

Episode 121- The Importance of Adult Daycare Centers with Jackie Smiertka

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SPEAKERS

Bob French, Alex Murguia, Jackie Smiertka

Bob French 00:00

The purpose of retire with style is to help you discover the retirement income plan that is right for you. The first step is to discover your retirement income personality. Start by going to risaprofile.com/style and sign up to take the industry's first financial personality tool for retirement planning. Today, Wade and Alex speak with Jackie Smith, aka the founder and Center Director of Quality of Life, adult day health care services about what adult daycare centers are, what they do, and just why they're so important.

Jackie Smiertka 00:54

Hey, everyone, welcome to retire with style. I'm Wade and I'm here with Alex. And we're really excited on this episode to welcome a very special guests. Jackie smirk who I've known, actually going all the way back to she was my very first Sunday School teacher about the time that I was in kindergarten, I believe. But that's not the reason I have her on the show today. She's done so much in her life, dedicated her life to helping others improving the lives of others. She's a registered nurse, she worked in the health profession for a long time. But then specifically for today, what's relevant is in 2007, she opened the quality of life, Adult Day Care Health Care Center, in Auburn Hills, Michigan. And if you do live in the metropolitan Detroit area, make sure to check the show notes for information to get in touch with that, but an adult daycare center, she has the experience now going on 17 years, doing so much to help individuals as they age and need that help. And we want to talk about all the different aspects of that. So we're so excited to have you on the show today. Welcome, Jackie. Thank you. It's very nice to be here. Wade Thank you so much for inviting me. Well, my pleasure. And we're we we look for the best experts we can find. And when it comes to adult daycare, I think there's no one better out there to talk to. So that that really was the motivation. And in that regard, just to really get started with the conversation. Your career was not in adult daycare, specifically, you opened the center in 2007. Could you just really talk about what inspired you to think about this as a important direction to help people? Well, I had been in actually, as a nurse, probably about 20 years prior to deciding that this is what I wanted to do the most of my career was in surgery working in the surgery process. And I worked with patients that had obesity surgery did follow up, monitor their blood work, did a lot of classes for them afterwards, support groups afterwards, presentations in different countries around our states around the United States and in poor countries and was

asked to do presentations on what I did. I kind of felt that was kind of odd because I thought it just was a no brainer. But it was something that people wanted to know how did I get started with this? It was at that time in 2007. It wasn't really well known. It wasn't something that people really understood as an adult daycare, children daycare child daycares, yes, but not adult, you know. So that's kind of how I did get started at that time. But I was still working in obesity surgery. So I was in and out of the hospital a lot. But my mom was moving up here because from Indiana, she was in the house by herself. She needed to be with me, my brothers had passed my father had passed. So that's how mom came up. And she was the one that officially taught me the lessons of what someone needs, that is in need. And that's how that started, I knew that she would have to be somewhere where I could consider her safe. I did not want her in a large facility. So that's how I talked to one of my friends in Florida. And she enticed me to do an adult daycare, which is how that came about. I sort of flew by the seat of my pants. Basically, I had no idea what I was doing. But with her help of letting me know what she needed. I was able to pull it off. And it's not a large daycare. I am not a franchise. I don't like being told what to do. I hate to say that, but I don't like being told what to do because I knew how I wanted it to be done. I wanted a room no more than 10 people at a time so that I could pay direct attention to those eight to 10 people at a time. And then it was a matter of what are they going to do and what they were I'm going to do took a little while into the process by way of my first guy that came in, which was Frank, he came in before mom actually come up came up here. And Frank was probably well in his 80s, his wife had died a couple years before. And his daughter said, All he says is that I want to kill myself. And I heard that many times. And then finally, the last time I heard it, I said, Frank, we don't have time for that. And he looked at me, and he was in shock. And he said, What? And I said, we've got work to do tomorrow, we don't have time for you to do that. And he was like, he was so like, oh, what kind of work? And I said, You'll see, I'll show you tomorrow, I had no idea what I was saying, Not one single idea. So I got in my car. And I think the light bulb went off was that he wants something to do that's productive. So I knew that he was a World War Two airplane mechanic. And that's when I called my husband and said, Oh, by the way, you're going to be cutting out some wood into the shape of a biplane. And his first question was, are you kidding me? And I said, Of course not. So I got home. And here's what you're you're going to have to draw it out. So I did, I drew out this biplane by piece by piece, he cut them out. I brought them all. And I should have had my biplane here, because it's out in the foyer there. But he had to sand every single piece. He had the varnish, or he had to stain he had the varnish, he had to do all that sanding everything to that plane part, those plane parts. And then we helped him glue it together. And it's and he ended up making nine, nine, as we call them, air Frakes. And I have one which I was so thrilled and honored to have. So he was the best educator in this process that I could have had, because I thought, Never again did he say I want to kill myself. From that it was like, What are we doing next. And so it was close to Valentine's day I came up David making hearts and then and the rest of it is history. Everything has gone down into doing projects that we would end up giving to charities, we would give to nursing homes over Mother's Day, weekend, Christmas, all kinds of events. We did a big charity for Breast Cancer Association. So that's sort of how we ended up doing all of these things that would benefit other people, but yet still help them learn how to work, learn to have a purpose. And everywhere in the office, you will see a sign that will say hope can be found here, because it can the sign in the back, which I love the most is this. Here we have a purpose. And that's the whole premise of all of our lives is that we have to have a purpose. No matter what age or stage of life we are in. We all need a purpose. So here are these people that are a little bit challenged because of the form of dementia they might have. So how do you work with that and every body is basically different. I've had most all types of

