

# NuStep's Pinnacle Award winners

create cultures  
of possibility



**Recognized for their wellness cultures, these organizations engage older adults with meaningful programs, positive environments and supportive relationships that help them thrive**

Wellness is intentional. It's the result of individuals making choices that help them to grow, enhance health and well-being, and live as fully and vibrantly as possible at any age. A commitment to wellness transforms lives. A culture of wellness transforms organizations.

NuStep Inc., whose vision is Transforming Lives®, encourages older-adult organizations to adopt and integrate whole-person wellness into their programming

and throughout their companies to create cultures that support healthy, active, successful aging. Based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the equipment manufacturer spotlights exceptional efforts with its annual NuStep Pinnacle Award®.

In 2011, the company received the inaugural ICAA INSPIRE Award for contributions to the active-aging industry<sup>1</sup> that include the Pinnacle program. The international Pinnacle Award, established in 1998, recognizes organizations that advance older-adult wellness in the seven dimensions of wellness—physical, social, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, vocational and environmental. Recipients are those that best demon-

*Continued on page 82*



*(L to r), Fran Werner and Celine Regalia have helped foster the cultures that won their organizations, Querencia at Barton Creek and Collabria Care, the 2016 NuStep Gold Pinnacle Awards. Image courtesy of NuStep Inc.*

# NuStep's Pinnacle Award winners create cultures of possibility

*Continued from page 80*



*Friendly competition helps motivate residents to embrace a lifestyle that supports successful aging, according to Querencia's Fran Werner. Image courtesy of Querencia at Barton Creek*

strate a culture of whole-person wellness throughout their organizations.<sup>2</sup>

NuStep has long promoted the whole-person wellness model for older-adult settings that Jan Montague, MGS, developed in the early 1990s. The holistic model places the individual at its center, with “personal wellness concepts” that help people actualize wellness meaningfully in their lives by focusing on what they *can* do. These concepts include self-responsibility, optimism, personal choice, self-efficacy and self-direction.<sup>3</sup>

Like individuals, organizations that undertake a journey of whole-person wellness become more open to the possibilities that exist for everyone to live well. That aligns with NuStep's philosophy of inclusiveness and the products it creates—recumbent cross-trainers, adaptive equipment and accessories—to support fitness for people of all ages and abilities. By saluting organizations that

serve diverse populations of older adults, the Pinnacle Awards program displays this same inclusiveness.

## Spotlighting successes

Entrants to NuStep's awards contest create foundations for wellness for older adults along the continuum of active aging. Each year NuStep invites applications in two divisions:<sup>2</sup>

- **Senior Living Community**—any wellness program that is part of an independent living community, assisted living community, skilled nursing center or memory care center; and
- **Senior Center**—any wellness program catering to the age 50-plus population offered at a senior center, community center, parks and recreation center, or adult day service.

Using the seven dimensions of wellness as criteria, judges review the applications and assign scores in such categories

as marketing, participation, educational content, supportive services and outcomes.<sup>2</sup> The judging panel then shortlists finalists. NuStep's representatives follow up with site visits and interviews to select the Gold, Silver and Bronze recipients.

For 2016, the organization named its Gold Pinnacle Award winners as Querencia at Barton Creek in Austin, Texas, for Senior Living; and Collabria Care (formerly Napa Valley Hospice & Adult Day Services) in Napa, California, for Senior Center. (The sidebar on page 85 reveals the Silver and Bronze recipients.)

NuStep provided the Gold Pinnacle winners with airfare and accommodation, so they could attend the 2015 International Council on Active Aging Conference as the company's guests and be recognized in the NuStep booth.<sup>2</sup> These two award-winners have each received a NuStep T5<sup>XR</sup> Recumbent Cross Trainer. Steve Sarns, the company's vice president of sales and marketing, also presented crystal Pinnacle awards to them in ceremonies at the organizations' sites.

“Each of the 2016 Pinnacle Award-winning organizations is notable in its dedication to helping individuals achieve optimum wellness,” comments Sarns. “Their efforts help older adults to participate more fully in life, maintain or improve physical function, and stave off depression and cognitive decline. They provide a vital tool for older adults to live well.”

