

A Beautiful Life on the Horizon

San Antonio's newest senior living community embodies hospitality and elegance in every square foot



In the Texas Hill Country, north of Loop 1604 in San Antonio, Forefront Living is building something extraordinary. Bella Vida, a \$230 million continuing care retirement community (CCRC), is rising on a scenic 26.5-acre site that overlooks the lush landscape and city skyline. It's a view that stops you mid-sentence, and that's the point.

"We drove up there before there was even a road," says Tim Mallad, CEO of Forefront Living. "There was a small path, and we got as high up as we could and looked out. We just said, 'Gosh, this is it!'"

Bella Vida will feature a six-story main building with two levels of below-grade parking, 164 apartment homes and 40 thoughtfully designed Villas. In addition to this, 16 Memory Support suites will be housed in a dedicated building adjacent to the Independent Living residences. The vision, long held by the nonprofit's leadership, has been years in the making—but finding the prime San Antonio location made all the difference.

"The idea or the dream for this project has been around for years," says Mallad. "Finding the right site was the hardest part. When that happened, the ideas and philosophy we had been talking about finally came together."

MISSION-BASED COMMUNITY CULTURE

Founded in the early 1960s as Presbyterian Communities and Services, Forefront Living has evolved through the decades while staying grounded in its core mission: to make each moment matter for those they serve.

"Our mission permeates everything," Mallad says. "Every morning from 9 to 9:15, our team spends 15 minutes focusing on our organizational mission, vision and values. It's a chance to talk about what they mean, what our guiding principles are. It's strictly about our culture. There's no business discussed in those meetings, and it's just a good way to start our day and remind ourselves where we are and what we're doing."

Today, Forefront Living employs around 700 people and operates two senior living communities located in Dallas and Plano, a foundation and a hospice center. The Bella Vida project alone will create 70–100 full-time equivalent jobs. It's a big undertaking with a big heart behind it.

"There's a lot of camaraderie here, a lot of trust and a lot of fun," Mallad says. "We're probably the most transparent senior living provider in the country."

RESORT-CALIBER DESIGN

Transparency and trust have shaped every decision made at Bella Vida, and what Forefront Living is creating is nothing short of remarkable. The community's design—led by architect of record three architecture, known

for their hospitality-driven approach and previous work on San Antonio's Hotel Emma—brings in natural light, tall ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows. Floor plans range from 820 to more than 2,500 square feet.

"When you walk into one of our future residences, you'll be walking into an environment boasting 10-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows. You're getting premium views," Mallad says.

The community will also include a Lifestyle Center, housing a large wellness complex, an indoor pool, a state-of-the-art fitness area and multiple dining venues ranging from chef-prepared, restaurant-style options to a bistro café. There will even be a sky lounge positioned on the sixth floor. Outside, residents will enjoy scenic walking trails, pickleball courts, landscaped courtyards and outdoor dining that blends seamlessly into the Hill Country surroundings. It's also clear that Bella Vida's regional identity was carefully considered.

"Nothing we've done is cookie-cutter," says Mallad. "Everything is imagined and appropriate to the region. We had a unique opportunity to blend Hill Country style, Spanish culture and modern convenience."

So far, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. As of mid-2025, 75 percent of the residences have already been reserved.

"The residences facing the amusement park, because they have fireworks, filled up the quickest," Mallad says. "It's a distinct community because of the elevation. There are a lot of really good views, and there's something for every preference—whether you want a glimpse of Hill Country, or you want to look out at the cities in the distance or greenery."

FOUNDATIONAL SUPPORT AND LASTING CONNECTIONS

It's not just the real estate itself that's drawing attention. Bella Vida is being built according to sustainable principles. A large portion of the site is preserved as green space and an aquifer recharge zone, which helped shape the layout and landscaping strategy.

Technology also plays a big role in the community's overall design. From customizing meal plans and transportation to facilitating resident communications, tech supports Bella Vida's highly personalized service model. Still, Mallad is quick to point out, it's all meant to work quietly in the background.

"The most important thing is not technology. It's the teammate-to-resident interaction and the hospitality culture. Technology will never find a way to surpass personal connection," says Mallad.

Forefront Living's commitment to its residents goes well beyond design or convenience. Through the Forefront Living Foundation, the organization offers scholarships, benevolent care and financial support for residents who may run out of funds through no fault of their own.

That philosophy extends to the first group of Bella Vida residents themselves, who were actively involved in the community's groundbreaking.

"This group of residents are visionaries and are able to put their stamp on something that's going to be theirs for years and years to come. So, they have deep ownership in it," says Mallad.

Phase 1 of Bella Vida is expected to open in summer 2026, with full completion by spring 2027—but the spirit of the community is already alive. ■



Forefront Living Leadership Team at Groundbreaking Celebration

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