

Notice the Safe Haven difference

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Staff Writer

Walk into Safe Haven at Lenox and certain elements of some later-life facilities are missing: There are no bars on the windows; no long, lonely hallways lit by fluorescent lights; and no bare, dull excuses for furniture. Perhaps most enticingly, the scent isn't that of a sterile institution, but instead one of a very active kitchen.

"There was no smell but except the cooking odors," said Joel Wise, who found the assisted living home the right fit for his mother Mitzy after scoping various other options. "I can say it was great for my mom, a whole lot better than a bigger place where there were 30 rooms on a hallway to one or two caregivers. This is a whole lot more hands-on and personal."



Safe Haven's main room brings in light the way it brings in guests. PHOTO/courtesy Safe Haven.

For co-founders Arkadiy Yakubov and sister Alla, that's been the object since Day One. The two, who immigrated to the U.S. from Uzbekistan with their parents, realized the need for a more tailored approach to elder care when trying to place their non-English-speaking grandmother just a few years ago.

They'd been raised in a culture that places responsibility for the elderly on the younger generation, and as such couldn't see a loved one somewhere she'd have little to no interaction with others. Thus Arkadiy gave up both a career on Wall Street and his own passion for traveling to pursue another.

"No one ever thought I'd be doing what I am today, but this is the most rewarding, most fulfilling job I have ever held in my life," the 30-year-old said. "Every day I go to bed knowing that I've made a difference for the people I have here. I love what I do; I realize we don't have 100 residents, but that's what makes us special."

On that point, there's no doubt the Yakubovs' model is unique. The proprietors refer to it as a "home" because that's exactly what it is, a renovated house in the middle of a quaint residential neighborhood.

There might be just six bedrooms, but space is plentiful in each. Most have their own bathroom (and

at most just two people would share), two are large enough to accommodate couples and many open onto balconies over a yard with fruit trees and a rose garden.

The inviting main room has a beautiful vaulted ceiling and tall windows for lots of natural light; the kitchen is open to let aromas waft throughout; and the dining room table is massive and welcoming. This wouldn't be a bad place to grow up, let alone rest, relax and recuperate.

"When people come to tour, they always say, 'I can't believe this is what it looks like on the inside,'" Arkadiy said with a smile. "Here, everything is private and everything is customized, because no two residents are alike; the only thing they have in common is that they wish they'd known about us sooner."

At the same time, he's just as concerned with offering superior care as a palatial setting. Safe Haven sports all the credentials and licenses required of senior living facilities in Georgia, but whereas the state guidelines mandate one caregiver per 15 residents (one per 25 at night), the ratio the Yakubovs employ is one-to-two.

That translates to tailored meal plans and daily physical therapy should the situation call for it, not to mention close relationships between staff and those they serve. There's no chance a call for help will go unanswered, a request won't be honored or a special occasion won't be recognized.

Activity programming including trips to the park, barbecues for clients' families and full-scale holiday celebrations. In short, this is fun and safe, loving and practical – the best of all worlds.

"We're all governed by the same rules and regulations: We have the commercial apparatuses, the sprinklers, the fire alarms," Arkadiy said. "The only difference is, during Halloween, my residents look out the window and see kids playing, and trick-or-treaters come in here.

"Our residents are part of the neighborhood, and part of a home."

As if trusting Safe Haven with his mother's care wasn't enough, Wise corroborates this sentiment with the biggest of endorsements:

"[Arkadiy] treats the people in there like a family and calls them a family."



Call today for a tour of this beautiful home!

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**1137 Lynmoor Drive
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**2nd Location coming soon –
Safe Haven at Brookhaven**