## Querencia at Barton Creek: 'enhancing the community culture'

About 350 older adults live at Querencia at Barton Creek, a nonprofit continuing care retirement community located at the base of Texas Hill Country, in west Austin. Dallas-based Senior Quality Lifestyles Corporation opened Que-

*Continued on page 84*

# NuStep's Pinnacle Award winners create cultures of possibility

*Continued from page 82*



*Querencia's art programs provide one outlet for expressing creativity. Many residents also participate each year in the statewide ArtsInspire contest and exhibit, held by LeadingAge Texas. Image courtesy of Querencia at Barton Creek*

Querencia in June 2007 “with the goal of providing resort-style living for seniors looking to embrace an active lifestyle,” states Fran Werner, the community’s wellness manager. Querencia, she continues, seeks “to inspire and nurture the successful aging of each and every resident.”

A partnership begun in 2012 aligns Querencia with Masterpiece Living®, a multispecialty group that works with organizations to maximize older-adult potential through a cultural approach that promotes successful aging.<sup>4</sup> Incorporating Masterpiece Living principles

has helped the community advance its culture of wellness and brand its programming, Werner says. In fact, Querencia was one of only two communities certified as a Center for Successful Aging in 2013, the year Masterpiece Living introduced its “best-in-class” designation.

All programs at Querencia “are created with thought to whole-person wellness,” Werner shares. While the primary responsibility for developing programming rests with the Lifestyles Department in which she works, residents play a driving role. In addition to the Resident Council, there are resident committees “whose goal is to help create relevant and meaningful programming.” These include the social, wellness, food and beverage, library, and welcoming committees, among others.

At Querencia, “everyone believes in the possibility of continued growth in all areas of wellness,” Werner continues. “The residents are enthusiastic and proactive about the opportunities afforded to them. They are open to and looking for new challenges in all areas of successful

aging, and play key roles in enhancing the community culture.”

For example, weekly speaker programs explore different topics to promote intellectual wellness. Members of the wellness committee are deeply involved in the process of choosing and obtaining the speakers for these presentations. Another example is Querencia’s peer-to-peer counseling program, which is run by independent-living residents with backgrounds in psychiatry, psychology or social work. These individuals assist other residents in managing life’s stresses and adjusting to change.

Yearly lifestyle reviews generate reports encompassing all areas of wellness at Querencia. These reviews give staff the opportunity to assess how well the community’s programming covers the various dimensions and meets residents’ needs. Together with annual fitness reviews using the Senior Fitness Test, lifestyle reviews also result in individualized reports that Werner discusses with residents, recommending ways in which they can each improve their wellness.

According to the most recent reviews, three in four residents take part in the community’s physical fitness programming. Independent-living residents may attend special fitness workshops and choose from more than 15 exercise classes every week aimed at improving cardio, strength, flexibility and balance. In other living levels, daily exercise classes target residents’ abilities. A fitness center is also available to use 16 hours a day, 7 days a week.

New residents and staff receive an orientation to Querencia’s whole-person wellness culture and its importance to community life, with a current wellness-refresher program presented each year. “Often, the residents lead the program,” Werner reveals. “This has the side effect of creating deeper connections between residents and staff.”

## **Entries invited for the 2017 NuStep Pinnacle Award**

NuStep, Inc., encourages senior living communities and senior centers to enter its 2017 NuStep Pinnacle Award® competition. The deadline for entries is July 1, 2016. For rules for entry and application guidelines, click “Apply today” at [www.nustep.com/community/pinnacle-awards](http://www.nustep.com/community/pinnacle-awards).

What does Werner see as the key to success with Querencia's culture? "It emanates from everyone who lives or works here," she stresses. "The leadership's focus on wellness is at the forefront of decision-making, and helps guide the direction and scope of our successful aging culture. And staff input and participation are an important part of community programming. Everyone plays a crucial role in creating and growing our culture."

### **Collabria Care: promoting well-being**

Napa County, California, has large populations of adults over 65 and over 85 years of age, according to Celine Regalia, MSW, Collabria Day Program director with the nonprofit Collabria Care. There are also approximately 3,100 people living with Alzheimer's disease in the county.

The Collabria Day Program at Collabria Care has provided state-licensed adult day health care in Napa County since 1998. It's also a designated Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center, with "a mission to keep people as independent as possible, living in the community and out of institutional care," Regalia says. Areas of focus include early-stage dementia, caregiver support and training, and community awareness and programs for people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers.

Each year the Day Program serves approximately 175 participants and provides support services for 600 caregivers. The program's social interaction, mental stimulation and therapeutic activities "support and promote independence for those at risk for falls, ongoing physical and cognitive decline, and depression," Regalia comments. Participants are typically living with chronic conditions, dementia or frailty.

