



## **MBK Senior Living's Oakmont Gardens Community Goes Extra Mile to Protect and Serve Residents During Wildfire Crisis**

**SANTA ROSA, Calif. (October 27, 2017)** In the early morning hours on Oct. 9, Cathy Allen, executive director of MBK Senior Living's Oakmont Gardens awoke to a call from an employee who was being evacuated. It was then that she discovered smoke filling her apartment and flames right outside the front window. Even with her own home in imminent danger, Allen knew her first responsibility was to the 200 residents at Oakmont Gardens.

Grabbing her purse, phone, a towel and her cat, she fled to her car—only to find the gate opener was jammed. Allen rammed her new car through the gate and headed for work. By 3:00 a.m., she was at the senior living community and calling the police every 20 minutes until the sheriff gave the order for immediate evacuation.

"I was amazed at the way the evacuation went so smoothly since it was the first catastrophic event for many of us to be in," wrote Oakmont Gardens resident, Rory Parker. "During the chaos, Cathy never faltered."

According to Cathy, staff members teamed up with the police officers and sheriff deputies to safely move the residents to a Red Cross evacuation site. Every apartment was swept by MBK employees and police to ensure nobody was left behind.

"With only eight or nine staff members on duty at the time of the evacuation, we had to act quickly. At one point during the evacuation, I ran back into the community to grab one resident's teeth and another's sweater," said Cathy. "I just thought, if there is something I can do to make these residents even a little more comfortable, I was going to do it."

That was just the beginning of a long 13-day period, in which Cathy and the MBK team worked nearly 24 hours a day. Of Oakmont Gardens' 200 residents, 60 residents were evacuated to the Elsie Allen shelter, some went to the Fair Grounds, Veterans Building or other shelters while others drove independently to stay with family or friends.

With phone lines down and wi-fi sporadic, communication with residents and families was critical. Within the first 24 hours, the Oakmont Gardens team had called all residents and family members to verbally update or check in. MBK managers also were dispatched to the other shelters to check in with or relocate residents to the Elsie Allen shelter. From then, a comprehensive communications plan was executed that included a hotline with regular updates, updated information on the company's website, social media posts, daily email briefs, and registering every resident with Red Cross' Safe and Well registry.

"Throughout this ordeal, Cathy and her team demonstrated so many of the core values that are intrinsic to MBK Senior Living," said Jeff Fischer, president for MBK Senior Living. "From

providing care with compassion, to responsive communication to concerns, to teamwork and accountability, we are incredibly proud of Cathy and her team and the way in which residents were attended to during the crisis.”

Once the evacuation order was lifted, Cathy was among the first to confirm that Oakmont Gardens had escaped the fire but sustained smoke damage. She then worked diligently with MBK to expedite the cleaning to make the community habitable – even when her own home was not.

Even before the evacuation order had been lifted, MBK had lined-up an industrial hygienist and remediation team to ensure that the community could re-open as soon as possible. Once able, staff took great pride in restoring the building to pristine condition for residents.

“The professional crews along with dozens of MBK employees worked around the clock for three days to scrub and sanitize every surface in the community,” said Cathy. “We received the ‘all clear’ from the industrial hygienist on Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup> and welcomed residents home with balloons, champagne, and live music the very next day.”

“I was very impressed with the way this bad situation was turned to good,” wrote Kathy Benedetti, an Oakmont Gardens resident’s daughter. “I appreciated the phone calls to see if my mother was okay. She was so excited to come back home to the Gardens and greeted with special welcomes and good care.”

“Oakmont Gardens was not the only senior living community affected by the wildfires. Others faced extreme challenges, from total devastation to formal investigations by state regulators,” said Cathy. “Our hearts go out to those who lost so much.”

### **About MBK Senior Living**

MBK Senior Living owns or manages 22 independent living, assisted living and memory care communities throughout the western United States. MBK Senior Living, LLC, headquartered in Irvine, CA, is actively involved in the acquisition, development and third-party management of high quality senior living communities throughout the western United States. MBK's overriding mission is to exceed the quality, service and care expectations of the seniors they serve. For more information about MBK Senior Living, visit [www.mbkseiorliving.com](http://www.mbkseiorliving.com).

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