



Stephenie Haldane

Vice President, Senior Care North America

In this Voices interview, Senior Housing News sits down with ASSA ABLOY Global Solutions - Senior Care Division Vice President Stephenie Haldane to learn the power and purpose of the VingCard solution, how this unique division became the exclusive provider of VingCard lock technology within senior housing and how electronic locks provide family members with peace of mind.

Editor's note: This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

ASSA ABLOY Global Solutions - Senior Care is the new senior living business unit within electronic locks leader ASSA ABLOY. To learn more about how electronic locks can help your community, visit assaabloyglobalsolutions.com/en/landing/elderly-care.

The Voices Series is a sponsored content program featuring leading executives discussing trends, topics and more — shaping their industry in a question-and-answer format. For more information on Voices, please contact sales@agingmedia.com.

Q: Senior Housing News:
You came to ASSA ABLOY Global Solutions - Senior Care with a long health care career, including time in senior housing. What career experiences do you draw from most in your role today?

Stephenie Haldane: While I was still in college, my mom and dad were taking care of my grandfather in our house in suburban Atlanta, so I learned the challenges of taking care of the elderly. And then my first role right out of college was an Alzheimer's memory care director, overseeing a 40-bed senior living community.

I was able to experience first-hand the challenges the staff had dealing with the residents with dementia, including what it was like to not have any security on the resident doors. In this role, I witnessed the challenges that came with not having locks on resident doors. Some of these challenges included shared infectious diseases, theft, and lack of engagement from the resident.

Conversely, in my last role in senior housing I got to work for a company that had VingCard electronic locks installed on each resident's door, along with perimeter access control. It made a world of difference. Having these locks enhanced security, reduced liability and provided peace of mind to residents, family members and staff. While I was there, we used the reporting capabilities to pull audit trails and verify events. We also used the system to cancel staff credentials in real-time and power open a room for a resident who was locked out.

As a senior living provider, we had a system from ASSA ABLOY Global Solutions - Senior Care that was integrated into the emergency call system we used. This provided an extra convenience for staff and residents only

having to wear one bracelet or lanyard. From that experience I was hooked on the benefits of electronic locks.



In my last role in senior housing I got to work for a company that had VingCard electronic locks installed on each resident's door, along with perimeter access control. It made a world of difference.”

Q: Senior Housing News:
The key difference between ASSA ABLOY Global Solutions - Senior Care and other ASSA ABLOY divisions is your team's background in senior living. That background is why you knew just how vital the cutting-edge VingCard technology is for operators. Only AAGS - Senior Care sells VingCard in senior care. Why does that matter?



You might have recognized the VingCard solution hardware within different areas, such as hotels and cruise lines. It is essential for electronic lock success, and it is part of what drew me to ASSA ABLOY.”

Q: Senior Housing News:
A new business unit brings a new team. How are you building your team?

Haldane: You might have recognized the VingCard solution hardware within different areas, such as hotels and cruise lines. It is essential for electronic lock success, and it is part of what drew me to ASSA ABLOY.

We created the ASSA ABLOY Global Solutions - Senior Care division to support the unique needs and challenges that come with developing and operating a senior living community. Since this type of technology is relatively new in the space, we wanted to offer dedicated service to our customers. I oversee a group of individuals who have a passion for serving and safeguarding seniors. Most of the individuals on my team have spent time working in senior living or have experience caring for their elderly loved ones. We recognize these unique challenges and want to help build solutions that make sense in this industry.

Our division begins at the design phase and supports the customer throughout the process. We install the products and software, and then offer technical support after the installation. Because we are solely focused on senior housing, we are able to offer a full solution and dedicated support.

Haldane: As I mentioned earlier most of the employees have experience in senior housing. As I interview people, my first question is, “Tell me your relationship with your grandparents — how do you feel about seniors?” As I am hiring for any position in sales, ops or support, the people I hire must have a passion for serving our elderly population.

One of my project managers used to be a nurse in assisted living. Having this level of in-depth insight of the industry, and the challenges it presents, positions us to build, design, install and support a better, safer environment for the seniors and the staff who care for them. Having that devotion and understanding of the population we serve is what motivates my team every day. Our mission is securing and safeguarding seniors and the staff who care for them.

Q: Senior Housing News:
Where might the reader have come in contact with the VingCard solution already?

Haldane: ASSA ABLOY is a very large corporation and has more than 200 separate companies, and people surely recognize our VingCard electronic locks. Most likely, if you have stayed at a hotel or gone on a cruise, you have used our hardware probably with a key card, but the growing trend is using a mobile key through a smartphone app.

Q: Senior Housing News:
Why have these electronic locking systems become common in some areas of life, yet not senior housing?

Haldane: Well, electronic locks on resident's doors in senior living is a relatively new concept. In hotels, we see a standardization that involves electronic locks on each guest door. The senior housing industry is not there yet. I am hoping to see this change in the upcoming years.

Q: Senior Housing News:
Let's think about the electronic lock in terms of its everyday use in senior living. How are they used?

Haldane: The resident or staff member enters up to the door and presents the credentials to the lock. At that point the lock or reader recognizes their credentials and unlocks the lock. This event is now registered in the system, meaning we can now trace who entered and exited that door at that specific time. Most senior living residents use a wrist band instead of a key card, and staff carries a FOB.



In hotels, we see a standardization that involves electronic locks on each guest door. The senior housing industry is not there yet. I am hoping to see this change in the upcoming years.”

Q: Senior Housing News:
What are then the benefits of electronic locks in the different levels of care in senior living?

Haldane: I want to start with memory care. The great debate within memory care is “should we use them or should we not?” As I stated earlier, it is difficult to operate without electronic locks, in part because there is no accountability. Using electronic locks is also a way to drive occupancy. The family member is able to leave their loved one in a secured memory care community with extra assurance and peace of mind.

In assisted living, electronic locks become more about safety, ease and convenience for both staff and residents. For example, how hard would it be for a resident with severe arthritis, or Parkinson’s, to enter her room with a traditional key? Not to mention how many times residents or staff lose their key? With a VingCard electronic lock, the resident would simply present their bracelet to the lock and the door would power open.

For independent living and active adult, they really want that cruise ship mentality. They want to have everything available to them. This is where we work with other providers to build them an all-inclusive platform. That just

means that they want their fitness equipment, their point of sale and nurse call system all on one wearable device, so they don’t have to carry a credit card and a hard key. They just want to have one platform. That’s been the growing trend that we’re seeing in active adult.



I’m hopeful that we continue to embrace and implement technology. This is something that every other industry is doing. We need to adjust to that.”

Q: Senior Housing News:
2020 was an unprecedented year, but there are reasons for hope in 2021. What are you most hopeful for?

Haldane: COVID brought to our industry a heightened demand to increase the technology to better care for our seniors and most vulnerable. I’m hoping to see that continued awareness and implementation. I think that adopting technology to each and every senior housing community is critical. We need to, as an industry, ask ourselves, how do we safeguard and secure our most frail and elderly population? How do we take care of moms and dads? I’m a huge advocate of really looking at other industries and saying, “What are they doing, and why can’t we mimic and emulate some of the changes of technology that they brought in?”

I’m hopeful that we continue to embrace and implement technology. This is something that every other industry is doing. We need to adjust to that.