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For Immediate Release

**Serenity House Assisted Living Wins Recognition**

DENVER—, Serenity House, operators of two small assisted living facilities in Englewood and Denver were recognized on Thursday, August 26 as "Best Practice" winners for their "Life’s Journey" program, which was initiated to get residents to interact with one another and join in activities that have meaning to each resident.

The Best Practice program is sponsored by the Health Facilities Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and its Personal Care Boarding Home Advisory Committee.

The Serenity House program was nominated under a category called "activities."

"Activities are a very important part of assisted living," said Terry Zamell, Assisted Living program manager. "A well-structured activity program is not just a way to pass time, but a way to make living meaningful so that residents find substance, challenge and joy in their lives."

According to Zamell, more assisted living facilities are beginning to accept persons with beginning stages of Alzheimer’s disease. She said, "Creative activity programs for such residents are especially important in maintaining their dignity and self-esteem."

Serenity House has developed a four-step approach to help residents interact in a more meaningful way with another so that the homes feel more like family units.

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Step one involves getting residents to identify their common emotional issues and explore their differences. Step two helps residents talk about past events and interests so they develop some common ground. Step three uses questionnaires for family members, facility staff and volunteers so that common talents and interests are identified. Step four puts all the information together so that a dynamic activity program can be created.

Using the four-step approach, Serenity House residents have visited quilting and ceramic shops and book stores; taken sight seeing tours; engaged in baking, cooking and decorating.

The result of Life’s Journey has been an increase in camaraderie among residents and a greater sense that the facilities are really a "home". Family members visit more often and participate in activities. Staff morale has increased as residents have become more content.

Assisted living is a very popular alternative for seniors who need help managing daily activities such as cooking, dressing, shopping and taking medications.

According to the Health Facilities Division, there are now over 520 licensed assisted living facilities in Colorado which vary from small homes housing three residents to large facilities with 100 or more residents.

"Assisted living homes work hard to meet the needs of their residents and often are confronted with problems where they could use assistance and advice from other homes," said Zamell.

"That is why our Advisory Committee and the division decided to institute a best practices program—to help facilities share information with one another and to reward those facilities who have outstanding programs."

To learn more about all of the assisted living providers in Colorado, consumers can see the Health Facilities Division’s Home Page at www.cdphe.state.co.us/hf/hfd.html. Sorted by location, information includes the facility name, owner and number of beds. The division’s home page also has two brochures about assisted living: one explains how to choose a facility; the second explains how the consumer can resolve concerns about care in an assisted living home. For those without access to the internet, materials are available by calling the division at 303-692-2853 or toll-free at 1-800-886-7689.