

Givens
COMMUNITIES
Spring 2025

Discovery

NEWSLETTER

*People Passionate, Make A Difference,
Power of Community, Do What's Right*



Senior Living Industry Trends

A Message from Kevin Schwab, CEO

As we progress through 2025, I want to share some key developments shaping the senior living industry, which directly influence our community and its future.

Demographic Shifts Driving Demand

The senior housing market is experiencing a resurgence, primarily due to the aging baby boomer population. Projections indicate that by 2030, the U.S. population aged eighty and older will increase by more than four million, leading to a substantial demand for senior housing. However, current construction trends suggest a potential shortfall, with an anticipated need for over 560,000 new units by 2030, but only 191,000 units expected to be built.

Affordability and Accessibility Challenges

The senior living industry continues to face financial pressures due to rising operational costs, evolving regulations, and inflation. These factors have contributed to increasing costs. While some seniors have the financial means, many are choosing to age in place. Additionally, the demand for enhanced services and amenities has led many developers to focus on premium offerings, which can create challenges in providing more options for middle-income seniors.



Emerging Trends in Senior Living

Several trends are shaping the future of senior living:

- **Middle-Market Focus:** There is a growing emphasis on creating affordable housing solutions for middle-income seniors who are currently underserved.
- **Solo Agers:** An increasing number of seniors are aging without immediate family support, prompting communities to adapt services and social structures accordingly.
- **Longevity and Well-Being:** A holistic approach to health is becoming standard, with communities offering wellness programs that address physical, mental, and emotional well-being.
- **Home- and Community-Based Services:** There is a rising demand for services that allow seniors to receive care while remaining in their homes or community settings.



Nonprofit Mergers and Affiliations

In recent years, single-site nonprofit senior living communities have faced financial and operational challenges, leading to a notable increase in mergers and affiliations. In 2023, approximately 110 nonprofit senior living communities changed hands across seventy deals, marking the most active year on record for such transitions. This trend reflects a strategic move toward consolidation to achieve greater financial stability and operational efficiency.

Technology and Innovation in Senior Living

Advancements in technology are transforming the senior living landscape, improving care, connectivity, and overall quality of life. From artificial intelligence-driven health monitoring to smart home integrations, innovation is playing a vital role in enhancing resident experiences.

- **Telehealth and Remote Monitoring:** The rise of virtual healthcare services allows residents to receive medical consultations and ongoing care without leaving their homes, improving accessibility, and reducing healthcare costs.
- **Smart Home Technology:** Voice-activated assistants, automated lighting, and fall detection sensors are increasing safety and independence for seniors.
- **AI and Predictive Analytics:** Data-driven insights are helping providers anticipate care needs, prevent health issues, and personalize services for residents.
- **Social Engagement and Virtual Reality:** Emerging platforms are combating social isolation by connecting seniors with family members, educational programs, and immersive experiences.



Givens Communities' Commitment

In light of these developments, Givens Communities remains dedicated to:

- **Expanding Access:** We are exploring opportunities to develop new housing options that cater to a range of income levels, ensuring more seniors have access to quality living environments.
- **Enhancing Services:** Our focus is on personalized care plans and wellness programs that align with the evolving needs and preferences of our residents.
- **Community Engagement:** Recognizing the importance of social connections, we are implementing initiatives to support solo agers and foster a strong sense of community.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** We are actively assessing potential partnerships and affiliations that align with our mission and values, aiming to strengthen our services and ensure long-term sustainability.
- **Technology and Innovation:** We continue to explore and implement technology solutions that enhance our residents' well-being, safety, and engagement, ensuring they benefit from the latest innovations in senior living.

We are committed to navigating these industry trends thoughtfully, ensuring that Givens Communities continues to be a place where seniors and team members thrive.



Kevin Schwab
Chief Executive Officer
Givens Communities

50th Galas Planned

This year marks an extraordinary milestone – the 50th anniversary of Givens Communities.

For half a century, this nationally recognized senior living nonprofit organization has been shaped by the dedication of countless individuals, and stands as a testament to the values, vision, and hard work that have led to where we are today.



This golden anniversary is a reminder of the partnerships, innovations, and shared goals of the journey. It also is a time to look ahead with renewed purpose and ambition and envision together the bright future that is ahead.

- Givens Highland Farms Celebration – April 30
- Givens Estates Celebration – May 22
- Givens Great Laurels Celebration – June 18
- Givens Gerber Park Celebration – July 16
- Manor House Rededication – August 14
- Gala Celebration at Highland Brewing (ticketed event) – August 21

Health Center Rated as Best

U.S. News & World Report has designated Givens Estates Health Center in Asheville as a best short-term rehabilitation facility for 2025.

Overall ratings recognize facilities that excelled at providing highly satisfactory services and making residents feel safe and well cared for.

Givens Estates Health Center provides Medicare-certified short-term rehab services, long-term care services, as well as short-term rest and recovery (respite) stays in uniquely furnished private and semi-private accommodations, including suites. The center works directly with individuals, families, and healthcare providers to ensure the best treatment plan possible.



