A CASE STUDY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS IN
THREE DALLAS RETIREMENT FACILITIES

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of
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By

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This study compared the public relations efforts in three Dallas retirement facilities against suggested standards of professional public relations practitioners to determine which standards each facility utilized.

Externally, all three facilities related to the community in an "above average" way, as indicated by their utilization of the twenty-two suggested standards.

Internally, two facilities related to residents and staff in a "superior" way, and one facility related in an "average way," as indicated by their utilization of the twenty-two suggested external standards and twenty suggested internal standards.

The conclusions drawn from this study are that retirement facility administrators, in general, are not fully aware of the internal and external public relations strategies that could benefit them within the community and with residents.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The term "nursing home" or "retirement facility" often carries the connotation of the elderly awaiting their turn to die in something of an old age death row, an image that has plagued the industry since the early 1900's.

The origin of modern nursing homes and retirement facilities can be traced to three sources. The first was the almshouse or county poor farm; the second was the private home for elderly individuals established by charitable organizations; and the third was the private proprietary boarding home for elderly individuals of financial independence (6, pp. 100-102).

As residents of these facilities grew older, the need for nursing care became paramount. To gain an edge over other facilities, some of the homes added a nursing staff to attract residents. The real growth of the industry occurred when the Social Security Act of 1935 made the purchase of facilities easier with the Old Age Security Income (OASI) and Old Age Assistance (OAA) provisions of the Act (6, p. 100).
The act and its provisions did not regulate the nursing home industry, and the negative image of the county poor house and almshouse prevailed even for the more modern facilities. In many cases this negative image is furthered in today's society by reports appearing in publications such as Time, which in 1975 carried a story entitled "Nursing Homes under Fire" and said, "It is no secret that nursing homes are dismal places owned by investors far more interested in turning a profit than caring for their elderly patients" (7, p. 2).

Ralph Nader, in an article for Ladies Home Journal in December, 1973, said, "Anyone who tries to find a good nursing home today inevitably discovers what too many older Americans already know: Most nursing homes offer minimal care at best and some are guilty of shocking neglect of their patients" (6, p. 2). Overgeneralizations of this type are addressed by Jim Brennan in his book Public Relations Can Be Fun and Easy, in which he tells the facility administrator that he must learn to improve his communication skills. Brennan says the retirement facility has "too often been unnecessarily chastised by people who are speaking out against nursing homes and services offered" (4, p. xiii). The critics of these facilities overgeneralize when they hear of a few people
in the elderly health care field who may bring discredit to the whole profession by their actions (4, p. xii).

The problems the administrator now faces may not be any easier in the future. The congressional Office of Technology Assessment reported as of October 2, 1984, that in number, people above age sixty-five outnumber teenagers in the United States for the first time, and by 2025 the margin will increase to more than two to one (5, p. 5A). The report says, "The number of those over sixty-five is projected to grow from today's 26 million to an estimated 39.3 million by 2010, when they will constitute almost 14 per cent of the nation's population" (5, p. 5A).

At the time these elderly Americans are finding they need retirement facility care, funding from the state and national governments has been cut. From 1980 to 1984, $24 billion was cut from programs for the elderly. The largest cuts were in Social Security, $9 billion, and Medicare, $12 billion (5, p. 5A).

The facility administrator may find that the image his facility projects is the deciding factor when an elderly citizen chooses a place to retire. The potential resident has a choice between a nonprofit or church-affiliated facility and a proprietary facility. Often the
image projected by each may be the reason for selecting one facility over another (12, pp. 10-13).

The facilities chosen for this study were Buckner Baptist Benevolences, affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, The Dallas Home for the Jewish Aged (Golden Acres), and Monticello West, not affiliated with any denomination. Inasmuch as a nursing home differs from a retirement facility only in that a nursing home provides health care and a retirement facilities does not always, the term "retirement facility" is used throughout this study to refer to both nursing homes and retirement facilities.

