retirement community in the country has, is testament to our commitment to offering the most welcoming and supportive environment for retirees and long term care residents,” says Michelle Gramoglia, the President and CEO. “For ours to be the only continuing care retirement community based skilled nursing community to achieve this honor in 2018 is just incredible.”

Organizations seeking to be considered for the “Healthcare Equality Index Leader” honor must meet rigorous prescriptive goals. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation then provides a score based on how the facility achieved the stated goals in four different areas. Woodland Pond scored 100 out of 100 points on this assessment. The first criteria consists of the foundational elements of LGBTQ patient-centered care. The three remaining criteria are Patient Services and Support, Employee Benefits and Policies, and Patient and Community Engagement.



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At Woodland Pond, this HEI Leader designation was achieved with a very coordinated effort spearheaded by the Staff Educator, and with participation by members of all departments of the community, including Human Resources and Marketing. Policies had to be strengthened, all staff members trained, marketing messaging made clear, signage posted, and so much more. This was a multi month project, and one that Woodland Pond intends to undertake annually into the future.

“We have a diverse population of residents, staff, and guests, many of which openly identify as members of the LGBTQ community. We want to publicly embrace and support the needs of these residents through our person-centered care approach, but also for their neighbors that may privately identify as a member of the LGBTQ community. Every resident and staff person should feel fundamentally supported regardless of how they identify themselves, and regardless of whether they ‘have come out’,” says Philip Mehl, the champion of this effort to achieve HEI Leader status, and Director of Long Term Care at Woodland Pond at New Paltz.

Historically, the application and assessment process for the “Healthcare Equality Index Leader” status has been very focused on healthcare in the hospital environment, and has only in recent years begun to extend into the long term care or nursing home environment. For Woodland Pond, demonstrating this commitment in the skilled nursing environment simply was not enough. Woodland Pond decided very early on that the commitment to inclusive, person centered care for all residents in the LGBTQ community had to extend beyond the walls of the skilled nursing unit. So, all of the required aspects of the HealthCare Equality Index have been put into place across the entire community.

“Being able to demonstrate to our staff, residents, and visitors that we are committed to actively embracing and supporting the care needs of residents in the LGBTQ community is absolutely crucial to me, and to our leadership team as a whole. It was not enough for us just to be able to demonstrate these commitments in the skilled nursing environment: through the process of applying for “Healthcare Equality Leader” status, we made sure that our policies, programs, training, and supportive messaging have been ingrained into every aspect of Woodland Pond. We have developed tools and techniques that assist our team in planning for the care of the residents, have spent time training on the ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ vocabulary to use, the best ways to make residents and staff feel comfortable that Woodland Pond supports their sexuality, regardless of what it is,” Mr. Mehl goes on to say.

If you are a member of the media interested in covering this story or setting up an interview, please contact Philip Mehl via phone at 845-256-5915 or at pmehl@wpatnp.org, or Michelle Gramoglia at 845-256-5501 or at mgramoglia@wpatnp.org.

ABOUT WOODLAND POND

Woodland Pond at New Paltz is located in New Paltz, N.Y., and is a not-for-profit, upscale continuing care retirement community (CCRC), tailored exclusively for those aged 62 and older. Nestled beneath



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the shoulder of the breathtaking Shawangunk Ridge, the community opened in 2009 and is the only CCRC in the mid-Hudson Valley. Woodland Pond offers an 83-acre campus that includes a professionally staffed Health Center and a Community Center with an art studio, fitness center, heated indoor swimming pool, salon, Market Basket, billiard room, library, woodworking shop, game room, computer lab and more.

As a true CCRC, Woodland Pond at New Paltz offers independent living with a choice of a private residence (24 cottages and 177 apartments), services and amenities. Many of the apartment styles and all the cottages are now either fully reserved and/or occupied. Under Woodland Pond's Life Care program, residents are provided privileged admission to the assisted living, memory care and a 5 star rated skilled nursing center. Woodland Pond also offers outpatient physical, occupational and speech therapy, and accepts Medicare and Medicaid. Life Care functions similar to a long-term-care policy wrapped in a healthy and fulfilling resort lifestyle—so that residents can enjoy this chapter of their lives in an inspiring and supportive environment, free from worrying about escalating future long-term-care expenses.

Woodland Pond caters to a diverse group of accomplished individuals with a variety of interests and a zest for life. For more details, please visit: www.wpatnp.org.

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