

The Memory Center  
Johns Creek, GA



Interface®





## FLOORING SELECTION PROMOTES SAFETY AND INDEPENDENCE AT THE MEMORY CENTER ATLANTA

Across the United States, dementia is a significant disease growing at an epidemic rate. More than 60 percent of Americans over the age of 65 will experience symptoms of dementia at some point in their life. While approximately six million individuals suffer from Alzheimer's or another form of dementia today, it is estimated that the number will increase to more than 16 million in the next 20 years. As the aging population grows larger, the post-acute care model is challenged to provide facilities and trained staff to care for them. Though establishments, such as skilled nursing facilities, are often unable or unequipped to ensure the safety of the aging population adequately, The Memory Center in Johns Creek, Georgia, is pioneering new ways to provide exceptional care for these patients.

### **The Thoughtful Solution**

The Memory Center Atlanta offers a unique solution to this challenge facing the health care industry. Adjacent to Emory Johns Creek Hospital, The Memory Center is a



comprehensive facility specializing in the care of those living with Alzheimer's and dementia in the Atlanta area.

"We want to provide the absolute top quality of care for individuals," explains Kevin DiBona, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The Memory Center. "We want to empower the individual and make sure they live with dignity and respect. It's their home, and we're trying to make it feel like their home. Everything that we do is based upon that loving feeling."

The community is comprised of 48 residential suites designed around an innovative Town Center concept – a centralized, interactive area featuring a movie theater, library, general store, bank, tavern, ice cream stand and salon with touches of iconic, historic Atlanta. Residents reside in four neighborhoods with fully-functioning kitchens, living rooms and dining rooms. "Community is such a



big word for The Memory Center. Residents interact with each other and participate in myriad events, just as they would in a real downtown setting,” says Lilliana Alvarado, Design Principal at UPHEALING and designer for the Memory Center Atlanta. “The building’s intentional design and layout contribute to that sense of belonging and community.”

“One thing that I think makes The Memory Center unique is the design of the building,” says Stacey McNamara, Activities Director of The Memory Center. “It gives our patients the experience of being in a little town, which is really unique to them because it feels like they can go out. In this town, they can do their own thing and not just be stuck in a building. That concept is brilliant because they love it.”

#### **Attention to Detail, From the Ground Up**

During construction, The Memory Center’s designers took into account the effects the built environment may have on patients’ health and wellbeing, recognizing that the environment can play a major role in patient outcomes. “The built environment is particularly important in a post-acute health care setting as it supports our efforts to provide not only a safe environment for our residents, but also one in which they feel comfortable and at home,” explains Alvarado.

“The Memory Center was built to ensure the safety and care of residents with memory impairment,” says Dr. Amar Mohan, Medical Director for The Memory Center. “Thought and detail were put into every aspect of this building, so it really allows patients to take advantage of the space because it was meant with a purpose in mind.”

As the largest surface of any built environment, flooring selection was particularly important to The Memory Center. “The interior of The Memory Center is extremely important to the wellbeing

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“We were able to have a seamless floor without thresholds throughout the entire community. That greatly helped reduce the number of falls that our residents were having.” – Kevin DiBona, CEO, The Memory Center



of residents. It allows individuals to feel comfortable with their setting and not feel as if they're in an institution. The aesthetic alone allows patients to be calmer and to feel comfortable in their environment," says Dr. Mohan.

It was important to the design team to find a flooring solution that was aesthetically pleasing. It also had to provide slip resistance, acoustic benefits, wayfinding and be easy to maintain. The Center selected Interface products, including carpet tile, LVT and nora rubber flooring, to support its mission of fostering patient safety and independence. "A flooring solution that is seamless, slip-resistant, cushioned and easy to clean is ideal in this type of setting," says Alvarado.

"Flooring is important in a health care setting because many of our residents use walkers or wheelchairs, and a lot of them shuffle," explains Julie Taylor, Executive Director of The Memory Center. "You can't have an area for them to trip... falls are one of the biggest events that can change a senior's life."

Interface's carpet tile and LVT are compatible in height, creating a seamless floor without need for transition strips. "We were able to have a seamless floor without thresholds throughout the entire community. That greatly helped reduce the number of falls that our residents were having," says DiBona. "Because of our demographics, we need to keep everyone safe, but we also need to be able to move around and do the things we want to do and not worry about slipping or causing any problems," adds McNamara.

Residents have the freedom to participate in their choice of activities daily, giving them access to the entire facility. Therefore, it is critical that the flooring be resistant to wear from moving furniture and the rolling of wheelchairs and walkers.

"Our floors need to handle constant wear and tear, as well as spills, and must be able to be cleaned easily," says Taylor. "We don't have a huge staff for our maintenance department, so housekeeping needs to happen quickly and easily because residents are in the facility all the time."

Dr. Mohan also notes the importance of acoustical properties in memory care. "Individuals with dementia have a difficult time filtering out sounds. It's important that the acoustics of a building prevent individuals from being bombarded with excessive ambient noise, so they can focus on their task at hand."

With Interface carpet, LVT and nora® rubber flooring, acoustics haven't been a problem for The Memory Center. "The floors absorb the sound when we're moving around or dragging tables, so it's not irritating to the residents," says McNamara.

### Fostering Freedom

The Memory Center strives to give its residents a sense of independence, offering them opportunity to move between areas as they wish, and the flooring plays a significant role in realizing that freedom. "The building is designed to be as functional and as easy for our residents and guests as possible," says McNamara. "The flooring is important because it transitions from one space to the next, from the town center to the neighborhoods. So, they're able to use the flooring to know where they are going and where they're at."





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– Stacey McNamara, Activities Director, The Memory Center



"We make it easy for them. We keep them as independent as they can be for as long as they can," adds Taylor.

### The Proof is in the Smiles

Since opening, The Memory Center Atlanta has seen the success of its unique program and facility in the flourishing lives of its residents. "The Center gives seniors the grace that allows them to thrive," says Dr. Mohan. "Some individuals come from facilities where they were ignored and here at The Memory Center, they thrive. They've regained cognitive function in a way that allows them to more fully enjoy their life."

"Some people have a preconceived notion of what memory care is and then they come here, and they realize, wow, I didn't know this was memory care," explains McNamara. "My favorite thing is being able to give our residents purpose and love and to just share what beautiful lives they still have to live. It is a privilege and an honor to work with these people."

"I think the biggest thing we excel at is giving them their life back," says Taylor. "The beauty of this place is that when residents come here, they feel free."

### PROJECT DETAILS

**Facility** The Memory Center

**Location** Johns Creek, GA

**Lead Designer** Lilliana Alvarado;  
UPHEALING, NY, NY

**Architects** Nelson-Tremain Partnership

**Photography** VantagePoint3D

**Interface Products** LVT: Level Set™  
Collection; Carpet: Shiver Me Timbers™;  
Rubber: norament® satura (not shown)



### THE SHORT STORY - WHY INTERFACE?

- 1 **Seamless Floors** – Interface's carpet tile and Sound Choice™ LVT are compatible in height so there's no need for transition strips that could cause potential falls.
- 2 **Single Source** – Interface offers a wide variety of carpet tiles, LVT and nora® rubber flooring, making it easy to specify the right flooring for each area.
- 3 **Quieter Spaces** – Interface flooring offers optimum sound reduction for a more peaceful atmosphere.
- 4 **Built to Last** – Interface carpet tiles, LVT and nora rubber are built to withstand foot traffic, moving furniture and rolling loads with minimal daily maintenance from in-house staff.