

Upholding values

Shady Oaks celebrates 40 years

Story by Erica Schmitt | Photos by Mike Orazi and Erica Schmitt

There is a family where the corners of Bristol, Burlington and Farmington meet that upholds the core values of strength, comfort and wellness.

This encompasses the mission of Shady Oaks Assisted Living in Bristol, now celebrating 40 years in the community.

Shady Oaks in 1976 after welcoming their youngest son, Tyson, into the world. Now four decades later, Tyson purchased the home and has devoted himself to ensuring the health and well-being of its residents.

"We want to be part of the long-term care solution for helping our seniors to enjoy the years they've rightfully earned," Belanger says. "I



Tyson Belanger



Laura Ford with Shirley and Evelyn Whitman at Shady Oaks in Bristol.

feel a person's career meant to this mission and our values." That's why he has taken up residence in the home directly adjacent to Shady Oaks, located at 344 Stevens St. Ensuring close proximity not only offers a short work commute; it allows him to be on call anytime one of the 30 residents or two-dozen staff members need assistance.

An accomplished ITA, Major who served the same mission, Belanger, 41, earned his undergraduate degree at Yale University and a PhD in international relations from Harvard University. The past year he became a Blue Cross Certified Financial Advisor, and on July 15, he purchased Shady Oaks.

When Shady Oaks Belanger has had a constant focus on the home. Now that he has taken the reins, the benefits of automation, programs and certified professionals is adding to every day. "It makes our staff an increased sense of dedication to ensure our residents receive the quality of care they deserve throughout their lives," Belanger says.

As the second assistant being added to be founded by Cornerstone, not the only one in Bristol, Shady Oaks is now 40 weeks into its 20-hour in-home nursing care and more of its most medically complex cases "was similar instead of 'g' centers.

The difference is an initiative, facility-focused occupation - unique to these types of facilities.

Certified Nursing Assistant Terrie Morris has spent the last 13 years working at Shady Oaks and is a favorite among residents. "I'm like a regular piece of furniture here," Morris says. "When you've been here this long you really own the resident's trust, and they come to you with their needs and wishes. We do our best to meet them."

Shady Oaks Director of Activities and Wellness Joan Patten, also embraces this duty. She is working to create the spiritual and recreational needs of residents, but also to honor their every wish.

"It's not so much the challenge to people's spirits," he says. "I have some creative freedom and a very generous budget, which is great." Once the work is done to complete the second year of construction, several people have expressed a desire to honor their religious beliefs, and Patten will be regularly presenting the Holy Communion to those individuals. He did not see a moment's regret from the hardest decisions after all.

A common job is also in the works, since more than two-thirds of residents are either military veterans or their spouses. Clean, safe, staff projects, some of performance and gathering for special occasions all now have a permanent home at Shady Oaks.

"That's the very goal for us," said Care Manager, MEd, MEd, MEd. "We all really enjoy each other's company." On Wednesday, Nov. 9 at 9:30 a.m. Shady Oaks is having a Veterans Breakfast at the Bristol Senior Center. Open to all residents and their spouses, City officials will be among several guest speakers.

Belanger committed his resources to the community with these core values: care, respect, education and health. "In my work, I mean helping others - to this day, it's someone who needs assistance. By education, I mean: learning new things, what I continue to learn, every day through residents and staff. By health, I mean a stroke of good will. When people do right for each other, we have a great sense of health. Now, now here, I'm doing my part."

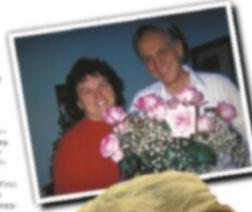


Photo courtesy of Tyson Belanger. Kay and Vernon Belanger with their youngest son, Tyson, in front of Shady Oaks in 1976.



Laura Ford

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There is a family where the corners of Bristol, Burlington and Farmington meet that upholds the core values of strength, comfort and wellness.

This encompasses the mission of Shady Oaks Assisted Living in Bristol, now celebrating 40 years in the community.

Vernon and Kay Belanger built Shady Oaks in 1976 after welcoming their youngest son, Tyson, into the world. Now four decades later, Tyson purchased the home and has devoted himself to ensuring the health and well-being of its residents.

"We want to be part of the long-term care solution for helping our seniors to enjoy the years they've rightfully earned," Belanger says. "I feel a personal commitment to this mission and our values."

That's why he has taken up residence in the home directly adjacent to Shady Oaks, located at 344 Stevens St. Ensuring close proximity not only offers a short work commute; it allows him to be on call anytime one of the 30 residents or two-dozen staff members need assistance.

An accomplished U.S. Marine who served five tours overseas, Belanger, 41, earned his undergraduate degree at Yale University and a PhD in international relations from Harvard University. This past year he became a Red Cross Certified Nursing Assistant and on July 15, he purchased Shady Oaks.

Since childhood Belanger has been a constant fixture in the home. Now that he has taken the reins, the breadth of infrastructure, program and medical improvements is multiplying every day.

“It makes me feel an increased sense of devotion to ensure our residents receive the quality of care they deserve throughout their lives,” Belanger says.

As the second assisted living facility to be founded in Connecticut and the only one in Bristol, Shady Oaks is more affordable than 24-hour in-home nursing care and vows to be more medically-committed than similar assisted living centers.

The difference is an intimate, family-focused atmosphere – unique to these types of facilities.

Certified Nursing Assistant Terrie Motta has spent the last 13 years serving at Shady Oaks, and is a favorite among residents.

“I’m like an antique piece of furniture here,” Motta says. “When you’ve been here this long you really earn the residents’ trust, and they come to you with their needs and wants. We do our best to meet them.”

Newly hired Director of Activities and Wellness Jean-Pierre Parent also embraces this duty. He is working to meet the spiritual and recreational needs of residents, but also to honor their every whim.

“I see it as being the concierge to people’s spirits,” he says. “I have total creative freedom and a very generous budget, which is great.”

Over the next year he plans to implement several new initiatives. Several people have expressed a desire to honor their religious beliefs, and Parent will be regularly presenting the Holy Communion to these individuals. He did earn a master’s degree from the Hartford Seminary, after all.

A veterans club is also in the works, since more than two-thirds of residents are either military veterans or their spouses. Games, art, craft projects, musical performances and gatherings for special occasions all now have a permanent home at Shady Oaks.

“They’re very good to us,” resident Carol Mullins, 87, says. “We all really enjoy each other’s company.”

On Wednesday, Nov. 9 at 8:30 a.m. Shady Oaks is hosting a Veterans Breakfast at the Bristol Senior Center, open to all veterans and/or their spouses. City officials will be among several guest speakers.

Belanger connected his devotion to the community with three core values he lives his life by: service, education and loyalty.

“By service, I mean helping others – in this case, it’s seniors who need assistance. By education, I mean learning new things, which I certainly do here, every day, through residents and staff. By loyalty, I mean a circle of good will. When people do right by each other families taking care of families. And now here, I am doing my part.”