To better understand public relations as it applies to a retirement facility, two definitions are offered. David Porter, in his book, Hospital Architecture: Guidelines for Design and Renovation, defines the changing role of the public relations practitioner in a health care facility in this way:

No longer the mere conveyor of publicity messages, the public relations person is involved with the administrator in policy making. Becoming lately, the consumer advocate, weighing the impact of new programs on the community, the public relations professional has become an important part of the health care delivery team, particularly in the vital area of health care design and administration (12, p. 137).
Doug Newsom and Alan Scott, in their book *This Is PR: The Realities of Public Relations*, third edition, define the role of the public relations practitioner in this way:

The public relations person is the link between the public and the institution. Finding out what a target audience needs to know and wants to know, and breaking through the isolation of institutional structures to make these needs known is the first step of the PR practitioner.

The second basic task is to discover ways of presenting vital information so the public will hear and understand. Both tasks are embodied in the practice of what might be better understood if it were called "relations with the public" (11, p. 227).

Buckner Baptist Benevolences is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. According to Administrator R. L. Herring, the first retirement facility at Buckner, the Mary E. Trew Home, opened in 1954 with a capacity of 24 residents and now has a capacity of 280.

Golden Acres is a retirement facility for people of the Jewish faith. According to Administrator Mary Jo Pompeo, residents come from Texas and the surrounding states for the quality of the health care at Golden Acres and for its high standards for keeping Kosher. It offers religious services for the Conservative, Orthodox, and Reformed Jew. Golden Acres opened in 1953 with a 40-bed capacity and now has a capacity of 435.
Administrator Linda Abbott stated that Monticello West began operation in 1980 with a capacity of 180 residents and has maintained that capacity by selecting residents who are primarily from an upper-class socio-economic background.

Each facility administrator stated that external and internal public relations were handled somewhat differently. At both Golden Acres and Monticello West, external public relations are handled by the facility administrator under the jurisdiction of a board of directors. At Buckner, external public relations are handled by the director of public relations with input from the facility administrator. At both Monticello West and Golden Acres, internal public relations are handled by the facility administrator in matters dealing with policy, and by the activity coordinator in matters dealing with resident contact. At Buckner, internal public relations are handled by the facility administrator and the activity coordinator.

Statement of the Problem

This study compared the public relations goals, activities, and organization of three Dallas retirement facilities against suggested standards of professional
public relations practitioners to determine what percentage of and which standards each facility utilizes.

**Purposes of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to compare public relations activities in three Dallas retirement facilities to standards suggested by public relations professionals to determine how they related to a variety of audiences, internally and externally. The audiences included the residency of each facility, the administrators of each facility, and the general public.

**Questions to Be Answered**

This study attempted to discover answers to these questions. How many, if any, of the suggested standards of public relations practitioners are followed by facility administrators for better external public relations?

How many, if any, of the suggested standards of public relations practitioners are followed by facility administrators, activity coordinators, and occupational therapists for better internal public relations?

**Review of Literature**

Much of the background for this study came from the health care view rather than a theoretical business approach. The data collected have been synthesized from
two areas of academia: public relations and studies in aging.

Four publications directly addressing the use of public relations in nursing homes and retirement facilities were found. *Public Relations For Homes for the Aging* by John Grace details the importance of internal and external audiences in creating and maintaining a successful public relations campaign. His study deals with correcting whatever negative images many retirement facilities may face. Grace covers a basic outline of what should be considered when establishing a public relations campaign, such as determining the audiences and methods for reaching them (7, pp. 15-21).

*Public Relations for Nursing Homes* by John Bachner provides more detailed explanation for creating public relations campaigns. Bachner defines the tools the successful practitioner must use when establishing a public relations campaign. Extensive attention is directed to business letters, newsletters, interpersonal communications, and emergency situations. Bachner analyzes actual implemented programs of patient relations, employee relations, community relations, and news media
relations that administrators may consider for use in their facilities. Bachner emphasizes in his preface that each of the programs for analysis was designed to create a better image for the facility and to assist facility administrators in keeping resident turnover at a low level. Each of these programs was designed to have a minimal cost. Bachner offers strategies to decrease employee turnover and to provide tangible benefits "whose value far exceeds the investment made" (3, p. xi).

