

Living the Dream



Something new is available in Cookeville, Tennessee (the heart of the Upper Cumberland). **Living the Dream** is an elegant independent living home for seniors. This is a dream come true for Ms. Wendy Askins, Executive Director of the Upper Cumberland Development District. For fifteen years, she had a vision and passion to build a beautiful home for middle income people that needed a place to live independently in a gracious environment. Ms. Askins has become no stranger to serving people during her 30 plus year career in the Upper Cumberland. She is a tireless, hard working people person with a passion for helping and serving others, which is evidenced through the work she has done over the years. Through the Upper Cumberland Development District, she has helped to obtain infrastructure for the 14 counties that she serves, providing low income housing, funding for the relative caregiver program and services for seniors, historical preservation and so much more. Living the Dream has been a dream of fulfilling a need that has been obvious to Ms. Askins for years. That dream has now come to fruition in late 2010 with the purchase of a beautiful villa surrounded by 11 acres of lush pastures that were auctioned earlier in the year. This beautiful stucco façade home allows residents to age gracefully and live independently in a loving home environment with country living.

Currently, there are two residents who love living in the non-institutional style home which allows them the freedom to walk outside and enjoy nature and the loving touches that Ms. Askins and her team have created. Phase II will be completed in spring 2011 and will offer 20 units. 18 of those units will be one bedroom units with full ADA approved bathrooms, bedrooms and a small sitting area with *Dish Network*. Each unit will have its own heating and cooling controls to customize comfort. There will also be 2 units designed for couples that want a little more space and desire to live together. Living the Dream's country living allows for the ability to enjoy nature. The lovely 50' x 100' barn that houses horses, barn cats, dogs, baby goats and soon, some donkeys for the residents to enjoy and care for if they enjoy animals will add to the experience. Ms. Askins has put her heart and soul into this project, working day and night to oversee the renovations. She is so passionate about this project and has such a keen desire to make sure every detail is as it should be that she has given up her own home in Cookeville to live on-site. This has allowed her to be there during every step of the project — making sure that her residents are cared for. Her determined personality and professional loving team will make this the best home for seniors. Ms. Askins credits God for letting her know that this was the home and the time to get this project moving forward as many baby boomers are or will be needing affordable housing in the near future.

Living the Dream has a sprawling 6,600 square feet of living space with a high-tech media room complete with big screen TV, card table, Wii for fitness and fun, plus Wi-Fi for computer internet hook-up. There will be a beauty salon and barber shop on site and laundry facilities for the residents to use. For security, there will be one main entrance and for safety the facility is equipped with a sprinkler system. The covered atrium (phase III) will also have a fitness room for those residents who wish to exercise year round, plus there will be outside walking areas to help maintain fitness. Living the Dream offers a commercial kitchen that provides all the meals and snacks for the residents. The open, spacious dining area will host many themed events, holiday celebrations, and offers a delightful ambience for good food and breaking bread together. The activity calendar will be the heartbeat of Living the Dream with planned activities on site and occasionally off-site enjoying the beautiful Upper Cumberland area. The planned gardens and vegetable gardens will be lovely for sitting outside and enjoying the sights, smells, and sounds of the seasons. Phase III will put an atrium over the gardens and a flowing fountain that will make this sitting area relaxing for social interaction with residents and guests that will visit Living the Dream. Living the Dream will allow something for everyone to enjoy, whether nature, gardening, socializing, walking, or just enjoying country living. Ms. Askins has a twinkle in her eye when she talks about her childhood growing up on their Clay County farm. It was some of the happiest times of her life and where she developed her love of horses and nature. She is so happy to be living in the country again and being able to offer this to seniors. Living the Dream is an independent living facility; however, services such as *Choices*, *Option* or other licensed agencies offering homemaker, personal assistance, and therapeutic services are available. Living the Dream also offers respite care, if space is available, for those caring for a loved one. Living the Dream is a first of its kind in Tennessee. As you drive up the winding driveway lined with the white picket fence and Bradford Pears and see the beautiful stucco façade with the ornate wrought iron front entrance, and the geese in the pond, you know that you are home. Come visit Living the Dream and give yourself or a loved one a graceful place — a loving place in the country (only minutes from Cookeville and the hospital) to age gracefully and to live independently. Living the Dream can be contacted by phoning 931-858-4117 or 931-261-6273 and speaking to Ms. Askins or by visiting their website, www.ucdd.org.

