Imagine a time in your life, maybe in ten months, maybe in the next ten years, when an illness, accident or surgery puts you in need of special care—healing and rehabilitation so you can get back on track. Maybe it’s someone you love, someone who needs and deserves the best care possible. It happens every day. In our area, Conover Nursing & Rehabilitation Center is a godsend for families searching for care above the norm, care that creates healing. Conover Nursing is a unique, family run, family friendly facility where excellent quality nursing care is the mission everyday.

“Because we’re family owned, we’re able to make ground-level decisions that immediately impact residents and the facility without navigating corporate bureaucracy,” Owner Josh Sherrill shared. “Our entire staff—the CNAs, nurses and therapists, the housekeeping, maintenance, business office and dietary employees—are all involved with our residents’ care. We’re always brainstorming to develop ideas for improvement. Our goal is to help people heal, get better, and get back to whatever they love doing, and I believe people’s happiness and joy are crucial in improving total well-being. It’s rewarding knowing that we can make a difference in someone’s life in a palpable way. Some days, it’s as simple as bending over and giving someone a hug.”
WHAT YOU’LL FIND
Walk through the front doors and you notice sunshine bouncing off a striking wall fountain. It’s a comfortable living room, one that families can settle into for a friendly visit. “We have lots of peaceful places for families to gather and visit,” Administrator Todd Roper explained. “Grants from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the North Carolina Culture Change Coalition recently enabled us to build our new healing garden. Now that we have warm weather, this spacious healing garden and pergola will get plenty of use. Josh invests back into this facility generously, we upgrade regularly, and we have unique plans for future additions that you won’t see anywhere else.”

“Music is really big here,” Josh told me. “We believe in the healing power of music, and you can see it in action every time Todd or anyone else plays for the residents. Music enlivens people’s spirit.” Indeed, during my visit, the halls were filled with cheerful music coming from the dining room. Several musical fundraisers are on the calendar each year. In February, Shellem Cline, assistant activities director, wrote and performed a dinner variety show, “Let Me Call You Sweetheart.” Last November, Conover Nursing & Rehab hosted a gospel music concert at the Green Room in Newton. Both of these events were huge crowd favorites and raised funds to benefit resident activities at Conover Nursing & Rehab.

Activities Director Kathy Campbell, named 2013 NC Activity Director of the Year, coordinates with church groups, performing groups, and plans parties, concerts, bus trips to the zoo, the apple orchard, fishing, Skype calls with families and friends, the annual family spaghetti dinner for everyone, and church services each week. The in-house musicians who make up Todd’s Tunes–Todd Roper, Shellem Cline, and vocalist

Photos:
On the cover–From left to right–Conover Nursing & Rehabilitation Center’s Director of Marketing Jennifer Dyson; Todd Roper, administrator; Dr. Nicole Roper, rehabilitation director; and Dana Withrow, director of nursing

Opposite page–Smiles from the caring staff

Pictured, top to bottom–
• Residents and staff are one family
• Residents enjoying the space offered by the new Healing Garden
• Shellem Cline, Annemarie Lopina, Todd Roper–the trio making up Todd’s Tunes.
Annemarie Lopina, play and lead energetic sing-a-longs and dances for residents at least once a month.

“During the week, some of our families eat here every single day!” Todd said with a big smile on his face. “Our food is off the chart, and in our new deli you get the best salads, wraps, and sandwiches. Our staff eats in!” Dietary Manager Natalie Auton’s family-style cooking is the norm, and special meal requirements are prepared tastily. With a warm stone fireplace and beautiful grand piano, the spacious dining room hosts games, music, parties and more. Just like at home, people gather near the kitchen. It’s a place to share with new friends.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS
Folks arrive at Conover Nursing & Rehabilitation Center for a variety of reasons. There are private and semi-private rooms furnished for short-term rehab and long-term skilled nursing care. “Once you are in the building, everyone is treated the same,” Josh emphasized. “Our staff is our biggest asset. They attend to each person’s needs with compassion and skill. We are a family of caregivers, and we work as a truly dedicated team.”

Under the supervision of Dr. Michael DeSantis, Conover’s medical director, Director of Nursing Dana Withrow keeps her 90 nurses and CNAs inspired to give their best every-
day. “Our nursing staff is the backbone of this facility,” Josh said. “They are compassionate and skilled, and they care for our residents like they would their own family.” Every resident is unique, with their own story, situation, and life experience that eventually lead them to Conover Nursing & Rehab.

Dr. Nicole Roper is Conover Nursing’s rehabilitation director. Her department works with residents in one of the most unique, cutting-edge, therapeutic gyms in the country. Patient rooms surround the indoor track and the track circles the gym. Restorative care and therapies are prescribed to help people regain lost abilities, such as walking, eating independently, dressing or speaking. It’s her staff of physical, speech, and occupational therapists that help residents reach their potential and prepare for a return home feeling better and able to engage in activities they enjoy. It’s a proud moment when someone who arrived on a stretcher walks out the door for his or her trip home.

A key part of the operation, both in resident and family interaction and support, is the business office staff overseen by Manager Barbara Pannel. “Barbara is one of the best people I’ve ever met,” Josh shared. “She’s a saint.” Families work with Barbara during admission and discharge, and she can explain it all so you will understand it!

Director of Marketing Jennifer Dyson is a helpful resource for patients and families. Todd explained that navigating the endless regulations and requirements of the health care industry, from trying to understand insurance options, with all their implications, to family and estate planning, to understanding the often confusing rules relating to Medicare and Medicaid can be overwhelming. Jennifer is a valuable community resource; someone you can call with questions and concerns.

**A LITTLE HISTORY**

Josh Sherrill arrived at his position honestly. “I’d been running facilities all around eastern North Carolina since the early 1990s and moved my family from Raleigh to Conover to open this facility in 2002,” Josh recalled. “My great grandmother was the visionary matriarch who got our family started in long term care, opening Sunny Acres Rest Home in Bladen County in the 1950s, and we have been building and managing long-term care facilities ever since. Todd was the missing link. We were friends first, and I couldn’t have found a better administrator anywhere.” The team of Josh and Todd, in tandem with their outstanding staff of caring professionals run a beautiful, welcoming and very special place. “The rewards of this work,” Josh continued, “are the benefits of the wisdom, humor, stories, lessons, and belly laughs that we share with our residents, every day. There are a lot of blessings in this line of work.”

Plan a visit anytime. Give Todd a call or just stop by. He will be glad to show you around, answer your questions, and introduce you to some of Conover Nursing & Rehabilitation Center’s very special people. If you come the last Thursday of the month, around 10am, you can join in the sing-a-long!

**Conover Nursing & Rehabilitation Center**

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An actual patient who arrived in a wheelchair, received rehabilitation, and was walking by the time he was discharged.