On Aug. 15, 2011, Providence ElderPlace in Cully threw a party to celebrate 15 years of service.

Since 1996, those who have called Cully home include published poets; professional artists; a female wrestler; military veterans; immigrants from England, Cuba and Uruguay; former models; a Department of Justice employee who oversaw bingo parlors; several piano teachers; a Food and Drug Administration expert; a professional roller skater; many dancers; an adult foster home provider and hundreds of other unique individuals.

ElderPlace in Cully is unique because it is both a residential care facility and a health and social center. Since the site first opened or numbers have grown to 140 participants (42 residents and 98 from the surrounding community). Thirty-two full- and part-time employees care for our participants; three staffers have been with Cully almost since day one!

“Cully was the first housing site for Providence ElderPlace Portland,” notes Rebecca Reed, longtime employee and Cully’s social work supervisor. “It changes how you care for people when you work where they live.”

Providence ElderPlace in Cully will remain unique to all of us who have lived at, worked in or visited the center. Each resident and each employee stamps a little bit of herself or himself into Cully’s history.

Read on for memories from some of those who work at Cully now.

From Jean Kastner, physical therapist:
“I remember Ray walking with a LiteGait trainer and mobility device with his wife in 2010. It was the first time he had walked in five years. His wife was overjoyed and tearful. Ray did not stop talking about it for a year.”

From Lois Plunkett, LPN:
“A memory that sticks in my mind is the time an ElderPlace delivery truck tried to make a delivery but was too high for the portico over the front entrance and got stuck!”

“I have been at Cully almost since it opened...and have been the med room nurse the whole time. The job has changed a lot. I used to fill 42 medisets for housing every week. We were at about 58 or 62 participants, with a goal to have 88. Now we are at 140.”

From Kelli Erickson, life enrichment coordinator:
“In the six-and-a-half years I have been at Cully, I have had the privilege of being part of many memorable moments. Here are just a few:

“A participant couple who met in Cully residential care facility and got married in the social center. Staff baby showers! 100th birthday celebrations. Several Snowball/ Live DJ holiday dances, with participants, staff and the families from both all intermingled and having fun.

“Seven Senior Make a Wishes: Taking a participant to Jimmy Mak’s by way of a stylish town car to see and meet the members of the Mel Brown Quartet. Taking an old rodeo pro to a rodeo in St. Paul. Crowning an 80-year-old birthday queen for the day and taking a Hummer limo to get to a birthday beer. Accompanying a 96-year-old participant to Arlington, Ore., to revisit her favorite haunts.

“Forming a motorcycle gang in honor of a participant and then parading to Salty’s on Marine Drive. Taking one of our 90s Club gentlemen to an old-fashioned tailgate grill-out before watching a University of Portland baseball game and meeting some players. Providing an Oregon coast getaway for one of our participants and his wife.”