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by Becca Anderson

A Million Pounds of Laundry a Year

CHESTER VILLAGE HOME

It is astonishing how much laundry a relatively small laundry department can handle— if the personnel are well trained and the equipment is sturdy. Chester Village Home, a state-of-the-art long-term care facility with 203 beds, is located in Toronto and is operated by a not-for-profit charitable organization. The original building began operation in 1972 and the new facility opened in 2006. Moving from one to the other made it possible to re-evaluate the needs of the laundry and upgrade equipment.

The laundry department has been using UniMac equipment for many years – Roger Parker of Harco has been servicing their account since 1989, but the relationship goes back at least 40 years. “People come and go, but we keep supplying the service and equipment they need. We have a good partnership,” Parker said.

John Madill, Environmental Services Manager at Chester Village, has been in his position for two years, with 15 years’ experience prior in the same field. He’s also a Certified Technician (Engineering). Chester Village wisely brought Harco representatives together with the architects and engineers when the laundry facility was being planned in the new location.

“The laundry does lots of terries and cotton fibres that need high extraction speeds,” said Parker. “The equipment to handle that kind of work requires a 12-inch concrete floor depth so it can be properly bolted down.” Chester Village also saved some money by keeping two UniMac 60-lb. washers and two UniMac

75-lb. dryers, which were more than a dozen years old at that point. “Most managers prefer to get new equipment, but these pieces worked well. It’s situations like this that keep customers appreciating that they bought the right equipment in the first place,” said Parker. “This is where quality equipment gives its payback.”

A third dryer with a sensor that turns off the dryer when the load is done (unlike the older two) was added. Madill also purchased a 65-lb. UniMac washer that has a smaller footprint but a larger capacity than the other two (which are 60 lbs. each). It also has a 28-minute wash cycle (compared to 40–45 on the older machines) and extracts at 400 G-force, compared with 300 G-force. The new washer has a microprocessor, which enables it to handle a wide variety of loads, from delicate to rugged to heavy. It was programmed by Barry Eisener from Diversey. All the washers include OPTispray™, which sprays a rinse as the load revolves, and is said to penetrate the fabrics and do a better job of rinsing than filling the washer. This results in considerable water savings.

Madill and his team of three full-time and five part-time laundry aides manage to turn out over 19,000 lbs. of laundry per week in 14 overlapping day and night shifts. “Laundry is one of the hardest jobs, and the staff here, some of whom have been working more than 20 years, do a great job,” he said. All linens for the facility are run through the laundry, as well as about 75% of the personal laundry for

residents – even though there are washers and dryers available in all units.

Always looking for ways to save money, John Madill attended a seminar on energy efficiency. The new building was well engineered from this standpoint, but lacked an ozone system for the laundry. Chester Village purchased a Del Ozone™ system from Harco and received a rebate cheque from Enbridge, a utility company, for 40% of the cost of installing it, as part of a program to encourage businesses to install energy-saving equipment. Each of the washers includes ozone capability.

With the ozone system, most wash loads can be done in cold water, and use less chemicals to clean. The exceptions are kitchen, catering and table linens, which have grease on them, and therefore require hot water wash.

Madill has also seen additional savings in the fact that the new processes and equipment are easier on the linens. “The people who supply our linens on a regular basis called to ask why I hadn’t placed a new order,” he said. Towels and other linens were lasting 20% longer due to ozone and cold water.

Maintenance costs are also proving to be low on the UniMac equipment. “The way Harco looks after the service, we may get almost 20 years out of this new equipment, too,” he said. ■

Front entrance to Chester Village Home.



Top: Roger Parker (L) and John Madill (R) with UniMac washers.
Below: Left: The ozone-generating system. Right: The dryers, newest one at right.

