

Vincent A. Dattilo

CEO – Gloria Dei Communities Corporation

www.gloriadeicommunities.com

Gloria Dei Communities Corporation is a nonprofit that started 40 years ago and serves Bucks, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties with five independent senior facilities, as well as an assisted living program. Initially an outreach program of Gloria Dei Lutheran church, Pastor Dr. Ernie Schmidt had a dream, saw how seniors were living and felt that the community could do a better job in servicing their needs. Pastor Schmidt wanted to do something and along with his church established the first building thirty five years ago consisting of 175 apartments.

The church quickly found that running a church and managing a building with 175 apartments for seniors was an enormous amount of work and required full time attention. The board made the decision to divest and Dr. Schmidt stayed on with a separate board and became the CEO. The goal has been to provide a high quality living environment with below market rents. This is done through the effort of a very dedicated staff.

At present there is a construction of a 21 unit memory care facility that will open by August 1, 2010. This will allow the residents the option of staying at the location if they need additional services.

Vince's background is varied. Vince was initially trained as a computer programmer. During the Vietnam War, he was drafted and went to Vietnam. After the war he went into the computer industry and then moved into accounting, which he liked. Vince's involvement with nonprofits started with Visiting Nurses Association of Mercer County. Vince was working in the for profit world for Matcor, an engineering company. The general manager of the company left and joined VNA of Mercer County as the CFO, Vince was contacted by him and

the concept of working for a nonprofit was discussed. Vince was traveling extensively with this job, and as always experiencing a high degree of stress. Vince and his wife had historically been active in the church and community activities and he felt the time was right to make a change and went out and visited the VNA of Mercer County. He accepted the job as controller for the VNA. Over time the CFO moved onto another nonprofit and Vince was asked to be the interim CFO. The accounting firm that worked for the VNA contacted Vince about interviewing for a position with Gloria Dei Communities Corporation. During the interview Vince felt right about everything, the organization, the people, the culture and felt there was a natural fit. He was hired the next day and became controller for Gloria Dei Communities Corporation.

About a year later Vince was asked to be General Manager of operations. He was somewhat reluctant since he wanted to do the work, and still continue on as the controller. This gave Vince more flexibility in working within the organization. His emphasis was on placing new systems in the organization, upgrading the computer systems. His previous experience with computer systems came in very handy about this time. Service is the key to Gloria Dei and the improved systems allowed the staff to increase their efficiency and allocate more time toward service and the needs of the residents.

A couple of years ago, Dr Schmidt was still acting as the CEO but ran into some health issues. An interim CEO was brought in by the board of directors. However he had other business interests and needed to refocus his time on his main business. The board approached Vince and wanted him to take over as CEO. Vince once again was somewhat reluctant. He accepted the position as acting CEO in February 2009 and was appointed CEO at the April board meeting.

As CEO Vince has focused on the future needs of his market as part of a five year plan and realizes more services will be needed over the next five to seven years as the population ages. A Continuum Care retirement community will be needed in the region. There will be a growing population of seniors with increasing needs.

One of the challenges that Vince has recognized is that within his own organization there will be a need to attract younger workers. The combination of offering competitive wages and benefits to attract these people will be necessary for continued growth. He is now working on creative ideas to find and attract these workers.

From a management perspective Vince is a *hands off* manager. Vince is a strong believer in the management techniques developed by Peter Drucker. He has read all of his books and asked his management to read many of these books. Vince strongly believes in mission work, community type work. Vince does not believe in top down management, at least not for his organization. He believes in developing teams that take responsibility as a group for the end results. He believes in autonomy for the administrators. He has given them the confidence and budget responsibilities for each corporation, there are seven corporations that make up the total company. Each corporation helps to create their own budget and is responsible for that budget.

How success is judged at Gloria Dei is different than in the for profit world where the main motivation is the bottom line. At Gloria Dei you are judged on how do the residents feel, how comfortable are the facilities, are the tenant associations providing enough activates, many levels for evaluating success, this is in many ways more challenging than in the for profit world.

Vince has some advice for young people entering the job market. Vince believes in Drucker's concepts of evaluating what you are good at by listening to feedback, be prepared to move and make changes in your job or career, adjust to your

strengths, you need to know yourself, your strengths and weakness. Self evaluation is very important.

Vince has done this in his own life and career and has never been happier since entering the not for profit area and joining Gloria Dei. Networking is very important, you need to join organizations and meet people in your field, read extensively, and constantly educating yourself is critical.

Managing your personal life and career as a CEO is a challenge; long hours of work are required. He strives for balance and believes you need to be there for the important things in your personal life. Once again, going back to Peter Drucker you have to know when to say no to the organization. You need to have enough confidence to take control. You don't want to have an imbalance take place in your life with your career and your personal life. Striving for that balance is important. Young students and adults need to find outside activities, they need to be involved with their community, to build character, giving back to the community in some small way. Once again, balance is important.

Gloria Dei is financially strong. At present construction has begun on a 21 unit memory care facility that should be open by August 1, 2010. This will allow the residents the option of staying at the location if they need additional services. The future looks bright for Gloria Dei as they continue to grow and meet the needs of the community.

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