



The Mosaic

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Masterpiece Living Achieves Major Milestone

By Dr. Roger Landry, MD, MPH, President, Masterpiece Living

Cover Story

In the fall of 1999, a small group of determined individuals set out on a journey to improve the lives and aging experience of all older adults. That group included, among others, Drs. Robert Kahn and Toni Antonucci from the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, my brother Larry and me. Masterpiece Living (MPL) is the result of that group's work, and MPL's partnerships with now 60 communities has demonstrated clearly that its lifestyle and cultural approach to successful aging is effective. Recently, however, MPL took a major step towards achieving its core goal of improving the lives of *all* older adults.

The University of Michigan, in partnership with Masterpiece Living, was awarded one of five MacArthur Foundation grants as part of the Foundation's *How Housing Matters* initiatives intended to support research projects which seek to address how affordable housing for older adults can achieve improved health and well-being outcomes, while lowering overall health-care costs.

Toni Antonucci, PhD, Principal Investigator and Robert L. Kahn, PhD, Co-Principal Investigator will lead the study in which The University of Michigan, Masterpiece Living and American Baptist Homes of the West (ABHOW) will collaborate.

"The ABHOW Affordable Housing Team is thrilled to be part of this initiative." Ancel Romero, Senior Vice President of ABHOW, said. "Our residents and team members are of greatest importance to us and this grant allows us the opportunity to further enhance their well-being." The Study will involve three ABHOW affordable housing communities in the Redlands, California area and last two years.

"Our goal is to develop a blueprint that can be widely used to improve the quality of life for all older adults, of every income level," Principal Investigator, Toni Antonucci said. "We hope the results of this field experiment will also result in Medicare and Medicaid savings and contribute to efforts to reform current models of service provision to older Americans."

The outcomes of the project will be presented to the House and Senate, The Administration on Aging, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Center for State Innovation and the Surgeon General; a potential major step in influencing public policy on aging in America.

Larry Landry, Chairman of Masterpiece Living summed up the feelings of the entire MPL Team. "We are both humbled and exhilarated by this project. We thank all of our partners for their commitment to successful aging. Without their hard work, we would not have this opportunity."

Hot Health Topic

Who's Livin It?

Community
Spotlight

News

Hot Health Topic

By: Neal Miller, MA

Fall Risk NOT on the Rise for Masterpiece Communities

Each year, one in every three people over the age of 65 will experience a fall. For those who are over the age of 80, the ratio is one in two - making fall risks a major concern for older adults. Among those 65 and older, falls are the leading cause of injury death. They are also the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma. Additionally, the financial impact a fall has on both the medical system and on the individual is substantial, as direct medical costs for all fall related injuries exceeds \$19 billion dollars a year and the average cost for an individual is roughly \$19,440.

Masterpiece Living's newest research demonstrates that the risk of falling for adults residing in Masterpiece partnered communities is less over time than healthy older adults who are not affiliated with successful aging cultures.

The Tinetti Gait and Balance Assessment is a widely accepted measure of fall risk in older adults. One study demonstrated that the average healthy older adult's Tinetti score decreases by a half point each year. This represents a gradual increase in the risk of falling.

Masterpiece Living examined Tinetti scores in successful aging cultures. More than 100 individuals living independently in retirement communities demonstrated a strong pattern of maintaining a low fall risk over a three-year period, with no significant changes in their fall risk over time. Even more impressive, residents of Assisted Living were also studied and found that they maintained their average Tinetti score over a one-year period.

So while one study demonstrates that healthy older adults experience an increase in fall risk with each passing year, those residing in Masterpiece partnered communities experience maintenance in their fall risk over time.

Because independence is something that weighs heavy on older adults' minds and is something that can change with just one step, Masterpiece Living has packaged a six week program that exclusively focuses on preventing falls and is built from the latest research in the field that has shown to be effective in preventing falls. This program is called Vertical, and you won't want to miss it. See your Masterpiece coordinator for more information.

MPL is committed to continued research in the area of fall risk among older adults in successful aging environments.

Who's Livin' It?

By: Danielle Palli

A Life of Gratitude: an Interview with Alma Emerson



"She greets every day with gratitude and has an unflagging enthusiasm for whatever each day brings," Alma's daughter, Sandy, told friends at her 100th birthday party nearly two years ago. "She is thankful for the sunrise and the birds and the plants she tends in the garden. She is cordial and kind and tries to greet everyone she sees by name."

Alma Emerson was born in Toronto, Canada on June 27, 1910, but has lived in the States for most of her life. She has been at ABHOW's Piedmont Gardens for sixteen years.

"Her optimism is contagious." Shelley Tsao, Director of Resident Services at Piedmont Gardens told the Mosaic. "She lives appreciatively."

