



**KINDCARE**

ASSISTED LIVING



**WOHLSEN**  
CONSTRUCTION

## KindCare Senior Living Case Study

### Bringing Experience to an Exciting Frontier

A new trend in Assisted Living facilities is sweeping the state of Connecticut, and Wohlsen is helping lay the foundation. If you have heard of KindCare, you may be familiar with their promise: bringing seniors and their families a luxury-level living experience without the luxury price. But the man behind the brand, Mark DePecol of Senior Living Development (SLD), could not do it alone. And that is why he turned to long-time partner, Wohlsen, to transform this vision into a reality — and make that vision even better.

With the goal of creating affordable senior living communities all over Connecticut, SLD set its sights on Bristol for its first KindCare Senior Living facility. The five-story, 60,802-square-foot facility includes 60 assisted living units, a commercial kitchen, multiple common areas, an exercise room, a movie theater, a memory care unit, and main offices. Boasting all the same quality and amenities as the higher-end communities throughout the state, KindCare embraces a “roommate” concept that significantly brings down the cost of living. This concept allows middle-income seniors to get the care they need and remain in the community where they raised their families.



## A Familiar Partner Brings Clarity in a New Space

With extensive experience as a partner in Senior Living development and construction, Wohlsen has helped with the completion of over 400 high-end and subsidized assisted living facilities throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regions. We have also worked closely with Mark DePecol on dozens of projects over the last seven years. But this project was the first for Mark in the senior living space, making Wohlsen the perfect partner to step in from day one.



“The beauty of this relationship was it allowed us to bring in our expertise to really develop this project from the ground up,” Hairo Trinidad, Wohlsen Project Engineer, explained. “Because of our experience in this area, SLD was looking for our insight during the preconstruction phase to bring clarity to the cost of the project in an environment of price escalations, long lead times, and material shortages. Our value engineers worked to bring the cost down and put a schedule together that would maintain the timeline and stay within budget. By getting involved early, we could proactively address a lot of the issues we knew we would face to minimize their impact versus having to step in and try to fix them.”

And the specific ways in which Wohlsen provided this heightened level of planning and organization within the constrained urban area, tight budget, and complex building system are what truly made the difference along the way.

**“Wohlsen has performed exceptionally and met all challenges with the professionalism, creativity, and solutions-based attitude required to get the job done,”** Mark DePecol, Principal & CEO of SLD. “Dealing with the city officials in a professional, courteous manner, keeping the job clean and safe, performing on the buildout to budget, and timely/accurate financial reporting has given us a reputation on a community level that is unsurpassed.”

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## Leaning on Experience to Get Ahead of the Game

These issues were nothing new to the Wohlsen team. Even prior to the complicated shipping and labor landscape, we established a transparent and aggressive approach to procuring necessary materials that the challenges have only fine-tuned over the last few years.

“When you have a 14-month timeline and products are over a year out, you have to be on top of everything,” Hairo shared. “Through our experience, we had an understanding of what needed to be ordered and tracked from day one. Approaching the procurement process this way is crucial in this type of environment, and we knew what we needed to do regarding certain vendors and materials to avoid major issues. We were tracking materials from the minute the manufacturer signed and calling constantly to push the delivery chain. In fact, our electric contractor was actually waiting on us at one point, which is very rare in this climate. They had all the product pulled and just needed the go-ahead from us, which showcases the effectiveness of our planning and efforts, and we are very proud of that.”

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## Laying the Groundwork for a “First” in Connecticut

In addition to this KindCare model being new to the state, another significant “first” lay within the foundation of the building itself. The Comslab system used in the flooring and walls of the facility is a first-of-its-kind in CT.

“Comslab is essentially a new metal decking system that allows us to minimize the amount of structural steel used in the construction of the building,” Hairo explained. “This is a new approach for our team with the goal of being cost-effective while enhancing the stability of the structure. But it required a lot of coordination between the mechanical, structural, and framing elements to make it work — because if it did not, it was back to square one with design. It certainly came with a learning curve for us, but now, it is something we can bring to clients moving forward as it becomes more popular across the state.”

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## Collaboration is Key to Building a Better Community

Overcoming a challenging supply chain and uncharted construction system was only possible (and successful!) thanks to a shared collaborative mindset across all teams. From the design team to the subcontractors, it was all-hands-on-deck through our approach to every hurdle.

“We had such a strong team that really came together to creatively solve issues as they came,” Hairo shared. “Our design team was highly responsive to requests, and our subcontractors took an all-in mindset to become part of the solution versus waiting on us to reach out with the answers. It has truly been a team effort in every way.”

“This KindCare Senior Living facility is the largest funded project by Thomaston Savings Bank in its history and is located in a high-profile location in downtown Bristol,” Mark added. “All eyes have been on this project. The accolades we have received from the city, and the bank has been overwhelming largely due to the exceptional job Wohlsen has done in all aspects of project performance.”

And the real work is just getting started. While completion on this KindCare facility will wrap up in March 2023 after 14 months, Wohlsen has already begun abatement on their next location in Naugatuck. We are proud to continue supporting SLD’s exciting rollout across the region in the years to come.