

It's All In a Day's Work

by Leslie Finkley, PAC Mentor

It doesn't matter what type of senior living setting you work in there is *always* work to be done. Staff are busy 24 hours a day supporting residents, preparing meals, cleaning, selling, repairing, greeting, serving; the list goes on and on. It's all in a day's (and evening and night shifts') work to keep a community running. And at the end of the day, we take pride in the difference we made, the challenges we overcame, and the moments of happiness we created for others. Work builds pride, confidence, self-worth, and purpose in ourselves.

So when do people living with dementia have opportunities to build their own sense of pride or accomplishment? Are residents in your building currently engaged in productive work activities or is the idea of work limited to reminiscing about what the person used to be able to do?

Staff work so hard at trying to make a building feel like a home to the residents but part of having a home is taking care of it. As residents are provided opportunities to contribute and work, they feel pride, self-worth, and purpose in their lives.

Here are a few ideas for how everyone can get involved in partnering to provide productive work opportunities for residents. Give one a try and see if it works.

- Dining
 - Have residents help fold napkins for the dining tables
 - Ask a couple of residents to help refill salt and pepper shakers
- Housekeeping
 - Ask for a resident's help with dusting bookshelves
 - Partner with a resident that likes to move to push the laundry cart together
- Maintenance
 - Get some fresh air with a resident and have them help hose off patio furniture
 - Have a resident assist you with changing light bulbs
- Front Desk
 - Have residents help deliver the newspapers to individual apartments
- Customer Relations
 - Identify community ambassadors to show new residents around
 - Ask outgoing residents to lunch with potential residents during a tour

