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Westside rehab center will have home-spun feel, owners say

Wichita Business Journal - by [Pat Sangimino](#)

When Fred Hermes thinks of his grandmother, the late Esther Fuhman of Fowler, Kan., he is reminded of visits that included all the attention a boy could want -- and amazing kitchen creations.

"She was so attentive," says Hermes, who has been named the CEO for the **Family Health & Rehabilitation Center** -- the first phase of the Lillie Medical Campus that will include a hospital -- being built on Maize Road just north of Kellogg.

Esther Fuhman is the inspiration for Esther House, one of four wings of the 64-bed rehabilitation center scheduled to open its doors in February. The other wings -- Daisy House, Lulu House and Bremer House -- are named after the family members of fellow Family Health owners Matt Lillie, Greg Lakin and William Simon.

The homey feel is what Hermes was going for when he worked with the architects at **WDM** to design the Family Health & Rehabilitation Center, which is scheduled to be completed in December and open for business by February.

He wants the residents of the center -- many of whom are elderly -- to feel like they are at home. For him, that brought back those boyhood trips to Fowler, Kan.

"When you went and saw grandma, there was always apple pie," Hermes says. "She was always interested. She always wanted to get you something. These people who will be here tended to the needs of others and now they are no longer capable of doing so.

"As providers, we want to be able to do that for them."

It's a unique design and it took someone of Hermes' background to help to create it. The skilled nursing home administrator who ran Halstead Health and Rehabilitation approached Lillie and Lakin last year with a plan.

"This is Fred's dream," Lillie says. "Dr. Lakin and I have been able to fulfill it. He came to us



Pat Sangimino / WBJ

Fred Hermes, the newly named CEO of Family Health & Rehabilitation Center, says the facility's at-home environment will be a selling point to its residents.

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with a dream and a concept. It made sense. It seems like every day we talk, we get new ideas about additional services we can offer."

Convenience

The proximity to the hospital that will be built on the grounds in the next year only makes it more convenient, Lillie says, adding that patients that are discharged following surgery won't have to be moved very far to a rehabilitation center.

"We can literally transport them across the parking lot for rehab," Lillie says. "The proximity to the hospital makes it possible for doctors to come and check on them."

When you walk into one of the four houses, residents will walk into a living room and kitchen area not so unlike the houses from which they came. An inconspicuous nurses station, situated behind a fire place and bookshelf, will allow those on call to be within viewing distance of 14 of the 16 private rooms, all of which have private bathrooms and kitchenettes.

Jason Lafferty, WDM's project architect, says he talked extensively with Hermes and kicked around several ideas before drawing up plans for the project.

"From my experience, the separate houses with smaller divisions within the houses have a different feel than other skilled-nursing homes we've done," Lafferty says. "There were no huge challenges design-wise. It was a matter of making sure it met the needs of the patients who are going to be here."

Lillie has no doubt that it will do just that. In fact, he says there have been talks about taking this concept to other parts of Wichita in the future.

"We think it's such a good model, we are considering building one or two more in Wichita where they are needed," he says.

Family Health & Rehabilitation Center

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