

# How We Succeed in The Senior Living Environment

*by Ryan Null, Director of Special Construction Services*



*There's a reason why residents at Presby's Inspired Life senior living facility stop the superintendent and tell him what a pleasure it is having the Horst Special Services team working in their living space—and that reason starts with Ryan Null.*

*Ryan learned the ropes early on in his career, having managed a number of complex renovations at the VA Hospital in Virginia. There, he was often renovating a wing, just a few feet away from returning veterans being treated for major injuries. According to Ryan, "That experience set the tone for how I go about managing my projects and my career, where I interface with residents, staff, and patients on a daily basis."*

When renovating or upgrading senior living facilities, it is ingrained in our approach that we must minimize the disruption to both the staff and residents, and be willing (and able) to accommodate everyone's schedules. Once you come to understand and respect that these facilities are people's homes, you adopt a completely different mindset—one that is resident-centric and aligns with the owner's goals. Horst Construction may renovate half of a corridor at a time to allow the unobstructed flow of traffic, employ a phased-approach, or even perform work at night to accommodate a client's needs.

In my role as Director of Special Construction Services, I consider it my responsibility to create solutions for the owner's problems by making their projects as seamless as possible. I find that two of the biggest factors in my success are my commitment to keeping the client informed and updated throughout their projects, and making sure we keep the project on budget.

Horst not only specializes in senior living environments, but also strives to become an integral part of the facilities team—whether planning for the future or addressing emergency repairs. Horst understands what it takes to work in a fully functional healthcare facility and we employ a staff of qualified field employees who prioritize the safety of residents and staff.

*Could you imagine if you had a loved one from another state moving into an assisted living community and the room wasn't ready when he/she arrived? We don't take this work lightly and we understand the importance of working in collaboration with our clients to ensure we adhere to our schedules.*

## Safety Means a Lot to Us

At Horst, we have thorough policies and high expectations. We expect our workers and subcontractors to be attentive to safety; and we consistently assign the same individuals to a client whenever possible. This way, everyone—from the carpenter to the foreman to the superintendent—is familiar with the facility, staff, and residents, as well as Department of Health regulations and local permitting requirements. This helps to build upon our partnership and mutual trust with our clients—creating a safe, efficient, and successful project for everyone involved.

## The Horst Approach

Horst prefers to lead the design team from the beginning, allowing us to better understand and execute the client's intentions. We also like to be involved in creating the budgets and assisting our clients with value engineering options. The next step is scheduling and implementing a phasing plan, if applicable.

## Our Clients are Our VIPs

In the Special Services Group, as well as throughout Horst Construction, we think of ourselves as true partners with the owner and management team—and we like to treat them like the VIPs they are. We can quickly respond to needs with the right team and the right subcontractors; and in many cases, put pricing together on the spot. If we have a Master Service Agreement (MSA) with fixed, pre-negotiated rates, we can address emergencies or quick fixes with rapid efficiency. With an MSA, we are actively engaged with the Facilities Director or Director of Facilities Management, providing our expertise and assisting in proactive planning and budgeting for capital improvements.

We often see issues before the client, and we can bring those to the owners' attention before they become bigger problems. At Horst Construction, we are here to listen first—then build what matters to you. We work as a team to ensure your goals are achieved—beyond your expectations.

**For more information about building, expanding, or renovating senior living environments, contact Ryan Null at 717.581.9961 or email [RNull@HorstGroup.com](mailto:RNull@HorstGroup.com).**

## Horst Approach Key Components:

- **Having the right team in place.** Those who are the most familiar are the most effective and the most efficient—particularly the Project Manager, superintendent, and foreman.
- **Having the right subcontractors on board, not necessarily the lowest cost subcontractors.** It is absolutely essential that they understand and have experience on previous projects like this.
- **Creating a realistic and detailed schedule, and managing it.** This requires buy-in from all parties—Horst, subcontractors, and the client.
- **Creating a safe work environment for all.** This includes workers, staff, and residents.
- **Making certain that everyone understands expectations and hurdles.** It's imperative that everyone is involved, especially during the planning phase.