“This recognition by U.S. News underscores the dedication and commitment of our topflight healthcare providers, and the outstanding leadership of Robert Underwood, Health Services Director at Givens Estates,” said Ashley Haney, Sales and Marketing Director of Health Service with Givens Communities, a nonprofit senior living organization serving Western North Carolina.

The assessment is based upon a resident survey covering a wide range of conditions, such as safety, caregiving and satisfaction with food, dining and range of activities, and data from the federal Nursing Home Compare Program, which measures staffing, health inspections and levels of therapy.



“Since 2009, U.S. News’ annual Best Nursing Homes analysis has supported American consumers and their families in making more informed decisions about quality of care for their loved ones,” said Ben Harder, chief of health analysis and managing editor. “These facilities set the standard for quality care and should be commended for their commitment to improving the lives of their residents.”

Team Member Accolades

LeadingAge North Carolina will present its 2025 Workplace Excellence Award to Givens Communities Training and Development Team, while Thelma Sullivan, director of Environmental Services at Givens Estates, has been selected to receive the Excellence in Leadership Award.

The Excellence in Leadership award recognizes a staff member who, regardless of their role within a member organization, demonstrates an aptitude for and commitment to professional growth and provides leadership within the team that is impactful, effective, motivational, and consistent. Honorees show commitment to personal and professional development in preparation for future potential leadership opportunities within the field of aging services, along with a capacity to form harmonious and influential relationships with coworkers through the organization.

The Workplace Excellence Award recognizes a member community that demonstrates investment in their staff and workplace environment in fostering a healthy workplace culture and environment that promotes the recruitment, retention, and development of staff at all levels of the organization through innovative workforce development practices.

The awards will be presented during a luncheon ceremony that will be held in conjunction with LeadingAge North Carolina’s 2025 Annual Conference in May.

New Community Manager

Sharon Jones has a new role at Givens Great Laurels, serving as community manager. She previously had been the leasing consultant for the affordable rental retirement community near Lake Junaluska.

She brings a wealth of experience and a passion for helping others to this new role. She holds a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of North Carolina Asheville and is currently pursuing a second bachelor's degree in personal finance from Western Carolina University.



Her professional background includes work with Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services as an Income Maintenance Caseworker II, and with the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville as an Eligibility Specialist.

New Health Center Director

Annette Baker has been named as the director of nursing at Givens Estates Health Center.

Annette began her career as a Certified Nursing Assistant and has been a Registered Nurse for 24 years. She has experience working in the Emergency Department, Hematology and Oncology, and Medical Surgical departments in various hospital settings. She also has experience in Hospice and Skilled Nursing. After working as a travel nurse in the Southwest for 5 years, her and her husband decided to return to Western North Carolina to be closer to family.



“I am so excited to be at Givens Estates Health Center,” she said. “I hope to help build a great nursing department and I’m excited for the opportunity to work with the Health Services team and the rest of the community.”

Givens Estates Health Center expressed excitement in welcoming Annette and are looking forward to the experience and commitment that she will bring to the position and expansion of the nursing department.

Affordables Aid Region, Post-Helene

Resilience Recovery NC, created by Jim and Rebekah Artman, of Lake James, continues local disaster support following Hurricane Helene. The nonprofit organization is making an impact in through aid distribution, road and bridge repair, tree removal for safe access, home construction for displaced families, and environmental restoration. Givens Affordable Communities, upon learning of the all-volunteer group's need for storage space, began providing the Clinchfield Mill, which has ample capacity.

Teresa Stephens, Vice President of Affordable Communities, and Andrew Crosson, Project Development Coordinator, quickly set things in motion to make the historic mill in Marion available at no charge.

Givens Communities purchased the mill in 2022 after receiving a \$3 million grant from the Dogwood Health Trust. The master plan is to preserve the historic integrity of the site and rehabilitate the mill into affordable senior housing.

Resilience Recovery NC has shifted their focus from supply distribution to home and infrastructure repair and construction, as they continue their work on mitigating Helene's significant impact on the region. For more information about Resilience Recovery NC or to make a donation, go to www.resilientrecoverync.org.

Fraud Alert

Fraud targeting older adults is a major crime problem, according to a report from the North Carolina Consumer Fraud Taskforce. Americans lose some \$3.2 billion a year as victims of fraudulent activity.

Givens Communities recognizes the threat to seniors and retirees to fall victim to online scams, financial loss and identity theft. A few quick tips from the IT Department:

- Do not answer calls from phone numbers or emails you do not recognize.
- Beware of anyone who asks you to send money immediately, no matter what the reason.
- Do not share information about you or your family with anyone you do not know.

If you have a senior scam to report, contact the N.C. Department of Justice's Consumer Protection Division at 1-877-5-NO-SCAM.



Team Member Spotlights

Meet Executive Chef Susan Davila

For more than five years, Chef Susan Davila has been bringing her culinary creativity to Givens Highland Farms, crafting the wonderful dishes that residents enjoy every day.

