

SCHLEGEL SENIORS VILLAGES/OAKWOOD RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Smoke-free from the very beginning

Schlegel Seniors Villages is a family-owned company with roots in private hospital operations that has since evolved to provide long-term care as well as seniors' retirement home facilities. Spread out across southern Ontario, there are currently eight (soon to be ten) Schlegel seniors villages operating as Oakwood Retirement Communities, the Village of Winston Park and the Village of Aspen Lake. They are:

The Village of Winston Park – Kitchener-Waterloo

The Village of Aspen Lake – Windsor (under construction, to open 2011), and

Oakwood Retirement Communities

The Village of Erin Meadows - Mississauga

The Village of Riverside Glen - Guelph

The Village of Sandalwood Park - Brampton

The Village of Tansley Woods - Burlington

The Village of Taunton Mills - Whitby

The Village of Wentworth Heights - Hamilton

The Village of Humber Heights - Etobicoke

The Village of Glendale Crossing - London (under construction, to open spring of 2010).

These villages offer a continuum of care from independent rental and life-lease seniors' apartments to retirement care with registered nursing staff available 24/7, to assisted living accommodations with personal support workers, to government-regulated long-term care facilities. This concept of providing a complete continuum of care within a village setting allows seniors to age in place and avoids disruptive and sometimes traumatic moves as more supports are needed. In addition, these seniors' villages offer a variety of amenities and services on site and indoors to promote continued independence and social interaction within a safe and comfortable environment.

There are currently approximately 3,000 residents who call these villages home, and this number is expected to rise to approximately 7,000 residents in the next decade. Schlegel-operated senior villages are also heavily staff-dependent—currently employing approximately 1,200 staff across all villages, this number is expected to more than double in the same time period.



Schlegel Seniors Villages operates in partnership with the University of Waterloo (U of W) and together form the Research Institute for Aging, a multi-disciplinary effort to study the aging process in the real world and to translate its research findings into practical applications towards improving clients' quality of care.

Given the company's relationship with the U of W and its beginnings in health care and health promotion, it is no surprise that all Schlegel senior villages have been smoke-free from the outset. The no-smoking policy not only fits with the company's desire to offer a "best practices" approach to seniors' facilities and care, but also ensures a smoke-free environment for the many employees who regularly enter residents' private quarters to assist with personal care and activities of daily living.

The company's policy prohibits smoking within all buildings but provides outdoor designated smoking areas equipped with ashtrays and benches. Signs posted at entryways remind residents and staff alike of the no-smoking policy.

In terms of enforcement, the company has never had a problem with its no-smoking policy. Although not currently actively promoted, all prospective residents are told about the smoke-free status of the villages when they come to see the facilities. The success of this company's policy stems in part from the understanding of residents and staff that a world-class facility affiliated with a world-class university will follow best practices for senior care in a clean and safe environment. High expectations from the company are translated into high expectations for its clientele.

With senior citizens representing the fastest growing cohort of Canadians, many of them financially comfortable baby boomers with discerning preferences, and a historically low rate of smoking in this province, Schlegel Seniors Villages stands poised ready to respond to the increasing need for quality seniors' care in the coming decade.

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