dementias. So I have had to learn through each individual what it was that they were capable of doing. And most of that was the common denominator was then to be able to see something that they created that they painted that we gave to Costco, and I like the birdhouse project, the birdhouse is right behind you. The third year of this birdhouse project, my husband said Oh, please don't do it next year. Well, I you know, he'll sleep for this No. So, but the birdhouses we painted this year we painted 215 birdhouses because some we gave to churches. And then the other 200 We are going to take to Costco for Mother's Day weekend. And so they paint I embellished David, of course, cuts them out, puts them together. And so it makes it nice because there's a lot of people involved. My husband's retired, I said, Oh my gosh, you'd have to have something to do. So that's what he's doing. So, and mine is to keep them busy. And the day goes fast, and it's productive. And to have a productive day. From my standpoint of someone that has some form of dementia have that productive day. It's it can't get any better than that. You know, it's something it's amazing. So I asked me another question ramble on and on. I mean that yeah, it's incredibly important and it's really providing purpose passion mean I mean, in many cases where individuals might otherwise be socially isolated or stuck at home, could you also talk a little bit about the caregivers? And I think that was part of your seeing the need in this area was that helping your mother caregivers also need a break to not have to drop out of the workforce or to just have rest or an opportunity to have more social interaction with their family? Yes, I think, in fact, I wrote an article about being a caregiver. And I wrote it because I needed to write it down. I needed to write down how I was feeling during the process. And it was, although my husband says, This is not something you want to say on the air, but I would always say to my friends and say, how are you managing? I'd say, Well, I have a pity pot. Yes, it was in my bathroom. And yes, it was a pot. But this whole concept of that was, I can go there, and I could sit and just meditate and think about what I needed to do next. Because there's always a next, you know, so how am I going to manage this? How am I going to pull this off. So at that time, when my mom I knew was coming up, she needed something to do, she was used to working all the time in around the house, she loved to paint. So the how this whole adult daycare develop is being a working model, as well as a medical model daycare. And I emphasize that because it's very two important parts. The working model is just that we do put them to work like the work birdhouse project. Next, they're doing little Adirondack chairs are kind of small, but they're really cute. And they can take those home to their wives, whoever, their kids. So it's that kind of thing. That's the work part. You have to remember that this past two years, it was it was a little tough for me, because I ended up getting people during COVID that were pretty good to work with, because they were just not being isolated, like the people that were isolated in their homes. Then when COVID lifted, and I started getting these people that had been isolated that two years, almost, it was tough. Isolation affects everyone. So particularly in this group, it was a very, very tough group to have to start with. But it's kind of gotten easier. So not too many of my group are actually feeling like they're isolated any longer. So that's a good thing. And that makes it easy, especially because we definitely do keep them busy.

Alex Murguia 12:48

No, I just real quick, I can't help but be impressed listening to you speak about this stuff. It's almost like you created the antithesis of like, the welcoming sign and Dante's Dante's Inferno, which is abandoned all hope ye who enter here, you're the exact opposite where it's like, no, there's, we're very helpful. We're very hopeful here. And you're going to find purpose by doing things that will have a knock on effect. For others. I think it's fantastic. Really a huge tip.

Jackie Smiertka 13:20

Oh, thank you. I think my history is my father died when I was 12. And my mother had myself I was the middle child, my younger brother was severely developmentally disabled. And my older brother was down syndrome. So I don't believe in what was not considered, I guess, like a normal type family. It was normal to me. But I was used to I was raised to be used to a lot of stuff, particularly people that were being made fun of. And I could step up and say, Whoa, this isn't gonna work. Yeah, only a funny story that I tell you about that. My youngest son was in kindergarten, and I decided I would volunteer for outdoor. playtime. Don't ever do it. Don't ever do that. It's just not. It's not good. It wasn't good for me, because there were bullies, which there still are. There were bullies out on the playground. And these kids were like in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, whatever. And I just couldn't tolerate that. And I had one little boy who was making fun of this little girl and calling her a fat girl. And it was really, really on her case. And I went over and I remember holding him by his arms and his face was right in my face. And I said, if I called you that, how would you feel? And he just he was paralyzed. Because now there's an adult that's really angry that's talking to him. So that was the end of that for that kid. He did not do anything else. His teacher said Wow, he's really a different person. You know, different little kid but They have to learn at that age that you can't do, of course, and I had to learn that at

Alex Murguia 15:05

any age, right? You have to learn that at any age. Yes, yes. Everything I wanted to learn to learn in kindergarten or something, some exams, I don't like that. And I've

Jackie Smiertka 15:17

had adult encounters that are equally as snarky. More on Oh, you usually hear how

Alex Murguia 15:29

exactly. It's, I guess he missed a couple of classes later.

