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St. Mark's Living Receives Workforce Grant To Help Recruit and Retain Employees

AUSTIN, Minn. (July 28, 2017) – St. Mark's Living has received a \$24,840 Workforce Solutions Grant from the LeadingAge Minnesota Foundation to help recruit new employees to senior care and to retain them after they are hired.

While demand for senior care in the Austin area is increasing, the available workforce is shrinking. St. Mark's Living is using the grant money to develop a multi-faceted education and training program focused on mentoring new employees and providing career advancement for top performing employees.

St. Mark's is creating a "peer mentor" program for newly hired nursing and resident assistants to support them during their first 90 days of employment. Experienced employee mentors will help train and guide them in a structured approach to becoming familiar with their new jobs. The mentors, in turn, can grow their careers and receive higher compensation.

"We've found that most turnover in senior care happens in the first 90 days of employment," said Murray Finger, Executive Director at St. Mark's Living. "One way we can stay ahead of issues that might prompt new hires to leave is by having experienced peers guide new employees through the adjustment process. Many of our new hires are younger, and research shows that members of the millennial generation are more likely to stay at a job where they have developed friendships and a support network at work."

The grant from LeadingAge Minnesota, the state's largest association of aging services providers, was awarded through a \$1 million Workforce Solutions Grant program. The program goal is to improve the experience of care for older adults by funding workforce strategies that increase the quality, quantity and capacity of the caregiving workforce.

Mark's Living is an Ecumen-managed senior living and healthcare campus that provides a full continuum of living and care options for older adults in Austin, Minn., including rehabilitation services, independent living, assisted living, memory care, long-term skilled nursing care, respite care and hospice.

About Ecumen

St. Mark's Living, managed by Ecumen, has been providing senior care and services in the Austin, Minn., area for more than 50 years. Ecumen is one of the nation's top 25 largest non-profit providers of senior housing and aging services. Ecumen is one of the nation's top 25 largest non-profit providers of senior housing and aging services. Based in Shoreview, Minn., Ecumen operates 36 communities in 8 states — Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Idaho, Ohio, Indiana and Tennessee. Ecumen provides a variety of senior housing options and services including independent living, assisted living, short-term rehabilitation and long-term care communities as well as at-home and community-based services including home care and hospice. Dedicated to empowering individuals to lead richer, fuller lives, Ecumen prides itself on innovation and radically changing the way aging is viewed and understood. Ecumen, founded more than 150 years ago, was named "Best Places to Work" 10 times by the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal* and one of Minnesota's Top Workplaces by the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and *Minnesota Monthly Magazine*. To stay up-to-date on the latest news, find us on Facebook or visit www.ecumen.org.