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Press release

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 **SCHÖNWALD**
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Interview with Petronella Stoffer-Sitsen, room designer at CBT – Caritas-Betriebsführungs- und Trägergesellschaft mbH, Cologne:
"Tableware has got to be functional and visually appealing."

Frequently, older people with disabilities or restricted movement, poor visual acuity and coordination find it difficult to eat. Due to embarrassment, many of them withdraw from communal eating and lose their enjoyment in food. CBT - Caritas Betriebsführungs- und Trägergesellschaft - is a charity based in Cologne, and is taking a new approach to equipping its total of 35 retirement and care homes, as well as homes for people with disabilities, throughout the Bishopric of Cologne: In cooperation with Schönwald, the porcelain manufacturer, the charity developed the DONNA SENIOR tableware collection which is specifically tailored to the needs of this target group with discreet, functional details. In the interview, Petronella Stoffer-Sitsen, who is responsible for room design at CBT, talks about the cooperation with the porcelain manufacturer, the advantages of the tableware and experience gained in the CBT facilities.

How did you establish contact with Schönwald, and what was the development process like?

Every day, we see the need to offer our residents an environment in which they can enjoy eating and drinking in spite of their restrictions.

We already knew about Schönwald as a competent vendor of professional porcelain, and we had been working with the company in some of our facilities already. Tableware for the care area must be both functional and visually appealing. Both of the parties were equally involved in developing DONNA SENIOR, an expansion of the existing DONNA porcelain collection: We know exactly what our residents want, whilst Schönwald has the expertise to put our suggestions into effect professionally. It took less than two months from the first meeting until delivery of the finished pieces.

How does the porcelain help your residents?

When people start to lose their visual acuity and manual dexterity, they find it difficult and frustrating to handle cutlery, plates and cups. In cases of dementia, they find it increasingly difficult to orient themselves at the table. Sufferers frequently refuse to use means of assistance such as feeding cups, because they feel it stigmatises them. Normality and participation are important aspects for us; DONNA SENIOR offers the residents of our homes the opportunity to participate more in society again. They feel more secure when eating, because they find it easier to deal with meals and drinks.

What are the characteristics of DONNA SENIOR that make it easier for the residents to use?

If you look at the tableware, you would never think that it has been specially developed for older or disabled people. What DONNA SENIOR sets apart are the small, concealed functions that you only notice at second glance: For example, the recesses in the saucers are identified with signal colours, making it possible to see exactly where the cup should be placed. Moreover, the plates have a coloured rim. This makes the contours clear even for people who have poor vision. The cups have been specially designed for people with restricted motor functions, because the large opening and wide handle makes them easier to hold. There is also a protective bar to prevent anyone burning their fingers. The food placement surface of the plates has been reduced in size, so that the food does not go

cold so quickly. This means the residents can take more time whilst eating.

How has the response been in your homes?

The residents are very happy with the tableware, because they notice that it makes it easier for them when they are eating. The employees also appreciate the collection because it matches any style of interior design and can be combined very well with decorative materials. Our newest facility, the Katharinenstift senior citizen and care home in Remscheid has been built according to the communal house principle without a central dining area, and we have fitted it out completely with DONNA SENIOR. We are going to be changing the other homes over to the new collection in a gradual process.

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