More than 100 people attended the grand opening Dedication of Saint Antoine Residence’s new Rehab Center with Easy Street on April 23rd.

Several dignitaries took part in the ceremony, including the Most Reverend Bishop Thomas J. Tobin, D. D., who called Saint Antoine’s rehab center “God’s work on earth” and North Smithfield Town Administrator Paulette Hamilton, who termed “Easy Street” as the “road to independence.” Other people participating in the ceremony were Msgr. George Frappier, Chair of Saint Antoine’s Advisory Board, and co-chair of the Second Century Rehab Expansion Capital Campaign; Bishop Louis E. Gelineau, Bishop Emeritus, Diocese of Providence and former Chaplain of Saint Antoine Residence; Wendy Fargnoli, Executive Director, Saint Antoine Residence; and Rev. Dennis Kieton, Chaplain, Saint Antoine Residence.

“Easy Street” simulates a typical city block, presenting real life challenges that a person will face upon returning home after rehab. Its various modules include a CVS-sponsored pharmacy where a person has to make cognitive choices about what to buy, reaching for items off the shelves, and “purchasing” them at the checkout counter. There is a car in which patients can practice getting in and out of, supplied by New England Technical Institute. An apartment, “Jackie’s Place,” named in memory of Saint Antoine’s late Director of Nurses, Jacqueline Nerbonne, contains a fully-equipped, working kitchen, including a washer and dryer. T. D. Bank supplied “Easy Street” with an ATM Machine for banking practice. And, Cox Media Services donated a television/monitor and WII machine. All of these modules help to prepare patients, under the watchful eye of a trained therapist, for safe transitions home again and independence.

Wendy Fargnoli, Saint Antoine’s Executive Director, thanked all the people who attended the Dedication Ceremony for their help in making Easy Street a reality. She noted that $1.1M had been raised already for Saint Antoine’s Rehabilitation and Transitional Care Expansion Project but we still had a ways to go if we were to meet the total cost of $1.5M. Two other phases are to follow “Easy Street.” They are a separate entranceway and parking area for ease of access to the Rehab Center, and a refurbishing of Transitional Care Rooms for the comfort of those who are in short-term care.

The total Rehab Center is expected to be completed by the end of the summer.
A Modern Day Miracle

A "Modern Day Miracle!" That is how Fr. Dennis Kieton, Saint Antoine’s Chaplin, described the new Rehab Center with Easy Street. Fr. Kieton led the closing prayer at the Easy Street Dedication on April 23rd.

He said that "you don’t hear much about miracles, anymore, but they occur every day at Saint Antoine.”

He went on to describe how “miracles” occur all the time between clinical staff and residents because of the loving care that is provided — a loving touch, a kind word, a good deed, a smile — these things mean a great deal to our residents and to their well-being.

“…But the biggest miracle so far that I’ve seen,” said Fr. Kieton, “...is how Easy Street came about ... from an idea, to a vision, through research, planning, committees, and a swell of donations, to reality. — now that’s a true miracle,” continued Fr. Kieton.

“And, miracles will continue to happen here as patients rehab, get better and go home. It may not be turning water into wine but it is the miracle of healing "broken" bodies into whole functioning human beings,” concluded Fr. Kieton.

Rehab Important to Villa Residents

The Villa at Saint Antoine’s administrative director, Tammy Summell, said “the new ‘Easy Street’ Rehab Center is very important to us as it adds yet another dimension of care for our residents.”

“That’s the nice thing about living at the Villa,” continued Tammy, “Residents go back and forth between our assisted living facility and the nursing home for a variety of reasons. They often visit friends and family there but, also, our residents can avail themselves of the many services that are offered at the nursing home — Chapel, Transitional Care, Rehabilitation — and if they need a higher level of care, they have priority access to the nursing home.”

Villa resident, Don Burrell, was amazed at the incredible service he and his wife, Joyce, recently received when Joyce accidently fell and broke her arm. “I am so grateful to Cheryl (the Villa’s head nurse) for quickly arranging for my wife's care and even arranging my transportation to visit her before she was even out of the hospital! I’m also thankful that the new rehab Center with ‘Easy Street’ is up and running and that my wife will be able to use its state-of-the-art equipment and new modes of therapy.

We are, indeed, fortunate to be able to live here.”

“…That’s what we do best,” concluded Tammy, “We take care of our own!”

