

## Providing aid for elderly

**Katie Cashman, program manager,  
Family and Children's Services of Central Maryland, Westminster**

By Nancy Jones-Bonbrest

**Salary:** \$40,000

**Age:** 27

**Time on the job:**

Three months

**How she got started:**

Although Katie Cashman wanted to work with children after graduating from Towson University with a degree in psychology, she couldn't find the right job, so she went to work as a

program manager at an adult day care. She quickly found her niche working with seniors and moved on to become the manager of an assisted-living facility in Frederick. She then worked as the resident services and admissions coordinator at Fairhaven, a continuing-care retirement facility in Sykesville. Cashman started her current position in January.

She's enrolled in the master's program in gerontology at McDaniel College and is a member of the American Society on Aging.

**Typical day:** Cashman oversees the daily operations of West End Place Medical Adult Daycare. The facility is run by the nonprofit Family and Children's Services of Central Maryland.

She meets with potential clients, markets the center, ensures compliance with federal, state and local guidelines, and oversees a staff of seven. She must also take care of budgeting for the center, attendance sheets and writing grants.

The center is open 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. five days a week. It averages about 18 clients a day and has a capacity of 30 clients.

She also attends training classes and educational seminars. In June, she'll facilitate a monthly support group that's open to the public for caregivers of people with dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

Activities offered at the center include field trips, art classes, music programs, video games, cooking and bingo. Medication administration and personal care services are



Katie Cashman (center) works with clients Gordon Smith and Gwyn Buell at the center. (Baltimore Sun photo by Chiaki Kawajiri / April 15, 2009)

also available. Cashman must be ready to jump in and assist wherever she's needed.

"You kind of become a jack-of-all-trades," she said.

Clients come to West End Place for various reasons, including after a crisis or near-crisis occurs and supervision is needed or on doctor's orders. Others come for the social activities and interaction.

"We're a great alternative to nursing homes and assisted

living," Cashman said. "It allows people to be able to stay in their homes longer. We like to say we provide just as much respite for the client as we do the caregiver."

**The cost:** West End Place offers a sliding fee scale based on income. Clients can pay as little as \$6 a day or up to \$75 a day. This includes transportation, activities, medical care and meals.

**Respect:** Frequently people dismiss seniors, Cashman said. "So often we forget these are wise people who have lived their entire lives. It's making sure they have that dignity and preserving what life they have left."

**The good:** The clients. "Helping them understand their struggles as they get older and helping to educate their families. That's my passion."

**The bad:** "It's hard when someone passes away. It's not only hard on me but on the other clients as well."

**Philosophy:** "Quality of life overall and really enjoying the moment."



**Adult Day Care**, offered in Carroll and Harford counties, is one of the programs offered by Family and Children's Services of Central Maryland to families and individuals at all stages of life. For more info: [www.fcsmd.org](http://www.fcsmd.org)