Born and raised in Ohio, she spent over 20 years as an executive chef at a private country club before taking a bold leap—traveling with her family for nine months through Southeast Asia, primarily Thailand and Vietnam, before settling in Asheville.

Her favorite part of the job? The residents, of course! She also loves working on special projects like the resident-created herb garden, the Food Connections donation program, and sponsorship of the Deck the Trees holiday fundraiser for the Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministries Fuel Fund—where Givens Highland Farms provided the food for this year’s event.



Through challenges like Hurricane Helene and the COVID pandemic, Chef Susan has remained dedicated to serving the community. On average, the dining team serves 180 meals for dinner, 110–120 at lunch, and around 120 for Sunday brunch.

Susan and her husband are both trained chefs, and yes—she still enjoys cooking at home for her family.

Chef Waters Featured in Magazine

Josh Waters is described as a rising star by Edible Asheville, a seasonal magazine that tells the story of the local food and drink scene.

The Executive Chef of Givens Estates, Josh oversees four restaurants and a staff of more than sixty chefs, servers, and bartenders. At 24, he has already traveled the world for prestigious culinary competitions, cooked for world-renowned musician Yo-Yo Ma, and along the way earned two degrees from Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College in culinary arts and in baking.

The feature article tells of a family legacy, with a maternal grandfather working as a cook at a south Asheville restaurant while his maternal grandmother routinely cooked for friends and family at home in Montford, and growing up as his mother prioritized home-cooked meals. “I remember her chili and cornbread,” he said. “As soon as they hit the table, I knew it was my favorite time of year. That meant it was getting colder, and it was hoodie season.”



The idea that he could become a professional chef began when a home economics instructor at T.C. Roberson High School taught the class how to make popular dishes from scratch. As an A-B Tech student, he stood out for his dedication to hard work and budding leadership skills and in 2021 was captain of the student team participating in the American Culinary Federation’s cooking competition.

Money Matters

A January 21, 2025, New York Times article, “When the Retirement Community Goes Broke”, warns that retirement communities across the country are increasingly facing financial troubles. While focused on a CCRC (Continuing Care Retirement Community) in New York state that declared bankruptcy, the article also references Aldersgate in Charlotte. Aldersgate has re-stabilized, with the guidance of the NC Dept of Insurance (the State’s regulator of CCRC’s) which mandated a remedial action plan including the engagement of needed fiscal expertise to help restore the financial footing.

Unlike that story’s subjects, Givens is very strong financially, with financial reserves well exceeding the required minimums, and a structure that itself lends stability. In this environment, where some other CCRC’s are struggling, how can we be sure of that? Here’s what can give us comfort:



- A visible answer is that rating agencies like CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities), and Fitch (a prominent fiscal rating agency for banks and bond buyers) continue to award Givens very high ratings.
- One source of strength is the multi-model organization (Givens Communities) which allows for spreading administrative and other costs over multiple facilities, the sharing of essential expertise, as well as providing bulk purchasing options.
- Givens has also developed additional models, that add breadth to the service package offered: notably Home First and Givens Choice.
- Operating a Health Care facility is a major financial challenge for many senior living communities, as requirements increase and funding streams tighten. Givens has responded by reducing the number of beds at GEHC, (to minimize risk), and planning full occupancy to maximize reimbursements. Further reductions in government funding could bring a new challenge.

Currently, Givens Communities is well- positioned in the senior-living market to move forward, from a foundation rooted in strength and stability.

**By Bette Meyer, Chair Money Matters
a Resident Association sub-committee**

Information Technology

A Message from Ricky Foor,
VP of Information Technology

As the Vice President of Information Technology for a nonprofit continuing care retirement community, I'm passionate about leveraging technology to drive meaningful change in how we care for older adults.

McKnight, which is a long-term care news provider, recently featured a report that illustrated a need for innovative approaches to meet the complex needs of older adults, especially in areas like enhanced home care, integrated health services, and proactive chronic disease management. <https://www.mcknights.com/news/expanded-long-term-services-are-a-must-study-authors-say/>

I believe expanding long-term services is no longer optional. It's essential. Innovative approaches that empower individuals to age comfortably and independently in their homes and communities, free from pain and stress, for as long as possible.

Technology plays a pivotal role in making these expansions feasible and effective, from telehealth solutions to predictive analytics that identify risks before they escalate.

The McKnight article also pointed out the unfortunate challenges that face

funding this technology. Medicare doesn't cover these services at all and programs like the CARE act offers very little funding to improve communication between health providers and family caregivers.

At our communities, Residents, Team Members, and Leadership are committed to being part of this evolution, finding funding to adopt these tools, and creating strategies that empower both residents and staff.

By embracing proactive, tech-driven solutions, we can ensure that long-term services not only expand but also excel in delivering compassionate, personalized care.

Collaboration is essential in the senior-living industry to redefine what's possible in senior living and healthcare.





Glimpse Back

Givens Communities history dates to 1975 when, through their estates, Dr. and Mrs. Maurice H. Givens donated their farm and the income from a \$2 million trust to help establish a retirement community, with the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church authorizing incorporation as a nonprofit organization.







1975

2025

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