Executive Director’s Letter

A Call to Action

Dear Friends,

Saint Antoine Residence dedicated its new Rehab Center with Easy Street on April 23rd. It was a glorious day with more than 100 people in attendance. Bishop Tobin joined us as our dedication celebrant and blessed our new center to be a place of "healing" for all future rehabilitative patients.

Everyone seemed so pleased with the results of Easy Street and how it would make a marked difference to those rehabbing in the future. As North Smithfield's Town Administrator, Paulette Hamilton, said, "Easy Street is the Road to Independence."

During the dedication, I was able to share a personal story of one of the first patients who visited Easy Street for rehabilitation. The patient later joyfully told a remarkable story to his sister of how he had visited an amazing place that day --- a place where he walked independently for the first time in a long time --- a place with a town, a store, a city street, and a dog. He told the story of "Easy Street." It was at that moment, we knew what we had dreamed had been achieved.

For those of you who were there, you know what an exciting day it was; for those not present, we share the day's excitement through the pictures found on the next page of this newsletter.

Happily, I was able to report that we had raised $1.1 M towards a project cost of $1.5 million. We still have a ways to go, including a new parking area and entrance-way for ease of access, as well as refurbished transitional care rooms to make our expansion project complete. However, the large number and varying levels of gifts to date has given us the impetus to press forward to completion.

Call to Action

Now, I reach the section of my letter that I call --- an "Executive Director’s Call to Action". So much has been accomplished in our Second Century Campaign as described above but the final leg of our campaign, no doubt, is the hardest. Our steering committee has “tapped” most of our closest donor resources and we are now again looking to our friends and supporters to help us reach our final goal with a call to action. In other words, we are looking to you to help make a difference. If you have not yet given to our campaign, will you join those donors listed in the newsletter by making a gift or pledge? If you have already given would you consider making another gift or extending your pledge? Will you help us to complete a 100% donor-funded project miracle for Saint Antoine Residence? To this end, we have enclosed a self-addressed, return envelope to make your contribution a bit easier.

On behalf of those who will build strength, confidence and endurance while rehabbing on Easy Street in the future, I thank you so very much for your thoughtful consideration and participation in this very exciting and much needed project.

Sincerely,

Wendy Fargnoli
Executive Director

The History of Easy Street

The “Easy Street” concept was developed by David Gynes in 1986, when he entered a contest sponsored by Phoenix Memorial Hospital, AZ which was looking for new and exciting ways to work with rehabilitation patients. An interior architect by trade, David had seriously injured himself as a teenager when he fell off a 250 foot cliff in Oregon and suffered severe and lifelong back injuries. The contest was a natural for him to enter. He was tired of the drudgery and the pain of lifelong therapy that he was going through and wanted to develop something that was fun and yet would replicate the challenges that the rehab patient would encounter in every day life. Thus, “Easy Street” with an apartment in which you can practice the daily tasks of daily living was born. Villa Administrator, Paulette Hamilton, said, “Easy Street is the Road to Independence.” Everyone seemed so pleased with the results of Easy Street and how it would make a marked difference to those rehabbing in the future. As North Smithfield’s Town Administrator, Paulette Hamilton, said, “Easy Street is the Road to Independence."

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Sincerely,

Wendy Fargnoli
Executive Director
Capturing the spirit of Saint Antoine Residence’s new Rehab Center on dedication day.

Thank you!
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As of 6/10/15
The Mary Ann Altrui Award

Food Services worker, Alonzo Drish, accepts the Mary Ann Altrui Award. The award, named after Saint Antoine’s Executive Director Emeritus, is given each year to the staff member who, after nomination and committee review, is seen to provide excellent service beyond all expectations to residents and to their job. In presenting the award, Saint Antoine Executive Director Wendy Fargnoli noted that Alonzo discharges his duties with uplifting exhuberance and that his smile is infectious to all.

National Nursing Home Week

To celebrate National Nursing Home Week, which took place in early May, a number of staff presented skits for the enjoyment of residents and staff alike. Shown above is the management staff which presented the “Viking” rendition of the award winning, J G. Wentworth “operatic” advertisement, “Call 877 - Cash Now!”

Editorial Information

“Saint Antoine Notes” is published quarterly for families, friends, residents, staff, and others interested in the work of the St. Antoine community by:

Office of Development & Communications
Tel: 401.767.2574, ext. 602
Fax: 401.767.2581
Email:rchristensen@stantoine.net

Editor:
Robert W. Christensen,
Director of Development