Jackie Smiertka 15:38

know, it's something that I wasn't raised like that, you know, it was when my dad and to when my dad died, I gotta tell you how I came into nursing, just as a funny story is that my dad always said he wanted me to be a nurse. So he was, he was in a construction. And he was a builder. And he had his own little business going and everything. But he also had, we had six cows and seven pigs, South seven cells. So all the cells were pregnant. Before my dad died, him and I delivered 77 baby pigs, because I was like, 12, right? And that I would know what to do. So I said, okay, because he'd say, you can do anything, you just have to try. And my mom would always you can do anything. You just have to try. So I'm helping him deliver the 77 baby pigs it was into the night, it was like, oh, yuck. So then I knew when I was going to become a nurse, the one profession I was not going to be in was labor and delivery. I had already heard pig squeal wasn't listening to the women. So that's how I ended up in surgery. Because those suckers are all put out, right?

Alex Murguia 16:53

Oh, you must have been an expert by by pig number 73. You must be like, let's go. You must have had like an assembly line going there.

Jackie Smiertka 17:02

It was wild. But dad, and then of course, I helped him put your pig the cow. So surgery was an easy thing for me to go into, you know, same thing, you know, sort of the gods, the same organs, you know, maybe a few extras. But you know, it was it was it was an easy transition. So I did I went to school Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis became a nurse. And from that time on, I first worked in peds and then I went into surgery. And that was sort of the way the history was, as I evolved into what I knew was necessary for my mother. When she was up here, I had the medical issues all in place. Okay, I don't have time to take her to a doctor, I have to have a doctor come here. I don't have time to take her blood work and X rays or whatever else she'd need. It has to be here. That was by the way, the core Pisano home health care and an agency that I have worked with for years that they actually did help me. They helped me and Elaine who was the owner helped me understand why it was necessary to be able to see these people in the places where they live in the places where they are like a daycare. So it was that kind of thing that taught me one of the biggest lessons. So now to this day, I still have the corporate sono home health care. They do our physical therapy, occupational therapy in here. We have speech therapy on occasion in here. We have a podiatrist that comes in here. Same with a physician, who is an MD, who actually makes house calls. I don't think anybody can tell me they know of a doctor that makes house calls anymore. I've actually seen her sit in her her her conversations with families that have lasted up to an hour. Nobody does that. Yeah, I had one of my patients who was going to another doctor, and also seeing Dr. Dooku at the same time, and the other doctor would not order a script for a urinary tract infection. I called Dr. Dooku on Friday night at six o'clock at night, and she called in the script. Who does that in this day and age. Let's

Bob French 19:18

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Alex Murguia 19:42

Yeah, right and let me let me then ask you something because not everyone's gonna live in Detroit, listening to this podcast. From that standpoint, and what you're doing is amazing and frankly, my mom right now is in an AI Lab and Uh, interestingly enough, one of the huge benefits was just the doctors just helping arrange that and things like that. But for the folks listening from a daycare standpoint, and they're, you know, they're listening to you, and they're probably saying, this is exactly what I need my mom in? Or is this this is exactly the place where, you know, there's someone in their head that they're thinking should transition to and the like, what are and you said something, I think was before our concert before we started the interview, which is, yeah, you know, wait, and I have the book knowledge, if you will, right. But it's still beneficial to know what happens in real life. And from that standpoint, I'd love for you to maybe hit on some signals. What if somebody's shopping around for a daycare center? For their loved ones, you know, be it a son or daughter for their parents or a spouse for the other spouse? How should they go about it? That, you know, what are some towels, obviously, you're going to, you know, go to a place, whatever. But, you know, there's always you always want to make sure they have XYZ, you always want to make sure they don't do XYZ, you know, those kinds of things would be I think, interesting, because then, you know, everyone's gonna say the niceties. But what are things that we should be looking forward to be an informed consumer? And then maybe at some other point, I just don't want to forget right now, the conversation you

had with your mom, what kind of conversations do you have to kind of help transition with this? Because I think I made, I probably made a meal out of it with my own parents. And so I'm curious, what are some best practices around that? So if you just mind hitting the first one, which are someone's an informed consumer? How do they kind of figure out what separates the signal from the noise? In terms of a good health care center?

Jackie Smiertka 21:43

I think the most and that's a really good question. Because the question that I have asked a lot of times is, what do you do? What do you do? That's any different? And I said, you have to know the difference that this is not an A lot of them will say it's a medical model. That means they might have a doctor come in, some of them don't.

Alex Murguia 22:04

Or have Excedrin in them in the kitchen cabinet or something.

