

## MHHA Awards

### 2005 Innovation of the Year Award

# **“IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO FEEL ALIVE”**

## **St. Francis Health Services of Morris**

The 2005 MHHA Innovation of the Year Award goes to St. Francis Health Services of Morris, under the leadership of St. Francis’s President and CEO, Luverne Hoffman. Hoffman’s vision to create a community setting for residents was fulfilled in architecture that includes representations of churches, banks, restaurants, cafes, train depots, local businesses and so on. The rooms that residents live in are as homelike as possible, to the point that the nurse call light seems to be a front porch light and when a resident steps outside their room at St. Francis, they step into a hall that has the feel of a street.

Residents interact with their fellow community citizens in a greenery-filled indoor park, at a sidewalk café, or in the railroad depot. These are just some of the touches that have turned a “facility” into a “community.”

It is one thing to recreate a community feeling that will help attract residents and give them a feeling of home. The other benefit of this approach is that it also attracts employees. Rather than working in an institutional setting, the staff at St. Francis have residential theme areas to enjoy. One commented: “Who wouldn’t want to go to work in a park everyday?”

In this time when many financially troubled facilities are closing, it may be hard to justify the capital investment that transformation like this requires. But St. Francis can look at better staffing levels, a higher census and overwhelmingly positive responses from residents and families to confirm that it is the right direction.

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