

## *Celebrating Twenty Years: From Room 35 to West Wing Family Room*

How do you turn a functional and basic office room into a welcoming, warm, and comforting space for visiting family members of long-term care residents on the West Wing? You work with an enthusiastic group of employees at Douglas County Health Center!

After losing the one small meeting room social workers had several years ago, the West Wing of the health center no longer had a private space for families to meet with physicians, nurses, visiting specialists, or to simply spend time with a resident when more privacy is needed than what is offered on the neighborhoods. The catalyst moment identifying the need for a new room to house these activities came when a young woman resident who lived in a 4-bed bedroom was dying and she had several family members with young children visit during her last days. It was challenging for the room's three other residents, challenging for the nursing staff to communicate privately with the family, and challenging overall.

Spearheaded by Sherry Murray, Social Services Specialist, a room on the ground floor of the West Wing was identified as a space that could be converted to a family room with soft furnishings (sofa and upholstered chairs), a small table and chairs, a locked cabinet for personal belongings, a television, a small refrigerator, a radio, curtains and more. West Wing nurse managers, along with social workers at DCHC, created a wish list of needed items and estimated the cost of such a project at approximately \$5,000.00. They then brought their idea to the foundation for potential funding.

Given that the foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life of long-term care residents at Douglas County Health Center, the proposed project was an absolute right fit. Approving an expenditure of up to \$5,000.00 to support the project, the foundation was surprised and delighted to walk through the space upon completion.

Here was the surprise: Not only identifying the need for such a vital space on the West Wing, the employees - volunteering their time and effort and donating some of their own funds - handmade the curtains for the room; planted and landscaped the green space just outside the ground floor window in the room; donated much of the decor (wall decor, vases, and the like); and chose the paint colors and subtly coordinating fabric finishes for the everything in the room. It is a beautiful room that lives up to the expectation of creating a space where family members and their loved ones feel valued, comforted, and welcomed. Provided on an as reserved basis in order to ensure privacy and priority for family members of residents on the West Wing, the Family Room is a point of pride for everyone involved.

All of the foundation directors especially give thanks for and appreciates all of the hard work and effort provided by those employees involved. We appreciate you!