



ST. LEONARD

A FRANCISCAN LIVING COMMUNITY

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **St. Leonard Redefines Senior Living By Opening \$4 M Wellness Center**

New facility caters to the holistic needs of those living in and around the Centerville community

Centerville, OH (September 15, 2011) – St. Leonard Franciscan Living Community will be the first in the Miami Valley to introduce a new holistic approach to wellness among seniors when it opens its 22,000-square-foot Franciscan Center this week.

The center, newly constructed in the heart of St. Leonard's Centerville campus, showcases many amenities and architectural features not often associated with continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs). The \$4 million investment includes a day spa, full-service restaurant and bar, aerobics studio, meditation room, fitness room, community banquet room, three-lane lap pool and warm-water therapy pool.

Each space is carefully designed with the rich details seen in classic Franciscan architecture such as smooth stucco, exposed wood trusses and large arched wood windows. The building's large atrium – adorned with stacked stone and carefully designed mosaic-tile prints – make it seem as if one is entering a spa-like resort rather than a traditional senior living facility.

The Franciscan Center was designed for the entire Miami Valley community, and St. Leonard will unveil it for the first time Thursday, September 15 when it holds a ribbon cutting ceremony from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Tours will be held for the public from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Plans for the center emerged five years ago when residents began asking for aquatic facilities, which quickly evolved into something bigger as the leaders at St. Leonard started to study the correlation between holistic health and long-term health care costs. Final blueprints called not just for a building, but for a place that would enable St. Leonard residents to live longer and more meaningful lives.

“While we wanted to meet the physical needs of seniors through amenities like the fitness room and pool, it was equally important to provide a place to gather, learn, grow and socialize,” said Debra Stewart, Director of Wellness at St. Leonard and manager of the new center. “Through this building, we are fostering a culture that prevents our residents from feeling self-contained to one where they remain a part of the greater community.”

Stewart envisions the center as a multi-generational gathering place for people throughout the area. The banquet hall will be open to community groups looking for a space to meet, and fitness facility memberships will be sold to those age 55 years and above who want to work out among their peers. The full-service restaurant and bar, named The Station House, after a train station formerly located nearby, will be open to any community member looking for a new place to dine.

Russell Garber, vice president of Columbus-based Andrews Architects which designed the building, said St. Leonard is one of only a few CCRC’s in the state to build such a facility and will most likely become a leader in a growing trend to redefine senior living.

“Senior living communities grew out of the hospital model and for a while you couldn’t tell the difference between the two,” Garber said. “But over the years our firm has watched the senior care industry move away from being a medical-based model to one that is focused on holistic care.”

The Franciscan Center symbolizes a greater cultural change at St. Leonard. A year ago, the community was one of three organizations across the nation chosen to pilot a progressive wellness program developed by Atlanta-based Vital Nation. Today it has become the only one of those that were selected to successfully meet the rigorous criteria to be officially certified in the program, called Vital Life. The program, which includes half of its 760 residents and more than 200 members from the greater Dayton region, offers the first concrete accreditation standards for CCRC’s when it comes to wellness.

The Franciscan Center – built by Columbus-based Corna-Kokosing – will provide a hub from which Vital Life will be able to strengthen and grow in its eight key areas of wellness including environmental, nutritional, social, spiritual, physical, vocational, intellectual and emotional health. To further aid in the Vital Life efforts, a chiropractor, physical therapist and exercise physiologist will be among the 20 new employees hired by the time the facility is fully operational this fall.

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*St. Leonard is one of the largest senior living communities in the United States located on 240 acres of countryside in Centerville, Ohio, just 10 miles south of Dayton. The community’s unique array of distinctive, yet interrelated, mature living programs are designed to meet the individual needs of the 760 seniors living there. Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis, St. Leonard provides a secure and friendly atmosphere where reverence, service and stewardship are its foundation. They are the third largest employer in the city of Centerville.*