

Southington Care Center recognized with Merit Award for Memory Care renovations

Published: Monday, 6 December 2021 12:37

@brianjohnsonBP

SOUTHINGTON – The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Design for Aging Review (DFAR) has presented Southington Care Center with one of its Merit Awards in recognition to the design for Memory Care renovations.

The AIA released a list of Merit and Special Recognition awards in November. The DFAR showcases facilities that "represent conscientious surroundings and advance environments for Senior Living."

The Memory Care area renovation was completed just before the covid-19 pandemic put senior living communities on lockdown for months. The project was made possible by the Main Street Community Foundation, which awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Bradley Henry Barnes & Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust.

The newly renovated courtyard includes shade and vegetable and flower gardens at wheelchair height, which was the residents' only access to the outdoors for months. The courtyard overlooks a parking area, where family members and friends were able to come to wave and speak to their loved ones during the lockdown.

"The outdoor visits were invaluable for keeping up the morale of the residents and their loved ones during the heart of the pandemic," said Stephen Barrett, executive director of Southington Care Center.

Barrett said the Amenta Emma Architects design team, which was in charge of the renovation, made time to understand the needs of Southington Care Center residents.

"We seek to create an environment that feels like home while incorporating the benefits of nature," Barrett said. "The wooden screen by the nurses' station with the Hartford HealthCare logo cutouts is a creative solution which provides site lines for our nurses while maintaining the home-like setting."



Southington Care Center -Southington Care Center

Amenta Emma Architects' senior living team, which was led by Principal Myles Brown, was tasked with re-imagining the "institutional feel" of the center of the second floor of Southington Care Center. This area is home to 65 residents living with varied stages of dementia.

“One challenge was to bring natural light and views into the reception area, which has no windows,” Brown said. “By opening up walls and creating an axial connection to the outdoor space, we were able to pull light from the courtyard, through the common room, and into the reception.”

The following notes were made by AIA about Southington Care Center when they were making their judgments for Merit Award selections:

“The design team opened up the common area, still providing spaces for storage and a landing area for staff. A highly decorative CNC screen provided a design feature but also a screen for privacy between staff and resident, not impeding sight lines for safety. Details within the space promote socialization, therapy, and thoughtful interaction not only with each other but the space itself.”

Brian M Johnson can be reached at 860-973-1806 or bjohnson@bristolpress.com.