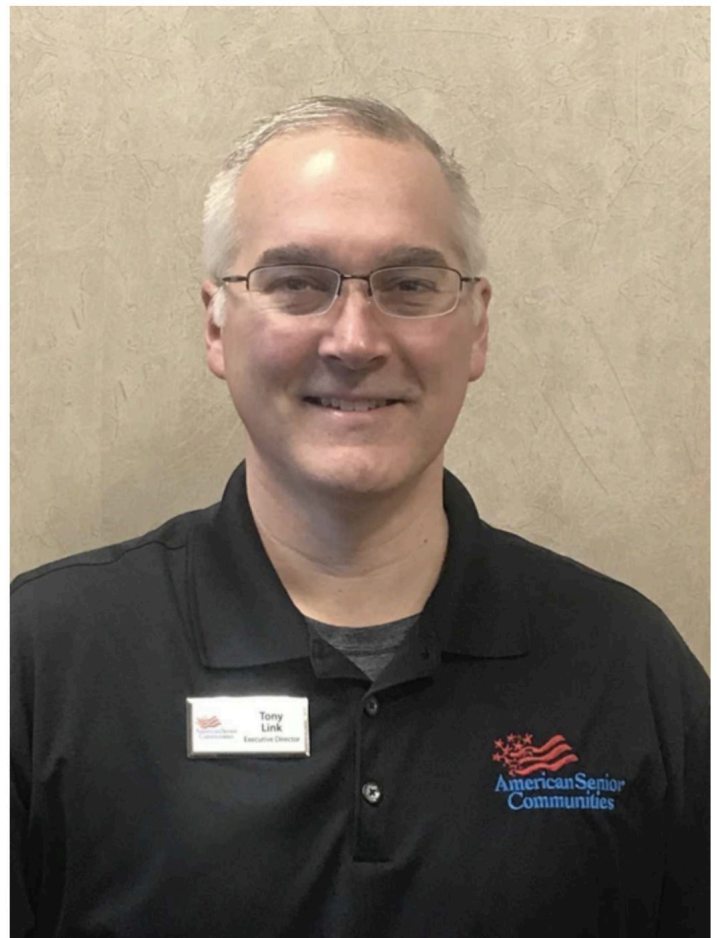


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The Link Between American Senior Communities and Emergency Preparedness

American Senior Communities is a healthcare organization that provides Long-Term Care and assisted living to senior residents across the state of Indiana. As a prominent member of dozens of communities, American Senior Communities (ASC) is the largest Long-Term Care and assisted living provider in the state. The MESH Coalition recently did an interview with a member of the ASC team to gain INSight into his position and how they collectively provide some of the best care in the state to senior citizens in Long-Term Care facilities.

Tony Link is the Executive Director of Allisonville Meadows for ASC, located in Fishers, Indiana. As the Executive Director, Tony is in charge of his facility's residents and employees. He interacts with them on a daily basis to assure that his team provides the most caring and comfortable environment that he can. Although the day-to-day life of an Executive Director can bring about almost any task, Tony's day-to-day typically involves a diverse and interactive schedule. He tries to help in any place he can be of service and that shows by making it clear that no task is too big or too small for him to handle. He begins the day by being at the facility by 7 to interact and check-in with residents and employees to assure their needs and feedback are adhered to. After making his routine rounds, he helps staff with breakfast for the residents, followed by a morning meeting with all department heads and clinical grand rounds to assure that all departments are operating efficiently and providing the best care they can for residents. In the second half of the day Tony helps with meal service, welcoming new admissions to the facility, and chairing meetings to ensure best outcomes and continual rounding of all departments. Another integral part of his day is to ensure that quality care outcomes, financial obligations, and budgetary expectations are met each day for him and his team of 20 department leaders.



Tony Link, Executive Director Allisonville Meadows

Providing for others has been something that Tony has done for more than 2 decades, as he has been a licensed Health Facilities Administrator in the state of Indiana for 26 years. After those years of experience Tony has seen how his management style can apply to different facets of life. He states, "Life experiences in healthcare help you plan ahead and have more sound contingency plans for when the unexpected happens". In addition to recognizing how he can apply his management style, Tony's priority values at ASC are consistently exceptional resident care and outcomes. Whether it is a regular day, a day assisting sister ASC facilities, or a day when a disaster has struck (a lightning strike interrupting facility power supply), he always wants the best for his residents from all staff, in all departments, on all shifts.

With being responsible for a vulnerable population, Tony believes that Emergency Management is a daily thought, focus, and discussion to be had through his own actions, as well as interactions with other staff and residents. Furthermore, he states, "Keeping abreast of occurrences in other Health Care facilities is key to continually analyzing our plans". With American Senior Communities having 80 long-term care facilities, there is a need to stay up to date with training and education of staff on how to handle an emergency incident or disaster.

One key way that American Senior Communities and Tony stay up to date on Emergency Management is through exercises done with facility staff and management. ASC did just that when they partnered with the MESH Coalition to complete a tabletop exercise in three regional locations. These exercises were done in Southbend, Evansville, and Central Indianapolis to provide training and education to ASC staff across the state. Within these exercises, staff were put into a simulated disaster scenario dealing with tornados. They were challenged to put themselves in that situation and then to go through their Emergency Operations Plan and Disaster Plan to test their skills and knowledge on how to handle a situation of that magnitude. According to Tony, the exercises "helped us to discuss best practices, omissions that may be in our plans, and to realize the strength of 80 buildings in the state". Altogether, the MESH Coalition organized 3 separate tabletops that included over 350 staff members from American Senior Communities. This type of education and training helps staff understand their role and how to operate during a disaster, which subsequently helps residents and staff stay safe.



Staff of American Senior Communities participating in Tabletop Exercise.

Long Term Care facilities are a large piece of the healthcare field, and organizations like American Senior Communities, and employees like Tony Link are a great example of the outstanding care and compassion that ASC residents and staff get on a daily basis. To this day, Tony believes that resident and family satisfaction is the greatest part of his job and as long as there are people like him, ASC residents will be in great hands.