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Arabella Manor addition opens Oct. 15

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New building will include 37 high-end Senior Apartments



Arabella Manor, an Independent Living apartment complex for Adults 55 and Better, is expanding. On Oct. 15, a new building will open that will offer 37 brand new apartments. Potential tenants will have a choice of six different floor plans, which vary in size from 745 to 1,389 square feet.

“We are excited to open the new building, and the tenants here are very excited,” said Joni M. Neal, president and proprietor of Arabella Manor. “Everyone said it would take 18 months, but it will be completed in just six. We have an excellent contracting company (HDC Development of St. Cloud) and a wonderful job superintendent (Duane Winkelman) and they have done a great job.”

Joni is joined on her administrative team by Kimberly Englund, director of Operations. The two women have developed individual relationships that go far beyond knowing the first and last name of those who live at Arabella. They have made it a place where they would want their loved ones to live, with all the personal touches that make it a home.

“I was influenced by my grandmother, Margaret Monson,” Joni explained. “Even though she has now passed, I wanted to create a choice-filled, in-between step from living alone at home to nursing home care.” That thought brought Joni to a vision of “Independent living with the option of having services brought in” and eventually the building of Arabella.

“Arabella is unique in that it provides special niceities on the premises in addition to providing independent-living choices. It is an apartment building designed to age in place, giving tenants the freedom to secure specific services on their own, meeting their own specific needs,” explained Neal. “Residents pick and choose what they want, and where they want to get it from.”

Some residents have specialized nursing services, not contracted by Arabella, but by the individuals themselves. Some residents have senior companions, some opt to purchase meals catered by Pete’s County Market, either on a daily basis or whenever they don’t feel like cooking their own meal in their apartment.

Arabella Manor opened on Sept. 1, 2005. When word spread that a new building was on the way in 2014, a waiting list was quickly formed.

“We are over one-half full right now,” said Joni.



Arabella Manor is a secure building featuring one and two-bedroom units and can be leased on a month-to-month basis or longer, based on resident wishes and needs. The lease includes central air, central heat, electricity, garbage, water, TV, snow removal and activities. Apartment floor plans feature a large kitchen with a nook, spacious living room, bay window, washer and dryer hook-up, and individually-controlled central air conditioning and heating. Coin-operated laundry rooms are available if the tenant chooses not to have a washer and dryer in their apartment. Garages are available, and residents are just minutes away from downtown shops and businesses, city park and the clinics/hospital.

Arabella also features a large common area for dining, meetings, family gatherings or coffee time. A serving kitchen, living room with fireplace, postal area, elevator, library with games, fitness center and barber/beauty shop are added amenities.

“We also have a retired pastor who lives here who has started to offer a church service, which has been great,” said Joni.

For Joni and Kim, Arabella Manor is more than an apartment building for seniors because of the unique relationships that have formed and services that have been added over the years.

“Our oldest tenant is 95 years of age and lives independently. The previous owner of the property on which Arabella now stands lives here and is still known as the supervisor of development,” Kim smiled. “Someone else checks doors and lights at night. Another resident contributes to daily operations, when he hears the snow plow at 5:30 a.m. he’s up shoveling the front sidewalk and always makes coffee in the common area by 7:30 a.m. It’s a family atmosphere here. We’re small enough to know everyone and know every family. Coffee time is around 3 o’clock, but if you show up on time you’re late,” added Kim.

Phyllis Keith and her husband were the second residents to sign up for an apartment back in 2005 when Arabella Manor first opened its doors.

“I walked in and said, ‘I’ll take it,’” she said. “It had everything I was looking for — two bathrooms, laundry area in the apartment, nice berber carpeting, big bay windows, a beauty shop, a dishwasher, and it has more closet space than I have had in a long time. This place reminds me of the home I lived in for most of my life.”

Phyllis and her husband moved in short time later. They quickly realized they made the right choice.

“Joni and Kim are awesome. We couldn’t ask for two nicer people,” she said. “And there are so many great activities. Bingo, potlucks and cards every Tuesday.”

When Phyllis’ husband died about four and a half years ago, she had the support of her close friends at Arabella Manor.

“People are very friendly and helpful,” she said.

One of Phyllis' favorite activities is playing cards on Tuesdays. Like all the other tenants at Arabella, she is excited about the new friends they will meet in the new building. Phyllis also has a hope that some of the new residents might share her passion for a particular card game.

"We could use a few more bridge players," she smiled.

Silver Bells Bazaar

The first big event after the opening of the new building will take place on Saturday, Nov. 22, when Arabella will host its annual Silver Bells Bazaar. The event features more than 30 vendors and is open to both tenants and the public.

"It is a great way to get a jump on holiday shopping," said Joni. "And we will have vendors in both buildings this year."

Arabella Ranch

Just across the street from Arabella Manor are the Arabella Ranch Townhomes, created in partnership with the natural beauty it embraces. These single-level-living townhomes with inviting floor plans take advantage of the breathtaking views, private ponds, and walking trails framed by majestic oaks.

"It's perfectly natural to feel right at home at Arabella Ranch, this is a senior-friendly community, however not age restricted," explained Joni, adding "If you're looking for retirement living that is naturally beautiful, delightfully uncrowded, convenient and affordable, check out Arabella Ranch."

Contact Information

Arabella Manor is a private facility. It is located at 1810 Darling Avenue just east of Henry's Foods in Alexandria.

Tours of Arabella Manor and Arabella Ranch are available Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturdays by appointment. For more information call (320) 763-1763. Those interested in possibly reserving a spot in the new Arabella Manor building are urged to call soon, as apartments are expected to fill up fast.