

school senior projects, and Humane Society functions.

“Our residents want to be an active part of helping the next generation, they want to stay connected and involved,” Olson said. “We want to support them in that, and while we’re at it, we want to foster as many community partnerships as possible.”

According to Olson, the building is owned by the hospital and managed by Artegan. The company employs more than 40 employees at the senior living facility, 26 of which are full time. Several on staff are cross-trained and maintain CNA licenses.

“At Artegan staff are called Vallettos, which is Italian for ‘to serve,’ meaning that we all are here to help the residents regardless of our position,” Olson said. “We have an excellent, dedicated team, and the Health Care District generously provides us with staff members to give hands-on training for our employees and guest speakers

Signs it may be time to consider assisted living

If a loved one is experiencing these symptoms, it may be time to start looking into options that offer increased support and supervision.

- ❑ Increasing difficulty managing the activities of daily living (shopping, dressing, cooking, laundry, managing medications, etc.)
- ❑ Recent accidents, ongoing close calls, or other safety concerns
- ❑ Wandering
- ❑ Escalating care needs such as unusually slow recovery or a chronic health condition that’s worsening
- ❑ Aggression
- ❑ “Sundowning” agitated behavior that tends to increase later in the day
- ❑ Noticeable weight loss or gain
- ❑ Changes in personal care (unusual body odor, a formerly meticulous person appearing in stained clothing, etc.)
- ❑ Decreasing social interaction (going days without leaving the house, etc.)
- ❑ Noticeable preoccupation or anxiety
- ❑ Piles of unopened personal mail and/or bills, unread magazines in their home
- ❑ Multiple nicks or dents on their car
- ❑ Broken appliances that go unfixed
- ❑ Stale/expired foods in the refrigerator, signs that they are only eating frozen dinners, increased use of takeout
- ❑ Plants/animals that don’t seem well tended
- ❑ Neglected house repair
- ❑ Caregiver stress or overwhelm

If you believe your loved one may need additional assistance, Department of Human Services is available to walk you through the next steps, including a formal assessment: 541-426-3155 Ext. 238 (APD Aging and People with Disabilities Services).

Community Connection’s caregiver support group meets regularly; they also offer classes including “Powerful Tools for Caregivers” and “Living Well with Chronic Conditions.” Call 541-426-3840 for more information, or visit the website: www.ccn.org

for our bi-monthly family meetings. Everyone works together to keep resident needs the priority.”

“Our experience has been just the greatest,” said Phyllis Johnson, who comes in regularly to style hair in the on-site salon. Her clients include her mother-in-law, who has been a resident since last fall.

“They are all very kind and loving; she’s well taken care of and they stay right on top of things,” Johnson said.

“I just hope they plan to enlarge, because we need it!”

The list of people looking to join the community is long, but it isn’t first-come-first-serve. When a space opens up, Olson said she chooses the new resident based on who will best mesh with and balance other residents.

“I maintain an extensive list of families who would like to move their loved one into an apartment. When I have an opening, I review my list to determine the best fit and start

“She’s well taken care of and they stay right on top of things.”

– Phyllis Johnson, has a family member as a resident at Wallowa Valley Senior Living



Jennifer Hobbs
Executive Director Jennifer Olson enjoys a chat with resident Donna Mae Johnston.

making calls,” Olson said. “My biggest challenge is not having enough apartments for the large number of elders who would like to move in. Turning away families because I don’t have an opening is always heartbreaking for me. I do my best to help them locate other resources within Wallowa County such as the Caregivers Support Group or lists of in-home care providers. We could have built this building twice as big and we’d still be full.”

Olson encourages people who are curious about Wallowa Valley Senior Living to come by and take a tour.

“This building is meant to be a resource for all of Wallowa County,” Olson said. “We encourage folks to stop by and see what Assisted Living really looks like, to join us in our activities or music programs, or to volunteer. Come and see what we’re doing!”

For more information, call 541-426-5311 or send email to jolson@artegan.com.