

## The Power of Partnership

*Teoma goes above and beyond for Presbyterian Villages of Michigan.*

As far as Presbyterian Villages of Michigan (PVM) is concerned, Teoma Systems is more than just a provider of voice and data solutions. PVM expects any vendor to deliver quality products and services at competitive prices, but its relationship with Teoma goes far beyond that.

"Teoma is a partner," said Paul McAninch, Director of Technology for PVM. "A partner supports our mission and values. A partner contributes to our fundraising efforts and takes pride in doing the right thing. A partner calls you when there's a special deal from the manufacturer but doesn't waste your time with offers that don't fit into your overall strategy.

"Teoma has done all of that and more. They're a very strong vendor, but they have also gone above and beyond to become a partner of ours."

### Teoma Measures Up

Since 1945, PVM has served older adults of all faiths and is focused on creating new possibilities for quality senior living. Its vision is to become the premier leader and organizational resource for older adults in Michigan. PVM currently has 19 senior living communities including continuing care retirement communities (apartments, assisted living and skilled nursing all on one campus), subsidized senior housing and market-rate senior housing.

The organization began partnering with Teoma several years ago when it came time for a phone system upgrade. After completing a needs analysis, submitting an RFP to several vendors, and comparing features and skill sets, PVM chose Teoma for the project.

"You have to measure a lot of things —

just the price and capabilities of the equipment but the vendors themselves. We looked at the expertise of their engineers and technicians, their track record, their customer base, and decided on Teoma," said McAninch. "Dan Janer and Mike Quarton [of Teoma] met with me for almost eight hours on a Christmas Eve and we hammered out all of the details."

### Filling Special Needs

At that time, what PVM hoped to accomplish was pretty revolutionary. The organization asked Teoma to begin connecting its sites into a unified voice platform using voice over IP (VoIP).

"To the best of my knowledge, there weren't many organizations doing IP telephony between locations five years ago. We knew we were on the leading edge and that it would be a bit of a challenge," McAninch said. "There's always a learning curve when you try something new, but Teoma has good people. They step up to the plate, and do what they say they're going to do."

PVM went with an Avaya solution because it was one of the few VoIP systems that could deliver voice calls to both digital and analog phones. In addition to providing five-digit station-to-station dialing between locations and advanced features for administrative personnel, the system enables PVM to offer low-cost phone service to more than 600 residents at four communities.

"It's a unique offering in our industry, and it makes things a bit more difficult from a telephony perspective," McAninch said. "IP telephony provides all kinds of cool features for administrative users, but our residents just want a typical home phone. The solution Teoma helped us

deploy enables us to provide residents with basic voice service on an analog connection, plus features like CallerID and call waiting if they want them."

### Looking to the Future

Today, Teoma continues to support PVM's phone systems as well as the WAN that provides data connectivity for its 19 locations. Teoma also helps PVM stay abreast of the latest technologies and make strategic technology decisions to support its long-term goals.

"Here's a perfect example. Right now Teoma is working closely with us to upgrade to a new Avaya phone system and chart a migration strategy for the next three years so that we stay up-to-date. That's the challenge in technology — it moves ahead so quickly that you suddenly find yourself so far behind that you have to throw everything away and start over," McAninch said.

"Teoma brings to the table technical knowledge of the latest equipment. I tell them where we want to go as an organization, and they help us design the best strategies to meet those goals long-term."

That's important for an organization experiencing rapid growth. PVM is the 37th-largest not-for-profit provider of long-term care, housing and services for seniors in the nation. It's also the sixth-fastest growing. PVM adds two to four new communities a year and is constantly looking at new ways to bring services and care to seniors.

"People keep getting older, and we're working to properly position ourselves as we prepare for the onslaught of the baby boomers," said McAninch. "With the help and support of partners like Teoma, we'll be able to do that."