

# Presidential Ponderings - September 2024

*In the years since LV opened our first Green Houses, we have been visited by many other providers interested in the Green House concept. Some of them went back to their home states and built Green Houses. Some did nothing. Many of them built new nursing units that had some (but not all) of the Green House features. They constructed households that were “half as good” as a Green House, and they got results (in my opinion) that were also “half as good”.*

*Several university-based research studies have confirmed that, on average, the resident and family experience in a Green House is better than in a traditional nursing facility. Are Green Houses perfect? Certainly not. But they are a notable step forward compared to a traditional institutional nursing home. What makes them a better alternative? Part of it is the physical environment, and part of it is the care philosophy.*

*A Green House must meet the applicable building and life safety codes for the type of license (nursing or assisted living) it will hold. It can care for up to 12 elders, but we (at LV) prefer 10. All of the rooms are private, with a full private bath. There is an open floor plan that also contains a kitchen, dining area, and living room (with a fireplace). All of the food for elder consumption is cooked in the House where elders can experience the sights, sounds and smells of food preparation. The model also requires an easily accessible outdoor space (patio, deck, or balcony) for the elders to enjoy. In short, Green Houses look and feel like a real home, not a medical institution.*

*Equally important to the success of the Green House model is the philosophy of care. I could speak on this issue at length, but essentially it boils down to two factors: an emphasis on personal relationships and an emphasis on personal choices. The staff and the elders in a Green House develop deep personal relationships because the staff and the elders in a House are the same each day. The staff also get to know the family and friends of the elders as they come for visits. With only ten elders in a House, the elders also get to know one another intimately as they share life together.*

*As to personal choices, the elders have numerous choice opportunities not available to residents of traditional nursing homes. They choose when to awake and when to go to bed, they choose activities that are meaningful to them, they help to choose upcoming menus, and they can participate in House meetings to help define the “rules” for their House.*

*All of us hope that we will never need to use the services of a nursing facility as we get older. For many of us, that will be true. For others it will not be. I can tell you that if I (or my wife) ever need to be in nursing care, we want to be in a Green House.*



*Thanks for Listening,  
Jeff Shireman, President*