

# TRANSFORMING SENIOR CARE: A JOURNEY OF LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

By Amanda Chriswell, President, Legato Living

## Rising to Leadership at Legato Living

From a young age, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in healthcare to feel purposeful. Majoring in Health Science in college set the foundation for this journey. The loss of my great-grandfather to Alzheimer's during my college years deeply impacted me, and I saw how it affected my grandparents and our entire family. I credit my parents and grandparents for fostering my passion for the senior care industry.

After graduating, my first job was as a health coach at WebMD, where I learned a wealth of healthcare knowledge. I then transitioned into sales and marketing, taking on a sales role. This experience was invaluable, as it helped me develop strong communication skills and learn how to overcome objections. After a year of success in sales, I was promoted to regional manager, which gave me my first taste of leadership. I found great satisfaction in helping my team and customers succeed and grow.

My next goal was to enter medical sales, which led me to sell a Durable Medical Equipment (DME) product. After our first son was born, I decided to step back from the traveling lifestyle and accept a sales position with a staffing agency, targeting various healthcare sectors. Within six months, I was promoted to oversee a multi-million-dollar operation focused on healthcare and medical recalls. This experience played a pivotal role in shaping my career as I transitioned to a non-medical/home care company.

After eight years, and a combination of successes and challenges, the company was sold to a private equity firm. I stayed on board to help start the hospice division

and build a team to obtain the Indiana hospice license. It was here I realized how much I missed the home care side of healthcare. I then accepted a director position with a local Adult Day company, overseeing their home care division. Eventually, a former colleague approached me with an opportunity to become the President of Legato Living.

With more than 10 years of experience in home care, the concept, mission, and goals of Legato Living were too exciting to pass up. I recognized the immense potential to positively impact the lives of many families. Over the years, I've listened to clients, families, and staff, learning about the gaps between facility-based and 1:1 in-home care. Legato Living offers the chance to integrate home care with medical providers while keeping clients socially engaged in a homey, comfortable environment.

## Vision for Legato Living's Future

My vision for Legato Living is to transform the "big box" industry into a boutique experience. We aim to integrate innovative care for individuals living with Alzheimer's and dementia, not just in Indiana, but across the U.S. With all the experience I've gained, our goal is to become a premier dementia care provider within actual homes, offering highly personalized and compassionate service.

## Building a Culture of Innovation and Growth

Growth is one of Legato's core values. We must always be looking to learn and adapt our approach for each new resident, caregiver, and situation. We will continue to implement the latest innovations in care and stay updated on new technologies



and discoveries related to Alzheimer's and dementia. Continuous learning and innovation are critical to providing the best care possible.

## Driving Efficiency and Excellence: Key Strategic Initiatives

To achieve efficiency and excellence, we focus on providing personalized care through aligned care ratios and tailored plans. Initiatives include activity programming, integration of traveling physician groups, nursing, and therapy services, dementia-specific training through video and simulation devices, and family support to guide them on this journey. We also emphasize staff engagement, leveraging the latest technology to ensure the highest standards of care.

## Challenges and Opportunities in Memory Care

The biggest challenge in memory care is caregiver retention and providing exceptional, customized care through the end of life. Memory care involves three participants: residents, caregivers, and families. Many facilities focus only on residents, neglecting the other groups. At Legato, we focus on supporting all three groups with the best practices and innovations available, addressing their unique needs to ensure the overall success of the caregiving process. This approach sets us apart from other caregiving facilities.

## Leadership Values in Healthcare

As a leader in healthcare, my decisions are always centered around the well-being and needs of the client, caregivers, and families. My parents instilled the principle of "treat

others how you want to be treated," which I practice through integrity, accountability, and empathy. I believe in teamwork, collaboration, and communication with staff, families, and vendors. Transparency and honesty are key to building trust, and I constantly seek innovative ways to improve in an ever-changing industry. Leading by example, I show others the importance of empathy and compassion—values essential when dealing with loved ones.



My vision is to transform the 'big box' industry into a boutique experience, offering highly personalized and compassionate service to individuals living with Alzheimer's and dementia

## Career Advice for Aspiring Elder Care Leaders

To young professionals in elder care, I recommend getting involved in the community and industry-specific groups to build your network. Volunteering, attending conferences, joining committees, and serving on boards will all help you grow. Always ask questions, listen carefully, and maintain a genuine desire to learn. The more you immerse yourself in the field, the more opportunities you'll find to make a lasting impact. 

