



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOX VALLEY SELECTED AS GRANT RECIPIENT

APPLETON, Wis. — According to the National Eye Institute, macular degeneration and various diseases affect the vision of millions of Americans. To help address this problem, the Touchmark Foundation is funding a pilot program at Touchmark on West Prospect to provide reading magnification systems to seniors.

The special equipment will be installed at Touchmark on West Prospect, a resort-style retirement community in Appleton, and will be available for use by people throughout the Fox Valley area. Touchmark will collaborate with a number of local agencies and groups to design and implement the program, including Thompson Community Center, local ophthalmologists, the Wisconsin Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Wisconsin Council of the Blind, Prevent Blindness America and Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Inc.

According to Touchmark Foundation Executive Director Janet Plummer, the low-vision project is a top priority of the Foundation in its ongoing efforts to improve the physical, social, intellectual and spiritual lives of seniors. “Not being able to read causes many seniors to feel isolated, frustrated and dependent on others,” she says, adding, “Having access to this magnification equipment truly will improve the lives of seniors with low vision.”

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“We are thrilled to have been chosen for this important project,” says Touchmark Life Enrichment/Wellness Director Bobbie Thompson, who is heading the project locally. “We are looking forward to working with people in the community to implement a comprehensive program that will help seniors who have vision problems.”

The Foundation has ordered an Optelec ClearView+ Desktop Video Magnification System, which will be installed in Touchmark’s Library. When fully developed, the program will include the magnification equipment as well as volunteers who will drive seniors to and from Touchmark and people who will read to participants.

People can contact Bobbie Thompson at (920) 832-9100 if they have questions about the equipment, its use or upcoming programming.

Opened in 2001, Touchmark on West Prospect offers resort-style retirement and is home to more than 100 people. The community offers a wide range of homes and lifestyle options.

The Touchmark Foundation is devoted to finding ways to help seniors receive support and services. This includes offering scholarships to those pursuing a career in nursing as well as working to give grants to nonprofit organizations focused on improving the physical, social, spiritual and intellectual lives of older adults.

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