Jackie Smiertka 22:06

Yes, exactly. And they might they might say, well, I asked such and such daycare, what they did, and they call themselves a social model daycare. And I said, okay, but the problem with just a social model daycare is that you're not

Alex Murguia 22:26

we don't even know the definitions of like social model or medical model. Okay. That's an FYI,

Jackie Smiertka 22:31

social model is basically working with them, like you might get them color together, or they're doing a game together, or they're sitting in a circle listening to piano player or, yeah, social. The one one that I happen to know of daycare is a social model. And I have gone there in the morning, early morning, early, early, late morning, early afternoon. And it bugs me because they're all sitting in the same chair. And they're not. It's not they're not doing anything, they're sitting in the same circle. They're singing or whatever, but they're not doing something. And I feel like, from our standpoint, is the person that owns the daycare, that we're not believing that they can really do anything. So that's the reason why we just keep it simple. And we let them sing. And we let them do whatever. Yeah. So here,

Alex Murguia 23:34

and just real quick social model, then the trap to that is someone running it can rationalize very quickly. Well, they can't do anything. So we just put them together in a group. And they're watching Good Morning America. Well, they're kind of socializing. And that's good enough. I'm exaggerating to make the point. But you're talking like, that's the danger that could happen by someone pitching a social model exam or interpretation on my part, right?

Jackie Smiertka 24:00

It is, and it's actually and I and I, I can understand why they do that. Because it does seem like from a lot of people from the outside, like you say is that lets you kind of think that's the only thing they can do. They can only have the social model because they've got XYZ in the line of some form of dementia. I never looked at that. I never looked at all I looked at was, yeah, the social model is good. But they can also have the social model in another way that's even better, which is basically actually doing something physical together, like we do in the say, the

birdhouse project. They're all painting the same birdhouse type of birdhouse, they're all doing that kind of project together. So they're working. And, and a big deal was made at that. You know, some people have a hard time believing that my group does what they do and as much as they do, but but it's not hard when you've got this whole group of seven or eight people at the table that are doing something physically okay

Alex Murguia 25:07

so patiently for our audience, because I think they could figure it out. But what's the what is then the benefit, and I want to be as explicit for everyone, as opposed to just them reading between the lines. So social model could be just doing things in a group, but you take it to a next level, whereas now we're going to have a defined purpose, we're going to create something that's going to be used of significance in in this manner. And I think the birdhouse has a good sense of it. So as someone's looking for, you know, daycare centers and the like you want, you know, they can they can ask, Do you have something similar to what this would be? And can you describe what the birdhouse project is as, like an example of things that are productive?

Jackie Smiertka 25:52

Well, you mean, what can I, how can I describe the birdhouse as being productive? Yeah,

Alex Murguia 25:56

and the listener can kind of take that as Yes, as an example. Right. But it can be applied to many other projects.

Jackie Smiertka 26:04

So I'm getting the most important thing with this disease is to have them in whatever stage they're in to make their own decisions. Okay. It's not just do you have to go to the bathroom? Yes. And they have to go? It is that. Okay, you have this birdhouse now, what color do you want to paint it? There's red, green, purple, blue, that. So you get you pick the color that you want. So they have to pick the color. They have to pick if they want a tall birdhouse or a small birdhouse, there has to be choices, or giving them choices in this life. Still, disease.

Alex Murguia 26:43

Got it? Yeah, that's great. Yeah.

Jackie Smiertka 26:46

And sometimes they complain. And I look at them and I go, excuse me. I'm not listening. You want to come up and work at my computer, then you'd really have something to complain about. But and there's a lot of laughter Oh, my gosh, a lot of it's fun. It's, and I have one kid get caregiver that is too much like me, sadly. And it's not unusual for us to pre decide to go dancing through the daycare, because in the background is the Cinderella movie. And of course, we have to dance and sing to Cinderella. It's not a pretty picture. But it really gets a lot of laughs. And it just, I mean, you can make fun and enjoyment out of almost anything you do. And this is the biggest test. But it's it is it's a lot of fun.

Alex Murguia 27:35

Here's an anecdotal question. And this could be similar to what you've experienced, leading up to this in our podcasters. We spoken about how there's a progression, there's, you know, you get someone to help you out the house to help somebody, eventually that person needs a

respite or, you know, they're not going to provide the the milieu that you do at your place. And so when they go there, but then eventually there's even a further progression, if you will, but the fact that you're doing what you're doing, would you say? And again, anecdotally, because we don't it's like you're doing a study on this or anything like that. Would you say that helps deflect, if you will, the progression a little bit of the next phase, does it maybe hold it as a standstill? Like, what what part do you think that plays having a daycare center for somebody in terms of the grand scheme of, you know, as they get older,