Well-being, a Collabria Care value, is at the core of the Day Program model. The program provides a person-centered care (PCC) approach that looks at

mind, body and spirit and concentrates on individual strengths "to help the person restore, maintain and improve optimal functioning," Regalia explains. PCC emphasizes respect, value and empowerment for all participants. It also sees these individuals as extraordinary, focusing "on all the possibilities of what they can do."

Adopted by the Day Program in 2002, the PCC model was created by Lyn Geboy, PhD, and Beth Meyer-Arnold, RN, MS, of Cygnet Innovations Group, LLC, authors of *Person-Centered Care and Practice: Tools for Transformation*.

Regalia describes it as a systemic approach to culture change, with a "model of place" that centers on people, program ("culture and activities"), and physical setting. Implementing PCC, she shares, is a journey of sustained, intentional effort that evaluates and changes these areas.

"All levels of the Day Program staff are trained in the PCC model, working as an interdisciplinary team [nurse, social worker, physical and occupational therapists, among others] to improve the health and quality of life for both the

*Continued on page 86*

## **Snapshots: 2016 NuStep Pinnacle Silver and Bronze Award winners**

### **Senior Living Community**

*Silver: Brookhaven at Lexington, Lexington, Massachusetts*  
Nonprofit continuing care retirement community. Strong resident-led programs that enhance vocational, social and emotional wellness. "Blurs the lines" between levels of care and combines populations in several programs. Technology heavily used to communicate and educate; website houses "members only" minisite. All directors involved with executing wellness philosophy.

*Bronze: Spanish Cove Retirement Village, Yukon, Oklahoma*

Mission to help residents "live longer better." Not-for-profit continuing care retirement community; public trust with three residents on Board of Trustees. Resident-driven programs. Focus on employee health and well-being. Many volunteer opportunities within community. Individualized programming for residents, staff, and older adults in greater community. Dragon Boat team helping change perceptions of older adults.

### **Senior Center**

*Silver: The Wellness Institute at Seven Oaks General Hospital, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada*  
Self-supporting, nonprofit arm of hospital; leading medical fitness facility. 80,000-sq.-ft. "barrier-free" building with inclusive programming. Seamless referral program between hospital and institute. Evidence-based health and fitness programs. Hospital's research findings translated throughout facility. Partnered with Alzheimer's Society for exercise and therapeutic recreation program. Over 50% of membership aged 55+.

*Bronze: Urbandale Senior Recreation Center, Urbandale, Iowa*  
Opened in 1958. Division of Urbandale Parks & Recreation Department. Wellness focus for more than 10 years. Adept at adapting wellness programs and services to meet the needs of older members and Boomer members. Classes facilitated by members who worked in fitness and wellness. Strong loyalty and support among members, who fundraise for center equipment and other needs.

# NuStep's Pinnacle Award winners create cultures of possibility

*Continued from page 85*



*A Collabria Day Program participant climbs stairs in the physical therapy gym to improve his gait and balance. Photo: Jason Tinacci Photography. Image courtesy of Collabria Care*

participant and the caregiver,” Regalia says. The team meets every morning to evaluate the previous day’s programming and environment, and its impact on the participant, responding with changes as necessary.

Shaped by PCC principles, the programming targets the seven dimensions of wellness. Examples include armchair travel, laughter yoga, “Memory Workout” (cognitive stimulation), “Walk for Wellness” (after-lunch walks on the outdoor infinity-loop trail), and horticulture therapy. Small affinity groups sometimes develop when individuals have the same interests. Regalia notes that participants lead a lot of the programs and groups (often with staff support), which builds confidence. PCC creates more balanced relationships between staff and participants, as well as more dynamic, individualized activities, she also points out.

For caregivers, including those in the broader community, the Day Program

offers one-on-one consultations, support groups, “lunch and learn” education, and tools for dealing with dementia. More individualized support helps caregivers in the program “maintain their caregiving situation with the respite they need,” Regalia observes.

A “buddy system” supports participants. Each new participant is assigned a participant buddy to help with adjusting to the environment, Regalia says. There is also a staff buddy who spends time with and engages the new participant to discover what will create a sense of well-being for the person. This staff member encourages participant self-efficacy, empowering the individual to advance toward personal wellness goals.

In creating an environment that promotes well-being, Regalia considers the power of culture change to be the Collabria Day Program’s most valuable lesson learned.