Communication, a manual on public relations and news media published by the American Nursing Home Association, informs facility administrators how to use their news media resources (1, pp. 1-43).

Public Relations Can Be Fun and Easy by Jim Brennan is perhaps the book best suited for explaining public relations to facility administrators. This practical guide explains in simple terms how administrators can define their publics, plan a course of action, and evaluate the results. Brennan stresses the importance of improving the image of the facility from within: "The image of nursing homes will improve only when there is a collective effort on the part of each nursing home person" (4, pp. xiv-xvi).
Internal public relations can be described effectively in health care facilities because of extensive activity programs designed and conducted by staff members. In a study developed by the Human Development in Aging Project, the importance of volunteers, family members, and community resources was observed in studying internal public relations. Lou Ann Mattson says in this study that the internal public relations implemented in a facility are more stable if the standards have the support of the family and volunteers on a daily basis (11, pp. 1-40).

Mattson says community resources, family and volunteers provide another dimension to the aging process and helps others to view the situation in a different light (11, p. vi). She says that all of the factors must be taken into account when a highly structured program of intervention is being implemented or even if more informal programs are being considered (11, p. vii).

In a paper presented to the American Association of Homes for the Aging, Lois Jenkins-Wasser approaches the public relations standpoint from a step-by-step format and poses questions for administrators to make them think before they act. The questions, approached from an internal viewpoint, ask if the administrator and the prospective resident have a clear understanding of what
services will be available and what is expected of the resident (8, pp. 13-15).

Hospital Architecture: Guidelines for Design and Renovation by David Porter presents a chapter on public relations for nonprofit and proprietary facilities. Porter says the health care facility administrator must realize the power of the news media and the potential in the general public for creating awareness about the facility (12, pp. 137-145). For the nonprofit facility in particular, exposure to the general public may encourage donation from new sources and stimulate donations from benefactors. Porter says several audiences, including the board of directors, medical-nursing staff, volunteers, families, and residents must be recognized. Some of the avenues Porter suggests for better internal public relations are that newsletters for and by the residents be produced and distributed to other audiences, resident boards be established, and other forms of media be used to draw attention to the facility (13, p. 137).

Methodology

This study focused on the external and internal public relations efforts of three Dallas retirement facilities. These three facilities were selected upon the recommendation of graduate students and faculty members of
the Center for Studies in Aging at North Texas State University on the basis that each facility would have identifiable programs for external and internal public relations. Interviews with administrators of each facility and a tour of each facility indicated that each has a good reputation within the community and provides much-needed services in Dallas.

To obtain information, interviews were conducted with key personnel [see Appendix A]. At Buckner, Director of Public Relations Betty Ensminger and Administrator R. L. Herring were interviewed concerning external public relations, and the activity coordinator was interviewed concerning internal public relations. At Monticello West, Administrator Lynda Abbott was interviewed concerning external public relations, and Activity Director Donna Swenson was interviewed concerning internal public relations. At Golden Acres, Executive Administrator Herbert Shore and Administrator Mary Jo Pompeo were interviewed concerning external public relations, and the activity director was interviewed concerning internal public relations.
In addition, each of the eight people interviewed was asked to complete a demographic information form detailing experience and qualification in his field [see Appendix B]. The recommended standards of four publications were chosen for making the evaluative judgment in this study. Twenty-two standards for improving external public relations and twenty standards for internal public relations were selected from Public Relations Can Be Fun and Easy, Public Relations for Nursing Homes, Hospital Architecture: Guidelines for Design and Renovation, and Communication [see Appendixes C and D].

