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LEADING WOMEN IN BUSINESS | BALTIMORE

LIVE WELL. AGE WELL. BE WELL.

Keswick is committed to enhancing the quality of life for older people both on **campus** and in the **community** by providing a variety of award-winning services that enable them to live their best lives.

Carmel Roques, CEO

When Carmel Roques—a healthcare visionary with expertise in geriatrics, dementia, and palliative care—joined Keswick as its CEO seven years ago, she was presented with a challenge: Execute more fully on the Keswick mission and craft a vision for future relevance given the projected increase of older adults in the next decade.

At the time, Keswick was primarily known as a 240-bed nursing home. Today it is a highly rated, multifaceted resource, serving more than 1,000 nonresident seniors through its community health and adult day programs and its rehabilitation services—in addition to its nursing home residents. Keswick’s reach continues to grow with the Fall 2018 opening of its Wise & Well Center for Healthy Living, the first of its kind in Maryland. The center is designed as a place for older adults to pursue their health and well-being goals through classes, coaching, and personalized service across multiple dimensions of wellness.

“Here in Maryland, 20 percent of the population is over the age of 60; by 2030 that will increase to 25 percent. It’s critical to those in that age group that they are seen as an asset to society,” Roques says. “As it now stands, someone who retires at 65 may very well live to be 100. But with our current societal structure, there’s no place, no purpose, for that person. I’d like for that narrative to change.”

Roques is getting her chance to be a changemaker as a member of Maryland’s Commission on Aging and as the incoming chair of LifeSpan Network, a senior care advisory association. Involvement with these organizations and others affords her the opportunity, she explains, to influence how the aging population is addressed throughout the state, with an ultimate goal of making Maryland a best place to live and age.

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THRIVING IN THE LATER YEARS

According to Roques, there are three things older adults need to do to thrive: connect with something larger than themselves, engage with others, and keep moving.

“A failure to connect with others can be particularly damaging to older adults, and a lack of physical contact can lead to depression, susceptibility to illness, and worse,” she explains. “The health ramifications of becoming sedentary are also powerful and potentially deadly.” Simple activities like vacuuming, walking up and down stairs, and taking a yoga class can help immensely.

Adult day services and other Keswick programming are also options for older adults who wish to remain an active part of their community. Such services include transportation, socialization, nutritious meals, medical care, and meaningful activities tailored to each individual’s interests and level of function and that incorporate various disciplines, such as occupational and physical therapies, into everyday practice.

“The older adult population is as diverse as any other and is experiencing longevity that is unparalleled in our nation’s history,” Roques says. “The time has come to reframe what aging means to us as a society. Aging isn’t a tragedy, and older people shouldn’t

be seen as a burden. What they should be is a resource—an untapped, unstoppable resource—and a part of the solution to the challenges we face. Does that sound like pie-in-the-sky thinking? Because from where I’m standing, it’s only a lack of imagination that’s kept us from achieving this goal so far.”

KESWICK

wise & well