Modest and soft-spoken, Alma doesn't know what the fuss is about, and yet everyone we contacted described her as helpful, positive and generous. Alma likes to "sit and knit" baby caps and adult hats to be donated to the local hospital for preemies and for adults undergoing chemotherapy. She gardens and goes for walks almost every day, taking the time to pick up fallen magnolia leaves from the community grounds because they are slow to disintegrate. During Active Aging Week, she was one of the only residents who attended every single event, including hula classes, tango lessons, a hike in the redwoods and a visit to the local food bank. In fact, Alma lists all the monthly activities Piedmont Gardens offers on her calendar, attending as many as she possibly can and particularly enjoys visits to museums, the symphony and public dances.

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Community Spotlight

Llanfair: Leading the Way in Staff Wellness Initiatives



"Take care of the staff and residents will be well taken care of. It's that simple." Education Director of the Llanfair community, Ed Stinson, told the Mosaic. As both an educator and a parent himself, he understands how daily personal responsibilities can affect work productivity as well as a sense of fulfillment in the work place. For that reason, Ed developed the Masterpiece Life Series, a curriculum filled with information designed to help address all of life's challenges and spearheaded Llanfair's comprehensive wellness plan that actually rewards its staff members for good health.

"We participate in Virgin HealthMiles," Director of Resident Services, Carol Saylor, said. "It's an online program that provides an electronic pedometer that measures the number of steps you take in a day and suggests daily health tips. Participants are given a monetary award every time they take 7,000 steps a day." To aid in this endeavor, the fitness center is open to staff members and residents alike, and a nutritional care technician provides education for eating healthy on a budget.

But it didn't stop there...

More than just becoming physically healthier, Llanfair wanted to help employees feel emotional support as well. One Friday a month is dedicated to the Masterpiece Life Series, where guest speakers are brought in to offer advice on a variety of topics, or staff members are taken on an educational field trip. Recent discussions included: How to Create a Budget, How to Be a Homework Helper to Your Kids, Estate Planning and How to Find Your Way in a Public Library. They also provide one-on-one counseling to help parents with children who have specific needs develop their own Individual Education Plan, and they hold mock practice sessions for parents with children who are being bullied in school. No matter what your life status, they've got a workshop or lecture you can use.

And then an amazing thing happened...

Over time, residents began participating in the MPL Series, and before long, they started volunteering their talents, be it teaching math, art or giving advice based on their life experience. These days, sessions often end with at least one resident hugging a staff member and saying, "I know exactly what you're going through because I've been there too."

The Staff Member Satisfaction Rates are consistently going up, and employees are reporting that they appreciate the ongoing wellness programs offered to them. All of this translates into the staff being at the top of their game when it comes to their work. With residents participating in many of the same wellness classes this amounts to a very healthy, and very happy, Masterpiece Living Community.

Continued... A Life of Gratitude: an Interview with Alma Emerson



A former Licensed Practical Nurse, Alma has spent her life helping others; but if you ask her about it, she'd rather point out the contributions of the people around her. For example, when asked what she thought about the visit to the food bank, she replied, "I was amazed at how big the place was and how efficient they were at dividing up barrels of donations and distributing them to so many different places."

With her 102nd birthday just around the corner, people are always asking Alma what her secret is to longevity. She says it's "in the genes," but we suspect it is a lifetime of optimism and gratitude, coupled with what we would describe as a healthy helping of the four components of successful aging: maintaining social, spiritual, intellectual and physical pursuits in one's daily life.

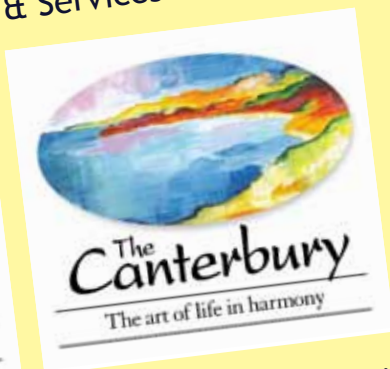
Out of curiosity, we wanted to find out if she tried out the computers at Piedmont Gardens. "I have not," She answered truthfully. "But I remember a time when adding machines were all the rage!" She laughed.

"Is there anything in particular that you would like people to know about you?" We asked.

"No," she replied gently. "I think I'm just Alma Emerson."

NEWS:

Welcome to the Masterpiece network:
Episcopal Communities & Services - The Covington & The Canterbury



Masterpiece Living and Anti-Aging Games have a new partnership. Masterpiece partners' residents and staff can now enjoy unlimited free individual Anti-Aging Games. Contact your Masterpiece Living specialist for more information.



World of Wellness Release: The newest program by Masterpiece explores the four Masterpiece components and how these shape other cultures around the world. Countries explored include Japan, Italy, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, Kenya and Antarctica. Contact your Masterpiece Living coordinator for more information.

Walk to Wellness begins May 1, inspiring community members and staff to improve their health through walking. This year we are "walking with purpose" and experiencing new ways to increase meaning and purpose while walking.

