



# Pines Village makeover aims for family feel

By Brian Williams

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VALPARAISO | Drafts of cold air, the pounding of hammers and the whir of machinery have punctuated life at Pines Village Retirement Communities the past several months.

But the payoff should be worth it.

An additional 10,000 square feet will bring the facility a host of new amenities, greater aesthetics and just plain elbow room. Not to mention increased safety and convenience.

The \$10.5 million project, which is targeted for completion in October, is not an expansion per se, but a life quality enhancement, CEO Laurie Mullet said.

Although 10 new apartments have been added during the work, others have been lost to reconfigurations elsewhere, resulting in a net addition of only two apartments.

But expanded dining and common areas will create a "town center" and add to the family feel, said Amy Page, public relations director.

The dining room, with a bistro dining section, will feature 15-foot high floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking an outdoor terrace and landscaped gardens.

Resident hallways have received makeovers to look less institutional. Recessed lights and ceiling arches will reduce the tunnel-like look of halls, Mullet said. Wainscoting, wooden door borders and patterned carpeting are designed to add a touch of class.

A completely redone entrance will feature an enlarged lobby, new portico and outdoor fountain.

A direct, enclosed walkway with gazebo in the middle will cut 140 feet off the walk from the assisted living wing to the main facility.

Other amenities include:

- \* wellness, physical therapy, massage and spa areas
- \* an art gallery with monthly shows
- \* an enlarged kitchen
- \* 16 attached garages
- \* a second elevator
- \* an increase in laundry rooms from two to eight
- \* a delivery dock
- \* a quarter mile walking path around the community

\* seven "fire zones" separated with fire walls

Dom Jaksa, a resident for five years, said the construction and the parade of workers over the past few months hasn't bothered her.

"Everybody has been so nice," said Jaksa, 93.

She had to move to a new apartment on the second floor because of the changes -- "It was a big change for me," she said -- but there has been a plus.

"I think upstairs is a little warmer."

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