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30-yr-old Atlanta resident revolutionizes senior care; furnishes upscale living option



Submitted by [Arit Essien](#) ([profile/57882/arit-essien](#)), 11Alive Contributing Reporter
Monday, January 2nd, 2012, 3:00pm

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Boasting specialized menus, resident-decorated rooms, daily activities including a live band every Wednesday, accordion players, field trips, yoga, and a rose garden complete with fruit trees which residents help maintain; Arkadiy simply says that he “wanted to build something that his grandmother would like.”

A small but stately assisted living home, built from the ground up; and nestled within a picturesque Buckhead residential community, **Safe Haven** hardly embodies the institutional ideal of assisted living.

And nor does Arkadiy Yakubov (Ar-ca-dee Ya-koo-bove), the 30-year-old founder of Safe Haven Assisted Living facility-

One of the youngest assisted living owners in the country –young enough even to be great-grandson to most, if not all of of Safe Haven’s only six residents, Arkadiy’s inspiration for the facility was inspired from his grandmothers’ confrontation with the need for elder care. His family encountered great difficulties attempting to find suitable accommodation for her from big facilities inexperienced in providing personalized attention.

While Arkadiy, the son of a builder, admits to having “absolutely no experience” in the senior care field; and enjoys a casual work attire of shorts and flipflops, Safe Haven has exceeded numerous licensing requirements. State criteria calls for a 1:15 ratio of nurses to residents, while Safe Haven often employs 2-5 nurses during the day, double what Georgia requires. Servicing a senior market 65 and older with conditions such as Alzheimer’s, Dementia and Parkinson Disease; Safe Haven also has managed to exceed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements with its arching oversized entrances for wheelchair access and private modified bathrooms for each resident.

“Big facilities are corporate driven, versus here, you’re talking to me,” Arkadiy said. “We work very closely with the families. At the end of the day, everyone wants to remain in the comfort of their own home. The whole point is that it’s we’re not an institution, but a family setting that families want their loved ones to be in. When residents look outside the window, they see kids playing and trick-or-treaters. We’ve made Safe Haven a home for people from all walks of life. Most people wish that they found us sooner.”

Safe Haven's concept seems to be a model that parents appreciate. Despite scarce advertising, Safe Haven regularly stays booked.

As related by one parent, who visits Safe Have regularly to make fresh fruit juice in the kitchen for his two parents residing there: "Big organizations, or 'Big Box' assisted-living facilities present some economies of scale, but the drawback is personal attention. People are stockpiled and herded. They get one ready and then the next, and they sit for an extended time as others get ready...Here, everyone sits in one big room and you get to know the other families and celebrate birthdays. Communication is quicker, and it's small enough that's there's still a lot of privacy even in a group setting. There's just enough coming and going of other peoples families to give enough variety to my parents day."

Such specialized care comes with enormous regulations however, for owners like Arkadiy, who desires to build additional facilities to help people. "The biggest hurdle is that local municipalities put so much red tape on facilities like these that are so needed," Arkadiy said.

While regulations temporarily restrain his dream of expanding beyond the two facilities he currently owns, he regards his position as "the most rewarding job."

"When working with people in their 90's, positive energy runs off; you learn so much," Arkadiy said. "One of our first clients was 91 and lived through two world wars. You can only gain from all that. I wake up every morning knowing that I'm making a difference."

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
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