For purposes of this study, the external and internal standards were distributed into five categories as indicated by Table I. The use of whole number was implemented so that no fractional deviation would be included in the final scores of each facility. The percentages coordinating with the number of standards and subsequent ranking were obtained by dividing the number of standards utilized in a facility into the number of total standards. For example, if Monticello West utilized seventeen of the twenty-two external standards, seventeen divided by twenty-two equals 77 per cent or an "above average" rating.
TABLE I
EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL STANDARDS AND COORDINATING PERCENTAGES AND RATINGS

Twenty-Two External Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Standards Used</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00-04</td>
<td>00-18</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05-09</td>
<td>23-41</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>68-86</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>91-100</td>
<td>Superior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twenty Internal Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Standards Used</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00-03</td>
<td>00-15</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-07</td>
<td>20-35</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-12</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-16</td>
<td>65-80</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-20</td>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>Superior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the external and internal standards as they appear in Tables II and III are listed in descending order of importance according to the publications from which the standards were taken. This allows for a subjective evaluation of standards.
Justification of the Study

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge of public relations by describing how administrators of some retirement facilities seek to improve their public images through the use of standards established by professional public relations practitioners. This study will contribute to a possible new area of expertise that incorporates the techniques of the public relations practitioner and the retirement facility administrator.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into three chapters: Chapter I provides the introduction; Chapter II outlines the public relations strategies implemented in each facility and compares them to suggested standards; and Chapter III provides the summary and conclusions.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


7. Grace, John, Public Relations for Homes for the Aging, Number 6 of Center Studies Series, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas.


CHAPTER II

CURRENT PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED

Each facility in this study implements public relations strategies on external and internal levels. In this chapter the facilities are compared to indicate the public relations strategies utilized (8, pp. 71, 85). Facility administrators were interviewed about their strategies implemented on the external level. Table II indicates the external strategies implemented in each facility.

Dr. Herbert Shore of Golden Acres said that in addition to the suggested standards, a monthly report is issued to the Board of Directors of that facility. Monticello West and Buckner did not indicate that anything other than the suggested standards was undertaken to improve external public relations.

The differences between a proprietary facility like Monticello West and nonprofit facilities like Buckner and Golden Acres are implied by Table II (1, pp. 105-110).
### TABLE II
TWENTY-TWO EXTERNAL PUBLIC RELATIONS STANDARDS IMPLEMENTED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXTERNAL STRATEGIES</th>
<th>MONTICELLO</th>
<th>GOLDEN ACRES</th>
<th>BUCKNER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community relations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News media relations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government relations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency relations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer relations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family relations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donation returns</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-kept facility</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special events</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public service spots</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speakers' bureau</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional association</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior groups</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint activities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contest solicitation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund-raising projects</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual reports</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor tours</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone techniques</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article submission</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade advertising</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer recognition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent of standards</strong></td>
<td><strong>19 = (86%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>15 = (68%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>19 = (86%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating</strong></td>
<td>above average</td>
<td>above average</td>
<td>above average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II indicates the external public relations strategies utilized in the facilities ranked in descending order of importance by administrators.
Monticello West was the only facility to advertise in trade publications. Administrators at Buckner and Golden Acres said there was no need to advertise in any publication because the residents for their facilities come from their religious affiliations.

All of the administrators indicated that there was no need for contests to solicit funds. For Buckner and Golden Acres, large donations from individuals and financial support of religious organizations help subsidize these facilities. Monticello West believed there was no need to solicit funds because it would lower its reputation, and the residency provides adequate financial support. This was the only standard that all of the facilities did not include as part of their external public relations.

Table III indicates internal public relations strategies utilized in the facilities ranked in descending order of importance by administrators. Donna Swenson of Monticello West said that special events brochures were not in use in her facility, but announcements of special events were included in the facility newsletter. Swenson said that instead of a suggestion box for residents, surveys about living conditions were conducted several times a year.
TABLE III

TWENTY INTERNAL PUBLIC RELATIONS STANDARDS IMPLEMENTED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERNAL STRATEGIES</th>
<th>Monticello</th>
<th>Golden Acres</th>
<th>Buckner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal PR program</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean facility</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident boards</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility newsletter</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident bulletins</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information kits</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident orientation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor guides</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board meetings</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident recognition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letterhead</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint mechanism</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special events</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events brochure</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident bulletin boards</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion box</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee bulletin boards</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee ID tags</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee kits</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone techniques</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent of standard

| Monticello | 17 = (85%) |
| Golden Acres | 19 = (95%) |
| Buckner     | 9 = (45%)  |

Rating

| Monticello | Superior |
| Golden Acres | Superior |
| Buckner     | Average  |

*Suggestion boxes are not used at Monticello West but surveys are conducted several times a year.*
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


4. Grace, John, Public Relations for Homes for the Aging, Number 6 of Center Studies Series, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas.


CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

A study was completed on the public relations efforts in three Dallas retirement facilities to determine the number of suggested standards utilized. To ascertain this information, facility administrators and activity directors were interviewed about the standards they utilize on the internal and external levels. These standards were compared to standards suggested by authors of books dealing with public relations in retirement facilities. Percentages of the number of standards were ranked in five categories: superior, above average, average, below average, and poor.

Three retirement facilities in the Dallas area were selected upon the recommendation of graduate students and faculty members from the Center for Studies in Aging at North Texas State University. Data were collected and synthesized over an eight-month period from June, 1984, to January, 1985.
In addition to the interviews, a demographic information form was provided for each subject. Items on the demographic form were analyzed to determine age, educational background, professional experience, total capacity of the facility, and number of staff under supervision.

A generalized summation of this study indicates that Monticello West, Golden Acres, and Buckner utilized a majority of the twenty-two external and twenty internal suggested standards.

On the external level, Monticello West and Buckner utilized nineteen external standards for 86 percent and an "above average" rating. Golden Acres utilized fifteen external standards for 68 percent and an "above average" rating.

On the internal level, Golden Acres utilized nineteen standards for 95 percent and a "superior" rating; Monticello West utilized seventeen standards for 85 percent and a "superior" rating; and Buckner utilized nine standards for 45 percent and an "average" rating.

Conclusions

The conclusion drawn from this study is that each of the three facilities surveyed conducts both an external and internal public relations program, although the administrators may not be fully aware of that fact.
Adherence to an arbitrary set of suggested standards may not indicate the success of either an external or an internal public relations program. Variables not contemplated by the suggested standards may alter the evaluation of an individual program. For example, on the internal level, Monticello West indicated that it did not have a total public relations program and then indicated that it utilized seventeen of the remaining nineteen suggested standards. Moreover, in place of suggested standard number sixteen, the suggestion box for residents, Monticello West conducts periodic surveys of residents to determine their needs and complaints.

Buckner’s nonutilization of the suggested internal standards indicated either a lax attitude toward residents or the fact that, because of its connection with the Southern Baptist Church, its residents and potential residents are already aware of the facility and its benefits. Even so, some of the suggested standards, on both the external and internal levels, if utilized, would benefit both the facility and the residents. For example, Buckner did not have much of an internal public relations program. Implementing such standards as an internal newsletter, resident information kits, visitor guides, and resident orientations could result in a more satisfied
residency. On the external level, even though Golden Acres has no real need for involvement with senior citizen groups, such involvement could accrue to the benefit of residents who are, themselves, involved with such groups.

Specific conclusions are as follows: On the external level, all three facilities, Monticello West, Golden Acres, and Buckner, related to the community in an "above average" way, as indicated by their utilization of the twenty-two suggested standards. Monticello West and Buckner utilized nineteen, scoring 86 per cent, and Golden Acres utilized fifteen, scoring 58.

On the internal level, Golden Acres and Monticello West related to their residents and staff in a "superior" way and Buckner in an "average" way as indicated by their utilization of the twenty suggested internal standards. Golden Acres utilized nineteen standards, scoring 95 per cent; Monticello West utilized seventeen, scoring 85 per cent; and Buckner utilized nine, scoring 45 per cent.

Combining the twenty-two suggested external standards and the twenty suggested internal standards showed that Monticello West utilized thirty-six of the forty-two total standards for an 86 per cent rating, Golden Acres utilized thirty-four for an 81 per cent rating, and Buckner utilized twenty-eight for a 67 per cent rating, indicating
they all related to the community and to their residents
and staff in an "above average" way.