Jackie Smiertka 28:30

I think, in the way we have this working model set up and the way it's going that it has increased the longevity, and the mental sharpness. And a lot of these people and we have seen that where it's not like they're going down, they're starting to level off or come back up. Then when it gets to the time when the disease does start to cause and wreak more havoc, that it's at that point, we help the family with that transition. It's hard for us because it's like us losing our mom or dad. And that's the hardest thing. And I can actually see and I've seen this many, many times is that when someone leaves us here, they do not live too long afterwards. And one of my friends who was joking, Lee saying to me Well, I think it is because you work them to death. Well, that's not. But the thing is, is that to have them have this kind of joy when they're in here. I have a man who's 76 and he came in just this week with Huntington's. And it's a debilitating disease. And I think, you know, you sit down and I do I sit down with each one of them and I have a discussion with them. And when I'm talking to him, he's still very sharp minded and is able to talk to me about where he worked and that Chrysler is no longer Chrysler, it's Atlantis and I've been I was so enthralled by his ability to rise above what his disability actually is. And so we try, you know, and when the family comes in, I say, okay, he has Huntington's. But I can tell you I want to script for physical therapy, I want to script for occupational therapy. And we start that as soon as possible. Because that is what will help keep muscles strong, and help slow the process down to the point where it's still a person

Alex Murguia 30:34

that you do as much as you're giving them purpose. Your places unique. I don't know how common it is. And that you really advocate for them on a on a holistic level across all things health.

Jackie Smiertka 30:46

Yes. How do we Oh, across all things? Oh, boy.

Alex Murguia 30:50

Well, I rehab let me just say, rehab wise, yeah, maybe you're not asking for like a neurosurgeon to get in there. And a new they do their best, but you're making sure that they get the OT, they need the PT, just because it helps compensate for any deterioration that they may have. Yeah,

Jackie Smiertka 31:07

yes. And I think if you remember back to the little boy who I was holding onto his shoulders, and saying, Don't ever do that, again, don't ever say anything bad to anybody again, and make fun of anyone. I pretty much do that in a lot of ways. Now, I am not a fan. And I know if there are any neurologists that are listening, I'm not a fan of neurologists, because actually, in this disease, the psychiatrists actually know the best medications. And they're the ones going to have an amazing couple of psychiatrists that work with our clients. And they are, it just is

amazing what we do as a team. And that's the whole thing. It's not just me, I'm, I'm the person that's over here with a mouth. But here's this team of people that I can rely on. I've got a psych nurse that comes in who's bar none, he is the best. And so we take that all of those evaluations from psych doctor, to psych nurse, to MD, to myself watching this person, okay, what can we do? You know, how can we help? And generally, the first thing is my request to the family, get scripts, we need to start PT, we need to keep those muscles going. Because the wife is still taking care of her husband with Huntington's at home. So it's protecting the family in any way that we possibly can. It's offering them all kinds of resources. It's maybe mouthy sometimes, how,

Alex Murguia 32:33

how common is this among daycare center?

Jackie Smiertka 32:37

As far as doing what we do? Yeah, the medical side. Yeah. I mean, if you're not close enough to Auburn Hills to have the best option available, I think, is this something you can expect elsewhere? Or is it unique, I had to create this along with Alene, who is the guy that owns the Corporate Center of healthcare, I had a discussion with him, it was right before COVID. And I had a discussion with him about what I was doing and what I could see in my vision and what I needed. And so he was the one that could really help me, he could help me kind of put some things into place, like the doctor, also getting mobile labs, and all that type of thing here, global x rays. So I had to kind of be picky, to pick on people and to say, I need your help, because I need this to happen in here. Because the family can't go to a doctor's office or to a lab and wait an hour with their loved one who has dementia who doesn't understand what's going on, to be able to have to deal with that. Plus, it's taking away from their work. So it was what can I do here that's going to save that family's energy. And so basically, here, we can have a pity pot, we can talk about it, and we can discuss it and have a lot of fun on it. That's

Alex Murguia 34:03

amazing. And in an episode previous that was talking in a way where my mom is, you know, going through the the progression a little earlier than usual because she's in her late 70s. And for a couple of reasons that are not just have to do with the normal aging. Dementia has been setting in sort of comorbidity issues that have happened. And as I was going through Miami looking for a place to put her for a daycare center. It was amazing how it looked like a cattle call kind of environment where I was just so disillusioned. And this is after seeing probably six or seven of these, with that, where it was like, kind of like this getting together watching TV for eight hours a day with a group of people having lunch, a snack and maybe coloring books and calling it a day. You know, it was that kind of thing and I was just so disenchanted that I was just like, this sucks. And I just tried to find something else altogether. You know? an all inclusive home that had everything, you know, from soup to nuts, and I was lucky enough to find a very caring place, but I'm trying to put myself in the seat of a wreath of a listener. Right? And they're listening to this and they're thinking, I gotta get myself the Jacklin version in Pensacola. You know, or the this version in Parts Unknown, wherever they are. How, you know, and disappointment is when, you know, reality doesn't meet expectations, etc, etc. What, what, what options do they have for themselves? Because I gotta imagine you're, you know, from one through 10, you're an outlier on the good side, right? Or is this something that's normal? I didn't see this when I was looking in Miami for my mom's things.

