

" Moosehaven - The City of Contentment "

Moosehaven is a 70-acre community owned and operated by the Loyal Order of Moose for its members and their spouses located on the banks of the St. John's River in Orange Park, Florida, 15 miles South of Jacksonville, Florida.

After the 1913 founding of Mooseheart, the "Child City" for children in need, the fraternity turned its attention to plans for a home for its dependent retired members. Before Moosehaven was established, a limited number of elderly persons had resided at Mooseheart since 1915, but this was deemed an unsatisfactory solution.

In 1921 the Loyal Order of Moose purchased the riverside "Hotel Marion" as a nucleus for its new complex, "Moosehaven", and 26-acres of shoreline property just south of Jacksonville, Florida, at Orange Park. The "Hotel Marion" was previously owned by Charles Albert Brown from New York State who had purchased it in the early 1900's and renamed it the "Hotel Marion" in honor of his mother. At the time of Charles Brown's purchase, the Hotel was known as the "Parkview" which was built in 1881 after the original hotel, known as the "Sparhawk", had burned to the ground. W.G. Benedict from Boston was the previous owner who formed the Florida Winter Home and Improvement Company in 1877 and built the "Sparhawk" Hotel with the hope that northerners would flock to this sunny locale. The land had many previous owners which was originally part of 1,000 acres purchased in 1803 by Zephaniah Kinsley, a notorious slave trader, for starting his new plantation, called Laurel Grove, for the many laurel trees in the area.

On October 3, 1922, Moosehaven was formally dedicated and on November 1, 1922, the "City of Contentment" was opened with the arrival of its first 22 retired Moose residents who had been living at Mooseheart. They set up house in the hotel which had been renamed "Aid Hall" from the previously known "Hotel Marion". During the first 20 years, Moosehaven was run essentially as a self-sufficient communal farm, with much of the work necessary to keep the campus running performed by those who live there.

In 1927, the Loyal Order of Moose, for expansion of the facilities, purchased the adjacent vocational college complex known as the American Missionary Association and all of the Moosehaven facilities were moved to the River Road campus in 1948 and the old college site was donated to the Town of Orange Park for a civic center. The Town used the old college buildings for the Town Hall, Police and Fire Stations and a library.

With land purchases, Moosehaven essentially grew to its current acreage by the 1960s. Since World War II, all of the original buildings have been replaced; during the 1990s most residential facilities were again thoroughly renovated or rebuilt. The physical plant today consists entirely of modern buildings designed and built to provide pleasant and comfortable accommodations, recreation, and care.

The Administration/Auditorium building was originally a gift of the Moose Legion, and was significantly expanded in 1989 by the Women of the Moose. It houses the offices of the superintendent and other administrative staff, resident counselor, postal service, bank and community auditorium.

Each of the buildings in which Moosehaven residents stay is a self-contained home with its own sleeping and living rooms, kitchen, and dining room. Pleasant recreational facilities, a library, game room, gift shop and barber and beauty shops are provided in the Michigan Recreation Center, while a fully equipped health club, bowling lanes and swimming pool are available in the New York Healthplex, opened in 1997.

The \$16 million Life Care Center, completed in 2002, and designed and equipped for the needs of senior care, provides space for 170 beds and has its own therapy department, x-ray, laboratory, and pharmacy. It also boasts six dayrooms, a chapel, library, beauty salon and barbershop, and arts and crafts room. It is a four-building, interconnected, 130,000-sq.ft. complex offering state-of-the-art assisted-living care at various levels.

Moosehaven residents worship in their own beautiful New York Chapel, located straight ahead from the campus entrance and at the center of campus. The bright, gracefully designed house of worship, dedicated in 1972 and funded by the Moose of New York State is served by Moosehaven's own Catholic and Protestant chaplains.

The men and women of Moosehaven are served delicious, well-balanced meals carefully planned for their nutritional needs. They request and are delivered such personal articles as they need. Birthday cakes are presented to those celebrating birthdays. While laundry services are provided without charge, some of the residents prefer to do their own, and washing machines are provided for them.

For all but the very earliest of its history, Moosehaven admission requirements included that the resident must be at least 65 years old, have been a Moose member for 15 consecutive years, and must turn over all your holdings. Former Director General Donald Ross decided, nearly five years ago, to formulate a new Moosehaven "Pay As You Go" arrangement. The Legion Residence, built in 1959, has been designated a "pay-as-you-go" prototype town home apartment residence for members willing to pay the entrance fee, and a monthly fee. Whether under the Traditional plan or Pay-As-You-Go, ALL incoming residents must still meet traditional admission requirements: Age 65 with at least 15 consecutive years of Moose membership.

In more than 75 years, the average age of a Moosehaven resident has steadily risen from early 60s to around 80. Moosehaven residents, as they are able, are free to plant their own gardens and can work for extra spending money as landscapers, housekeepers, food-service helpers, mail carriers, shop clerks, maintenance crew helpers, and the like. More than 3,000 aged senior Moose men and women have been admitted to the "City of Contentment." The present population at Moosehaven is about 300. Moosehaven celebrated its 85th anniversary in 2007.