

# Success Story of the Geriatric Health Centres of the city of Graz

Gerd Hartinger <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Geriatric Health Centres of the city of Graz, Albert-Schweitzer-Gasse 36, 8020 Graz*

The mandate of the Geriatric Health Centres of the city of Graz (GGZ) is to enhance the quality of life for elderly people and provide for a dignified aging. We offer treatment and care primarily for elderly people: the Albert Schweitzer Clinic (geriatric hospital), nursing homes and day care centres, and alternative living arrangements for the elderly.

Perhaps our most essential key achievement is our graduated care structure. This means that we provide treatment and care that covers almost all of the healthcare needs of elderly people. Over the past 15 years, we have expanded our portfolio from 2 to nearly 20 services. Thanks to this extensive service portfolio we are able to adapt our services to suit these needs and continue to provide the optimum care and treatment, often by seamlessly transferring them from one service or mode of supported living to another.

Within the different services, we also continuously strive to maintain the highest level of quality. This involves carefully planned measures, such as deploying patient-centred nursing approaches (e.g., primary nursing in the clinical area) and building effective forms of communication between all relevant parties (e.g. patients or residents and their families, specialists, front-line caregivers) to ensure rapid response to any developing needs.

When developing new services, our goal is always to fulfil existing needs in healthcare. To this end, we conduct research on the needs of elderly patients and work together with our in-house experts, front-line caregivers and the customers themselves to identify needs, devise innovative solutions, and then implement and test these new concepts. Working with researchers from our Albert Schweitzer Institute, we gain scientific evidence via testing and pilot programmes. This, in turn, helps us to secure long-term financing for our new services, all of which are devised with a careful eye towards sustainability.