Jackie Smiertka 35:51

From what I have heard, in fact, I just heard, in fact, we're getting this young man or this guy, I don't know how old he is. But his son is bringing him in tomorrow. And he said, we had him at. And I can't even remember the name of the daycare that he was, is at currently. He said, I have to get him out of there. And I said, why? He said, Well, number one, the most important thing is that the daycare is on the second floor, and they don't have an elevator. Right? You know, and I said that, okay, they did a we did they don't have an elevator at all for second floor. And he said, No. And he said, I have to walk in front of him. Like if we're going down the stairs, because of the halls. And I said, Yeah, that's the end. He said, He's the only one there. Well, I can imagine he wouldn't be the only one there if anyone else saw it, because I wouldn't take my mom to someplace, she had to go up and down the stairs. Like,

Alex Murguia 36:46

how did they get through inspection? Yeah, I

Jackie Smiertka 36:48

know. I don't know. I don't know. So I he's bringing her him in tomorrow. So it's gonna be interesting. He's an 83 year old gentleman. But I think you that my goal was to have a safe place. Right now I'm in the Wellington green, or the Auburn green, it's now it's called the Auburn building. magnificent building, you come in through the double doors in the back. And my office is just right in the right hand side when you get inside the doors. So Off the foyer or lobby. It was the safety aspect of what I needed. I actually designed how this was going to be laid out because I wanted one large room that when we're standing in that room, we can see everybody in the room, we have a television, yes, it's on the wall television sometime is on, especially with the Cinderella movie, you understand. So that is very important that they have some entertainment. But I've got two great caregivers. And I'm always back there with caregivers when they're, you know, in a process of doing something, but those caregivers actually know how to work and I tell both of them, you get the best out of this individual that I've ever seen happen. I and their families will even say, oh my gosh, I can't believe he or she is doing this. So it's the kind of thing you know, not just matching numbers. It's a like, the other day they were playing cards in the back and I swear it was poker, there was no money on the table. But it was the caregiver saying okay, and it was a simplified card game that here's three people involved. And here's a caregiver involved, and they're all playing cards. And you know, and of course, the caregiver would say, Well, why wasn't the one that one, you know, so it was always a fun type of game. They put puzzles together, we've got very large puzzles that they put together. And that's good for dexterity. These are basically morning things. We do have, yes, we have adult coloring for some that like adult coloring. But we have word search puzzles that are very large letters that a lot of the group can do, which really surprises me because I'm not good at a word search. But they seem to be able to do that. And it's without a problem. So it's, it's a lot of it's a test to see if this person can do it. And it's nice. Yeah, it is nice.

Bob French 39:06

Are you getting close to or are you in retirement? Well, investing during retirement is a little bit different than during your working years. Your investments are there to help you pay for retirement. And now is when they need to earn their keep to make sure you're on the right track download retirement researchers eight tips to becoming a retirement income investor by heading over to retirementresearcher.com/eight-tips again get retirement researchers eight tips

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Alex Murguia 39:44

What's what's a good because you've mentioned this used sense of phrase and it made me think what's a good for a consumer looking at it and trying to do due diligence on these types of tenants. What's a good like staff to Person number, I

Jackie Smiertka 39:59

think depends my my goal was and I still have not had over 10 people. And that's not always daily. Right now we've got to stay Thursdays or no Mondays Thursdays that are a little bit weaker in the numbers. But that's starting to pick up since the broadcast we just had. So I think it's, you know, it's everything about what we do is really a test. And you've kind of learned by doing. Yeah, well, that really didn't go over very well. You know, if it was something that, Well, John Doe did that six years ago, and maybe you can learn to do this and stalking and we've got some games like stalking, Legos, the big, big block Legos. And that sort of works with some, especially that are in have been in construction. We have Jamie or Jeremy, who is here with us now because of a fentanyl overdose. And if anybody talks to me about the problem with fence, they won't talk to me, because I'll go on and on about it. But I see what it did to Jeremy's mind 45 years old. And it was just a travesty. But his dad was probably well in his 70s drives Jamie 60 miles to get to my daycare. Because there's no other daycare around that he saw like it. I even tried to look for Jim the dad. And he said, Jackie, nope, I'm sold on you. Only you. So that's how Jeremy comes religiously every Tuesday every Friday. And it's it's wonderful. It's very sad case. I don't know how much better he will get. But we keep working at it is Dad said he has come a long way, a long way since we had he first got out as coma.

Alex Murguia 41:55

got, you know, that's great story. What? Obviously not? Like, it's great to hear that you you know, the services have been provided. One of the things I ran into trouble with I was telling Wade, is when I was looking for a place with my mom, no one would accept her as well. Because they wanted five days they were they had so many people on Medicaid, they're getting billed for Medicaid that they would only accept you for five days. So they can run it through Medicaid. If you're even if you wanted to pay out of pocket, they were like No, no, thank you, you know, that kind of thing. And, you know, there's a cynicism there that I don't need to get into, you know, this podcast around that. But everyone can like figure it out. But from your vantage point, to make somebody sort of again, an informed consumer, how should they be looking about the cost of this? And what methods they can use to pay? Or is three days a week better than two days a week? Obviously, it depends. But what are those things? What are those things kind of depend on?

