

# New program provides care for dementia patients, break for caregivers

**Published: Thursday, 9 September 2021 12:35**

@brianjohnsonBP

SOUTHINGTON – The Hartford HealthCare Center for Health Aging has partnered with Mulberry Gardens of Southington's Adult Day Program to provide care for dementia patients and a break for caregivers.

The Adult Day Program is intended to reduce stress and provide a safe and positive environment for clients at Mulberry Gardens, while at the same time giving caregivers a much-needed break. It provides personal care and assistance, memory enhancing activities, transportation, nutritious meals and access to the Hartford HealthCare GoodLife Fitness Program. The Adult Day Program was funded by a 2021 grant from the Bradley H. Barnes and Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust at the Main Street Community Foundation.



Mulberry Gardens of Southington -Mulberry Gardens

Dementia specialists from the Hartford HealthCare Center for Healthy Aging work closely with the community as a free service to support and educate, address safety concerns and assist with future planning.

Michelle Wyman, dementia specialist at the Hartford HealthCare Center for Healthy Aging, said that the Adult Day Program improves the quality of life for both the caregiver and the member receiving care.

“Caregivers enjoy the respite care,” said Wyman. “Providing a safe space to help answer and support any questions or concerns. Members receive individualized care plans for their social and cognitive needs.”

Wyman said she helps caregivers and family members to get a better understanding of dementia and its progression to provide the best management techniques.

Patty O’Brian, another dementia specialist with the Hartford HealthCare Center for Healthy Aging, said that the Adult Day Program is "the ideal environment for brain stimulation and structured activity with an opportunity to socialize."

“We are big cheerleaders for this program because we understand the need of adult caregivers,” said O’Brian.

O'Brian said she works closely with staff to review their programs and help enhance the therapeutic activities. While doing so, she takes into account each member's background and the best approaches to meet them at their stage in dementia.

The Adult Day Program also offers an on-site registered nurse (RN) and one-to-one support for families on care strategies that will assist with care at home. Members engage in therapeutic programs to enhance the quality of life and social interaction and decrease depression. The programs are intended to improve alertness and give members a better night's rest.

Deb Gaudette, whose mother is receiving care at the day program, spoke highly of the impact it has made on both of their lives.

"My mind is at ease knowing she is there each day among caring and loving people who laugh with her, console her, help her and provide friendship," said Gaudette. "More importantly, she feels welcome and cared about and safe and I could not ask for anything more."

There are plans to expand the Adult Day Program by adding a quiet space area where members can wind down. There will also be a series of education programs on adult care for family members and caregivers offered in the future.

For more information on the Adult Day Program, contact Leaja Johnson at 860-406-6864.

Brian M. Johnson can be reached at 860-973-1806 or [bjohnson@bristolpress.com](mailto:bjohnson@bristolpress.com).