



We're the people who make life better.

## **At AegisLiving the Culture Embraces an Employee-First Philosophy**

The Wisdom of Potato Soup Goes a Long Way

REDMONDS, WA (November, 2007) At AegisLiving the attitude of employee-first emulates throughout the entire company. From part timers to senior management, the culture is one driven to treat all employees with value, respect and appreciation. This is evidenced by Aegis's enthusiasm and ability to go beyond the obvious and make life better for its employees. Call it caring for people, call it smart business-- the two go hand in hand.

When the company was started in 1997, Dwayne Clark, chairman and CEO of AegisLiving had a mission: to create a company with an incredible corporate culture, exhilarating and caring at the same time.

Dwayne explains, "I knew from the beginning that I wanted to create a culture at Aegis that was unsurpassed in the industry. I have been able to make that vision a reality through the shared efforts of everyone here. My job is to give the employees the tools they need to make their life better and more enjoyable. After all the staff are the ones that drive the customer experience. Unless they are absolutely happy, motivated and have a genuinely good feeling about working for the company you're never going to get to the customer experience you need to be a success."

### **Wisdom of Potato Soup**

When Clark was in high school, he and his mother were very poor. A proud and very ethical woman, the occasion came up where she had to steal a dozen potatoes from her employer so they would have something to eat. For an entire week, they ate the potato soup she made, teaching him a lesson he has never forgotten. She told him to never forget where he came from and what they had to do. And she advised him to "be there for your employees and they will always be there for you."

Today Clark weaves that lesson into everything he does for his employees. In the past year, he established the Potato Soup Foundation, a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization with the principal purpose to help Aegis employees and their families in time of need. The majority of the Foundation's funds are targeted for hardship requests and the balance for education opportunities and loans and services.

### **Employee Benefits**

AegisLiving provides employees with a competitive compensation plan, profit sharing and benefits packages. Beyond that it offers unique "soft benefits" including discounts on haircuts or groceries, free massage or personal training session, and a no-fee mortgage to start with. Aegis extends hundreds of other extras onto its employees, depending on what's available in a specific Aegis community. And then there is the "fun factor" encouraged at every AegisLiving facility. A committee of employees take charge of

making fun a daily occurrence with activities such as go cart racing, bowling, picnics and even dunking booths.

“It is often the small things we can give our employees that make a huge difference for those making an hourly wage. We are always looking for ways to extend our appreciation and support to those who are taking care of our seniors, work that is so often physically demanding and mentally exhausting,” adds Clark.

### **Education and Training**

Another area that AegisLiving contributes to employee well-being is through education and training. The management team has designed and implemented a series of progressive employee training programs through the Aegis Academy that have proven highly beneficial, garnering employees with a comprehensive understanding of the sensitivities of aging as well as highly specialized dementia training. Another aspect of training comes in the form of the company’s annual meeting. At the meeting there is no business discussed. Instead it is a time to focus on inspiring and enriching the lives of employees with speakers such as Dr. Wayne Dyer, Dr. Andrew Weil and Jim Loehr.

### **The Bottom Line**

AegisLiving’s mercurial growth and strong leadership can be credited to the people on the management team and the entire roster of employees. “People First” shapes the culture, and exemplifies the brand, a brand that wholeheartedly embraces a Five Star Service Philosophy. AegisLiving Communities are designed and operated to meet the standards of service and quality in a five star setting. “We truly value our employees. While we demonstrate our commitment through profit sharing and meaningful benefits, we make certain they know they are appreciated and feel connected to our company in a hundred little ways as well. Our success is because of them, and their tireless, dedicated commitment to our families and resident,” according to Clark.

By successfully creating an environment where employees know they are cared for and valued AegisLiving has earned the distinction of having the lowest staff turnover rate in the industry. Annual staff turnover ranges from 23%to 45% compared to an industry average of 120%. This low turnover rate translates into a better bottom line for the company and care for its residents. The company has been named among *Washington CEO’s* “Best Companies to Work For” repeatedly since 2002. Moreover, Aegis employees have typically been the best recruiters for the company

Aegis has successfully created a corporate climate and work environment that is often admired and emulated by other corporations. Yet the real rewards of the employee’s hard work are witnessed in the faces of residents and family members every day. Those are the true accolades.

### **About AegisLiving**

AegisLiving is a national leader in retirement and assisted living, offering a progressive selection of senior residences to meet the growing needs of today’s aging population. Providing the finest in senior lifestyle and living options available, “We’re the people who make life better” emphasizing health, quality of life, well-being and community. The residences include Signature Living, independent living, assisted living, Memory Care for individuals with Alzheimer’s and other forms of memory loss, as well as short term, rehabilitative and vacation stays. AegisLiving is guided by a simple philosophy: strive to

treat all people with the highest possible standards. Founded in 1997 and headquartered in Redmond, Washington privately held ÁegisLiving operates 32 communities in Washington, California and Nevada. More information about ÁegisLiving is available at [www.AegisLiving.com](http://www.AegisLiving.com).

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