Jackie Smiertka 42:52

I usually I'll ask we have had many over the years that have decided to, or they have come five days because their loved ones work five days a week, and they have to have moms somewhere. Usually, I will say when the family says how many days are best. And I said no less than two. Because at that point, they will remember who we are. And they will join in with their friends who they saw two days ago. So if you do it one day, a week, it's harder for them to remember, our daycare is \$125 for a day, one day. But considering all that that is inclusive of I haven't had any of my new clients bat an eyelash. In fact, one lady said well, that's not that. And

it's not in the fact that home health care. I don't know if you've ever had home health care health care with your mom, Alex. But home health care ranges at about \$39 \$36 an hour. And they were are requiring four hour minimum a day. And my one friend who has that, who has a daycare, she's requiring the four days, actually minimum, four hours, four days. So that ends up being a lot more than what I'm actually charging. Oh,

Alex Murguia 44:09

no, I think it's a great price point what you have I'm not even wondering the price one. I just want our folks to kind of know what they're looking at as a general matter, because I think you're probably within the market range relative to the services. They look about. Go ahead. I was just gonna ask and how did they pay out of pocket? Do they involve insurance? What What kind of roadblocks or hurdles Do you see happen if they're not 100% prepared? Um,

Jackie Smiertka 44:38

I haven't had anyone that's actually been negative about anything as far as the money goes, we bill at the end of the month. We bill for the whole month, they get the invoice and that type of thing. So usually they will write us a check. We don't take any credit cards at this point. We haven't ever So that usually that's what they do. I work with some of the best families that have been my best guide. And that helps.

Alex Murguia 45:08

And then if they want reimbursement, they can deal with it personally with their own insurance company.

Jackie Smiertka 45:12

Yes. And it was the bad thing, you don't get involved in it, no, I don't get involved. The bad thing is unless a person has really amazing long term health care insurance, and that's my nice way of putting it, by the way I get, I've used other words, but if it's long term health care insurance, they can sell you on a policy that looks like the greatest thing since sliced bread. But then you will get to that point where now you've got to need it in, you're going to have to have this daycare covered, or this home health care, or this, I called the big box stores, you know, the big facilities that they've got to be in for a matter of six months, three months, or whatever, that's in the fine print before they will actually start paying anything. So you had to pay for the first three or six months, and then they'll kick in. So the insurances are not as great Medicare doesn't cover it. They should. It's, it's too bad that they don't, because that would really help a lot of families. But I have most all of them not complaining about anything, because they know what we do. And that's important.

Alex Murguia 46:25

No, I think this has been great. That you and you thought we're only gonna last 20 minutes.

Jackie Smiertka 46:36

Well, you didn't know who you were talking to. Did you

Alex Murguia 46:39

know who you were talking to? No, no, no, no, no, it's fantastic.

Jackie Smiertka 46:47

You know, this is such a sensitive subject to me. It's anybody I always say, you know, don't get me started. Because wait knows we, you know, I just keep going on and on and on. And I can tell you, yes. moments of my life have happened in here and

Alex Murguia 47:00

will treat me like Mick Jagger and start you up there. Yeah.

Jackie Smiertka 47:03

Yeah, I

Alex Murguia 47:05

don't know. Oh, well, there is a question I had and Wade, you can you can take over questions after this one that they'll want to had. And I mentioned it earlier. How do you? How do you suggest folks have conversations to their parents? about hey, you know what, I kind of wouldn't mind a daily break. And I think you would benefit from this. Or even a spouse mentioning that. How does HUD based on your experiences? What? How do you go about doing that?

Jackie Smiertka 47:31

Well, I'm glad you asked. So the idea is, don't get me started. Don't get me started, as I'm telling you. So I will say to them, because they'll say well, I don't know how, how help he'll be one case was about three years ago, and I had Al's wife come in to see me. And she said, I really need a break. I'm so desperate. You know, I could use three days a week and I said, Okay, she said, but I can tell you he won't come in. I said, Okay. So she said, yeah, no, yeah, he just won't get out of the car. And I said, Okay, I said, let's let me make you a deal. I want you to bring him over. So she did, she parked at the far end of the buildings, so that was too far of a walk, he wouldn't get out of the car. So I said, I want you to bring him around my back door. So she did. And in the meantime, at that point, and we're getting ready to do these little Adirondack chairs, that's a planter chair. And I had three of them that I took out to the front porch. So Kathy pulls up and owls in the car, and I went, Hey, owl, how are ya? You know, I acted like I've known him for years. He is very good, very pleasant. I said, you know, I have to ask you for a favor. Would you mind helping me carrying these chairs are kind of heavy and you know, and he says, Oh, he was out of the car in a minute. His wife was just like, done. He was out of the car. And I said, Hey, we're having lunch. You want to have lunch? Yeah. So I sat him down by Tom. Now to Tom, I prepared Tom to say, Hey, I heard you we were in World War Two. What did you do? And Tom, who's a real jokester went right along with my story. Owl sits next to Tom. They start talking. The rest of it was history. I came around, I wave the wife off. And that was history. And he was in the office three days a week in doing the work. And she was amazed. I always when the wife brings in the husband or kids bring in their dad, mom. I talked to dad or mom, I talked to husband. You know, we could really use help around here because I gotta tell you, I don't know if you've been How long has it been since you've worked? Oh, really? I have got a job that I need to get done. Would you mind helping, you know, we need some workers running. We need some painter. And so so