In an effort to determine the quality of the external
and internal public relations programs implemented by each
facility, the suggested external and internal standards
were rank-ordered into "greater standards" and "lesser
standards." "Greater" standards were the first eleven on
the external level and the first ten on the internal
level. "Lesser" standards were the second eleven on the
external level and the second ten on the internal level.

On the external level, all three facilities utilized
a majority of the "greater" suggested standards. Those
not utilized were numbers nine, ten, and eleven, indicating that all three facilities utilized the most important
suggested standards. Monticello West did not utilize
number nine, conduct special events, and Golden Acres did
not utilize number ten, use of public service announce-
ments, and number eleven, establishment of a speakers' bureau.

Among the "lesser" external standards, none of the
facilities utilized number sixteen, fund-raising projects;
Buckner did not utilize number twenty, submit articles to
trade magazines and other media; Monticello West did not
utilize number fifteen, contests to solicit funds, and
Golden Acres did not utilize number fifteen, contest solicitation, and twenty-one, article submission. Nonutilization of those suggested external standards indicates that the source of funding for each of the facilities is rather sound. In addition, Golden Acres did not utilize number thirteen, involvement with senior citizen groups, indicating that its source of residents is plentiful; and number fourteen, involvement with other health care projects.

On the internal level, Monticello West and Buckner did not utilize number one, a total public relations program. However, Monticello West utilized seventeen of the remaining nineteen standards, indicating, in fact, that it does have a total public relations program. The two suggested internal standards Monticello West did not utilize are number thirteen, use of internal letterhead, and number sixteen, a suggestion box for residents. However, in place of a suggestion box, Monticello West utilizes periodic surveys of the residents to determine their needs and complaints.
Buckner did not utilize numbers four through nine, facility newsletter, resident news bulletins, information kits for new residents, resident orientations, visitor guides and pamphlets, and board meetings.

Among the "lesser" internal standards, Buckner did not utilize number eleven, special event brochures, number eighteen, employee identification tags, and number nineteen, employee information kits; and Monticello West did not utilize number thirteen, use of an internal letterhead.

Recommendations for Each Facility

Recommendations for each facility may aid administrators and activity coordinators in formulating a comprehensive public relations program. The recommendations to be made come only from the list of suggested standards each facility administrator completed in survey form. These suggested standards were synthesized from literature reviewed and the findings of this study.

Golden Acres, external: implementation of a speakers' bureau coordinated with various senior groups such as the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE). This association could serve a dual purpose by utilizing the speakers' bureau standard
and the association with senior groups. In addition, the name "Golden Acres" is kept before the public, and the residents' horizons are broadened with stimulating facts about the aging process in America.

Contest solicitation coinciding with fund-raising projects is a combined recommendation fulfilling two external strategies. One fund-raising project that could be established by residents and volunteers is a garage or bake sale. Funds from the sale of articles such as crafts, paintings, and handwork can be used for the benefit of the total residency. Trade advertising is not recommended because Golden Acres' residency comes from the members of the Jewish faith. Since it is the only quality retirement facility catering to the needs of that faith, its occupancy is virtually always at capacity. In addition, submission of public service announcements for radio stations, offering the residence services and expertise in different areas may be instituted.

Golden Acres, internal: a suggestion box should be placed in the facility.

Monticello West, external: implementation of special events could keep Monticello West's name before the public. This is important for Monticello West because it is a proprietary facility that must draw its residents
from the upper socio-economic group. Contest solicitation and fund-raising projects could coincide and create revenue for residents and recognition for management.

Monticello West, internal: the letterhead problem is easily solved and is not of primary importance to a comprehensive public relations program.

Buckner, external: submit articles to trade magazines to keep Buckner’s name before the public. Trade advertising and contest solicitation are not recommended because Buckner’s waiting list for residents is extremely long, and there is no need for advertising to stimulate business. In addition, the geographic area dominated by Southern Baptists ensures a residency.

