

How can I decide if Kendal at Longwood is right for me?

Every retirement community is different.

It pays to think carefully about your priorities as you seek out the place where you will want to spend the rest of your life. Perhaps you are considering Kendal at Longwood. The purpose of this document is to help you understand what makes Kendal different from most other retirement communities. I have tried to pick out some aspects of Kendal that reflect its special character. It is up to you to decide whether you find these features attractive or not.

One feature that sets Kendal apart is the prominent role residents play in organizing and contributing to the activities of the community. Rather than depend on a staff “activities director,” residents with a specific topic, hobby, or cause that they are passionate about often take the initiative to make it available to the community.

Another distinctive feature of Kendal is its Quaker heritage. It was started by a group of Quakers in 1973. Although Quakers are a minority now (current residents include Christians of many kinds, Jews, a few Buddhists, at least one Hindu, and many non-religious people), the values brought by the founding Quakers are still influential today. Some central values emphasized by the Kendal founders included simplicity, resident responsibility for their own community, equal treatment of everyone, and stewardship of the environment.

As you read through the list below, you will see that many of the aspects of Kendal that make it different from other retirement communities are reflections of those founding values.

If at all possible, we hope you will participate in Kendal’s “Try Us” program, through which you can reside on campus for three days, participating in activities and meeting residents. That will provide a deeper sense of the differences that are outlined below. In the meantime, you may want to consider which of the items listed below are things you would value as aspects of your daily life.

The following are considered important at Kendal, although not at some other communities:

- A fixed monthly fee to cover whatever level of care you require (some retirement communities have lower initial fees, but charge a lot more for services such as personal care, memory care or skilled nursing)
- Integration of personal-care and skilled-nursing residents into community activities whenever possible (at Kendal, we think it’s important to keep those who need assistance involved in the community; volunteers bring around water pitchers to those confined to bed; and those who can, join their independent-living friends for meals and other activities)
- Dining facilities that welcome both the able-bodied and those who need wheelchairs or other assistance (Kendal doesn’t segregate those with physical handicaps into separate dining rooms)
- Meadow areas, native plants and gardens (Kendal’s landscaping emphasizes the natural environment and de-emphasizes lawns)

- A dog park (pets are important at Kendal)
- Non-profit status (because Kendal is a non-profit, resident fees are all spent on Kendal, not on profits for a private company)
- Ability for those with memory impairments to wander freely, at least indoors, and otherwise to mingle with other residents (Kendal doesn't have a locked "memory ward" like many retirement communities)
- Emphasis on simplicity (for example, the facilities are attractive but simple—no fancy architecture or ornate furnishings in the central buildings)
- Designed as a walking community (most of Kendal's cottages are connected by covered walkways, with parking at the periphery)
- Architecture that encourages contact (the predominantly village-style independent living cottages open directly to the outdoor walkways, so contact with neighbors and the natural environment is frequent)
- No dress code (you choose what you want to wear to dinner, from very informal to dressed-up)
- A resident association with a real voice in decisions affecting residents, operating by consensus (the resident associations in some communities play only a minor role)
- Residents with diverse backgrounds (Kendal has many residents from "helping" professions, such as teaching, nursing, social work, and the arts)
- Kendal residents often look to be of service (unlike communities where residents prefer to be served)
- Continuing involvement in the wider community (many Kendal residents are involved in tutoring and political action, for example)
- Concern for the environment (for example, Kendal's grounds are an arboretum with hiking trails and Kendal has a very active Energy Committee working toward carbon neutrality)
- A large forested area, with a pond, stream, and many miles of resident-maintained hiking trails
- Well-paid staff that is treated with respect (from the start, Kendal's policy has been "if this is to be a good place to live, it must be a good place to work")
- Well-equipped studio areas for pottery, weaving, and painting as well as a well-equipped woodshop and a room housing a prototype year-round hydroponic indoor garden (not just a multi-purpose "activity room")

As you consider Kendal and the many other retirement communities you might choose among, we imagine you will be asking yourself the kinds of questions suggested by the list above. You may decide that Kendal does not provide what you're looking for, or you may decide it would be perfect for you. Whatever you decide, if this document has helped you make that choice it has served its purpose.