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The Rosette Difference

At **Rosette** in Gladwyne, elders who need specialized assistance enjoy a peaceful, loving, and deeply personal place to call home.

by **BILL DONAHUE** | photos by **JODY ROBINSON**

Lauren Hart has enjoyed a celebrated career as a performer and a recording artist, best known for singing the American and Canadian national anthems at Philadelphia Flyers home games. She's grateful for the fame and success, but they pale in comparison to the love of her family.

Lauren has always had a close bond with her parents—her father Gene, who passed away in 1999, and her mother Sarah. When Sarah's health began to decline in her 70s and 80s, Lauren welcomed her to live at her family's home in Gladwyne. Sarah ultimately got to a point where she needed more care and attention than even her own family could provide.

"Our full intention was to always have her here," Lauren says, "but it became apparent that the arrangement was no longer working the way we had it."

As often happens with aging adults, Sarah had suffered a few serious falls that required hospitalization and rehabilitation to expedite her recovery. Lauren's memories of her mother struggling in such traditional care environments left her feeling unsettled. In considering the few options she could think of to provide the care her mother needed, Lauren recalls all of them feeling "impersonal and industrial, not how you want someone you love to be treated."

Then she discovered Rosette in Gladwyne. Founded by licensed Personal Care Home Administrator Thérèse Southwell, Rosette seemed to offer a kinder, gentler, and more attentive alternative to traditional elder care. Rather than the institutional makeup of most senior care options, Rosette was bright, beautiful, and welcoming—like a home, because it *is* a home. A large single-family residence much like any other on the Main Line, Rosette enables each of its eight residents to feel safe, loved, and well cared for.

Once Lauren and Sarah had the opportunity to tour the home and speak with Thérèse, the Hart family made the joint decision that Sarah would live at Rosette. She became a resident in the spring of 2024, and Lauren says she is "getting everything she needs and more."

"This is a home away from home," she adds. "When I walk in, I don't feel like I'm

walking into a facility; I feel like I'm going to my mom's house. ... My mom has some health issues due to her age, but she's a highly intelligent woman and she's well aware of what's happening. It was a joint choice, done in agreement with her. She has found a good space or herself."

'We Live as a Family'

Prior to opening Rosette, Thérèse Southwell honed her management, financial, and development expertise in industries such as hospitality and real estate; she previously worked for several developers in Philadelphia, including Allan Domb, the real estate magnate and former Philadelphia Councilmember. During the pandemic, news stories detailing the horrific conditions found in some nursing homes compelled her to "be the force for change." She found further inspiration in her memories of her beloved aunt, Kay, who passed away shortly after moving into a nursing home.

"Aunt Kay was like a mom to me," she recalls. "When she needed more care than I could provide, I naively thought there were houses like [Rosette] where she would have nice ladies taking care of her. What I found was horrible. ... We have become desensitized to the needs of our elders. They are put in places that look and feel like hospitals, cared for by people in scrubs and nametags. Yes, some of these residents have medical issues, but they don't need to be living in an ICU."

Rosette has been completely renovated to meet the needs of immobile, disabled, or otherwise high-assist seniors, so each

of the home's eight residents can live and receive care in seamless fashion. All rooms are walker and wheelchair compatible. The ADA-equipped bathrooms have safety grab bars and zero-entry spa showers. Hoyer lifts and other specialized equipment enable easy movement for those with limited mobility. The home also has an elevator.

Licensed by the state of Pennsylvania, Rosette is staffed by trained and compassionate caregivers 24 hours a day. When needed, care providers from Main Line Health or Jefferson Health visit Rosette to deliver specialized medical services, such as skilled nursing, palliative care, or hospice care.

Rosette residents spend their days together, with the kitchen as the home's beating heart. All meals are made from scratch by an in-house chef, and the aromas of fresh-baked breads and hearty soups add to the comforts of home. Residents sit around a communal table for coffee, meals, and conversation; many even help prepare fresh vegetables picked from the on-site garden.

When not in the kitchen, residents gather in the living room to participate in gentle exercise, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and cognitive stimulation. They also have the opportunity to enjoy the simple pleasures of a favorite TV show or a movie, sitting in comfortable chairs and warmed by a wood-burning fireplace. Rosette often hosts visitors—namely, resi-



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—THÉRÈSE SOUTHWELL (LEFT), WITH ONE OF ROSETTE'S EIGHT RESIDENTS

dents' children and grandchildren—who are invited to take part in activities. The grandkids frequently play inside or outside in the yard, giving the residents regular access to the sounds and presence of children in the house.

"We live as a family," Thérèse says. "When they get up in the morning, the ladies have their hair and makeup done, and the men are shaved. Everyone is dressed in appropriate clothes. These are very dignified people who have lived full and rich lives. We want to continue to honor that. When you give people back their dignity and the comforts of home, they start to thrive."

Lisa Keblusek is among Rosette's eight residents. Her long road to Rosette began in 2020, when a brain aneurysm compromised her health and mobility. Her husband, who had been caring for her, passed away just a few months later. Eventually she moved into the rehabilitation wing of a senior living facility in Naples, Florida. When it seemed that her recovery had stalled, her family sought out other options.

One of Lisa's sons, Chris Keblusek, had recently moved to the Philadelphia area and heard about Rosette. He and his family were deeply impressed. After a brief stay on the waiting list, Lisa was flown in from Florida and moved into Rosette in February 2024.

"She loves it," says Chris, whose family lives in Lower Merion. "She has put on weight, she raves about the food, and everything is comfortable for her. It's the personal touch that really defines Rosette. We always know who to get in contact with, and I always know they have the best interests of

my mom at the forefront. Even if my mom wasn't there, I would have a huge amount of respect for the way the [home] is run. It's very good to everyone. This is how things should be done."

Since welcoming the first residents to Rosette in the spring of 2022, Thérèse has refined her mission to help as many people as possible. The second Rosette location, with a secure dementia component, will soon open in Villanova, followed by plans for more Lower Merion locations in 2026. Thérèse admits such high-level attentive care is currently affordable only to those of significant means, yet she envisions a day when places like Rosette become commonplace and appropriate care becomes available to anyone who needs it.

As for the Harts, Lauren and her family spend time with Sarah just about every day. Sarah is doing as well as or better than Lauren could have hoped.

"We would prefer her to be at home with us, of course, but Rosette feels like an extension of our home," Lauren says. "I wanted her to be in a peaceful home-like environment where there are a lot of caregivers and not a ton of people who need care, so everyone is attended to. And that's what she has. This is what care should look like for everybody." ■

Visit www.livingatrosette.com for more information about Rosette, including a video detailing the perspectives of residents' family members.

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