Buckner, internal: implement an internal public relations program; provide a facility newsletter; provide an information kit for residents; provide resident orientation; provide visitor guides; establish board meetings; utilize a suggestion box; provide resident bulletins; provide special event brochures; provide employee identification tags. Among these recommendations is the establishment of a facility newsletter. This can
serve as a major force in establishing communication between facility administrators and residents.

The recommendations for each facility to improve internal and external public relations are indicated in Table IV.

**TABLE IV**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH FACILITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Golden Acres</th>
<th>Monticello West</th>
<th>Buckner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTERNAL</strong></td>
<td>Special events</td>
<td>Contest solicitation</td>
<td>Contest solicitation</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fund-raising</td>
<td>Article submission</td>
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<td>Suggestion box *</td>
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<td>Internal PR</td>
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<td>Bulletin</td>
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<td>Resident kits</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Guides</td>
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<td>Guides</td>
<td>Board meetings</td>
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<td>Event brochures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Event brochures</td>
<td>Employee tags</td>
<td>Employee tags</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Monticello West utilizes periodic surveys in place of a suggestion box.
Recommendations for Further Study

The recommendations made herein are based on the literature reviewed and the conclusions drawn from this study. It is recommended that this study be replicated in major urban areas to determine if differences exist in external and internal public relations in large facilities. It is recommended that this study be replicated using a larger number of facilities to obtain a random sample of public relations strategies used in retirement facilities.

In contrast to the suggested study in urban areas, public relations practices in smaller, rural retirement facilities should be conducted to determine positive or negative correlations between the two.

It is recommended that a study of public relations practices in facilities should be evaluated by age of resident to determine if age has a role in the perception of external and internal public relations standards.

It is recommended that two studies, one using only proprietary facilities offering no medical services and one using facilities offering medical services, be conducted to determine how their standards may differ.
APPENDIX A

GENERAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What is the primary reason people choose your facility?
2. How do you attract new residents?
3. What specific medical services do you provide?
4. What program of activities has been designed for your residents?
5. What is the desired level of occupancy?
6. How do you increase occupancy if it falls below desired levels?
7. Do you conduct research into public attitudes toward your facility before establishing public relations or marketing goals?
8. By what criteria do you measure the effectiveness of your public relations efforts?
9. Who is responsible for making those measurements?
10. What specific public relations problems are unique to your facility?
11. What do you consider to be your target audiences?
12. What is the normal procedure after someone requests information about your facility?
APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Name ___________________________ Sex __ M __ F
Title ___________________________ Age _____________

Numbers of years with facility ________________________

Educational experience:
Degree(s) ___________________________ Institution(s)
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________

Professional experience:
Position(s) ___________________________ Years associated
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________

Organization membership(s)
____________________________________
____________________________________

Total capacity of facility _______________________
Number of staff under your supervision __________

35
APPENDIX C

TWENTY-TWO STANDARDS FOR IMPROVING EXTERNAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Establish community relations
Establish news media relations
Establish government official relations
Establish emergency public relations
Establish volunteer relations
Establish family relations
Improve donation return through direct mail
Well-kept grounds and retirement facility
Conduct special events
Submit public service announcements
Speakers' bureau
Involvement with professional associations
Involvement with senior citizen groups
Joint activities with other health care providers
Contests to solicit funds
Fund-raising projects
Annual reports
Visitor tours and pamphlets
Improve external telephone techniques
Submit articles to trade magazines
Advertise in trade magazines and other media
APPENDIX D

TWENTY STANDARDS FOR IMPROVING INTERNAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

A total public relations program
A clean retirement facility
Resident boards
Facility newsletter
Resident news bulletins
Information kit for new residents
Resident orientation
Visitor guides and pamphlets
Board meetings
Special events
Special events brochures
Resident recognition
Internal letterhead
Complaint-handling mechanism
Bulletin board for residents
Suggestion box for residents
Bulletin board for employees
Employee identification tags
Employee information kits
Improve internal telephone techniques
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