Alex Murguia 49:48

your angle is making them feel useful going back to the purpose? Absolutely. That that thing, right? That's you and you have that data like a science. How would I introduce this answer to my mom. Hey, Mom, you know what? We're going back to school? You know, we're going to the healthcare, it's time, how do you have the it's time kind of conversation?

Jackie Smiertka 50:10

I think I mean, I've had family say that, you know, I know they're not going to come in or I know that they're not going to be really receptive. And I said, I have a gal now that's driving from Northville, which is 30 miles away. Monroe is 60 miles away where Jeremy comes. So I'm really kind of in awe and very honored to know that they trust me that much. And when they bring their loved one in, it's generally that they just said, Hey, we're going to go meet Jackie, or if she's a good friend of mine, or something like that, to be able to get them in the door. And this is a medical setting. It doesn't look like it's a medical setting. It's okay. It's cool. In fact, I think where you have been in my office, haven't you? I have been there.

Alex Murguia 50:52

So every Sunday, Sunday night now.

Jackie Smiertka 50:57

It is very, it's it's cool. I mean, it's just like, we just make friends. This guy with Huntington's that I met on Tuesday, I was so impressed by him. And he was so excited when he loved his wife was just ecstatic. And his son, who was an attorney, was the one that saw our recent broadcast on channel two. And he called me because of the broadcasts, ascended the sons, an attorney, and he said, I had to tell you, I think this would be good for my dad. And I said, great, you know, have your mom calls a mom call mauled Mom, calm, she brings David to the, to the place. And I'm at talking to David about various things. And so later on, I called his son Scott back and I said, Scott, your dad was wonderful. He just just loved it. He said, Oh, that's great. I said, but I have to tell you, I found out all the family secrets while he was here. And he just laughed. But it's kind of like, you include the whole family in, you know, the kids in so they all feel like, well, their suggestion to mom wasn't really a bad suggestion, I guess, after all, because it's not them leaving you. It's them going to work to be able to

Alex Murguia 52:10

Yeah, it's not presented as they have their own identity, but closer to the inevitable.

Jackie Smiertka 52:18

Literally, they have their own identity here. Because they do get to work and they do get to the socialization is really fun. I mean, I've had guys magic in a bottle. Yeah. Yeah, I've had a group of guys not too long ago that I'm telling you, I'd have to stay back there just because it was hysterical 90% of the day. And, and people look at this group, and they say, how do you? How do you pull this off? I said, it's not me, I go back for the enjoyment of it. You know, it's just, it's just cool. And I think it's probably it's the most rewarding experience I've had, I think in my nursing career, I've had a lot of rewarding experiences. But this is really fun. So well, that's amazing. Yeah, new, it'd be amazing to have you on the show and hear your experiences. Thank you so much for taking time out of the work. On and on. So long, but I can say Alex made me okay. Yeah. You know, it's my fault. I always say, when, when it comes to talking about this, you know, obviously, I could go on and on and on. We went to a big Christmas event at ABC contractors over the December period, and we're sitting at this table, and somehow or other the topic came up about COVID. And I said, Well, you know, I have an adult daycare, and we didn't wear masks all during COVID. And some of them went, ah, and I went in, you know, come on. So then the gal that was next to my husband said, Well, I work in a Catholic church and we had Kindergarten through the eighth grade, and we were not closed at all either. And we didn't

have any cases of COVID either. So then I didn't feel so bad. Everybody kind of eased off for me and went to her went what? Anyway, so it's just not being afraid of what you do is being this

Alex Murguia 54:27

You're obviously passionate about this and when you're passionate about something you can't help but let enthusiasm permeate through how you say it, which you know, that takes time so I'm fine with it. People can always listen to it at 1.25 speed or or whatever it's i It's fine is a great session from my from my vantage point. So I really appreciate you adding color to weight and I you know, try to try to provide a foundation to and I think this this hit the spot nicely. Really, really well done. We're fortunate to have you on today. Bye

Jackie Smiertka 54:59

I appreciate being asked and invited. It was really a lot of fun. I I knew I wouldn't have a hard time telling you about it. So. All right. I appreciate you. Thank you. I appreciate all right. Yeah.

Alex Murguia 55:13

Thanks everyone for listening in this week and we'll be back with with more

Jackie Smiertka 55:22

thanks, everyone. Bye.

Bob French 55:26

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