## **Possibilities for living well**

Querencia at Barton Creek and the Day Program at Collabria Care have thoughtfully and intentionally fostered wellness throughout their organizations, creating cultures that encourage “each and every” individual to see the possibilities for living well. Together with the Silver and Bronze Pinnacle Award winners, these organizations show how committing to wellness can change organizations as well as the lives of the people they serve.

“We are delighted to recognize the 2016 Pinnacle Award winners for their outstanding whole-person wellness programs as well as their examples of wellness leadership,” says NuStep’s Steve Sarns. “It is clear, for example, that wellness is enmeshed in the culture at Querencia at Barton Creek. They work hard to ensure that their programming is relevant and meaningful, which in turn encourages residents to reach their pinnacle of wellness.” Collabria Care’s “exceptional efforts and unique approach help older

adults with chronic conditions, dementia or frailty to enhance their quality of life and that of their caregivers as well,” he adds.

“By integrating wellness throughout their organizations, our Pinnacle Award winners provide their residents and participants with the support to choose wellness in life’s different dimensions,” Sarns states. “We hope their examples will inspire others to create cultures of possibility for older adults by embracing whole-person wellness.”

*The Journal on Active Aging*® thanks Steve Sarns and Jane Benskey of NuStep, Fran Werner of Querencia at Barton Creek, and Celine Regalia of the Collabria Day Program at Collabria Care for their help with this article. NuStep is accepting entries for the 2017 NuStep Pinnacle Award until July 1, 2016. To learn how to apply, visit [www.nustep.com/community/pinnacle-awards](http://www.nustep.com/community/pinnacle-awards).

## References

1. The editors. (2012). NuStep steps up: an exercise equipment company chooses to make a difference. *Journal on Active Aging*, 11(5), 46–54; September/October issue. Available to ICAA members in the online content library at <http://www.icaa.cc> (go to: “Management articles” [“Business profiles” category]).
2. NuStep Inc. NuStep Pinnacle Award® entry form and rules for entry. Retrieved on January 24, 2016, from [http://www.nustep.com/files/8514/5401/7439/Pinnacle\\_2017award.pdf](http://www.nustep.com/files/8514/5401/7439/Pinnacle_2017award.pdf).
3. Montague, J., Piazza, W., Peters, K., Eippert, G., & Poggiali, T. (2002). The wellness solution. *Journal on Active Aging*, 1(2), 17–20; March/April issue. Available to ICAA members in the online content library at <http://www.icaa.cc> (go to: “Wellness articles” [“Wellness” category]).
4. Masterpiece Living. (n.d.) Masterpiece Living home page. Retrieved on January 24, 2016, from <http://mymasterpieceliving.com>.



*The Collabria Day Program focuses on the well-being of caregivers as well as participants. Photo: Jason Tinacci Photography. Image courtesy of Collabria Care*

## Resources

### Internet

#### NuStep, Inc.

[www.nustep.com](http://www.nustep.com)

#### Brookhaven at Lexington

<http://brookhavenatlexington.org>

#### Collabria Care

<http://collabriacare.org>

#### Querencia at Barton Creek

[www.querenciabartoncreek.com](http://www.querenciabartoncreek.com)

#### Spanish Cove Retirement Village

[www.spanishcove.com](http://www.spanishcove.com)

#### Urbandale Senior Recreation Center

[www.urbandaleseniors.org](http://www.urbandaleseniors.org)

#### The Wellness Institute at Seven Oaks General Hospital

<http://sogh.ca/wellness>

### Additional resources

#### Cygnnet Innovations Group, LLC

[www.facebook.com/cygnnetinnovations](http://www.facebook.com/cygnnetinnovations)

#### Masterpiece Living

<http://mymasterpieceliving.com>

### Multimedia

*Person-Centered Care and Practice: Tools for Transformation* (books and DVD)

Authors: L. Geboy & B. Meyer-Arnold  
Publisher: Attainment Company, 2011

\* Available at [www.attainmentcompany.com/person-centered-care-practice-tools-transformation](http://www.attainmentcompany.com/person-centered-care-practice-tools-transformation)

*Senior Fitness Test Manual* (book and DVD)

Authors: R. Rikli & C. J. Jones  
Publisher: Human Kinetics, 2013

\* Available at [www.humankinetics.com/products/all-products/senior-fitness-test-manual-2nd-edition](http://www.humankinetics.com/products/all-products/senior-fitness-test-manual-2nd-edition)