

DayAway Team

The St. Leonard DayAway program is back in operation in a beautifully renovated area and is looking to enroll new clients. The DayAway team, comprised of Lisa Frantz - Manager, Ruby Cockerham, Karen Junkin, Allison West, and Maria Deng are happy to be back after the reopening last April.

DayAway is St. Leonard's adult daycare program designed to give caregivers who take care of a loved one at home a break. It also provides stimulation and socialization for the client that can be difficult to provide at home on a constant basis.

What types of activities does DayAway provide for its guests? "Activities include games, cornhole, tabletop bowling, trivia, basketball, prayer group, music, singing, crossword puzzles, arts & crafts," according to Lisa. "Other services include meals, short trips, and medication management."

Talking with the team provided great insight on the day-to-day benefits that DayAway provides.

"Relationships we get to establish not only with our clients but families too is a bonus. And the caregivers establish relationships among each other which is nice. They find support," says Allison. "From the minute they come in the door, it's acceptance by all. It's a sense of belonging. They help each other which is great to see," says Ruby. Lisa adds, "I think this is such a wonderful service for our families that are dedicated to keeping their loved ones at home. It gives them a break

It's also a good opportunity for their loved one to have stimulation and socialization."

Allison describes a recent event, "Around Thanksgiving, we were all sitting around in a circle talking about what we are thankful for. It was very special because many of them expressed being grateful for DayAway. Thankful that they got to come here. They think of us as their family and it's reciprocal. That was pretty wonderful to hear."

Lisa adds, "Another special time was this past Christmas. My husband came in, playing Santa, playing familiar music and Christmas music, singing. Everybody had so much fun. So joyful. We were all dancing." Ruby thinks that was the most fun day at St. Leonard - EVER!

With a plethora of positives, there can be a few challenges. Managing behaviors at times can be challenging. According to Lisa, "So many different types of personalities which can clash or behaviors others don't understand." "And tailoring the activities with so many varying degrees of cognitive deficits. Not one size fits all. Usually, we can work around it," says Allison

The DayAway staff is well established and experienced. Lisa the DayAway Manager has been overseeing the program for 18 years now. Ruby the program nurse has been at St. Leonard for 21 years, first at the Healthcare Center, now in DayAway for almost 7 years. Allison has been part of DayAway for 3 years but has been here since age 16, starting in the Dietary department. The other aides, Karen almost 7 years, and Maria since last August.

Ruby says, "I anticipate we'll need more places like this. There are so few. Our families appreciate the staff so much and they tell them."

"And we appreciate them as much for sharing their loved ones with us," says Allison.

If you are interested in finding out more about the DayAway program, contact Lisa at 937.436.6315.

If you are interested in joining the DayAway staff, contact Jennifer Jamison, 937.436.6376