

CASE STUDY

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Sponsored Institution Management

Continuum of Care Facilities

Special Care Facilities

Educational Facilities

Retreat Facilities

Operations Review Studies include:

Buildings and Grounds Maintenance

Personnel Supervision

Program Administration

Financial Management

Food Service

Housekeeping

Zielinski Companies Transitions Institution to Lay Management While Maintaining Franciscan Influence

The Challenge: The congregation of Franciscan Brothers of the Holy Cross is a religious community of men vowed to sharing in the mission of Jesus by serving the needs of the Church in the Franciscan tradition. Since their founding in 1862, the mission of the Franciscan Brothers is to be of service to the needs of the sick, the suffering, and to those in need.

The Franciscan Brothers of the Holy Cross were invited to come to the Diocese of Springfield in 1928 to establish a Monastery and a Trade School. As master craftsmen, they worked at laying the foundation of an industrial trades school. The American Region was established in 1968. Today they serve in various ways; providing for the care of individuals with developmental disabilities, working in healthcare fields, pastoral care chaplaincy, and as teachers, mentors, and collaborators in various roles of leadership service.

Brother James Court rose from the foundation laid by the early pioneer Franciscan Brothers to become what it is today. As an intermediate care facility for the developmentally disabled licensed by the State of Illinois, it serves as an integral part of the state's continuum of care for meeting the needs of the developmentally disabled. Admission to Brother James Court is open to developmentally disabled adult males regardless of race, creed, or national origin.

“As with many religious congregations, the worldwide resources of the Franciscan Brothers in terms of both membership and financial resources were decreasing by the turn of the century,” notes Brother John Francis, Superior. This situation had a direct impact on the future financial and operational viability of Brother James Court. As a result, Brother John Francis initiated a program to assess, redefine, and restructure the congregation's commitment to all of its ministries, especially Brother James Court.

The Solution: The Franciscan Brothers chose Zielinski Companies to design and oversee the evaluation of the congregation's ministries. “We selected Zielinski Companies,” said Brother John Francis, “because of their background with religious congregations, their experience in the healthcare field, and their capabilities in facility management.”

The first step was to conduct an Operations Review and an Employee Work Atmosphere Survey of Brother James Court. These comprehensive studies confirmed the critical, ongoing need for the services provided by Brother James Court and the very high quality of care received by the facility's residents. The study also reinforced the ongoing commitment to maintain the Franciscan Brothers' influence within the facility.



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—Brother John Francis



The individual Franciscan Brothers who were managing Brother James Court, however, either had a desire to retire or were needed to fulfill other congregational obligations. It became clear that the management of the facility must transition to lay management in order to ensure the long-term future of Brothers James Court. This transition was overseen by Zielinski Companies.

Zielinski Companies also evaluated the community’s governance of Brother James Court. Ways to effectively keep the Franciscan oversight of the institution were recommended and implemented. In addition, a lay board was established to oversee Brother James Court, and suggestions were made and implemented to facilitate the functioning of the Board.

According to Brother John Francis, “Zielinski Companies facilitated a smooth transition by effectively communicating with all of the stakeholders, including the members of the Congregation, the families of the residents, the employees, and the facility’s Advisory Board. They also respected the contribution of the Brothers who were leaving the facility.”

The Results: After the transition process was complete, focus was placed on improving internal management systems. Revenue was enhanced by implementing an improved third-party reimbursement program. In addition, management practices were strengthened and an internal financial plan, including cost controls and budgeting, was implemented.

Today, a financially viable Brother James Court continues to provide unsurpassed care for mentally disabled men in the Springfield area. According to Brother John Francis, “Zielinski Companies has assisted us to ensure that the facility will continue helping residents into the future.”

As an important part of the transition process, Zielinski Companies recommended a Mission Effectiveness Program. This program was put in place to ensure the ongoing Franciscan influence within Brother James Court.

A member of the Franciscan Brothers oversees the Mission Effectiveness Program, and he has a daily presence within the facility. His primary role is to monitor the care given to the residents and to mentor the Franciscan philosophy and charism of care to all employees. This type of program has been successful throughout the country for religious congregations in keeping their charism alive in their sponsored institutions.

Our work at Brother James Court is a very special ministry with a rich and rewarding history,” said Brother John Francis. “Throughout this history, the facility has been able to change and adapt to better serve the special needs of the residents under our care. It is with this thought in mind that we move forward.”



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